

Changing Lives in Andhra Pradesh

Young Lives Children Growing Up



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Changing Lives in Andhra Pradesh: Young Lives Children Growing Up

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Introduction

Young Lives is an international research study of the causes and consequences of children's poverty. Here in India we are following the lives of 3,000 children in Andhra Pradesh over 15 years. We have now known the children for ten years. When we interviewed them for these profiles, the older group had turned 16 or 17. Our younger group had just had their ninth birthdays.

The aim of the study is to gain a deeper understanding of the intergenerational transmission of poverty, how families on the margins move in and out of poverty, and the policies that can make a real difference to children's lives. It also aims to inform the development and implementation of practices that will reduce childhood poverty. The Young Lives India Round 3 Country Report (2011) highlighted growing disparity and raised concern that these inequalities would continue if certain groups remained privileged and economic progress was still unequally shared.

The 13 stories in this book¹ come from in-depth interviews which were collected from a smaller group of 50 Young Lives children. Children are usually considered poor when their families or households have low incomes, and how they experience poverty is often completely overlooked. So, in an endeavour to place the children's perspectives centre-stage, Young Lives India have developed this book *Changing Lives in Andhra Pradesh: Young Lives Children Growing Up*. Here we catch glimpses of the changing lives of these 13 children, taken from different locations and contexts such as urban towns, rural and small tribal villages or belonging to diverse socio-economic backgrounds. None of the children appear in the photographs or give their real names. This is because we want to protect them from outside interest and prevent one child from being singled out over another.

Changing lives

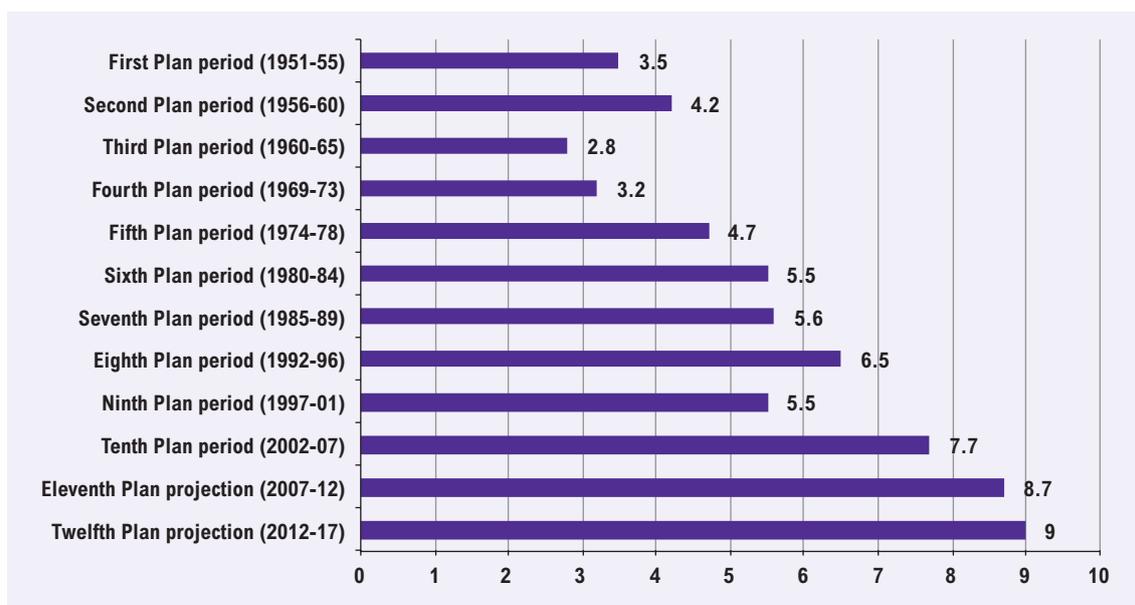
Through the children's voices we hear their perspective on where and how they live, their school, their friends, family members, some of the problems they face, and whether they think they have a good life or a bad life. We also know a little about what helps them when they are in difficulty. And both the children and their parents have told us about their hopes and fears – and their dreams for the future.

India is home to 1.2 billion people, of whom 30 per cent are children. Today the country is witnessing an economic boom and is expected eventually to become one of the world's most powerful economies. Yet India is characterised by stark disparities between regions and social groups related to wealth and consumption, access to welfare programmes, education, health, etc. The potential of the Young Lives study lies in its focus on tracking the same children's progress over 15 years throughout childhood and into early adulthood.

Figure 1 shows growth in India from 1950, over the periods of 12 five-year plans (the final two being projections), with actual and projected growth increasing significantly from 2002. The government responded to the global recession in 2009 by introducing fiscal stimulus and monetary measures which continued into 2009-10 when the economy was further hit by a severe drought.

1 Six of the stories – Deepak, Salman, Sarada, Ravi, Harika and Shanmuka Priya - were originally published in Nikki van der Gaag with Kirrily Pells and Caroline Knowles (2012) *Changing Lives in a Changing World: Young Lives children growing up*, Oxford: Young Lives.

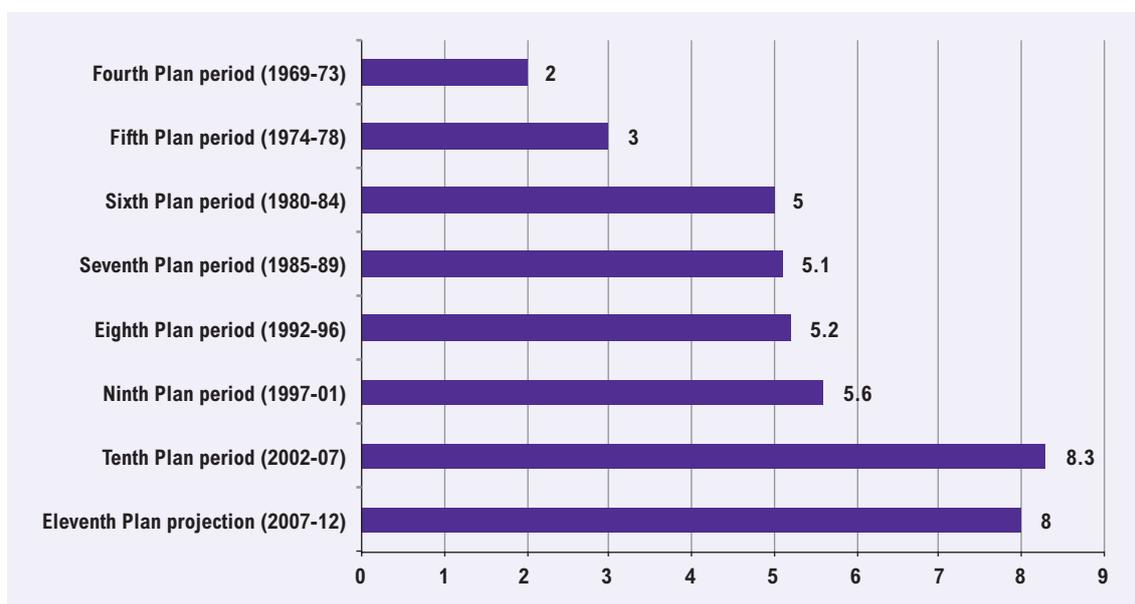
Figure 1: Indian economic growth since 1950 (%)



Source: Planning Commission (2010) *Mid-term Appraisal Eleventh Five Year Plan 2007-2012*, New Delhi: Oxford Press

Andhra Pradesh was one of the first Indian states to initiate the reform process for fiscal and institutional restructuring at the state level, and was the model for several new poverty reduction initiatives taken during the 1990s. Thus it is particularly interesting to see what progress has been made in the level of poverty and on individual indicators of child poverty here. Figure 2 shows growth in Andhra Pradesh since 1969.

Figure 2: Economic growth in Andhra Pradesh since 1969 (%)



Source: Government of Andhra Pradesh (2010) *Socio-Economic Survey 2009-2010* Hyderabad: State Planning Department

We know that if a child comes from a poor family, especially if they also live in a community with few resources, they are likely to face other disadvantages on top of being poor. We want to show how this can be changed, and the cycle of poverty broken.

But we are also finding that the things children and their families worry about are not necessarily the same as those prioritised by policymakers. We hope to be able to provide evidence for both national and state governments and international and local organisations so that they know which policies and programmes really make a difference to poor children and their families.

If we can get things right at the start of a child's life, we have a chance to stop poverty and inequality being handed down through the generations. That is why the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, agreed in 2000, included goals and targets aimed specifically at children. Young Lives uses evidence to inform policy debates with the aim of improving children's lives.

The wider context

Each child's story has a corresponding theme that gives a sense of the wider context of the children's lives. These range from education and schooling, to health and illness, balancing school and work, the impact of economic and adverse shocks, gender roles, social attitudes and well-being, the impact of social protection schemes, the role of self-help groups, domestic violence, the importance of maternal education, and parental aspirations and school transitions. We include stories about children from different locations, both rural and urban, and also from different caste groups. Young Lives research gives a wealth of information on childhood poverty. Some of our recent key findings from India are discussed below with reference to the children's stories captured in this book.

Inequalities persist despite economic growth

Although Andhra Pradesh has experienced steady economic growth since the time of the fourth five-year plan (1969-73), disparities remain. Table 1 shows that the most disadvantaged groups of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are still at the bottom of the wealth index and expenditure ladder.

Table 1a: Wealth index* of Young Lives households (both cohorts)

	Wealth Index		
	Round 1 (2002)	Round 2 (2006)	Round 3 (2009)
Urban	0.65	0.66	0.68
Rural	0.33	0.39	0.46
<i>Caste:</i>			
SC	0.35	0.39	0.45
ST	0.27	0.32	0.38
BC	0.41	0.47	0.53
OC	0.54	0.59	0.64
Average	0.41	0.46	0.52

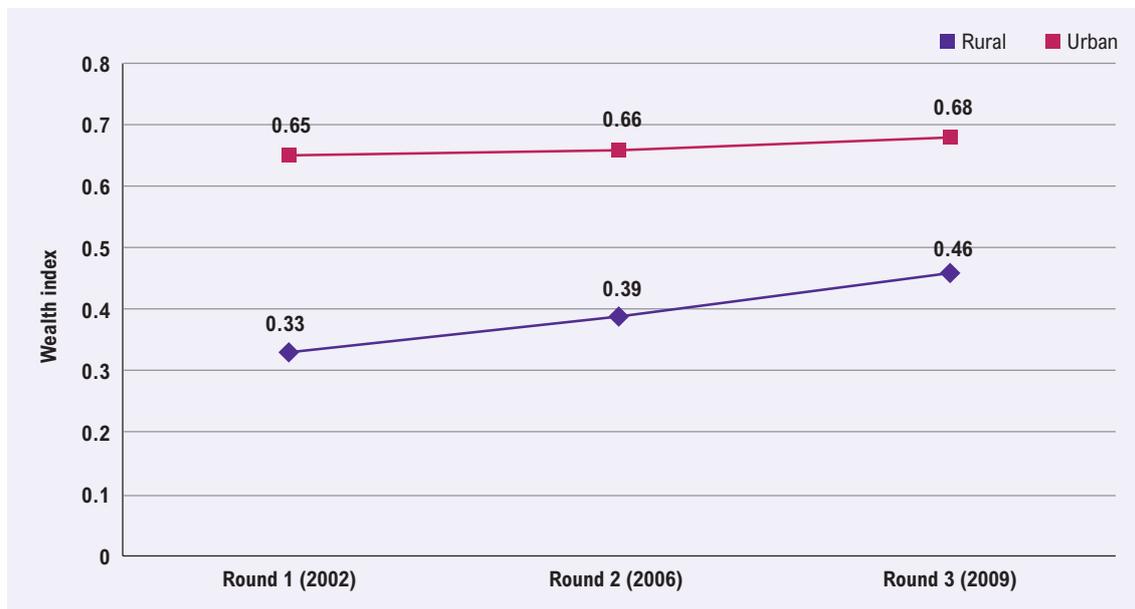
Table 1b: Monthly real per capita consumption expenditure (Rs.) of Young Lives households (both cohorts)

	Expenditure	
	Round 2	Round 3
	(2006)	(2009)
Urban	964	1,123.50
Rural	759.2	881.1
<i>Caste:</i>		
SC	757.6	842.9
ST	587.9	652.8
BC	794	960.5
OC	1,015.70	1,153.90
Average	812.3	942.3

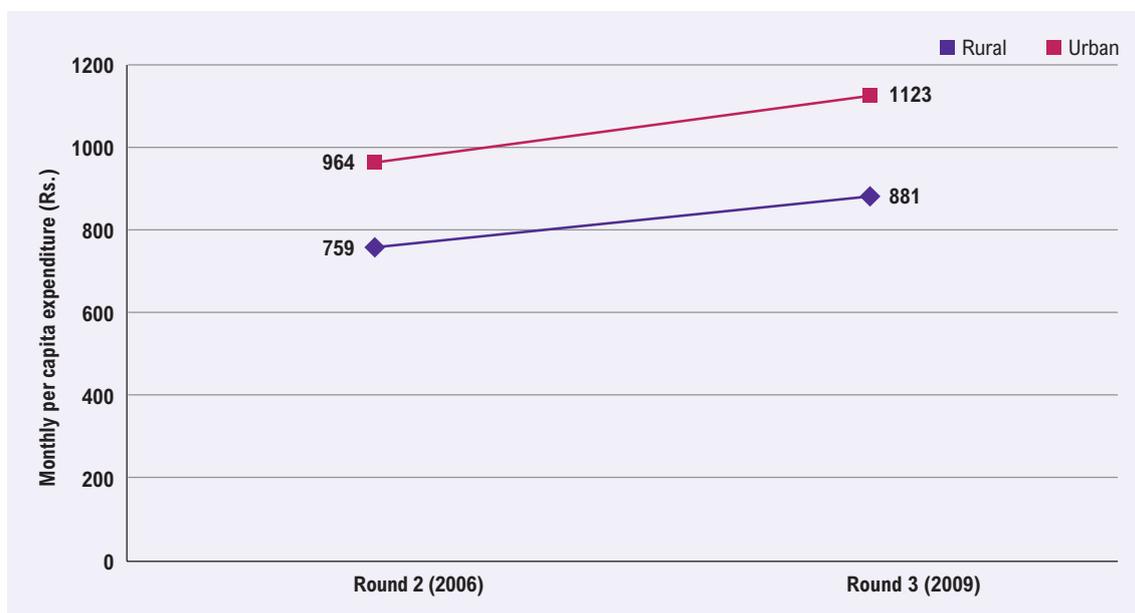
The data also demonstrates that rural areas lag behind their urban counterparts in both wealth and expenditure, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Disparities reflected in wealth index and monthly real per capita expenditure in rural and urban area

3a: Wealth Index*: Rural and Urban households



3b: Monthly real per capita consumption expenditure: Rural and Urban households (in Rs)



Note: All figures are averages. It is not only general economic growth but also life cycle change in respondents that lies behind the increases shown here for Young Lives households. If the data were only a cross-section taken at one point in time, then the results would differ. In a longitudinal study like Young Lives, there are many changes we can track in households: for example, children may move in to income-generating roles, daughters might marry and move away, or there may be a death in the family – all of which affects the resources of and expenditure by the household.

*The wealth index is constructed as a figure between 0 and 1, with a higher value reflecting higher household wealth. It is a simple mean of three components: housing quality, access to consumer durables, and access to services. For a detailed description of how the Young Lives Wealth Index is constructed, see S Galab et al. (2011) *The Impact of Growth on Childhood Poverty in Andhra Pradesh: Initial findings from India*

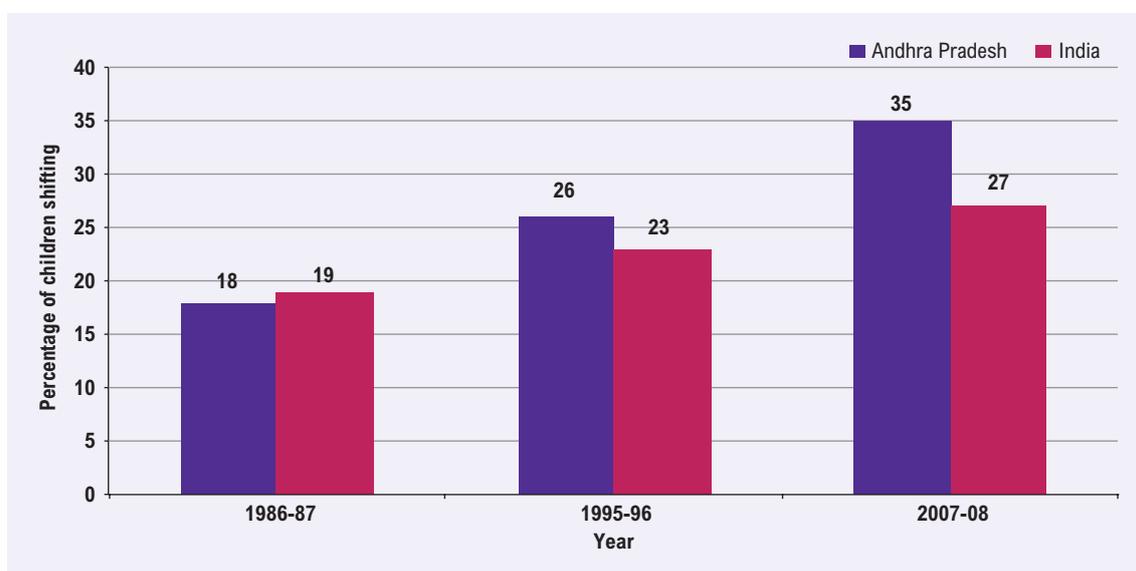
Source: Young Lives, Round 3 survey S Galab et al. (2011) *The Impact of Growth on Childhood Poverty in Andhra Pradesh: Initial findings from India*, Young Lives Round 3 Survey Report.

Most of the children live with an extended family, including brothers and sisters, grandparents and often aunts or uncles. Household structure changes all the time as siblings leave home, family members die, or parents separate. For example, we have cases of child-headed households like Triveni and her sister. They live on their own because their parents are dead. But fortunately, they have the support and guidance of their paternal grandmother who lives in a nearby village and visits them often.

