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# Understanding Childhood Poverty in Rajasthan

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# Preface

This paper is one of a series of working papers, reports and policy briefings on different aspects of childhood poverty published by the Childhood Poverty Research and Policy Centre (CHIP). CHIP is a collaborative research and policy initiative involving academic institutions and Save the Children in China, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and the UK. It aims to:

- deepen understanding of the main causes of childhood poverty and poverty cycles, and increase knowledge of effective strategies to tackle it in different contexts
- inform effective policy to end childhood poverty, ensuring that research findings are widely communicated to policy-makers, practitioners and advocates
- raise the profile of childhood poverty issues and increase the urgency of tackling them through anti-poverty policy and action
- work globally to tackle chronic and childhood poverty in developing and transition countries.

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## Disclaimer

The views in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of CHIP, CPRC, DFID or Save the Children.

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# Abbreviations and acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| ANM | auxiliary nurse midwife |
| AWC | Anganwari Centre |
| BMI | Body Mass Index |
| CBO | community based organisation |
| DPEP | District Primary Education Programme |
| DPT | Diphtheria, polio and tetanus |
| ICDS | Integrated Child Development Scheme |
| ILO | International Labour Organisation |
| NPE | National Policy of Education |
| OBC | Other Backward Castes |
| PHC | primary health centre |
| RCH | Reproductive and Child Health Programme |
| RGSJP | Rajiv Gandhi Swaran Jayanti Pathshala |
| SIDA | Swedish International Development Agency |
| SKP | Shiksha Karmi Programme |
| SSA | Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |

# Glossary

| | |
|---|---|
| *bigha* | 1 hectare = 4 bigha of land (might vary between regions) |
| *dai* | traditional birth attendant |
| *gauna* | formal send-off of the girl from natal home after marriage |
| *ghee* | clarified butter |
| *ghooghry* | gruel made out of boiled wheat and mixed with jaggery or salt |
| *gram panchayat* | village-level council |
| *gur* | jaggery (sugar from palm tree sap) |
| *jhagara* | settlement money paid at the time of *nata* |
| *kuccha* | house with thatched roof |
| *nata* | customary practice of second marriage practised amongst certain castes |
| *nautra* | feast organised to raise money for marriage or death feast in the tribal areas of Rajasthan |
| *panchayat* | council |
| *pucca* | house with concrete roof |
| *purdah* | female seclusion |

# Executive summary

This report is based on two years of research carried out in four villages in two districts of Rajasthan: Banswara and Tonk. It examines childhood poverty and the mechanisms that lead to transmission of poverty over a life course and between generations. Multiple vulnerabilities rather than a single set of factors contribute to intergenerational transfers of poverty. These include: poor nutrition and healthcare; low levels of education; a depleting environment; insecure livelihoods; indebtedness; and cultural norms and social practices. Disrupting negative poverty cycles necessitates a policy environment that provides potential opportunities for people to escape intergenerational and life-course poverty.

***Intergenerational transfers of poverty: the impact of livelihoods choices on children***

1. The depletion of land, water and forest resources and recurrent droughts have made livelihoods less secure, leading to increased participation of children in various aspects of household livelihoods.
2. The increasing population is depleting the carrying capacity of the environment. Households therefore require more time to access resources in the commons; this falls primarily on children who spend considerable time in low-value enterprises such as fetching water, collecting fuelwood and grazing livestock.
3. Girls spend 33 to 50 per cent more time than boys in various activities in all income and age groups. They are thus deprived of more educational opportunities than boys.
4. Children in Banswara who are engaged in wage labour are involved in construction, harvesting the soya bean crops, and migrating with pastoralists. In Tonk, they work in construction and carpentry, and as conductors in private jeep taxis. Given that the children start working at an early age and work long hours, their nutritional status is low.

***Migration***

1. There was migration of at least one member from 15 per cent of households in Tonk and 33 per cent in Banswara, across income groups. Children usually migrate with parents, except for those who migrate with shepherds. Children migrated from 10 per cent of households in Banswara and 15 per cent of households in Tonk.
2. The income of children from migration constitutes a significant proportion of total income in the lowest income groups – 46 per cent in Banswara and 18 per cent in Tonk.
3. Of children who migrate, only 20 per cent and 60 per cent respectively from Banswara and Tonk villages are enrolled in school and attend school when they are in the village.
4. Even in households where only male members migrate, children's household responsibilities increase: looking after crop waste, managing fodder for cattle, managing livestock, accessing markets, and even working for wages. The increased burden of household activities often leads to irregular schooling.

***Indebtedness***

1. A high proportion of households in the study area is indebted: 84 per cent in Banswara and 93 per cent in Tonk. Moneylenders play a central role, charging high rates of interest ranging from 24 to 36 per cent per annum. Loans are mainly used for social ceremonies such as marriage, death feasts and *nautra*. Other reasons for borrowing money are poor health, and to purchase seeds, manure and livestock.
2. When a household is unable to repay loans on time, moneylenders double the rate of interest. This pushes the household into greater impoverishment and indebtedness which can continue from one generation to the next.

***Education and intergenerational transfers of poverty: gender and caste***

1. Current male literacy rates in Banswara are 56 per cent and 75 per cent in Tonk. However, even when fathers are literate, girls' education is not a priority and girls may not be enrolled in schools.
2. Most parents desire higher education for boys than that which they themselves attained. In the 11-14 age group, around 60 per cent of boys and 25 per cent of girls in Banswara, and 80 per cent of boys and 45 per cent of girls in Tonk, are enrolled in school. However, attendance on a 'normal' day shows that absenteeism is high.
3. The enrolment and achievement of children from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes continues to be lower than that of children from other households. Furthermore, teachers continue to discriminate against children from these castes, reproducing hierarchical social relations and ensuring an intergenerational transfer of social inequity.

***Health and intergenerational transfers of poverty***

1. While there have been programmes to improve reproductive and child health services, the health situation of women and children in the study area is still very poor.
2. Immunisation coverage is low: 48 per cent of children in Banswara and 33 per cent in Tonk district were not immunised. The consumption of nutrients vital for children's growth is also very low: about 45 per cent of households in both districts consume less than 33 per cent of the norm. During the recent drought, nutritional intake decreased further with a drop in the consumption of milk, milk products and vegetables. Around 80 per cent of children in the 6-10 and 11-17 age groups are chronically energy deficient in both the districts, despite the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), which continues to be ineffective in reaching the most marginalised children.
3. There is a high incidence of early marriage and early pregnancy. Data from the study area reveal that more than 50 per cent of women in Banswara and more than 40 per cent in Tonk had their first pregnancy below the age of 18.
4. Vaccination coverage is low, with 48 per cent and 33 per cent of children in Banswara and Tonk respectively receiving no vaccinations.

5. The proportion of 'wasted' boys and girls respectively in the age group 0-5 was 9 per cent and 7 per cent in Banswara, and 20 per cent and 18 per cent in Tonk. Eighty per cent of children in the 11-17 age group were found to be chronically energy deficient according to their Body Mass Index (BMI).

***Policy recommendations***

*1. Education*

- The positive role of incentives (eg, cooked meals and free textbooks) in improving school enrolment and attendance needs to be strengthened and expanded.
- Innovative information programmes about the importance of education need to involve local community and government structures.
- The state programme for residential schools – in which children's food, education and health needs are taken care of – needs to be expanded.
- Addressing low demand for education means supporting civil society organisations which are involved in changing social attitudes and practices, especially those pertaining to gender and caste.

*2. Health*

- There is a need for programmes other than those like the curative ICDS. Preventive programmes that deal with the underlying social and economic causes of poor mother and child health (eg, weak adolescent girls being pushed into early motherhood) are also necessary.
- The quality and regularity of various existing services such as the ICDS and the Midday Meal Scheme need to be improved. This must include finding mechanisms to ensure that doctors and health workers attend to their duties.

*3. Livelihoods*

- Improving the availability of employment through the extension of guarantee programmes is important for reducing the need to migrate and the stress on livelihoods which is passed on to children, particularly during drought periods.
- Enhancing the effectiveness of natural resource management programmes is also important for strengthening fragile rural livelihoods. Involving children in these programmes would help prevent them from unwittingly creating greater workloads for already overburdened rural children.
- Extending the accessibility and pro-poor orientation of both formal credit and microfinance institutions is important for preventing spirals of indebtedness either for coping with livelihood crises or social obligations, and thus for preventing the persistence of debts across generations.