Education: high enrolment and parental aspiration towards private education

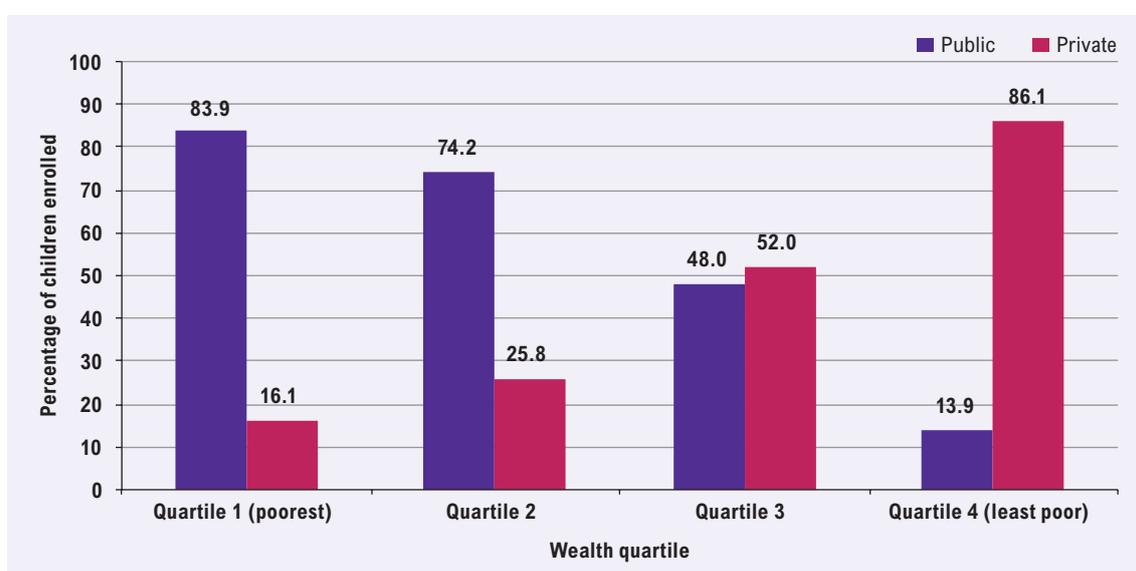
Enrolment at primary level in Andhra Pradesh has increased from 96 per cent in 2006 to 99 per cent in 2009 (Young Lives Round 3 report). Diverse school trajectories are illustrated in this book, from which we can see that even poor households are willing to make great sacrifices to give their children a better education. For example, many children like Vishnu are sent away to a residential hostel from a very young age, and even though Vishnu misses his mother, he is willing to stay away from home to study. Figure 4 shows how migration to private school has increased over the years in India, but the poorest quintile are in government (public) school as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 4: Children shifting to private schools in Andhra Pradesh and India, 1986–2008 (%)



Source: National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), Education Survey NSS rounds 1986-87 (42nd), 1995-96 (52nd) and 2007-08 (64th)

Figure 5: Public and private school enrolment for 8-year-olds in 2009, by wealth quartile (%)



Source: Young Lives survey

Table 2 shows that 62.7 per cent of parents of 8-year-old Young Lives children chose private school because they believe it provides good-quality teaching, while ease of access (52.8 per cent) was the reason for choosing a government school. Many parents believe private schools which teach in English rather than Telugu provide a better education and they are willing to sacrifice a lot to ensure their child goes to such a school. Vishnu's father is willing to spend the money on private schooling because he thinks it is the only way to secure his son's future. This idea is also common among the children, for example, Tejaswini would like to wear a uniform, tie and belt and go to the English-medium school like some of her friends. She also thinks that the teaching at the private school would be better.

Table 2: Main reason for choice of school (for 8-year-olds), as reported by parents

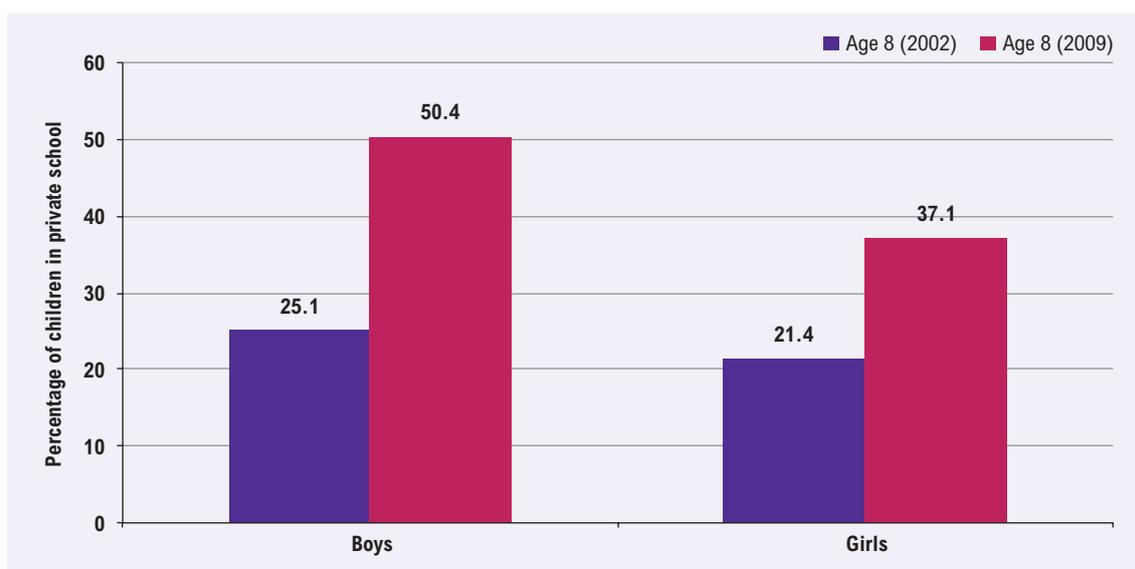
	Government (%)	Private (%)
School is near to home	52.8	22.6
No other option (only school)	6.0	1.8
No school fees	28.8	1.4
Low school fees	1.8	4.0
Good-quality teaching	5.8	62.7
Other	4.7	7.5
Total	100	100

Source: Young Lives Round 3 survey

Gender and caste remain major challenges, and through the children's stories we see how gender may impact on their lives both positively and negatively. Sixteen-year-old Kareena misses her carefree days as a young girl; now her movements are restricted and she has taken on more responsibility for her younger siblings. But 8-year-old Dilshad's family love her a lot because she is the youngest and the only daughter after seven brothers. They encourage her in her studies and keep stressing the importance of getting a job in the current times.

Family and community views on girls' education vary widely. Shanmuka Priya's parents want her to have a good education, but won't allow her to go on to higher education, preferring to invest in their son. Yet Rajesh's parents have made big sacrifices to enable their three daughters to go to college despite the other villagers describing this as 'pointless'. Children's actions too are critical, as well as access to knowledge. Sarada, a disabled girl, lodged a complaint with the labour inspector against her parents and the landowner, enabling her to return to school.

Figure 6: Private school enrolment in 2002 and 2009, by gender (%)



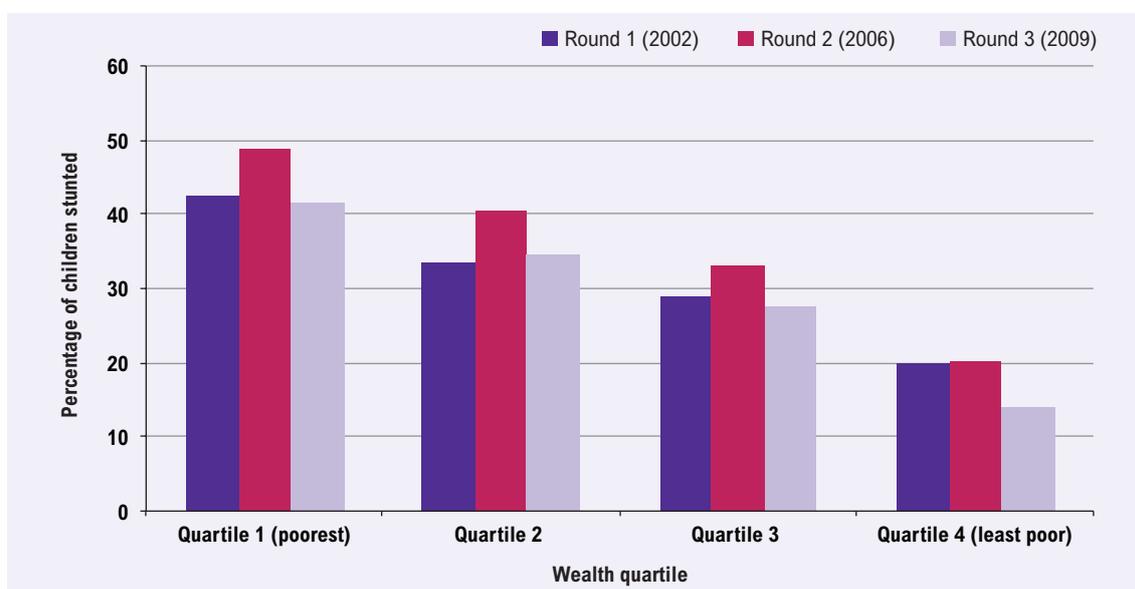
Source: Young Lives Round 3 survey

Health: Healthcare expenditure poses major shock while high levels of malnutrition persist

Healthcare expenditure can carry devastating long-term consequences. For example, Rajesh’s family had to spend around Rs.5,000-6,000 on his treatment when he was ill, and eventually had to shift from western medicine to ayurvedic treatment. Dilshad’s mother describes how her husband’s poor health led to his income being halved, so now they depend on help from her brothers to keep the family. And Salman’s family was left to struggle after his father died when Salman was only 6. Now aged 16, Salman has dropped out from school and is working as a driver. Ravi too has dropped out and is working in the groundnut fields.

Young Lives finds that about one in four (27 per cent) of the younger children were classified as thin (i.e. having a low Body Mass Index for their age) at the age of 8 in 2009, while almost one in three were stunted. There has been a very slight decline in stunting rates between 2002 and 2009, from 33 per cent to 29 per cent overall, but as Figure 7 shows, 41 per cent of the poorest children were stunted in 2009. India’s Midday Meal Scheme is the largest school meal programme in the world, covering an estimated 139 million primary school children. Deepak is just one of the children who benefits.

Figure 7: Changes in stunting rate, 2002–2009, by wealth quartile (%)



Source: Young Lives survey

Changing world: key points for policy

In the next rounds of our research we will be continuing to follow the children and their families to see what happens to them – whether they stay in school, how their families cope with the challenges life throws at them, and what kinds of roles and responsibilities the children take on as they grow into adults. We will be able to find out whether their dreams, and those of their parents, can be fulfilled.

India entered the Eleventh Five-Year Plan period (2007–12) with a vision of ‘inclusive growth’. The country can claim impressive economic growth and is now the world’s fourth largest economy in purchasing power parity terms (World Bank 2010).

But as we go into 2013, policymakers need to ensure that ‘inclusive growth’ is indeed achieved in practice. Existing social protection measures may not provide the necessary social benefits to the poorest and most vulnerable families and children, particularly in the face of shocks such as illness and food price rises. With the Right to Education (RTE) Act in place and with the cabinet clearing a total ban on employment of children under 14 years, we have strong laws and policies pushing for a better future for our children. But, there is still a long way to go because laws alone cannot change the lives of children, until and unless we ensure the needs of their families are catered for too. For example, children can only go to school when their stomachs are full and their parents are not ill. So there is a need to ensure pro-poor growth.

It is therefore important to start listening to and respecting the perspectives of the children and their families. Learning from the experiences explored in this book can help policymakers develop better and more successful policies and programmes which address the challenges faced by children in poor families, and build on their strengths and aspirations.

Some key points emerge from the children’s and families’ perspectives:

- Poverty affects many areas of children’s lives, from health to education and future opportunities. If they are doing less well in one area, this can affect their progress in another one; having poor health will affect their ability to go to school, for example. Designing policies from children’s points of view means creating a system of services which support their well-being and achievement in one area (e.g. school enrolment) while ensuring that this is not undermined by lack of progress in another (e.g. lack of health facilities).
- Our evidence shows clearly that children and young people and their families believe that education is key to improving their lives. And while enrolment levels in school are improving, attention now needs to be paid to access and the quality of education received as well as to the learning environment. A monitoring body for developing and ensuring quality standards for teaching and learning (in government and private, aided and unaided schools) needs to be evolved, and the mechanism for regulating private rural low-fee charging schools in the light of Right to Education and its impact on government schools needs to be analysed and inequities addressed.
- It remains to be seen whether education will translate into better-paid jobs and improved life chances for both girls and boys. For this to happen, the government needs to ensure that there are sufficient job opportunities when children leave school, through the development of appropriate skills and availability of vocational training, alongside pro-poor growth and development.
- Our study shows malnutrition remains worryingly high. This has implications for early childhood care and accordingly Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), India’s primary policy response to child malnutrition. ICDS has so far paid more attention to increasing coverage but the scheme requires strengthening as it has largely neglected to improve the quality of service delivery.
- As children grow older, differences increase between them, including those between boys and girls. Poverty and gender interact to disadvantage both sexes: boys may have to leave school to work to support their families, and girls may get married and have children at a young age. It is important to understand how poverty can widen inequalities and reinforce social norms for both boys and girls, and to ensure that policies do not exacerbate these inequalities.

- Government social protection schemes are showing positive results for children and their families, such as enabling them to attend school (some families use the wages earned to pay for school materials, for example) and to cope better when crises occur. But the quality and coverage of other services, such as health facilities, needs to improve alongside these schemes, so that families can participate more effectively.
- We are also finding that policies may have unintended consequences. For example, a social protection programme may take an adult away from the house to work, which will improve the family income, but may mean that children have to do more in the home. This in turn might affect their education, causing them to drop out of school. Policymakers need to be aware of possible unintended consequences when formulating policies, listening to children and their families and improving ways of monitoring and taking into account what they have to say.
- Economic growth needs to be pro-poor, for example through rural development and the expansion of services into the poorest areas.

Children's lives, and the world around them, are changing rapidly. But our research is revealing just how much poverty continues to shape the experiences of the Young Lives children. They may have high aspirations, but their chances in life are often heavily influenced by where they are born and their family circumstances. In order not to waste the talent of children such as these, policymakers need to develop policies and programmes which can unlock their potential and build on their strength. Only then will they be able to realise their dreams. As Shanmuka Priya's father puts it, "Why should our children suffer like we have? We want them to have a better life than we did. We all like to see our children happy and comfortable. I hope our dreams come true."

"Why should our children suffer like us? We want them to have a better life ... I hope our dreams come true."

Shanmuka Priya's Father



Country context

India has a population of more than 1.2 billion people. It is a country of huge inequalities, with the second-largest number of billionaires in the world but also 25 per cent of the world's poor. It ranks 134 out of 187 countries in the United Nations Human Development Index.

Over the last five years, India has seen impressive economic growth. Even during the global recession in 2009, the economy grew at a rate of 7 per cent of GDP. But inflation is a big problem, especially for poor people.

- 76 per cent of the population lives on less than two dollars per day.
- Malnutrition is more common in India than in sub-Saharan Africa.
- More children under 5 die from preventable and treatable diseases than in any other country.

Many of India's inequalities are tied to gender and caste: women and girls still face multiple discrimination and India ranks 129th out of 187 in the United Nations Gender Inequality Index. The caste system, which dates back many thousands of years, is still extremely important in everyday life, with what the Government calls Scheduled Castes (otherwise known as Dalits or formerly 'untouchables') and Scheduled Tribes (otherwise known as adivasis, India's indigenous peoples) continuing to be found at the bottom of the social ladder. This is despite the fact that discrimination on the basis of caste is now illegal, and various measures have been introduced to empower disadvantaged groups and give them better access to opportunities.

Andhra Pradesh, in south India, is the fifth-largest state and has a population of 84.6 million. It is still largely agricultural, although its capital, Hyderabad, is one of the leading centres of the technology revolution. The state was the role model for several new government initiatives during the 1990s to eliminate poverty and has made considerable progress on child development indicators since the mid-1990s.

- The poverty headcount ratio declined from 30 per cent in 2004/5 to 19 per cent in 2009/10.
- Rural poverty went down by more than half from 48 per cent in 1993/4 to 21 per cent in 2004/5.
- Urban poverty declined considerably to 15 per cent in 2009/10 from 35 per cent in 1993/4.
- Adult literacy went up from 61 per cent in 2001 to 67 per cent in 2011.
- But 76 per cent of men were literate compared with 60 per cent of women. And only 66 per cent of girls aged 6 to 17 attend school, compared with 77 per cent of boys.

Sources: www.younglives.org.uk; UNDP (2011) *Human Development Report*; S. Galab et al. (2011) *Impact of Growth on Childhood Poverty in Andhra Pradesh: Initial Findings from India*, Young Lives Round 3 Survey Report; UNICEF (2012) *State of the World's Children*; CESS (2012) Approach to the 12th Five Year Plan Andhra Pradesh.



Deepak's story

Deepak is now about 8 or 9 years old. He is much happier. His father has remarried and he has a new stepmother and baby brother and is boarding at a boys' hostel so he can go to school.



In the last interview, Deepak had tried going to the hostel but had not liked it, complaining of insects in the food. But although he was nervous at first, now he enjoys the hostel and seems very happy with the school. He is in Grade 4, where there are 54 students, all boys. He says he has five good friends.

"I like my school now."

Why? What have you found there?

"I mix with others well. The food is nice and the school is good."

Conditions in the hostel are basic, but Deepak doesn't seem to mind. The boys sleep in the classroom at night and sit on the floor in the same room to do their lessons. They say they prefer the floor to sitting on a bench. He has four teachers, and learns science and social affairs, Telugu, Maths and English. He says he likes Telugu best because the teacher "teaches us well" and because "[t]here are lots of pictures, and I know Telugu better than the other subjects". In his previous school he only learned two subjects, he says.

Deepak wakes up at 4am. He makes his bed, brushes his hair and takes a bath, usually in the stream near the school. Then he puts on his uniform. He has breakfast when the bell rings at 6am and goes to class by 7am. At 12.30, he has lunch. He says that he is studying well, better than before. In the break, he goes to the playground to play cricket and *kabbadi*.¹ He has a little money from his parents so he can buy things in the school shop.

At home in the holidays, things are very different too. His older brother, Anand, has gone to live with his aunt. His new mother, who is his father's fourth wife, looks after the other children, including their new baby. The first three wives, who were also relatives, all died, two in childbirth. Deepak's father was sterilised after this last baby so there will be no more children.

Deepak's stepmother says all the children call her *Amma* (Mother), and that things are fine: "My husband is OK, I am OK with the children and the children are OK with me."

The only problem is that Deepak's grandmother, who Deepak used to be very close to, is not happy with the new marriage. Deepak's father explains:

"My old mother-in-law is angry with her [the new wife] because I got remarried! She will not talk with me or come here often."

He feels concerned that this is affecting the children's relationship with their grandmother. "I feel bad [about this]. But we cannot change it."

Last time we interviewed Deepak, he was about 6 years old, though no-one was sure of his exact age. He belongs to one of India's indigenous tribal groups, and lives in a remote rural community with his father, two younger sisters and older half-brother. His mother died in childbirth. His father was a day labourer and often away. He and his stepbrother were trying to look after the family with the help of his grandmother. His health was not good and his grandmother was worried about him. He was going to the local school but often skipped classes.

¹ A team game, a combination of wrestling and rugby.

Deepak's father says he is earning a little more money now than he was before, around 100 rupees (about two dollars) for a day's agricultural work. He mainly works growing groundnuts before the monsoon because they do not require much water, and then after the monsoon he works in the paddy fields.

He talks a little about his own childhood. He grew up in another village and came to this village ten years ago. His father died when he was young. So he left school and worked looking after cattle in return for food. He thinks life now is better than it was then. For example, now there are medical services. Before, if there was an emergency: "We used to tie [the sick child] in a bedcover and carry them to the clinic. Now if we call 108 they will come and take you."

Even ten years ago, he says, there were no cement roads, or wells or taps. There was not even a bridge across the river, and if people wanted to go to the market, they had to cross via a makeshift and dangerous bridge made of wires and ropes. There was no government ration shop, where poor people could get food more cheaply. There were no school hostels like the one Deepak goes to. There were no government schemes (see below), which Deepak's father thinks has been beneficial for poor people like him and his family.

Because they are poor, school is free. His younger children are now also in the local school. Deepak's father says it was Deepak's decision to join the hostel and that he is happy there. "The facilities are OK, the master is there, and the hostel warden is there – they will look after him and tell us if he is sick." He feels Deepak is getting a better education than he would have in the local school. Deepak is asked what he would like to do when he grows up but just says he wants a job so he can earn money to buy clothes.

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme

India has a range of social protection schemes to help poor families. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is the biggest social security programme for the informal sector. It provides 100 days of unskilled manual work a year for each household, a legal commitment on the part of the Government to provide employment for those who seek work. As such, the scheme is one of the most important ways of alleviating poverty in India.

The programme covers all 22 districts in Andhra Pradesh. By 2009, 78 per cent of people in 15 of the 20 Young Lives study sites were involved. The Young Lives research team found that:

- poorer and lower-caste households were more likely to register, as were those affected by drought
- having more than five influential relatives increased the probability of registration by 10 per cent
- registration reduced the probability of a boy working by 13 per cent and programme take-up reduced it for girls by 8 per cent.

In general the programme seems to offer a viable security net for households and a range of employment opportunities. It also seems to have an important effect on children.

Source: Vinayak Uppal (2009) *Is the NREGS a Safety Net for Children? Studying Access to the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme for Young Lives Families and its Impact on Child Outcomes in Andhra Pradesh*, Young Lives Student Paper.

The impact of India's Midday Meal Scheme on nutrition and learning among Young Lives children

The Midday Meal Scheme is the largest school meal programme in the world, covering an estimated 139 million primary school children. It has now been extended to high school. It aims to enhance enrolment, retention and attendance and improve levels of nutrition.

This is very important, as 45 per cent of children under the age of 5 in India are stunted (which means they are shorter than they should be for their age). This is a higher percentage than in the poorest countries in sub-Saharan Africa. A high percentage of Young Lives children also experience thinness and underweight – all of which are signs of long-term malnutrition.²

Although started in 1995, the scheme was not introduced in all states in India until 2002, when it became mandatory to provide cooked meals for children in primary school. In 2004 a Supreme Court order also made it mandatory to provide midday meals during summer vacations in 'drought-affected areas'. Drought has affected large sections of India's rural population – among Young Lives children, almost 35 per cent of rural households suffered from drought between 2002 and 2006, when there was a severe lack of rainfall. In Andhra Pradesh, the scheme reaches 7.26 million children in primary schools. Of the Young Lives children enrolled in government schools, over 9 in 10 benefit.

Assessing the impact of the scheme and how it could be improved is of crucial importance, though it is not easy because children in government schools who receive the meals are typically from poorer, more disadvantaged households than children in private schools, who do not get the meal. But our research has found significant impacts on both nutrition and learning:

Impact on children's nutrition

- Children aged 4 to 5 are taller and heavier than might otherwise be expected, suggesting that the midday meal helps reduce serious malnutrition.
- The school meals have most impact on nutrition in areas affected by drought. For younger children, there are large and significant gains in height-for-age and weight-for-age, which more than compensate for the negative effects of the drought.

Impact on children's learning

- For children aged 11 to 12 there is evidence of significant positive impacts on their learning, although it is not clear if these are generated by less hunger or by improved school attendance.

Sources: S. Galab et al. (2011) *The Impact of Growth on Childhood Poverty in Andhra Pradesh: Initial Findings from India*, Young Lives Round 3 Survey Report; Caitlin Porter et al. (2010) *The Impact of the Midday Meal Scheme on Nutrition and Learning*, Young Lives Policy Brief 8.

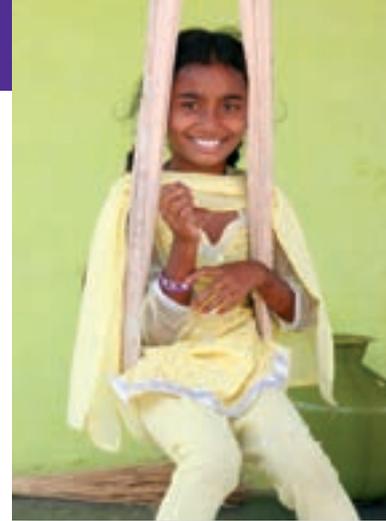
2 Thinness is low body mass index (BMI-for-age) and underweight is low weight-for-age.

“I like my school now. ... I mix with others well. The food is nice and the school is good. There are lots of pictures, and I know Telugu better than the other subjects.”



Shanmuka Priya's story

Shanmuka Priya is a lively 8 year-old. She learned to be independent at an early age. When she was about 5, her parents had to go and work in the fields for much of the day. They took her baby brother with them and left her at home, sometimes alone.



Before, Shanmuka Priya's family used to live in a big house with her grandfather, grandmother, uncle and aunt. Sometimes her grandmother looked after her when her parents were working, or a neighbour did, or she played with friends. But often she was alone. Last year her parents argued with her grandparents and moved into a rented house. Shanmuka Priya doesn't like it.

"Before, we used to stay in a big house. The house was very clean and neat. Now this house is all messy. I don't like it at all."

Who is living in the old house?

"My grandmother and grandfather. We don't have any buffalos now. My chinna tata [grandfather's younger brother] took them."

Shanmuka Priya and her little brother both attended the village *anganwadi* (pre-school). When she started primary school, her mother was worried that the quality of the education was not good. But Shanmuka Priya says she likes to learn. She prefers some teachers to others. She says she doesn't like the male teachers because they hit the children: "Once I got hurt when the teacher hit me. I wrote in letters that were too small, so he hit me."

She explains how she protected her younger brother: "If I was not at school, somebody would hit him. He would come home and say: 'This boy hit me, or that boy hit me.' So I kicked them after the teacher went out."

In 2009 her parents decided to send Shanmuka Priya to a private school that teaches in English in a town about 15 kilometres away. But she only attended for four days. Her father says they missed her too much as she was away all day, and her mother says it was too expensive. It cost 5,000 rupees (95 dollars) a year.

So she is back in the local school and now in 4th grade, where she says she has to work much harder than before.

"Since coming to this class they give us more homework. In the 3rd grade I used to finish it in a jiffy and then play."

And now?

"Now they give us more homework, I don't have time to play."

Who is helping you with your homework?

"No one helps me. No one in my house knows how to write."

Shanmuka Priya's mother cannot read or write. She was married at 12 and had her daughter when she was 15, although her brothers were educated, and one is now in college. Shanmuka Priya's father attended school until he was 10, when he had to drop out to help his family. He has been doing agricultural work ever since.

Her mother notes that there has been a change in attitudes to education for both boys and girls since she was young.

Shanmuka Priya did not feature in the first book of Young Lives children's stories, although we have been following her, like the other children, since 2002.

“Earlier, people never used to send their children to school. Now even girls go. Everybody wants to be educated. What is so good about agriculture? There is hardly any reward for working so hard. I think only education is important; children can get a job and live happily when they grow up.”

Her mother has noticed that Shanmuka Priya is working harder now.

“Her studies are better than last year. Now, when her father asks her questions about her lessons, she can answer them. Before, she used to say that she didn’t know the answer. Her father says she has all the right answers and she is getting cleverer.”

What do you think is the reason for her improvement?

Her teacher. Her teacher is teaching her well.”

Shanmuka Priya says there are currently 58 children in her current class, but only 15 are girls. The class is divided into three groups: A, B and C. She is much exercised about the fact that she is only in Group B and that there is only one girl in the top group.

“Boys are in A group. I am a good student. But the teacher said there were no girls in A group so I had to go to B group.”

What did you say?

I said: ‘Why did you put me in B group? I am a good student.’ He said: ‘There are no girls in Group A.’ I said: ‘Pavitra is in Group A.’ He said they were keeping her there for two days and then they were going to move her too.”

Shanmuka Priya says the other thing that has changed is that she no longer plays with boys.

“I am afraid of them now, I don’t know why.”

Did someone tell you not to play with them?

My mother told me not to play with boys.”

Her younger brother, Prashant, now goes to a private school. Her mother told Young Lives that most people in the village are not interested in girls staying on at school, but will make sure the boys attend because their sons will look after them when they are old, while girls leave for their husband’s family.

Shanmuka Priya’s parents say they want their son to go on to higher education:

“Shanmuka Priya is a girl; we won’t give her higher education. And in the case of Prashant we will make him study as much as we can. We want our only son to get a good education. We have up to 10th grade in the village school for Shanmuka Priya. We will see what happens after that.”

Her father says:

“Some people say that girls are just like boys and they should be educated well. And others say: ‘What are they going to do with higher education since they will be going to somebody else’s house?’ They also say: ‘Since we can’t benefit, why spend money on a girl’s education?’

But I want Shanmuka Priya to get a good education. We think that if she studies well, her life will be good. We know what it is like to work hard. Why should our children suffer like us? We want them to have a better life. We all like to see our children happy and comfortable. I hope our dreams come true.”

The rise in private education and its potential effect on gender equality

Andhra Pradesh has seen a huge rise in the private education system in the past few years. This appears to be driven by strong parental demand for services, which are often thought to be of better quality and likely to lead to better job prospects. This is especially because private schools typically teach in English, while government schools tend to teach in Telugu or the local language (with some schools teaching also in Urdu, which some parents like as the children are able to learn to read the Koran).

This overall increase in children attending private school can also be seen among the Young Lives children. Private schooling of 8-year-olds increased from 24 per cent to 44 per cent between 2002 and 2009. In urban areas, the private sector is now a major provider of primary education, but even in rural areas, its growth has been considerable.

Research is already showing that children in private schools do considerably better than those in government schools, a divergence that is also visible in Young Lives test score data from both older and younger children. While this could represent the fact that children in private schools are from wealthier households, it is possible that part of the effect is institutional.

Young Lives research is also showing a growing gender divide, with more boys being sent to private school while more girls stay in the government system. This is true in Shanmuka Priya's family. Among the older children, 50 per cent of boys and 37 per cent of girls have been moved to private school.

There is also a huge difference between urban and rural areas, with 80 per cent of older children from urban areas attending private schools but only 31 per cent of those from rural areas. And those from tribal groups or lower castes are also more likely to stay in government schools, despite the fact that 25 per cent of places in private schools are reserved for local children from poor and marginalised backgrounds, and subsidised by the Government.

This raises important questions for policy and research. Most challenging for policymakers is the risk that a growing and unregulated private sector may encourage greater inequalities between households able to afford private education and those not able to, or the fact that households may need to make choices between siblings, especially between boys and girls. These differentials are central areas of research for Young Lives.

Sources: S. Galab et al. (2011) *The Impact of Growth on Childhood Poverty in Andhra Pradesh: Initial Findings from India*, Young Lives Round 3 Survey Report; Pratham (2010) *Annual Status of Education Report 2010*; Martin Woodhead et al. (2012) 'Does Growth in Private Schooling Contribute to Education for All? Evidence from a Longitudinal, Two Cohort Study in Andhra Pradesh, India', *International Journal of Education and Development*.

“No one helps me [with my homework]. No one in my house knows how to write.”



Kareena's Story



Kareena is a 16-year-old girl from a traditional Muslim joint family and is currently in Grade 10 at school. She is the eldest in her family and has two younger sisters and one younger brother. Now she is a teenager, her life is much more restricted than when she was younger.

Kareena's father is a rickshaw driver and her mother is a housewife. It is a conservative Muslim area, and the family, especially Kareena's grandmother, took a lot of convincing to agree to be interviewed. They are a traditional Muslim joint family, and Kareena's maternal grandmother and maternal uncles also live with them. Her maternal aunt lived with them too until she married.

Once Kareena turned 13, her parents stopped her going out and her life was restricted to home, tuition and school. In such traditional families, the onset of puberty means big changes for girls.

"How did you feel when you started your periods?"

I got very scared. I cried. When I told my maternal aunt, she said it was a natural phase in every girl's life and that even my mother went through the same phase.

When I was small, I could go anywhere but now there are restrictions on everything. My mother tells me I can't go out anywhere, I must look after my younger siblings and stay at home.

Please describe the area where you live.

In this locality, the boys tease the girls a lot."

Kareena is unhappy with her lack of freedom, even though she knows her friends are in similar situations:

"I loved the way my life was when I was 5 years old. Then I had no restrictions and I could play with my friends. I could do what I wanted. Now there are only restrictions. I have to share everything with my sisters. What I dislike most is that if I have to go out anywhere, someone has to accompany me."

Kareena's mother's said that in her Islamic tradition, such restrictions are normal for every girl once she reaches puberty.

"Do none of Kareena's classmates live close to her house?"

They do. Two of them live next door but the girls' friendship is limited to school. After getting back home everyone has to stay in their own house. This is not just the case for our child, it's the life of every girl here. All fun should be confined to school. After leaving school, the only thing they should have in their minds is coming straight back home."

Kareena's daily routine

Kareena gets up at 7am. After breakfast, she goes to school around 8.30am and gets back home by 3pm. She then has a snack and watches TV before going for extra tuition at 4.30pm. Usually her father collects her but if he can't do it, Kareena's grandmother goes so she does not come home alone. Kareena gets back home at 8.30pm, has her dinner and watches TV. Then she goes to bed.

Kareena did not feature in the international books about the Young Lives children, although we have been following her, like the other children, since 2002.

The children all go to a private English-medium school. Kareena studies hard and has never missed a single day. Her mother says, “She is very serious about her studies and does not allow herself to be distracted. Once she gets down to her studies, then that’s it.”

Kareena’s mother likes helping Kareena with her schoolwork and is very encouraging: “We did not get the opportunity to study. But Kareena got to study. There is a lot of importance given to education these days. One cannot achieve anything without it. If children study now they can build a very good future for themselves.”

Currently Kareena is in Grade 10 at school. She finds science, physics and maths difficult, but gets very high marks in Hindi and social studies. Although she studies hard and is confident of passing the 10th grade examination, the teachers’ threat that if the children don’t study hard they will fail has made her a little afraid. So she and her friends constantly remind themselves that they should study hard as well as enjoy themselves.

Her classmates rely on Kareena to understand the difficult parts of the lessons and to complete the unfinished notes from class. They then ask to borrow her notes, a habit that Kareena’s mother dislikes:

“Parents should take care of their children’s studies. Even though I wasn’t sent to school myself, I keep an eye on everything. This is every parent’s responsibility. That is why when her friends come for her notes I tell them off quite sternly.”

Her mother does not give Kareena any housework to do, but Kareena still cooks for her sisters herself and looks after them with lot of love and care. She also helps them with their schoolwork.

“You study and you also help your brother and sisters with their studies. How do you feel about that?”

I feel very happy. I get recognised as being the eldest in the family. Along with that I also have a certain number of responsibilities.”

Kareena’s mother says: “She looks after her siblings well. She behaves very responsibly. She never thinks of herself alone and always thinks after her siblings. She saves the money which her father and grandmother give her and buys things for her younger siblings even without my knowledge. Sometimes she even purchases medicines for them.”

Ill-health is an issue for the family. In the past two years, members of Kareena’s family have fallen sick several times. Her mother was even taken to hospital with a chest problem. In such times of need it is Kareena’s grandmother who supports the family. And when it comes to any need relating to the children’s schooling, it is friends who come to the family’s rescue.

Kareena’s younger sister can’t see anything without glasses and recently those glasses broke. Because the family can’t afford to buy her another pair, she is having to manage with the damaged ones. The doctor also advised her to eat more nutritious food. But her mother said they have difficulty even managing a decent meal. Every day the children’s lunch consists of a very light curry made out of pulses which the children take to school packed in tiffin boxes. Although the children find it embarrassing to eat the same food every day, they are all aware of the family’s financial difficulties. So they hide their tiffin boxes behind books so other children can’t see what’s in them.

Kareena’s father doesn’t have good eyesight either, his earnings are quite low, and the family has no other source of regular income. Earlier, Kareena’s mother wasn’t sure whether they would be able to keep Kareena in school: “We are wondering whether we should make Kareena study till Grade 10 or take her away from school as the school fees are very high, and our financial position seems to be getting worse with every year.”

Yet in the same interview Kareena’s mother said she would like her daughter to train to be a lab technician once she had finished Grade 10. Kareena has different ideas, but is not unaware of the family’s situation. She is already anticipating the possible problems she might have to face and seeking ways to overcome them.

“What do you want to be in the future?”

I want to study hard and become a doctor. But my mother does not have the money.

What will you do if your mother stops you continuing your studies after 10th grade?

I will explain my situation to my grandmother and get her to convince my mother to let me continue my studies.”

Asked why children should study, Kareena says “so that they can study well and secure a good job and support their parents when they are sick.”

Given the family’s financial situation, whether Kareena will be able to continue her education beyond Grade 10 is a big question. Kareena’s mother uses all the money she gets from her sisters, brother and nephews to pay the children’s school fees. But there is no telling if the support will continue or if it will be enough.

Kareena does have other practical skills. She used to do a lot of embroidery work but her mother stopped her because she was afraid it would affect her eyes.

“Kareena is not just good at school; she is also adept at doing various types of embroidery and other stitches on sarees,” says her mother. “If she sees something – a design or pattern – and she likes it, she will learn how to do it herself.”

Despite the pressures on the family, Kareena is adamant about the importance of school:

“When you see children working while you are going to school, how does this make you feel?”

Children should not be working; they should be studying in school.”

But even though Kareena may have strong views about the importance of education for all children, the financial constraints faced by her family may limit the opportunities for her. Only time will show whether Kareena will be able to pursue her dream of becoming a doctor or if she will be forced to leave school to work or to marry once she has finished Grade 10.

*“I loved the way my life was when I was 5 years old. Then
... I could play with my friends ... Now there are only
restrictions.”*

Gender roles

Our interviews with the Young Lives children show how gender roles are perceived by children and their caregivers. We find a clear distinction along gender lines: while boys have very specific obligations towards family that emphasise their economic contribution, girls have more general moral responsibilities.

The social standing of households is greatly dependent on the modesty of its young, unmarried, female members, whose friendship or association with unrelated males can pose a significant threat to a family's reputation. Girls befriending boys, riding bicycles or being seen out on the streets are the main indicators of 'ill-being' listed by the young women we talked to. Like Kareena, a girl's movement outside the home may be heavily restricted, particularly after puberty, especially if she comes from the Muslim community. Limitations like these make girls dependent on others and provide little opportunity for them to become practised in making decisions for themselves.

From an inter-generational viewpoint, a grandmother may be keener on her granddaughter learning domestic skills than attending school. The brother supports his grandmother as he feels other boys will tease his sister if she is seen out on the streets. But the father wants his daughter to be educated because there is a demand for qualified brides, so he wants his son to accompany his sister when she goes out and protect her.

When a girl does go out, many different practices are used to protect a girl's reputation, such as walking to schools in groups or, if Muslim, wearing the *burka* [an all-enveloping cloak] to hide the face, even before puberty. However, despite restrictions on girls' movement outside the home, established norms are being challenged by the increase in the education of girls, which necessitates their use of public spaces.

We also see from our research how boys invest in their sisters' well-being. They described a number of ways in which they helped their sisters, for example, by paying school fees and contributing to their wedding costs. In contrast, girls do not articulate the same sense of obligation towards their families, possibly because brides traditionally move to live with their in-laws and transfer their sense of obligation to their mothers-in-law at marriage.

When we asked how the children in the Young Lives families spend their time, we find that from the age of 10 onwards, girls spend twice as much time as boys on household chores. There is evidence here of clear gender roles, where the pressure on girls to acquire the skills they will need for married life may undermine their schooling and employment prospects.

Source: Jo Boyden and Gina Crivello, 'Political Economy, Perception and Social Change as Mediators of Childhood Risk in Andhra Pradesh' in Jo Boyden and Michael Bourdillon (eds), *Childhood Poverty: Multidisciplinary Approaches*.



Vishnu's Story

Vishnu is aged 8 and comes from a Backward Caste family. He is the eldest child and is in Grade 4 at a private residential school. Currently he wants to become a doctor when he grows up. Previously he wanted to be a teacher or policeman.



Vishnu's family is middle-class. His father is a graduate but his mother did not go to school. They have four acres of wet cultivable land and three acres of dry uncultivable land. His younger sister lives at home and studies in a private English-medium school nearby. Vishnu started his education in an *anganwadi* near to his home.

According to Vishnu's mother, the *anganwadi* schooling is poor.

"Apart from the food, what is there in the anganwadi? They give some medicine but there is no education at all.

"My brother-in-law, who is a teacher, says that there is no teaching in that school and it would be better to send him to another school where the teaching is good. If he stays here he will grow up to be of no use. Even if we have to spend money, it is the only way to secure his future."

So Vishnu's father then sent him to the village's government primary school for Grade 1. Vishnu did not like this school because he had to sit on the floor and he thought there were too many children in his class. His parents also felt that there were not enough teachers, and that the ones who were there were no good. So they moved Vishnu to an expensive private English-medium residential school 30 kilometres away. This meant that he went from being in Grade 1 in the government school to being in the lower kindergarten in the private school. Another reason for the move was that many other children from the same village were admitted to the same private school and hostel.

Vishnu liked his new school because his friends were all studying there, the teaching was very good and he got used to being there without his parents. But it was not all easy. He said:

"When we don't study, they physically punish us and we feel like crying. It is painful and we get tears in our eyes. The teachers should not physically punish the children."

Also, originally the hostel food was quite good, but according to Vishnu, "They started giving us less rice during lunch. They say that if they give more rice we fall asleep in the class. But it's not enough and we feel hungry."

Vishnu would have tried to get used to this too, but suddenly the school raised the fees from Rs.8500 to Rs.12500 per year. This meant that Vishnu's father and some of the other parents sent their children to another, more affordable, private residential school in a town near to their village. This meant Vishnu had to change grades again, from Upper Kindergarten to Grade 1, and his studies became very difficult.

"I was very sad when I had to change school but my father insisted that I had to change because of the high fees. I also thought it would be better to change because the food was not sufficient and the laundryman was not washing the clothes properly. Plus all my friends apart from three were joining the new school. And the school is quite close to the village and so, with the thought of my parents and sister being able to visit me often, I didn't feel very sad."

Vishnu did not feature in the international books about the Young Lives children, although we have been following him, like the other children, since 2002.

Now, Vishnu is in Grade 4. He was put up directly from Grade 2 to Grade 4. Initially it was hard for him to cope because he had studied only a few months in each grade but he still got promoted because his father pushed for it and also because he is good at his schoolwork. Vishnu is proud of being promoted because his teachers praise him a lot and this motivates him to study well.

He came fifth in his examination and he is hoping to get first place. He asks his close friend Swami for help with mathematics because Swami gets the highest marks in this subject. For other subjects, he asks the teachers for help during the hostel's homework hour.

“We must ... keep quiet so that nobody knows that we have studied. They must wonder, ‘When did Vishnu study? He got very high marks!’ My friends tell me, ‘Vishnu, you have to come to the class and beat the others’, and it makes me feel very nice during those times. Now I am fifth in the class.”

Vishnu says two new teachers from Kerala in his hostel encourage him to study hard. According to Vishnu, since these teachers arrived, the children have to speak only in English otherwise they are scolded. From Grade 6 it is compulsory to speak in English.

In the hostel Vishnu gets up early, around 5.30am, to study. He is able to take care of himself, brushing his teeth and bathing independently. Vishnu says, “We go to school after breakfast and come to the hostel in the afternoon for lunch. Then we go back to school. In the evening we have homework hours. Then we play outside for some time. There are swings, slides and balls for play. In this school they give us lots of things to play with. In my previous school they did not allow us to play.” All the children have to be in bed by 9.30pm at the latest. They all sleep on a rug on the floor.

On Sundays they are allowed to watch TV. When he comes home for holidays Vishnu is glued to the TV night and day as long as there is electricity. He likes Chiranjeevi and Balakrishna [Telugu lead actors] and wants to become like them.

When Vishnu was in Grade 3, all the children were taken on an excursion to the Ramoji Film City in Hyderabad. In Grade 4, some of the pupils were taken on a study tour to visit the Jurala dam located close by. Vishnu said that seeing what he has only read about previously helps him understand his lessons better. What was even better, in his opinion, was that they went in the school bus.

But even in this hostel, there is a downside. There is an *ayah* [maid] who punishes the children, saying that they have not dried their towels properly. All the students are angry and have complained to the Headmaster asking for the maid to be removed. Further, Vishnu says, “Whenever the *ayah* scolds or punishes us I feel very sad and think how much better it would be if my parents were close to me. My sister is happy with my parents whereas I don't have that privilege. That is why I don't feel like coming back to school after spending time in the village for holidays.

I like my mother a lot because she cares for me. My father also takes good care of me and gets me whatever I want. But when he gets angry, he punishes me. That is the reason why I changed the school as soon as he told me to.”

Recently, the school and hostel fees have increased from Rs.12,000 to Rs.15,000 and the hostel has also moved to a new building with better facilities. His parents are determined to keep him in the hostel for his schooling; his father says: “though the financial situation in the family is not very good (we are happy that) the child is studying well. This makes us feel like spending any amount of money”. His mother adds:

“Vishnu has become very smart. He is not mischievous or stubborn like before. He used to roam around the village, but now he doesn't go outside much. Plus he tells me ‘Mother, don't worry about me, I will not cause you any trouble’ and such behaviour makes us very happy.”

Not only is Vishnu making good progress at school, physically he is also developing to be a strong boy and has won many sports prizes. Playing carom, cricket and reading books are a few of his favourite activities.

Being their only son, his parents are determined to give Vishnu the best of education irrespective of the cost. At the same time, they won't allow his sister to go to the hostel. The reason for this is that parents feel a boy will be able to look after them when they are old whereas a girl goes to another house after marriage. Moreover, Vishnu's parents said that in their village no one has a girl educated beyond Grade 10. That is why they have sent their daughter to the local school.

Vishnu's parents have no idea what Vishnu will be when he grows up. Back in Grade 1 Vishnu had said: "I will study hard and become a police officer or a cinema filmstar and build a big house. I will commute to my work by motorcycle. I will also go to (my own) well and get agricultural work done."

But currently his wish is to become a doctor and achieve a "status which is better than anyone else".

Parental aspirations and school transitions

We see from our research that children often have to move schools. There are four main pathways, but like Vishnu, the child may experience many more transitions as parents seek out the best education possible for their child with the resources available. This may entail changing schools in an effort to 'upgrade' in perceived quality (e.g. from a government to private school), or moving into distant hostels or with relatives in order to attend better schools or to access grades unavailable locally. Vishnu has already attended four schools, both government and private, and he is only 8 years old.

The first pathway most children experience is the transition from government pre-school to government primary school, which is what Vishnu first followed. In this, children commonly attend the government pre-school, anganwadi, for one or two years before moving to the local government primary school. It is mostly the poorest households who can't meet the costs of private education who follow this trajectory. Convenience also plays a role; because the children are still young, parents say they prefer their children to attend a local school which is considered 'good enough', rather than having them travel long distances to attend a private school.

Parents who can pay fees or who are able to take out loans may choose the second path, a transition straight from home to private primary school. These parents have high expectations and often talk of providing children with lives that are different from their own, meaning, for example, not being in the same occupation as their parents or not having to work as hard. Starting education early and ensuring that this education is of good quality and in English are key reasons why they choose private primary schools.

The third pathway is moving from a government pre-school taught in Telugu to a private primary school (either a residential hostel or day school) taught in English. This is one of the most challenging transitions, as Vishnu found when he switched to his first private residential primary school. Just like Vishnu, many children have to repeat a year in the new school's pre-school to prepare them for the new Grade 1, because this class will be conducted in a new language, with a new syllabus and a new timetable in a new place. The move to the private school may also require the children to leave their families and live in a hostel even from the age of only 6 or 7 years.

The fourth pathway is from government pre-school to government residential hostel. The government provides hostels and pays all schooling costs for specific disadvantaged groups of children, such as from the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Castes. Admission to these sex-specific hostels is limited to children from particular castes and long waiting lists are common.

Parental aspirations and school transitions *continued*

Parental aspirations for individual children combined with beliefs about the relative quality of government and private schools seem to shape children's individual pathways in ways that seem likely to reproduce or even reinforce inequities related to wealth, location, caste and gender. Vishnu's father, himself a graduate, and with a teacher for a brother, clearly demonstrates a consumer mentality in his search for the best private residential schooling for his son at an affordable price while choosing to keep his daughter at a local day school.

Source: Vennam, Uma, Anuradha Komanduri, Elizabeth Cooper, Gina Crivello and Martin Woodhead (2009) 'Early Childhood Education Trajectories and Transitions: A Study of the Experiences and Perspectives of Parents and Children in Andhra Pradesh, India', Working Paper 52.

“I was very sad when I had to change school but my father insisted that I had to change because of the high fees.”



Salman's story

Salman is now 15 years old. He still lives in the city and is now working as a driver. Today, although the family still struggles to make ends meet, he says he is doing much better and he has high hopes for the future, including wanting to work abroad.



Salman is currently working as a driver for a building company. His grandmother works in the company's office and got him the job. He drives his boss to and from work every day. He has been doing this for three months. He enjoys his work and says: "By the grace of Allah everyone is fine. I started working and my younger brother and sister are studying."

Because he is under 18, he is not legally allowed to drive so he had to pay a bribe to get a licence. He borrowed the money from the man who owns the hotel where his father used to work. He has now paid this back. He says he learns fast and learned to drive in two months, although he was nervous. "I was scared of hitting somebody. But later when I saw brake pedals at the teacher's feet, I felt all right."

In his new job, he earns 3,000 rupees a month (about 56 dollars). He gives 2,500 to his mother and keeps 500 for himself. They were able to buy a DVD player and he says he enjoys watching films. He also bought an expensive mobile phone but had to sell it because they were short of money. He then bought a cheap one but that was stolen – or possibly it fell out of his pocket, he admits.

He uses his own money to bet on cricket games that he plays with local college boys on Sundays. He has won up to 1,500 rupees (28 dollars) this way. He gets up at 8am and plays cricket until 3 or 4 in the afternoon. "After the game I come home, take a shower and sleep. Sometimes I play volleyball at night."

Salman says his best friend is his childhood friend, Ahmed. "He failed his exams so he did not go to college. Right now he just sits at home. We talk every night."

He says his mother works as a domestic servant for rich people. Her boss is a doctor. She earns between 1,500 and 2,000 rupees a month. His brother lost his job and is not working at the moment, though sometimes he does the driving instead of Salman.

The family had to leave their previous house because the landlord put the rent up. The rent in the new place is 3,000 rupees a month. They only have two rooms but to make ends meet they rent one of the rooms to a married couple for 2,000 rupees.

Salman's four uncles are living abroad. One is in Saudi Arabia, one is in Qatar, one is in Kuwait and one, he says, is in Africa. Salman says he likes it when they come to visit because they bring chocolates, crisps and clothes.

His sister, who lives nearby with their grandmother, is engaged to someone who is working in Saudi Arabia and plans are going ahead for her wedding, which their uncle says he will finance.

Salman's mother is really pleased with him now. She used to worry about him but she feels that in the past months he has grown up a lot.

Last time we visited, Salman was 12 years old. He came from a Muslim family and had four siblings. His father died when he was 6. The family lived in a city. Salman had left school and was working in a shoe shop. His mother had found him the work to get him out of what she called "bad company".

"He is becoming aware. He understands everything now. He is more intelligent and caring. The children have seen me working hard since their childhood. They understand that their mother goes out and works hard to pay the rent and to feed them. Naturally they have sympathy for me."

She says he is a caring son.

"He worries a lot about me. If I lie down, he asks if I am OK and offers to make me tea and get something to eat."

When you see all this, how do you feel about Salman?

"I am happy that Allah has given him intelligence. And he takes care of his mother. What else can a mother want, when she gets happiness through her children? To a mother, her children are more precious than the wealth of the whole world."

Salman says that looking after his family is his main preoccupation at the moment, but he would like to go and work as a driver abroad where he can earn a lot more money. He has applied for a passport and says that his uncle will find him work. He says he knows that he will have to learn to drive on the left side of the road rather than the right and to get a new driving licence and take a test:

"They will see if I can drive or not. They drive very fast in that country. There are no small streets. To turn right, you have to indicate. You can't turn suddenly like we do here. If you do that, there will be accidents."

But once this is sorted he has many plans. He thinks his brother will also work abroad: "Me and my brother will save money and build a house. I will educate my younger brother. I want to send my mother on the *Haj* [Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca]."

Salman says he will get married when he is around 25, and that he already has someone in mind. He has a girlfriend (although he hasn't told his mother yet). She wants to continue studying. Her parents both work in an office.

"Once she called me by my name and asked me to come up. So I went up to her house. She said, 'I love you.' I said, 'I love you too.'"

When your mother comes to know about this, what will she say?

Salman laughs: *"She will beat me!"*

He says he only wants two or three children. He wants to send them to school and college and for them to become engineers or something similar. He knows he will have to leave his wife and children in India when he goes abroad to work.

In general, Salman seems happy with his life and feels that it has improved a lot since last time.

"I was crazy then. But now I am bit cleverer. I learn well. I have become aware of many things. I was childish. I did not know many things. I used to do stupid things. Now I don't do those things any more."

Children and work

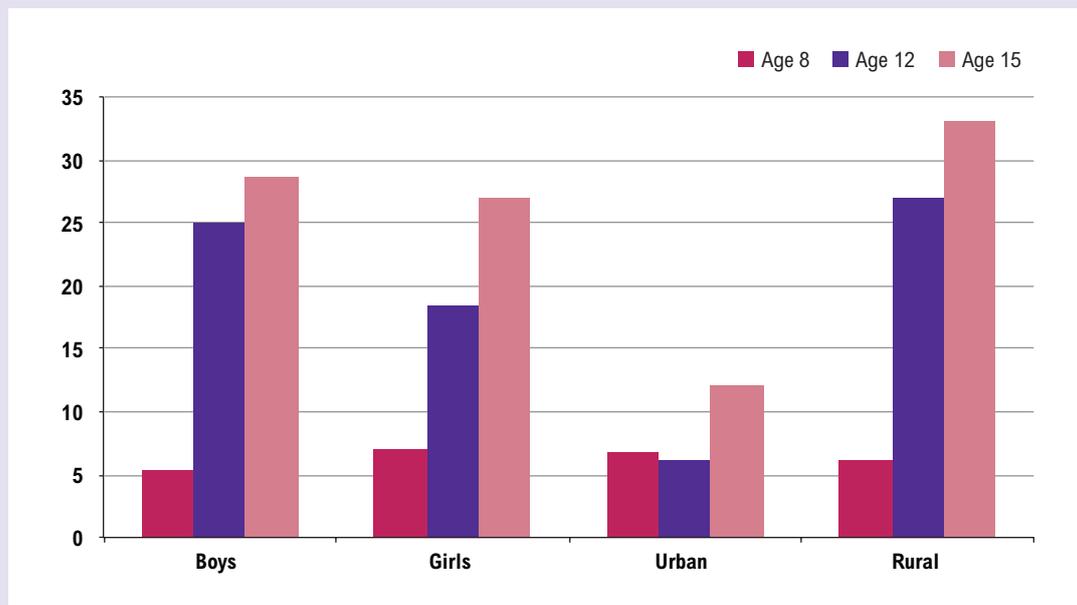
Most children in India do some kind of work, paid or unpaid, including caring for siblings or doing chores around the house. We found that work among Young Lives children often increased in response to drops in household income, and was very sensitive to children's gender and their age, and that in urban areas it varied according to women's position in the family.

The younger children, who are 8 years old, are almost all in school for most of the day. But even at this young age, girls and boys both help out around the home – about 20 per cent of girls say they look after other family members and more than a third say they help with domestic chores. Fewer boys help care for other family members, but a fifth of them help with chores. Very few of the children are helping on the land or in the family business at this age, and only a handful work for pay outside the household.

Among the older children, the percentage working for pay has risen from 6 per cent in 2002 when they were aged 8, to 22 per cent in 2006 when they were 12, to 28 per cent by 2009 when they were 15.

As the chart on the next page shows, slightly more boys than girls were working for pay. More children were working in rural areas (33 per cent) than in urban ones (12 per cent). Children from poor households were more likely to work than those from households that are not so poor. We also found that children from the disadvantaged Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were more likely to be working than children from the other castes.

Children working for pay by age, gender and location (%)



“What else can a mother want, when she gets happiness through her children? To a mother, her children are more precious than the wealth of the whole world.”

Salman's mother

Children and work *continued*

As we see in a number of the children's and young people's stories, children from households with land often work on the family farm during the peak agricultural season, which affects time spent in school. Not only does this show the seasonal pressures on children, but it means that they may be formally enrolled in school and still miss class.

Work can be a way for children to learn new skills that equip them for adult life and build their feelings of self-reliance and self-esteem. However, work for pay under the age of 14, and work in hazardous situations, is illegal under international treaties governed by the International Labour Organization. We will be continuing to study child work and its effects as part of our research.

Sources: S. Galab et al. (2011) *The Impact of Growth on Childhood Poverty in Andhra Pradesh: Initial Findings from India*, Young Lives Round 3 Survey Report; Kirrily Pells (2011) *Poverty and Gender Inequalities: Evidence from Young Lives*, Young Lives Policy Paper 3; Sofya Krutikova (2009) *Determinants of Child Labour: The Case of Andhra Pradesh*, Young Lives Working Paper 48.

“By the grace of Allah everyone is fine. I started working and my younger brother and sister are studying.”



Sahithi's story

Sahithi is an 8-year-old upper-caste Hindu girl from an extended family consisting of her grandparents, her father's elder brother, his wife and three girls, Sahithi's parents and herself. Currently she is in Grade 4 at a residential school. She is now the class monitor, and wants to be a teacher.



Sahithi is an only child. Her parents had mixed feelings about the birth of 'just a girl', but are now very proud of her:

How did you feel when Sahithi was born? Especially what were your husband's feelings?

"Both of us felt a little disappointed but didn't think much of it since she was our first child and we still have a second chance. But now we feel delighted watching her growing up day by day."

Sahithi's mother is the younger daughter-in-law. She and her husband attended school up to Grade 7, but they want their daughter to study hard and establish herself in life. They are willing to make big sacrifices to achieve this.

For example, there is a government primary school in their village, where most families send their children. But Sahithi's family felt that sending Sahithi to the village *anganwadi* did not do her any good, and if she went to the government primary school, she would not receive a good education. So instead they sent the four children to a private school in the neighbouring village and arranged for their grandmother to stay in a rented house close by to look after them.

It took Sahithi a little while to get used to going to school, but eventually she did. However, she still wasn't making progress even after a year in this school, so her parents moved her to a private residential school. Here she repeated the upper kindergarten year.

As one of Sahithi's other cousins attends the same school, the two of them now stay together in the school hostel. Sahithi initially found it difficult to adjust to her new life away from her family. But gradually she got used to it, thanks partly to her cousin's support.

Sahithi's parents work very hard in their fields and so are unable to be with Sahithi and help her with her studies. Because they live in a joint family, arguments are not uncommon. Her mother wanted her daughter to be away from this atmosphere; this was one of the reasons Sahithi was sent away to a residential school. Sahithi's mother regrets not having had the opportunity to study:

"When I was small, I did not go to school when my parents tried to send me. Now I understand why they were insistent. I also understand what problems arise when one does not get proper education. If I were educated, I would be in some city doing some job without having to struggle in the village like this. That is why even if I have to take out a loan, I am getting my child educated so that she does not have to struggle the way I do now."

However, Sahithi's mother feels that the teachers in Sahithi's current school lack the skills to teach properly as they have only been educated up to Grade 10 or intermediate level. So she wants to get Sahithi admitted into a good school in future.

In the meantime Sahithi enjoys life at the residential school. The school follows a holistic curriculum and has yoga classes, computer classes and other subjects. The children need to be disciplined and get up early in the morning and go to bed on time.

Sahithi did not feature in the international books about the Young Lives children, although we have been following her, like the other children, since 2002.

Sahithi's marks improved once she switched to the residential school. But she was one year behind her peers because she had repeated a grade. So Sahithi's parents asked the school to put her up into Grade 2 directly from upper kindergarten.

Now she has reached Grade 4, the number of subjects has increased. Sahithi is more interested in learning English than Telugu. Also, she found computing hard in Grade 3, but in Grade 4 she finds it easier.

Whether due to the sudden increase in her workload or the near doubling of her timetable, it is difficult to pinpoint, but Sahithi has dark circles under her eyes and her cheeks have lost their chubbiness. Her mother puts the changes down to the increased workload:

“Her homework has increased considerably. Even when she comes home for the vacations all she talks about is her homework. Even when we ask her to come with us to the next village, she says: ‘I’ll come only if we are coming back tomorrow because I have a lot of homework. So whether you come or not I am definitely returning tomorrow.’”

Sahithi's mother only visits Sahithi once a month because that is all the school allows. Every time she goes, she asks the headteacher about Sahithi's studies and well-being. Sahithi's father is also concerned about his daughter's education but focuses on finding the money for it, her mother explains:

“Her father does not ask much about her. Sahithi is also like that with her father. She is silent most of the time. Her father is only worried whether the hostel is providing good food. He also sometimes asks if she is studying hard and teases her that he will bring her back to a Telugu-medium school if she does not study hard.”

So it is Sahithi's mother who shoulders the main responsibility for Sahithi's studies. She is constantly striving to see that her daughter does well and is willing to incur any expense for her sake. She spends all her savings as well as the interest she gets from the land that her father gave her to buy Sahithi new clothes and other items:

“She is my only daughter. Even if I don't have, even if I have to struggle to work... my children should not struggle. I spend everything I have to buy her clothes and other things but my in-laws criticise me for not saving money and say that I am a spendthrift. My sister-in-law doesn't spend any money either for herself or for her children. My people call her a prudent woman.”

In an extended family that lives together there tends to be a lot of comparison between daughters-in-law. Sahithi's aunt does not spend a lot of money, which is why her mother-in-law often criticises Sahithi's mother.

But whatever people may say, Sahithi's mother is only interested in her daughter's welfare. However, she doesn't spoil her:

“Whenever she asks for anything, I get it for her only if I feel she needs it. Otherwise I tell her that it is not necessary. Alternatively I tell her that currently she is not having any money. If I explain to her properly, she listens and is convinced.”

Sahithi has now been selected as the Class Leader, and helps her classmates with their lessons. Her parents are very proud when they see a 'Good' on her report card. Sahithi has also won many prizes in school games. She has happy memories of the wonderful way in which they celebrated the Vinayaka Chavithi and Ganesh Chaturdhi¹ festivals, and also says that she enjoyed her birthday very much.

Sahithi's mother loves celebrating Sahithi's birthday, but such celebration is not the family's usual practice. So on Sahithi's birthday, she takes Sahithi directly from the school hostel to either her elder sister's or her mother's house. There she gives her a new outfit to wear and invites friends over to celebrate. After the celebrations she takes Sahithi straight back to the hostel. She does not allow anyone from her household except her husband to know about this. Yet, despite doing so much for Sahithi, she still feels she hasn't done enough:

1 Ganesh Chaturdhi is a Hindu festival celebrated on the occasion of the birthday of Lord Ganesha.

“While everyone else had a good celebration for their child’s naming ceremony, there was no such celebration for my daughter. I still feel unhappy about that. However I want to have a grand celebration when Sahithi reaches puberty.”

Though Sahithi’s mother generally keeps quiet for the sake of Sahithi, she has independent views and is pragmatic about the minor disagreements that are bound to arise in a joint family:

“My in-laws do not like my going out of the house but I don’t care about their opinions. I behave as if these things are common occurrences. Whenever they get angry, they bring [up] the topic of division of the property.”

In the past two years the grandfather’s sickness cost the family almost 8,000 rupees. Also, due to partial crop failure, the family is facing financial worries. So whenever the grandfather sees someone looking happy, he comments: “You neither worry that the crop has not been good, nor do you worry about how to manage under these circumstances.” But Sahithi’s mother, who is very practical, says just this in response:

“Will the crop get better if we starve? We have done what we could. We should eat till our bellies are full, at the same time struggle when it is necessary and leave the rest to God.”

As for Sahithi, she enjoys her school now and has come to like the discipline and the facilities there. When she was younger, she wanted to be a doctor when she grew up but now she wants to become a teacher:

“When did you decide you would like to become a teacher?”

“Since I was small I wanted to teach. I write on the blackboard and also give notes to the other children. I correct the notes and ensure that everyone is able to recite the lessons.”

Sahithi’s mother does not have any rigid idea of what Sahithi should study or what she should be when she grows up. She just wants her to get a good job.

“What have you thought about your daughter’s future?”

“Nothing. She must study well. She must settle down in some good position. She must get into a good job just like the other children.”

For now Sahithi is showing considerable progress in her studies. But whether she will fulfil her parents’ dreams and aspirations is something that remains to be seen.

“If I were educated, I would be in some city doing some job without having to struggle in the village like this. That is why even if I have to take out a loan, I am getting my child educated so that she does not have to struggle the way I do now.”

Sahithi’s mother

Migration for school and residential hostels

Sahithi's experience of the school system in Andhra Pradesh highlights some of the key factors shaping children's transitions through school, notably the high (but not universal) attendance rates at pre-school and primary school, the co-existence of a very large private sector alongside government schools, the trend towards English as medium of instruction, and the importance of residential hostels for children from rural areas.

For most children in rural areas, attending an Integrated Child Development Services Programme² (ICDS) anganwadi and then the local government primary school is the most accessible option. But increasing numbers of rural families are choosing to seek out private primary schools, for example, by using residential hostels in nearby towns.

The growth of residential hostels is an increasing feature of the education system in Andhra Pradesh, as in the rest of India. These boarding hostels allow children to live away from home in order to pursue their education. Children staying in a government hostel need not necessarily go to the same school, but they must attend a government school. Private schools with hostel facilities generally locate their hostels within the school grounds.

Children as young as 6 or 7 years old may have to leave their families and attend a residential hostel. So, in addition to adjusting to a new school, including a demanding curriculum, often in a different language from the one they speak at home, the children also have to cope with new living arrangements away from their families.

Like other schools, hostels are split into the public and private education sector. Sahithi comes from an upper-class family and is studying in a private hostel. The ITDA (Integrated Tribal Development Agency) initiative of Ashram Schools (residential schools) caters for tribal children only and has acted as a catalyst for such marginalised children to gain an education. There is a lot of demand for the residential schools by the families as places are limited. Increasing the number of residential schools under this scheme could open the doors to education, and a possible pathway out of poverty, for more marginalised children.

Source: ICDS Scheme, Department of Women and Child Development, <http://wcd.nic.in/icds.htm>.

² ICDS was launched in 1975 and is one of the world's largest and most unique programmes for early childhood development. Through ICDS children are provided supplementary nutrition, immunisation, health checks and referral services, non-formal pre-school education, and nutrition and health education.



Sarada's story

Sarada is now 15. She has developed into a confident and outspoken young woman. She is determined to continue her studies and become a lawyer. She wants to make her own decisions in life, but this leads to conflict with her parents. Her family have fallen into debt.



Sarada lives with her father, mother, younger sister and stepbrother. Two of her older stepsisters and one stepbrother live in Mumbai. One sister is studying, and the other is married. Sarada's father also has another wife in Mumbai.

Sarada's family had been hoping to get a government grant under a housing scheme for a new house after their old one collapsed. This did not materialise so they took out a loan and have fallen heavily into debt.

As a result, Sarada and her siblings were taken out of school and sent to work in the cotton fields in order to pay off the debt. But Sarada became ill because her disability meant the work was too much for her. With the support of the self-help group for disabled people, her schoolteachers and her friend, Sarada lodged a complaint with the labour inspector against her parents and the landowner. As a result she was withdrawn from the work.

But her younger sister and older brother are still working on the cotton farm to clear the debt. So it is not surprising that there have been arguments between Sarada and her parents. In addition, she gets a scholarship from the Government (for disabled children) which she used to give to her parents, but now she keeps the money for herself.

"Since 9th grade, I do not obey my parents any more. I do what I want to do. If I feel like eating fritters, I get the ingredients and make them. I make chapattis for myself. On Sundays I get an egg. On festivals I bring good things for the house. Sometimes I buy pictures of gods. I also buy plates and glasses. My family members tell me off for wasting money. But I don't care what they say.

I know I spend a lot of money and I feel bad that I am not thinking of my parents' problems. Sometimes when my mother asks for money for tea and my father asks for beedis [cigarettes], I give them money."

Sarada also thinks that her new confidence has to do with being educated. On one level, she says, her parents understand this: "They must realise that this is the age that I should be enjoying myself. Maybe that's why they let me have the freedom. I think they understand my pain, feelings and my ambitions much better now than before."

But she often argues with her father.

"Sometimes my father says that I come home late on purpose to avoid doing the household chores. Class is over at 5.30pm and it is 6pm by the time we come home. Since there is no bus at that time, we all try to work out how to come home, because none of us have money to come in a taxi. When he accuses me of coming home late on purpose, the next day I do come home late on purpose."

Last time we interviewed Sarada, she was 12 years old. She lives in a village and has been disabled since birth – though she can walk short distances, she has problems standing for any length of time. The family belongs to a low-caste community that washes clothes for a living.

Sarada does not complain about her disability, but describes how it affects her life in a matter-of-fact way:

"I cannot walk very far. Even when I walk from here to the bus stop, my leg hurts a lot. I keep telling myself that I will get used to the pain and I have to bear it. On Sundays if I go out walking, my leg starts to hurt a lot. Or if I lift the water pot too many times, or do the same work repetitively, it aches so much that I can't sleep at night."

On Saturdays, she goes to classes at the Disabled People's Association, Daroor Mandalam. She has been going there for three years. Sometimes she takes her non-disabled friends with her. She learns about disabled people's rights.

"We have facilities in buses, trains, schools and hostels. Employment opportunities are also given to us. We can get loans to start a small shop or something like that."

Are any jobs reserved for disabled people?

Yes. Disabled people who have finished intermediate education are given teaching jobs. They don't have to pay examination fees. They have special classes every Sunday. They don't have to pay college or hostel fees. They get blankets and clothes and books. They also receive scholarships."

How did you get all this information?

Our teacher at the association told us. The law says that disabled people have the right to all these facilities. He tells us about all these rights and motivates us to use them to improve ourselves."

The association is also a place where she can read newspapers.

"I learn lots of new things by reading the newspaper. I learn what's happening in the world. For example, the American president came to India. They wrote about what he said, who he met and his wife's name. He met our president and said that India is developing fast and it is in the top place in many things and he likes India."

In the future, Sarada says she wants to become a lawyer, although she recognises that she is by no means at the top of her class. Last time we spoke to her, she said she wanted to become a judge, but then a man told her that judges believe what lawyers tell them so lawyers are the ones who can really see that justice is served.

"My main ambition is to become a lawyer. I have been thinking about it since 8th grade. Even when girls accomplish great things, the world still treats women as slaves and looks down on them. People are not willing to educate them, saying: 'Girls will get married so why should they be educated?' If I become a lawyer, I can help women when they face problems. It will change our society for the better."

How do you know that women are facing discrimination?

I read it in the newspaper. I read that husbands falsely accuse their wives of various things and hit them. I also read that men get addicted to alcohol and destroy children's lives. I always wonder who will stand up for the women who are suffering, especially tribal women. They are still being exploited. I thought, 'If I become a lawyer, I could help at least few of them.'"

But she is also worried that her family won't let her go to college to study law. Sometimes, she says, she thinks about:

"Severing all family relationships and going to a faraway place, staying in a hostel, and working hard to become a good lawyer. But other times I don't feel like leaving my mother. And then I think about stopping my studies and staying with my mother. But if I do that, I cannot serve other people. I won't be useful to the country. And I have to study just to support myself."

The role of self-help groups

Sarada talked a lot about how much the Disabled People's Association had helped and supported her. Among other things, it enabled her to return to school, although her siblings had had to drop out to pay off the family debt. In Andhra Pradesh, there are over 700,000 self-help groups, funded by national and state-level government, non-governmental organisations and international donors, including the World Bank.

Our research shows positive effects for families who belong to such groups and have strong social networks. In Andhra Pradesh, children who live in households that don't belong to such groups are half as likely to be enrolled in school and 40 per cent less likely to have a healthy BMI for their age.

The Girl Child Protection Scheme, implemented by the Women and Child Welfare Department of Andhra Pradesh, is another way families can access support. The scheme is targeted at families with one or two daughters. Its primary aims are to eliminate prejudice and discrimination against girls, particularly through encouraging the enrolment of girls in school and trying to ensure they continue to the end of high school. It also aims to protect their rights, empower them socially and financially and eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls.

The scheme is open to families who have used family planning services, and whose total annual household income is below 20,000 rupees (about 370 dollars) in rural areas and 24,000 rupees (440 dollars) in urban ones. The state Government will deposit 5,000 rupees (90 dollars) in a bank account for eligible girls on birth, which can be accessed on completion of Grade 10 or when the child is 18.

Around 15 per cent of Young Lives households that have at least one girl child aged between 5 and 17 years old (not necessarily the Young Lives child) have benefited from financial support for her education through the scheme. This proportion is highest among the Scheduled Castes and lowest among the Other Castes, which probably reflects their relative economic status.

Little other research is available on the impact of the Girl Child Protection Scheme. Young Lives is well placed to help to evaluate its impact over time as the children grow up.

Sources: S. Galab et al. (2011) *The Impact of Growth on Childhood Poverty in Andhra Pradesh: Initial Findings from India*, Young Lives Round 3 Survey Report; Kिर्रिली Pells (2011) *Poverty and Gender Inequalities: Evidence from Young Lives*, Young Lives Policy Paper 3; Kिर्रिली Pells (2011) *Poverty, Risk and Families' Responses: Evidence from Young Lives*, Young Lives Policy Paper 4.

“If I become a lawyer, I can help women when they face problems. It will change our society for the better.”



Triveni's story

Triveni is a 16-year-old girl from a Backward Caste. She lives in a village with one of her elder sisters. Since their parents are dead, Triveni's grandmother keeps an eye on the two girls. She lives in a neighbouring village and works in the fields, and visits the girls once a week.



When Triveni was just 1 year old, her mother committed suicide due to family problems. Her father remarried, leaving his mother to look after the girls. Then he also died while Triveni was still very young. The grandmother supported the girls by selling vegetables. As a young woman, Triveni's grandmother was one of the *basivini*, the traditional dancing community. Triveni's eldest sister is now married.

Triveni is very smart. She first attended the village school up to Grade 7, and then went to the high school 5 kilometres away. Initially she walked to school, but after becoming a member of the Rural Development Trust (RDT),¹ she and her sister were given bicycles. There is a small stream near the school, which Triveni is frightened of, and so she rides her bicycle fast in order to cross that stretch.

Currently Triveni is doing the second year of her intermediate course (Grade 12) in a government junior college 6 kilometres away from her village. She had wanted to make the BiPC (Biology Physics Chemistry) group, but as she did not get the required grades, she took the HEC (History Economics Commerce) combination instead. Having failed one subject in the first year, she was very unhappy but her sister and grandmother encouraged her a lot.

On Sundays and other holidays Triveni works as a labourer in the fields for Kamma² families, for which she gets paid Rs.50 per day. She also goes for the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) work using her grandmother's job card. There she is paid Rs.100 per day.

**"You are doing all these works for so many days. How have you learnt all these activities?
*I learnt a few of the things I do by watching how others do it and partly I learnt from my grandmother."***

Sometimes Triveni gives the money to her grandmother. But sometimes, when her grandmother is not there, she keeps the money and uses it to buy groceries or books. The grandmother buys clothes for Triveni and her sister for every festival. With no adults in the house the sisters have to look after everything. Before festivals there is lots to do – cleaning, tidying and a host of other things.

When her sister was still at school, Triveni used to get up at 6am, sweep the house, fetch the milk and do the washing up. Her sister would finish cooking, help Triveni with her plaits and then go to school. After that Triveni would pack lunch for both of them and follow to school at 9am. When they got home, the sisters would divide the chores between themselves and then sit and talk about their day or eat sunflower seeds.

After dark they closed all the doors because they live alone without any adults or male, and they were a little afraid. The grandmother left them a knife near the door to use if needed. Triveni never goes outside after 6pm.

1 Rural Development Trust is a Civil Society Development Organization promoted by Fr Ferrer from Spain to facilitate development activities for the oppressed and exploited sections of the society particularly Dalits, Tribes Migrants and other backward communities

2 Name of a caste group, Kamma or the Kammavaru is a social group found largely in the Southern Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka

Triveni did not feature in the international books about the Young Lives children, although we have been following her, like the other children, since 2002.

“If grandmother is there we keep the house open for a little while after 6pm, otherwise the door is locked at 6.”

Once Triveni’s sister finished school - she completed Grade 10 only - she took over all the housework. So Triveni did not have to do any household chores for a while and had a lot of time for study. But now Triveni’s sister is working, the sisters don’t get much time with each other, and once again Triveni has to get up early, fetch the milk, sweep the house and get herself ready to go to college. Like many of the other girls, she doesn’t take anything to eat but has her lunch when she gets back home in the afternoon. During the first year the college was co-educational but now there are separate classes for the girls and boys. Triveni finds it very convenient that college is only from morning till noon and goes every day.

She has also taken part in all the other activities such as quizzes, National Green Corps,³ etc. Because she is an orphan, her studies are partly funded by a Self Help Group (SHG) in her village formed under the Velugu programme.⁴

When Triveni was in Grade 9, she saw neighbours who had studied hard and got good jobs. This was the turning point for her. Through them she got the idea that if she also studied hard, she would also be able to support herself.

“If we go to school we can learn at least something. It will help in life somewhere or the other. Education to any extent, even a little, would be of use to the individual.”

Many children of her age drop out to start work; this is why Triveni has very few friends left from when she was in Grade 9.

“If I dropped out from school and were to go to the fields taking leftover rice for lunch and be holding the sickle and watching children going to school, I would feel, this is how I would be if I were to go to school.”

Triveni’s grandmother thinks she has changed a lot since starting college. Before she did not read the newspaper but now she reads the paper every day. She used to watch a lot of TV but now she hardly watches any. In addition to that, she has developed newer acquaintances and learned how to behave with all sorts of people. “Those who go to college get an opportunity to learn all things including about life,” agrees Triveni.

Triveni wants to finish college, and then go for nursing training. She also wants to complete her Bachelor of Commerce and B.Ed. and become a teacher. She would then be able to help many students to secure a good future. Earlier she had said she would study only up to Grade 10 and then work as an *Anganwadi* teacher. But during the past year her interest in her studies has increased considerably. However, she said that her grandmother takes all the decisions relating to her studies:

“I will ask grandmother to help me study, and if she agrees I will study, otherwise I will stop. I do not want to put her to any trouble. I will go for higher studies if my grandmother allows me, otherwise I won’t.”

In earlier interviews, Triveni’s grandmother had said that she left Triveni’s studies to her sister to look after. She also said that if one studies, the future would be good and that if Triveni passed her Grade 10 examination she would put her in a residential college with hostel facilities for further studies.

Triveni feels that if she has the support and encouragement from the RDT and Velugu self-help groups she can fulfil her desire to study. She was very happy when the Velugu self-help group members took her to the nearby town and bought clothes worth Rs.1,000 for her.

3 The Ministry of Environment & Forests runs the National Green Corps Programme (NGC) whose primary objectives are to spread environmental discipline among students in Andhra Pradesh, from school to university level.

4 The Velugu programme has been introduced by the Andhra Pradesh government with the aim of eliminating rural poverty through the empowerment of women by adopting the self-help group approach and promoting sustainable livelihoods.

In the past two years Triveni and her family have suffered from *chikungunya*⁵ and malaria. Her grandmother had to borrow Rs.1,200 from others in the village and have Triveni admitted to hospital. Triveni suffered a great deal: “She contracted *Chikungunya* and couldn’t carry out any activities on her own. Even now she is unable to carry out much work due to her aches and pains.”

As well as looking after her health and supporting her education, her grandmother is keen to secure a good future for Triveni in other respects too. According to her, RDT has saved an amount of Rs.20,000 which they can redeem when the sisters reach marriageable age. Till then they can take an amount of Rs.1200 per year. “It’s like getting to eat the eggs while leaving the hen alone for a future date,” she says.

Both her sister and grandmother said that although Triveni looks tough and courageous, at times she feels sad that her parents are not alive. Triveni loves her grandmother and sister greatly: the most important person in her life is her grandmother.

“If I had not gone to school I would also have packed the leftover food for lunch, taken my sickle and gone for work. If I go to school, I can learn at least something. It will help me in life somewhere.”

Female- and child-headed households

In patriarchal societies such as India, an elderly male family member is considered the household head. But for many different reasons, including change in marital status (separation, divorce, desertion or widowhood), development, and male migration, an increasing number of women are assuming headship. According to the National Family Health Survey, the number of female-headed households has risen from 9.2 per cent in 1992/3 to 14.4 per cent in 2005/6. In Andhra Pradesh 14.9 per cent of households are headed by a woman.

Orphanhood also leads to many children having to take over as head of their family. A lot of the existing support, such as from the State, the Ministries of Women and Child Welfare, Social Justice and Empowerment, and Health and Family Welfare, or from NGOs like VasaviyaMahilaMandali or the International HIV/AIDS Alliance, focuses on the issues facing children orphaned by AIDS. Andhra Pradesh is one of six AIDS high-prevalence states in India, with more than one per cent of the population believed to be living with AIDS. But a broader view of vulnerability is needed as there are many other reasons why a child may have to take on adult responsibilities at a very early age.

Such children may take over farm and household work, care for ill or dying parents, look after younger brothers and sisters, and earn money for basic necessities. They often have to give up school, may have less access to healthcare and become vulnerable to malnutrition as family resources dwindle. They may even have to struggle to survive on the streets.

Policymakers and NGOs have considered the needs of female-headed households and child-headed households. But they have not as yet recognised the specific needs of poor, female, child-headed households, where gender, age and poverty intersect to create a situation in which girls are even more vulnerable.

continued overleaf

5 A type of fever caused by mosquito bite

Female- and child-headed households *continued*

But Triveni and her sister are doing well. Triveni is smart and works hard both at her schoolwork and paid work. The girls make full use of the support accessible to them, including getting bikes from the Rural Development Trust and schooling costs from the village self-help group. They also support one another and show considerable flexibility, adjusting household responsibilities as their study and work needs vary. Triveni's grandmother is very supportive so strong extended family relations play a part in the girls' success. What is not explained is why the girls remained in an independent household rather than moving in with their grandmother when their father died.

Source: Unisa, Sayeed and Datta, Nitin (2005) *Female Headship in India: Levels, Differentials and Impact*; Nandan Kumar and Achala Gupta (2012) *Female Headed Household in India: Evidence based situational analysis*; International HIV/AIDS Alliance in India (2006) *A Situational Analysis of Child-headed Households and Community Foster Care in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh States*; VasavyaMahilaMandali (2004) *Moving Forward: A Report on Pioneering Responses to Children Affected by HIV/AIDS in Andhra Pradesh, India*; Lakshmi Lingam 'Women-headed Households: Coping with Caste, Class and Gender Hierarchies', *Economic and Political Weekly*.



Ravi's story

Ravi is now 16 and is working in the fields. He says he is proud to earn money and help his parents out. Though he was drawn into fighting his brother-in-law to protect his sister and nephew, he says there is no place in his own future for the alcohol and violence that have blighted his family's life.



According to his parents, Ravi was never motivated to go to school. But he says that people laughed at him when he reached a certain age and said that he was too old to go. In fact, we know from last time that he left school in order to help pay family debts. He says he prefers to work. In this way he can contribute to the household.

Neither of Ravi's parents went to school. But they say that the increasing opportunities for education is one of the positive changes they have seen since they were young. However, only Ravi's older brother continued with school beyond 4th grade, and he has now failed his exams and gone to Bangalore to work. Ravi's parents still hope that he might take his exams again so that there is one educated person in the family.

Recently, when there was no work in the village, Ravi was sent to work in a neighbouring town where one of his sisters lives. He was very lonely because there was no-one his own age there. But he helped to pay for a television and now spends a lot of his spare time watching it. He is keen on films and was very excited when at a religious festival his father bought a photo taken of the family.

Ravi says he likes working in the groundnut fields near his village. He can be with his parents. He earns money. And he has a daily routine.

He likes the fact that everyone works together:

"We children, the older people and the married ones, all of us, we become very enthusiastic and competitive and rush to be the first to go to work. After work is over, we come back with the same spirit, happily together. On our way home we talk about our lives. We ask each other: 'Look, man, how is life? How are things going?' and so on."

But he says that no-one talks about the difficult things in their lives: "Even if we have difficulties, we don't like to share them. We prefer to share only our happiness."

Time	Activities
6.30am	Wake up and go to work
9.00am	Have breakfast
2.00pm	Come home, have lunch and sleep
3.30pm	Go out
4.30pm	Come back, watch television
8.00pm	Go to bed

Ravi was 13 years old last time we interviewed him. He comes from a Scheduled Caste family (also known as *Dalits*). He had dropped out of school to pay a family debt and was working on a farm but said he hoped to go back one day. He was distressed about the violence his father inflicted on his mother but didn't know what to do about it.

Ravi has plenty of difficult things in his life, though he finds it hard to talk about them. Last time we came, he was concerned about his father beating his mother. This is no longer mentioned, but Ravi's mother says she is very worried about both his married sisters, whose husbands beat them. During his recent stay with his sister he came home one day to find his brother-in-law hitting her. He intervened and was caught up in the violence.

"I was provoked and angry. I hit him back. I beat him with my bare hands. He fell down flat. He was in bed for three days. We thought that he wouldn't come back. We moved out and rented another room but he turned up, saying, 'How dare you hit me?' And again he picked on me.

What happened then?

My sister intervened and told me to calm down. She told me not to get involved and to go inside. He pulled me out and started hitting me. Then he started hitting my sister. I had to free her.

What happened after that?

He went away and did not come back home for a week. But then he came and caught hold of my nephew's neck and held him against the wall. I tried to stop him. I said, 'Take your hands off him.' Then he said, 'This is my son and I'll do as I please.' But he released him anyway. And after that he never came back. He hasn't turned into a good man. Whenever he came he fought with my sister and he would go away for a few days and come back again only to hit her again."

Not surprisingly, Ravi says he hates people who drink and that his own future will be different. He wants to earn money, get married to a good-looking woman from the same background, chosen by his parents. He says he wants one child. If he has a daughter he will only pay a small dowry, as he does not believe in large dowries.

"In future I shall put on weight and have a beard or moustache. I shall be well dressed. I shall wear trousers and a shirt and new and trendy clothes during festivals and on other occasions."

He would like to learn to be a mason so that if something happens to his house he can repair it. He would also like to learn to drive a tractor and maybe buy some bullocks. He wants to be able to work to support himself and his family and no longer to have to ask his father for money. In fact, neither of his parents are very well and he would like to be able to support them as they grow older.

Yet he feels the weight of responsibility; he says when he is older he will no longer be able to play: "If I still play people will laugh at me and say 'Look, you have grown up and look like a donkey. Do you still want to play?' That's why I ought to work."

The extent of domestic violence against women in India

A research study in five Indian States, including Andhra Pradesh, found that the incidence of violence against women was extremely high. Physical violence was defined as 'any action of the perpetrator used against a woman with the intention of causing her physical injury'.

Of the 1,250 respondents, a shocking 84 per cent had experienced physical violence in one form or another. About 59 per cent had been beaten, slapped, pushed and kicked; about 14 per cent had been beaten with canes, burnt with rods or had objects thrown at them; about 5 per cent had been assaulted with weapons; and about 10 per cent were the victims of sexual coercion and abuse.

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The extent of domestic violence against women in India *continued*

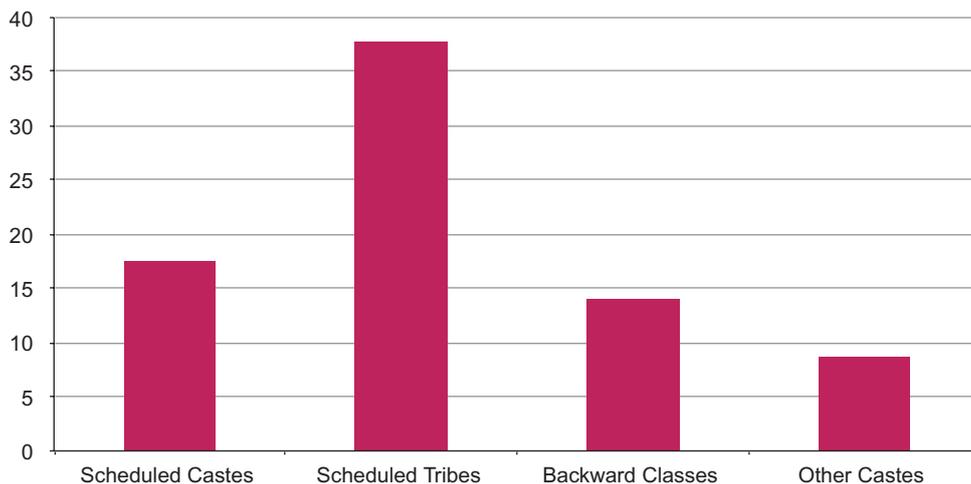
- In 15 per cent of cases the violence took place practically every day.
- Around 90 per cent were victims of emotional abuse. This was higher in lower middle class and middle class families than in upper class, higher middle class and lower class families and families below the poverty line.
- About 89 per cent were victims of economic abuse. This includes 'preventing a woman from taking a job, forcing her to leave the existing job, collecting full amount of her salary under force, pressurising her to bring money from her parents' family, and prohibiting her from making purchases of her choice'.
- The husband's alcoholism was reported as a major cause of violence by victims from rural areas and those belonging to lower class families in urban areas.
- Nearly half the respondents were either illiterate or had only been educated to primary school level.
- About 39 per cent identified the husband as the principal instigator of violence. Thirty per cent said it was their mother-in-law; 12 per cent, their sister-in-law; 7 per cent, their brother-in-law, and 8 per cent, their father-in-law.
- A significantly large number of women in all five states were totally unaware of the laws providing protection and relief to women in distress.

Source: Yugantar Education Society (2003) 'The Nature, Extent, Incidence and Impact of Domestic Violence Against Women in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra', study report submitted to the Planning Commission, Government of India.

Tribal and Scheduled Caste children are still disadvantaged

Ravi's family come from a Scheduled Caste group (see Country context page). Young Lives children from Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes fare worse than other children on almost all indicators. In rural areas 16 per cent of households from these groups are living below the national poverty line and 41 per cent in urban areas, a higher rate than for all other groups.

Young Lives children living in households below the poverty line (%)



- They also have high levels of malnutrition relative to other groups. Between 2002 and 2009, stunting rates went down for the Other Caste group and for the Backward Classes, but hardly moved for the Scheduled Castes and actually increased for children from Scheduled Tribes.
- Fewer than one in five Scheduled Tribe households reported access to improved sanitation, compared to around two-thirds of Other Caste households.
- Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe children were also more likely to be working.
- They were less likely than other groups to describe themselves as having a 'good' life.

Sources: S. Galab et al. (2011) *The Impact of Growth on Childhood Poverty in Andhra Pradesh: Initial Findings from India*, Young Lives Round 3 Survey Report; Kirrily Pells (2011) *Poverty and Gender Inequalities: Evidence from Young Lives*, Young Lives Policy Paper 3.

“Even if we have difficulties, we don’t like to share them. We prefer to share only our happiness.”



Tejaswini's story

Tejaswini is 8 years old and lives in a village with her parents, younger brother, elder sister and her father's elder brother. Her family depends on agricultural day labour for their living. She is very clever, and is now in Grade 4 in the village school. She spends most of her time with her brother.



Tejaswini first went to an *anganwadi* in her village and then moved up to the local school. She would have liked to go to a private school like some of her friends in the village. She would like to wear a uniform with a tie and belt and go to the private English-medium school. She thinks that the teaching would be good there too. Her father had promised that he would put her into the private school when she reached Grade 3. However, when we visited her again, she was still in the local village school in Grade 4.

When we asked Tejaswini about school in Grade 2, she said that it was more difficult than her previous class: there had been a lot of changes in the number of books and the number of subjects, and the price of books had gone up. Now she is in Grade 4, she says she has seen lots of changes in the school too. The previous headmaster had left and a new headteacher joined. Now they have one teacher for every subject and they have started to learn English. An A-C grading system has also been introduced, and Tejaswini is in the C grade.

“When I was in Grade 3, my parents took me out of school so I could take care of my brother. That’s why I scored low grades. I do not understand the lessons properly. I feel bad about getting the lowest grade.”

However, she was very happy that she had achieved second place in the school sports competitions.

Her father says that each class now has its own classroom, not like before when the students had to sit on a veranda. The reason for the change is that the upper primary and high school have moved into a new building, leaving more space for the primary school. The new headteacher has also introduced a lot of changes. Now there are no empty bottles of alcohol, indecent pictures and such-like to be found on the school premises. The school’s midday meal programme is also better and the teaching is more challenging for the children.

Tejaswini's daily routine

“I wake up at 4am every morning, I watch TV in our neighbour’s house, play with my brother, then after that I go with my father and my grandfather to light the fire so we can warm ourselves. Then I go to my grandfather’s place to have tea, play for a little while with my friends, help my mother with the housework (collecting water, cleaning utensils and sweeping the house), and after that I have my food and go to school. When I come back home in the evening I help my mother finish off the housework.”

But her father said Tejaswini doesn’t help at all. Apparently, she didn’t even get them a glass of water when asked.

“She goes to school only if she wants to and doesn’t go if she doesn’t feel like it. She roams around everywhere playing, comes back for lunch and goes back to play again.”

Tejaswini did not feature in the international books about the Young Lives children, although we have been following her, like the other children, since 2002.

Back then, Tejaswini used to have tea and go out to play with her friends, coming home late at night, sometimes not until 9 in the evening. Her father had to go out looking for her and bring her back home. Her parents said she had become naughtier, disobedient, stubborn, bad at her schoolwork. They also told us that she always got shouted at by the neighbours and villagers.

Happily, her father thinks Tejaswini has changed a lot now she is in Grade 4. Now she goes to school regularly and is eager to study and learn new things.

“I have to study well and read in front of my sir and then he will put me in A group.”

Her father said that in government school, the teachers do not take proper care of the children and as a result the children lose interest and stop attending school. But now that they have the new headteacher the situation has changed. Tejaswini adds:

“The parents have all been informed that a police complaint will be lodged against all parents who don't send their children to school. Now all the children who are supposed to go to school are going to school regularly. My parents were also scared about this.”

Tejaswini's father hopes she will be able to study until at least Grade 10. But he has no intention of sending her to the private school as she hopes.

Back in 2008, the family's financial situation was not good and they had to work extremely hard to make ends meet. At that time Tejaswini's mother was not working because Tejaswini's brother was small and needed to be taken care of. Her uncle was also sick. So Tejaswini's sister and father went out to work. Even so, they found it difficult to support the whole family with only two people's income. Tejaswini's sister had to drop out of school to start working at a young age. She was sent to her grandmother's to help with the harvest (for about four months every year); her grandparents save her earnings for her dowry. For the rest of the year, she works at home to support the family.

Recently the family's financial situation has improved. They bought five acres of land with the help of their maternal uncle who loaned them 2 lakh rupees. The villagers have also made good use of some of the government schemes that have been introduced, mainly the MGNREGS, the INDIRAMMA housing scheme, Government Social Welfare Activities, and pensions for the Aged, Widowed and Physically Handicapped, plus the new railway line and irrigation provided them with opportunities for paid work. Tejaswini's family got a house through the INDIRAMMA housing scheme, but Tejaswini doesn't like it because it is at the other end of the village.

Tejaswini has a lot of friends she likes to play with. If someone in the village gives Tejaswini some work or odd jobs they may give her a little money or some snuff in return for her help. A lot of people in the village, adults and children, take snuff. Tejaswini's parents try to discourage her from this habit, but without much success.

Sometimes her father gives her ten rupees so she can go and buy *puris* [bread] for herself, which she likes. She also sells leafy vegetables in her village. She sells a bunch of them for a rupee; she keeps one rupee for herself and gives the remaining money to her mother.

Some of Tejaswini's friends have a very different life from her: “Peddamma lives in a big house. She has a TV and a wardrobe.” She adds that Peddamma is happy and has a good life.

When asked what makes good children and bad children, she says:

“If you help someone, you are called a good person and if someone drops something and you pick it up and give it to them, you are a good person.”

Bad children indulge in bad habits:

“They smoke beedies and cigarettes and write love signs and buy peas and eat them and drink alcohol.”

For Tejaswini, good children are the ones who go to school regularly and are healthy. Bad children are the ones who are not healthy, who don't go to school and who are spoilt.

Her father wants his daughter to study and get educated and not be like them. When Tejaswini asked her parents about school, they said that one becomes wise and life will be happy wherever an educated person is. Her parents would be happy to allow Tejaswini to go on to higher education if she wants to, but if she doesn't study hard, they will make her learn all the housework, or start to work like her sister.

Plus Tejaswini's father is worried about the fact that the village boys are not good, and therefore the girls are married young, at the age of 12 or 14. So he says Tejaswini will also get married at around that age and that they will start looking for a suitable match when she is 13. The parents have already started looking for a suitable match for Tejaswini's 13-year-old sister.

However, Tejaswini hopes: "I will finish my Grade 10, go to college and behave well."

Social attitudes and well-being

What children find distressing about being poor is the sense of shame that comes with 'not having' or not 'fitting in', or not being able to display the symbols that mark them as 'somebody' among their peers and in their communities (for example, by wearing a clean and correct school uniform). This can be especially important for children's evolving sense of identity, belonging, and self-efficacy, which are strongly shaped by their everyday social interactions. Like Tejaswini, they may be aware that others live in a big house and possess goods such as a TV and a wardrobe, and perceive them as happy.

Material differences are therefore important to children because they reflect and reproduce entrenched relationships of interdependence between those who 'have a lot', those who 'have some', and those who 'have nothing'.

Poverty and caste are important factors shaping childhood inequalities. For example, children from the poorest households and from marginalised caste groups are more likely to drop out of school, to be working for pay, and to have missed school because of work. The poorest and most marginalised working children are more embarrassed and less proud of their jobs than working children from richer households. They are also more likely to describe their households as 'struggling to get by' or as 'poor'.

Increasingly, formal schooling is a key feature of what is considered a 'good childhood' for boys and girls in Andhra Pradesh, and even the poorest families aspire to send their children to private, English-medium schools in the hope that this will be a pathway out of poverty. This is Tejaswini's dream. However, although the poorest children place a high value on their formal education, they have lower educational aspirations than children in the richest homes. Their descriptions of varied access to services also suggests that wealthy families have more choices and greater access to quality services, whereas poorer families have little choice.

Source: Gina Crivello, Uma Vennam and Anuradha Komanduri (2012) 'Ridiculed for Not Having Anything': Children's Views on Poverty and Inequality in Rural India' in Jo Boyden and Michael Bourdillon (eds), *Childhood Poverty: Multidisciplinary Approaches*.

"If someone drops something and you pick it up and give it to them, you are a good person... Bad children smoke beedies and cigarettes and write love signs..."



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Rajesh's story

Rajesh is a 16-year-old boy from a tribal village. The village consists of about a hundred and twenty houses located in a hilly region with lots of streams and creeks. There are no proper roads, and the *kutcha* [unpaved] roads get eroded during the monsoon season, making it difficult to commute.



Rajesh has four older sisters. The eldest is married but still lives in the same village. He is the youngest, the only son and loved by all. He is very close to his sisters and rarely scolds them. Rajesh likes his mother more than his father because she gives him money from time to time.

Though they themselves were not educated, Rajesh's parents sent three daughters to residential schools, located in different places, a practice radically different from the rest of the families in the village. The other villagers tried to dissuade them from getting the girls educated, saying that it was pointless. But Rajesh's parents firmly believe that education is a necessity for which the family is willing to spend any amount of money. Rajesh's father said:

"All my children are getting only good grades, they study hard and it is my firm belief that one day they will have good jobs."

Rajesh's parents both work. They have about 2 acres of land in the forest area given by the government for *podu* [slash-and-burn] rain-fed cultivation. But this land is located in the *metta* area, and what they can produce from it cannot even feed the family.

So, in order to secure a good education for his children, Rajesh's father works in the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) farmhouse as a daily wage worker under the MGNREGS, earning 80 rupees per day. Even that is not enough, so he seeks work on Sundays in other places, but the work under MGNREGS is better. The government scheme introduced three years back, of supplying rice at 2 rupees per kilo, plus items like cereals, oil and other commodities at subsidy, at least ensure the family has the basic requirements for meals. Even so, it's still a struggle, and Rajesh's father feels that the government should offer scholarships to children to study.

Rajesh was given a place in an ITDA ashram residential school. But sadly, he caught malaria when he was in Grade 6, and had to stay away from school for almost a month.

His father added:

"We took Rajesh to the government hospital. His fever got very high and we thought he was going to die. We had almost given up hope but we kept giving him medicine. Slowly, after a month or two, he began to recover. We spent Rs.5000 to Rs.6000 on his treatment."

Once he recovered, Rajesh went back to the residential hostel. But within a month he developed jaundice and fever due to water contamination and became very weak. Nor could he tolerate the hostel food. His parents were scared and took him out of the residential school. After trying some allopathic medicine, they switched to ayurvedic traditional treatment, through which his illness could be controlled.

Because he was falling ill so often, Rajesh did not want to go back to the hostel for his Grade 7. His parents also advised him to attend a local school. Another reason for this decision was that Rajesh's father was told by the hostel staff and warden that Rajesh had not been regularly attending but playing truant with his friends instead. So Rajesh moved to a government school, where he is currently in Grade 9.

Rajesh did not feature in the international books about the Young Lives children, although we have been following him, like the other children, since 2002.

At school Rajesh enjoys learning Telugu and English. He likes English because he feels that it will help him get a job. According to him, he is now more interested in his studies and is working harder and getting good marks. He is also very fond of dancing. His parents say that he dances well in school functions as well as at social gatherings organised in the village during festivals like Diwali, Dusserah, Vinayaka and Chaturthi.

However, Rajesh says that his previous residential school had better teachers and he had a good time because all his friends came from the same village. The games and other extra-curricular activities in the ITDA School were also very good.

“Everything in the previous school was good, the studies, method of teaching, friends and hostel facilities. Only the food was not good, it did not agree with me.”

Rajesh's idea of a good school is as follows:

“If there are charts and other teaching aids relating to sciences and social studies in every classroom in the school, it makes learning easy. Many children have the desire to do well in school but they do not have much to fall back on as they are all poor.”

Compared to when he was in the hostel, Rajesh's daily routine has now changed a lot. He now goes to school in the morning and gets back home in the evening. He used to go to school by bicycle, but his bicycle is broken beyond repair and so now he has to walk 3 kilometres each way. He is spending more time on his studies and asks his sister to help if he doesn't understand his schoolwork. In his free time he plays cricket with his friends, and goes to the nearby forest to swim in the stream and look at the bird's nests, eggs and the baby birds.

However, increasing awareness of his family's situation and his father's recurrent typhoid and malaria have made Rajesh feel that he needs to be more responsible and share the family's burden. So he runs errands for his mother and helps in the fields at planting and harvest time. He also works hard to earn money during his free time and during holidays. He spends some of his earnings on books and clothes and gives the rest to his mother. As well as being proud of the fact that Rajesh studies harder than all their other children, his parents are happy about his increasingly responsible behaviour.

This is what Rajesh has to say:

“When there is work in the field my mother asks me to go and work there. Since this work is related to the house itself it is good to do that work. I also go to the forest sometimes to cut firewood for use in the kitchen. I do this because my father doesn't get the time and it is difficult for my mother.”

During holidays I do construction work on the INDIRAMMA houses or engage in MGNREGS work using my sister's job card. I learnt how to do the work by watching my elders working. I have learnt all this so that in case I don't get a job I can always fall back on these skills to sustain myself. I use the money to buy books, pens and clothes. I give some money to my mother for her use.”

Due to the family's poor financial situation, Rajesh's sisters could not take up their places on an engineering degree course though they were selected. Instead, they had to be content with a general course. Rajesh says:

“Both my sisters got selected for engineering but that costs a lot of money and we don't have that much money. That is the reason why they had to forego the place and settle for some other courses.”

However, Rajesh's second sister has been able to secure a place on a B.Ed. course, and his parents asked relatives living in the village for help with paying the fees of Rs.15,000 for this. Thanks to the support from these relatives, plus that from her other sisters and brothers-in-law, her studies are going quite well.

The family's circumstances are gradually improving. Rajesh is ambitious, and wants to study to become a doctor. He knows he will have to study very hard to do this, and will need support from his parents, teachers and the government.

"I want to become a doctor and work in a government hospital. I am prepared to work in any place. But if I am to become a doctor, I should study very hard and pass the exams."

Rajesh wants to become wealthy and support his family in every way. Once he starts work, he'd like to marry an educated girl, with a B.Ed., and to have just two children, one boy and one girl.

His father does not know what job Rajesh will take up but is confident that he will work hard and live a good life because he studies well.

Rajesh concludes:

"It is only studying that can enable one to reach the goal one sets for the future."

Family shocks, ill-health and health insurance

The illness of a family member, especially that of the main breadwinner, can have a big impact on poor households and their children. Chronically poor households like Rajesh's are hit harder because they have fewer resources to cope with risks or adverse events like the illness or death of a family member, which in turn causes the cycle of poverty and risk to carry on.

Chronic poverty also increases children's exposure to other risks, such as drought, illness, poor nutrition, and lack of access to, or poor-quality, services. These risks may have different impacts during childhood, as well as having cumulative effects lasting into adulthood, reinforcing the transmission of poverty and inequalities to the next generation.

The entire family, including children, is often involved in managing ill-health or coping after the death of a family member. Both illness and death in the family can have long-term consequences for children's life chances. For example, in Andhra Pradesh, children who have lost a family member (other than a caregiver) are 70 per cent less likely to be enrolled in school.

If they do become sick, poor families face many barriers in accessing healthcare, including not only distance to the clinic, taking time out from other household activities, and concerns over the quality of treatment received but also the cost of fees for consultation and medicine.

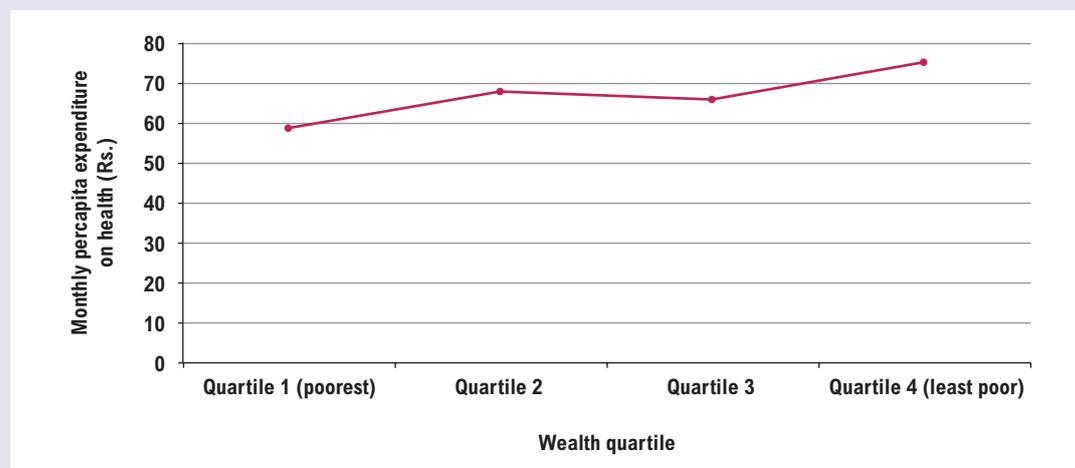
Children and their caregivers use a range of strategies to cope with the cost of illness, including cutting down on food, selling assets or using savings, children or other family members working in place of one who is sick, seeking help from relatives or neighbours, borrowing from neighbours or moneylenders by pledging assets, asking NGOs for assistance, and using social protection schemes.

If families do borrow from informal sources like moneylenders, they often have to pay high interest rates and may fall into the debt trap. Social protection schemes can provide some insurance and offer families other options than the informal systems.

continued overleaf

Family shocks, ill-health and health insurance *continued*

Figure 1a: Monthly per capita expenditure (MPCE) on health



Source: Young Lives Round 3 survey

Figure 1b: Percentage of MPCE spent on per capita health expenditure



Source: Young Lives Round 3 survey

Only 5 per cent of households in the Young Lives sample have any kind of health insurance. As a result, people bear over 80 per cent of medical expenses through “out-of-pocket” expenses, pushing the already poor to below-poverty-line status. Rajiv Aarogyasri¹ is the flagship government health insurance scheme in Andhra Pradesh. However, our data shows that though 83 per cent of the households had Rajiv Aarogyasri cards in 2009-10, only 3 per cent had accessed the scheme.

According to the National Family Health Survey Round 3 (2005-06), for 70 per cent of urban households and 63 per cent of rural households the unregulated private sector is the chief source of healthcare. Primary and secondary healthcare systems need strengthening to ensure quality provision, easy access and sufficient healthcare workers.

Sources: Kिरिली Pells (2011) *Poverty, Risk and Families' Responses: Evidence from Young Lives*, Young Lives Policy Paper 4; R. Ramachandran and T.K. Rajalakshmi (2009) ‘Unhealthy trend’, *Frontline* 26:7; <http://rajivaarogyasri.wordpress.com/2008/10/06/details-of-rajiv-aarogyasri-health-insurance-scheme/>

1 The Rajiv Aarogyasri Community Health Insurance scheme (RAS) was established in 2007 by the Government of Andhra Pradesh. Its object is to improve access of below-poverty-line families to quality medical care for treatment of diseases (such as cancer, kidney failure, heart and neurosurgical diseases) involving hospitalisation and surgery through an identified network of healthcare providers. For more details see www.aarogyasri.org.



Dilshad's story

Dilshad is a pretty 8-year-old Muslim girl in a very poor family with seven older sons. Dilshad's three oldest brothers are married and live nearby. Her father pulls a rickshaw and her mother works as a domestic help. Being the only daughter and also the youngest, Dilshad is loved by all.



Dilshad's family lives in the inner part of an all-Muslim area. All the houses look alike as all the families have barely enough to live on. Though the first few houses in the area are reasonably large and spacious, the roads steadily get narrower and narrower and the houses look like matchboxes. Each house is further sub-let into four or five sections, with one family renting a single room.

When we first visited, Dilshad and her family lived in one such room. Sacks were hung like curtains in front to conceal the women as, being Muslim, they follow the Purdah system. Apart from the most basic necessities, they had very little. In front of each house was a tap for drinking water and a latrine.

Because their old house was very crowded and the rent was too high, Dilshad and her family moved. The house they now live in is spacious and tidy, with two rooms. The rent is Rs.2,000 per month and there are six people living in this house.

Three years ago a tragic accident occurred that had a major impact on Dilshad's family. Dilshad and her family used to visit their paternal grandmother during holidays and festivals. Because it had been raining for the previous three days, one of the walls in the house became saturated and collapsed on Dilshad's older brother, killing him. Dilshad and her parents were also injured. Her mother says:

"Our son died so suddenly... we were heartbroken. There's nothing much I can do but cry about it."

The accident took a toll on Dilshad's father physically and emotionally. His earnings dropped. Before, he was earning about a hundred rupees a day, but now, he gets only half that amount. Even so, Dilshad's mother says their family situation has recently improved significantly. The eldest son helps the family quite a lot, and her other sons are also working. Their daily income is now at least 100 rupees. The family uses the children's earnings for rent and her husband's earnings to buy food and other necessities.

Dilshad was just 5 years old when her brother died. Although she was so young, it had a big impact on her and she remains very upset over the death of her brother. Even now, sometimes she sits alone and cries. Her mother says:

"When we went to our village, she went to the mosque, sat at his grave and cried. She doesn't eat her food. When asked, she says she is not hungry."

Dilshad's mother was heartbroken about her son's death and has tried to commit suicide several times. Some of her body has burn marks. A concerned Dilshad orders her mother to be very careful while she is cooking in front of the stove. And if she sees her mother crying, she tries to console her.

Dilshad did not feature in the international books about the Young Lives children, although we have been following her, like the other children, since 2002.

Dilshad's daily routine

Dilshad gets up every morning at 8am. She washes and gets ready for school. Then after having breakfast, she heads to school with her mother at 9am. At 3pm, again with her mother accompanying her, she comes back home. She helps her mother with some shopping if needed, and then, after resting for a while she goes to her Arabic class at 5pm. After coming back from there, she has her dinner, studies for a while and then goes to bed.

"My brother is in heaven. He belongs there and is a flower there. You shouldn't cry! He cannot come back and will not come back. What can we do? The adults say that even we will have to go there one day. So don't cry."

Dilshad loves her mother and spends most of her time with her. But she is very affectionate to all the family, and this affection is equally reciprocated. She is very spoiled.

Dilshad eats whatever is served by her mother, but she does like pulses and meat. She loves to go out, explore new places and meet new people. Whenever there is such an occasion, she dresses up in pretty clothes. But she also likes to stay at home, watch TV and play with her niece. She is not in the habit of going to neighbours' houses. Dilshad also enjoys visiting her paternal grandmother. But since her brother's death she does not get the chance to see her often, explains her mother:

"Dilshad likes being with her grandmother. But after the wall collapsed, the children stay here most of the time. Whenever there are signs of a cyclone I get very depressed."

Dilshad's mother places a lot of value on education. Dilshad's eldest brother studied to Grade 10 while her other two brothers studied up to Grade 8. The other brothers studied only up to Grade 4. Dilshad's mother did not go to school herself but wants Dilshad to study at least till Grade 10. That is the reason why she has ensured that Dilshad is in a good private school.

"I will try my very best and work very hard to see that [Dilshad] studies. The current days are not good. Even after getting married, she can still support herself. When I say that she has to study well I don't mean she should go for higher studies but she should at least be able to write a letter properly."

Who is better-off? The educated or the uneducated?

An educated person is better-off, that is because they use their intelligence to do what they want. They can be independent."

Dilshad was scared when she first went to school. At that time, the family were living in another area and they had enrolled Dilshad in a government Telugu-medium school. Dilshad speaks Urdu so she could not follow Telugu and had difficulty understanding her lessons. Also, she used to attend this school with her elder brother, but he died after just one year. Dilshad could not travel to school alone and so stopped going.

When the family moved house, they found there were no Urdu-medium schools in the area so Dilshad started at a private school which teaches in English. She says the teaching is very good and the children have bats and balls to play with. So now Dilshad goes to school very regularly.

According to her mother, Dilshad has become an intelligent girl who is able to do her homework on her own. She works harder on her English than all the other subjects. And not only is Dilshad good at her schoolwork but she also has a talent for remembering mobile phone numbers - even her teachers acknowledge this.

“Why is it that, despite having so little, you are sending Dilshad to a private school?

We are willing to forgo one meal in a day so that our children can get an education. These days education is very important.

I have made up my mind to send her to a private school as long as she needs in order to learn how to study. In government schools the teachers do not take that much care in teaching the children and they think that teaching only a part of the syllabus is enough. If on the other hand I send her to a government school in the higher classes, she will apply her mind and study hard.”

At the same time Dilshad’s mother nurtures ideas of getting Dilshad married. She feels that only then will Dilshad be able to be independent.

“We will get her educated to the tenth grade or Intermediate and then get her married. Then she will teach children Arabic. That will enable her to earn a living and then stand on her own feet. These days men are not to be trusted because they rely on the earnings of women. That is why even though we have only one daughter, we are trying our best to get her educated.”

One of Dilshad’s brothers contributes money towards Dilshad’s studies and also sits with her and helps her to study.

Dilshad’s mother says, “They all love Dilshad. They not only encourage her to study but keep stressing to her the importance of having a job in the current times.”

Talking about her daughter’s future, she says, “Dilshad has a very secure and protected environment. Even if I die, she has her brothers to look after her, to think about her and care for her. In other words, there are a lot of opportunities in this world.”

However, Dilshad’s mother still fears what will happen in the future.

“I do have a certain fear regarding the future. I wonder how long Dilshad will continue to receive the support from her siblings. Her father can support her as long as he is able to pull the rickshaw, but what will happen after that?”

“These days men are not to be trusted because they rely on the earnings of women. That is why even though we have only one daughter, we are trying our best to get her educated.”

Dilshad’s mother

Impact of shocks and adverse events on children

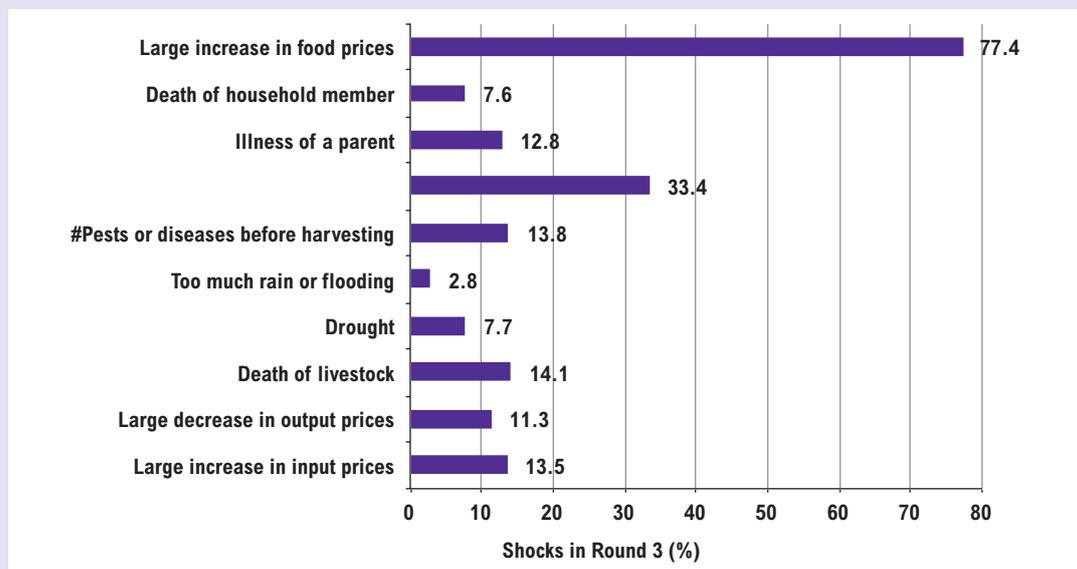
Adverse events and economic shocks impact on households as a whole but the impact on children is often different to adults and can have devastating long-term effects. Shocks are a major risk to children, both in relation to their own pathway through life and also in terms of the intergenerational persistence of poverty. Missed opportunities in childhood may trap children in poverty in adulthood.

In Round 3 of the Young Lives survey, food price rises affected 77 per cent of the poor households. According to the children, the rising prices resulted in shortages of quality food and increased household expenditure on food, which meant many children had to start working or to work more. Many boys and girls complained that they were not able to eat good food and so they had less energy and could not concentrate on their studies.

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Households reporting shocks and adverse events (%)



Source: Young Lives Round 3 survey

continued overleaf

Impact of shocks and adverse events on children *continued*

Households adopted a range of strategies to cope with food price increases; for example, cutting their food consumption, restricting it to the consumption of *dal* [lentils or other pulses] with the same vegetables (those that are cheap and locally grown) or no vegetables at all, and diluting dal so that it lasted for the entire day across multiple meals. Other households purchased low-quality food grains when quantity had to be maintained, or limited portion sizes.¹ Children were also encouraged to access the midday meal provided at school.

According to the children, the price rise caused a scarcity of food grains, thereby increasing dependency on the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)² to meet food requirements and so the TPDS was viewed as very useful in times of crisis. However, children commented on the poor quality of grains, the inadequate amount, leakages (food being sold outside the scheme for a higher price), and the irregular supply.

Children also said that the money their families saved through the subsidised rice scheme was often used to meet expenses related to healthcare in private hospitals because government hospitals have limited services. To combat this, there is a need to increase access to primary healthcare and for health insurance to cover primary as well as secondary care.

The public policies targeted to the poor act as a cushion, especially when a family like Dilshad's faces risks and shocks. But there is a need to improve the nutritional quality of food available via PDS and the Midday Meal Scheme. And equitable access still remains a challenge.

Source: Vennam, Uma, Gina Crivello and Hymvathi Kongara (2010) *Children's Perspectives on Risk and Vulnerability in Contexts of Poverty and Change: Findings from Andhra Pradesh, India*, Working Paper 64; Midday Meal, MHRD, <http://mdm.nic.in/> (accessed August 30, 2012); Planning Commission, Government of India, http://planningcommission.nic.in/reports/peoreport/peo/peo_tpd.pdf (accessed August 30, 2012)

1. The Midday Meal Scheme is the world's largest school feeding programme reaching out to about 12 crore children in over 12.65 lakh schools/Education Guarantee Scheme centres across the country. In Andhra Pradesh the Midday Meal Scheme is available in both primary and high schools.
2. The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is aimed at reducing poverty through delivering minimum requirements of food grains at highly subsidised prices to the population below the poverty line.



Harika's story

Harika is now 16. She is no longer working in the cotton fields but has returned to school, and is staying at a girls' hostel. She found it hard at first to be away from home, but now she has made friends and says she would like to continue her studies and become a doctor.



Harika missed school in 8th grade for a couple of months, and went back for the 9th and 10th grades to finish high school. A new school building had been constructed and six new government teachers were recruited, whom she felt were much better than the previous ones.

She says it was not easy to persuade her parents to let her go back to school:

"I wanted to study but my parents said no at first. Then when I insisted, they agreed."

Who said no?

Mainly my mother.

Your father?

He left it to me."

She has been supported in her desire for education by her three older female cousins. "They told my parents that it would be good to send me for more schooling." Her older brother also supported her.

After she completed Grade 10, she had to go to the city to carry on with her education. So she then went to a girls' boarding hostel. At first, she says she found this difficult. After three days she and a friend went home. "We got scared and we decided not to stay there and we came back to our village." But after seeing their families they felt better and went back to the hostel. Harika says she was worried what people in the village would think if they just left school.

Now she is less homesick. She has a number of friends, and two best friends in particular. She says: "If I had gone alone, I would not have stayed there. Because I went with my friends, we could support each other."

Of the five girls who continued with her to the end of high school, two are now in the hostel with Harika, one is at home, and the other one is already married. Harika says she was determined to continue her studies because:

"You get better jobs if you study and you have a better life and can marry an educated husband. If your husband is in agriculture, you have to go to the fields and work. If he is educated, you can be happy. We see our parents working and we feel that we do not want to be like them. They work in the fields and work hard every day."

Harika says she used to want to be a teacher but now she wants to be a doctor.

"I wanted to study but my parents said no at first. Then when I insisted, they agreed."

At the time of the last interview, Harika was 13 years old and had been missing classes to help her family in the cotton fields. This had affected her health. She was a good student and had won a national scholarship and was worried about not being in school.

Her mother, however, is worried about cost. Harika's current school costs 500 to 600 rupees (8 to 10 dollars) a month. The family also had to pay an initial 3,600 rupees (58 dollars). This is a lot of money for them, particularly as Harika's brother had been ill and hospital and medical fees were expensive.

"We wanted to stop her going on to further studies because we didn't have the money. We have to pay interest on loans. How can we afford all the expenses, my son's hospital expenses and her fees? Will she give us money once she starts working? We won't make anything from her; she is better off working here."

Last time we visited, Harika had won a scholarship, but apparently it never materialised because the headteacher moved to another school.

Harika's mother says the decision to continue studying was entirely Harika's: "She has gone [back to school] of her own accord. It is her decision and she is scared that we will stop paying for her if she complains."

Harika's mother did not go to school herself. In fact, Harika is the first girl in the whole family to be educated up to 10th grade. "Girls don't go [to school] here. Only three girls went and people scold us, asking, 'What is the point of educating girls? They will get spoilt.'"

The family is already getting marriage proposals for Harika but they have said that she will not get married for four or five years because she is studying. Harika's mother says she was married at around 18 or 19 but "Now girls are getting married earlier". She cites a number of girls around Harika's age who are married already and one who is already pregnant despite wanting to study.

In other interviews in the community, one person said that most villagers preferred sending their children to work in the cotton fields to sending them to school. Another noted that most of the teenage girls were working in the fields. All the farmers grow cotton in the same season, which means there is a lot of demand for labour and wages rise accordingly.

But while Harika's mother is ambivalent about her education, she is also clear that it is Harika who will decide. "We have given her permission to study and we cannot cut her throat halfway through. She can study as long as she wants to study and after that it's her wish. That's all."

The importance of maternal education

Our research is beginning to demonstrate what has been shown in many other studies – that having an educated mother improves a child's chances of going to school and has a positive effect on health, nutrition and well-being.

In India, we have found that the percentage of children in school increases with each level of schooling obtained by their mothers. Children whose mothers had no education were less likely to have attended pre-school (44 per cent compared to 72 per cent of children whose mothers had received 10 or more years of education), and were four times more likely to have repeated a grade by the age of 8.

Only 68 per cent of children from the older group whose mothers had received no formal education were in school, compared with 92 per cent whose mothers had received secondary education.

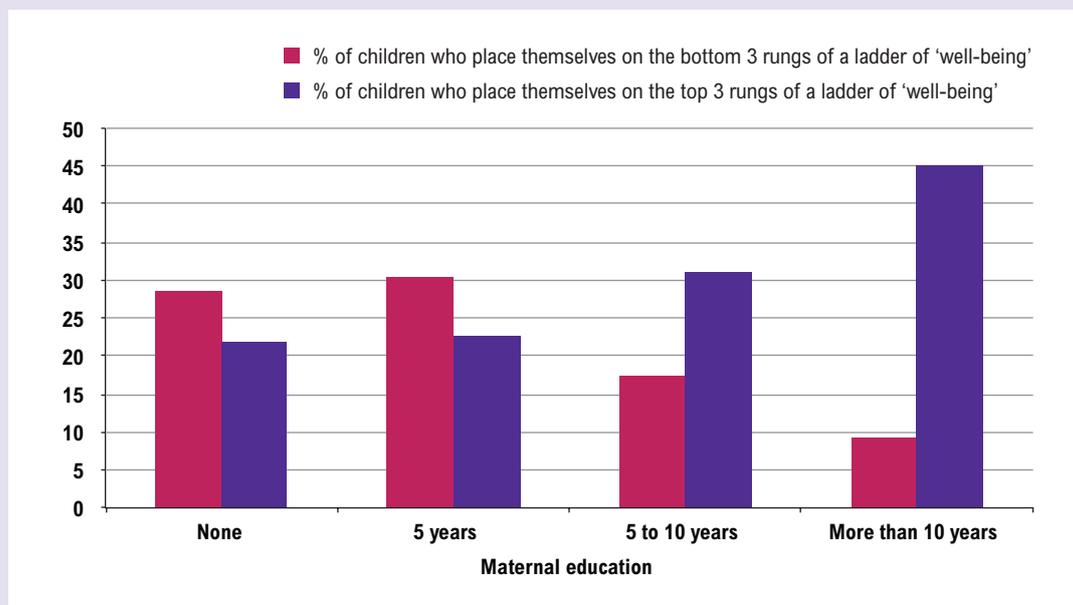
Maternal education also has an effect on nutrition: children whose caregivers had completed primary school were much less likely to be thin (low BMI-for-age), stunted (low height-for-age), or underweight (low weight-for-age), which are all indications of under-nutrition and malnutrition.

continued overleaf

The importance of maternal education *continued*

There also appears to be a link between maternal education and children working for pay. The proportion of children with uneducated mothers who were working increased from less than 1 in 10 to about 2 in 5 between 2002 and 2009, but fell from 5 per cent to zero for children whose mothers had been to secondary school. However, maternal education is also connected with other factors, including whether you live in an urban or rural area, and consumption levels, which are also likely to be important determinants of child work.

Maternal education and children's perceptions of their own well-being



Children were also asked to place themselves on a 'ladder' of well-being. In Andhra Pradesh, we found that children whose mothers had more education put themselves on the top 3 rungs of the ladder, whereas those whose mothers had no education or low levels of education put themselves on the bottom 3 rungs.

Sources: S. Galab et al. (2011) *The Impact of Growth on Childhood Poverty in Andhra Pradesh: Initial Findings from India*, Young Lives Round 3 Survey Report; Kirrily Pells (2011) *Poverty and Gender Inequalities: Evidence from Young Lives*, Young Lives Policy Paper 3.

“If I had gone alone [to study in the hostel], I would not have stayed there. Because I went with my friends, we could support each other.”

Further reading

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Nandan Kumar and Achala Gupta (2012) *Female Headed Household in India: Evidence based situational analysis* (<http://paa2012.princeton.edu/papers/121678>) (see Triveni)

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Access our data

The Young Lives datasets from the household and child surveys in 2002 (Round 1), 2006 (Round 2), and 2009 (Round 3) are publicly archived and available to download from the UK Public Data Archive, along with the documentation and questionnaires for each survey round. For users in our study countries, they are also available on CD-Rom, on request from the Principal Investigator.

We are committed to the widest possible dissemination of our research including public archiving of our data to enable policymakers and other researchers to benefit from this unique longitudinal survey.

The anonymised data and full documentation from our quantitative survey is archived in the UK with the Economic and Social Data Service and is available through the UK Public Data Archive (<http://www.esds.ac.uk/international/access/I33379.asp>). The 3 rounds of data have been assigned the following study numbers:

Round 1: study number 5307

Round 2: study number 6852

Round 3: study number 6853.

The panel dataset will be deposited with ESDS by end 2013. Both the Round 1 and Round 2 datasets are available on CD-ROM for users within India, and can be received from CESS in Hyderabad on application.

Users are required to register and apply for a password with ESDS and sign a confidentiality agreement before they can access the data. We also ask that users inform ESDS and Young Lives of any analysis or publications resulting from their work with the dataset. This helps us maintain an overview of how the data is being used, and is also required in our reporting to our funders.

Contact

If you would like to have access to Young Lives data in India or any further information about our data or our methodology, email younglives@younglives.org.uk or Piyali.yl@gmail.com

Acknowledgements and credits

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These profiles have been adapted from the book *Changing Lives in a Changing World*, written by Nikki van der Gaag with Kirrily Pells and Caroline Knowles. Seven additional profiles were written by K. Hymavathi and Uma Vennam for a Telugu version of the book (available from SPMVV), which were then edited and adapted in English by Piyali Sarkar with Emma Merry. We thank our Country Director, Dr Renu Singh, for her invaluable input, Ernest Leslie for the translation, Kirrily Pells and Dr Vijay Kumar for their help in developing the policy boxes, and Sudipa Sarkar for the graphs.

Confidentiality

The children and their families who are participating in the Young Lives study willingly share with us a great deal of detailed personal information about their daily lives, and we have a responsibility to protect their confidentiality and ensure their identities remain protected. For this reason, the children's names have been changed in these profiles. The accompanying photos are of children in similar situations to the children within our study sample.

Photo credits

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About Young Lives

Young Lives is a long-term study of childhood poverty following the lives of 12,000 children over 15 years in 4 developing countries: Ethiopia, India (Andhra Pradesh), Peru and Vietnam. Young Lives is a collaborative partnership between research and government institutes in the four study countries with the international NGO Save the Children, and led by a team at the University of Oxford.

In India Young Lives is a collaboration between Save the Children, the Center for Economic and Social Studies (Hyderabad), Sri Padmavati Mahila Visvavidyalayam (Tirupati) and University of Oxford (UK).

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www.younglives.org.uk

Changing Lives in Andhra Pradesh

Young Lives Children Growing Up

Young Lives is a research study following 12,000 children and young people in Ethiopia, India (Andhra Pradesh), Peru and Vietnam over 15 years in order to examine the causes and consequences of child poverty. We are following two groups of children in each country: 2,000 children who were born in 2001-02 and 1,000 children born in 1994-95. In Andhra Pradesh, we are following 3,000 children in 20 sentinel sites and in 98 communities.



In this book we chart the lives and aspirations of 13 of these children. These stories tell a fascinating tale of how children in Andhra Pradesh see their lives and give us a unique insight into how their lives are changing as they are growing up. They reveal what they think it means to be poor or rich, how they see their families, friends and communities, the importance of education, what is different between their generation and the previous one, and their dreams for the future. Their stories are accompanied by themed boxes that give more detail on the context in which the children are living.

The profiles show the children to be hard-working, resilient and adaptable. Much of what they say is very relevant to those making policy on poverty and children. We will continue to follow them as they go through school, grow into adults and face the challenges of marriage, parenthood, and earning a living in a constantly changing world.

Young Lives 
An International Study of Childhood Poverty

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