# 1. Introduction

The concept of childhood poverty focuses on the major deprivations which children face in childhood, especially in terms of health and nutrition, education and work. Childhood experiences deeply condition capabilities acquired during adulthood. Children who do not have a 'good start' in life are likely to be more deprived in the later stages of their lives. Therefore, children and childhood have become a focus of policy-making.

In Rajasthan, the relationship between childhood poverty, livelihoods and well-being is influenced by the status and conditions of children, as well as by their growth, socialisation, cultural practices, belief systems, community linkages and social relations. While attitudes to children and experiences of childhood vary significantly by caste, class, religion, gender, ethnicity and regional location, the lives of all children born into poverty can be exceptionally vulnerable because they face inequalities in access to crucial resources (ie, health, nutrition and education) leading to further exclusion and marginalisation. Furthermore, practices like child and early marriage, son preference, foeticide, infanticide, *nata* and *purdah* significantly influence childhood poverty and marginalisation since they all attach low value to female children.

## 1.1 Childhood and intergenerational transfer of poverty: a conceptual framework

The impact of poverty experienced during childhood can make children vulnerable to a lifetime of poverty. It is also true that children who have a 'good start' in life are at much less risk of being poor as adults or of initiating another cycle of poverty with their own children. Life-course and intergenerational transmission of poverty emphasise the linked set of processes that may result in or entrench childhood, adulthood or chronic poverty, rather than outcomes or experiences during a specific period of time (Harper, Marcus and Moore 2003). Childhood poverty and the mechanisms that lead to a transmission of poverty over a life course and between generations therefore assume special significance in the context of Rajasthan where a large number of families continue to live in chronic poverty situations.

The concept of intergenerational transmission of poverty is primarily used to signify the private transmission of poverty from the older generation to younger generations – especially, but not solely, from parents to children – and therefore has special relevance for childhood poverty (Moore 2001). Multiple vulnerabilities (rather than a single set of factors) that contribute to the intergenerational transfer of poverty, and which may have implications during childhood, include poor nutrition and healthcare, low levels of education, depletion of the environment, insecure livelihoods, indebtedness, cultural norms, traditions and social practices. Disrupting negative poverty cycles necessitates a policy environment that provides potential opportunities for people to escape intergenerational and life-course poverty.

The section below gives an overview of the situation of children in Rajasthan and the various vulnerabilities they face with consequences for intergenerational transfers of poverty.

## 1.2 Children and vulnerability in Rajasthan

***Depleting environment***

The degradation of the environment and diminishing natural resources, particularly common property resources, can adversely affect the livelihoods of future generations. The natural resource base is characteristically fragile in most districts of Rajasthan. Most poor people are dependent on common property resources, such as the forests for fuelwood and grasses for fodder. Recurrent droughts have led to depleted water levels and forest cover, and a crisis in access to fodder and fuelwood. Successive years of drought place an enormous burden on the poor as they impact on productivity and agricultural livelihoods with serious implications for household incomes. Women and children who are generally responsible for meeting the fuelwood and fodder requirements of the household have to struggle harder and travel greater distances. Reduced nutritional intakes during periods of droughts also have long-term consequences on children's well-being.

***Livelihoods and the intergenerational transfer of poverty***

Childhood poverty is inextricably linked to that of families and communities. Insecure livelihoods often mean that children are vulnerable and may face greater deprivation in terms of health and education. Insecure livelihoods may also mean an increase in children's workloads, both within the household and outside, as they may have to contribute to household income.

Some studies (Davies, Mathur and Bhargava 1998) point to the fact that intensification in agriculture has also led to an increase in children's workloads, especially of those in households where it has led to greater production and hence more work. The participation of children in animal husbandry activities is widespread and common to all districts of Rajasthan. Furthermore, commercial animal husbandry and a shift in livestock composition from big ruminants (such as cows) to small ruminants (such as goats and sheep) has resulted in an increase in the workloads of children as they are often assigned the responsibility for grazing small ruminants. When the herd size is small, parents usually send girls to graze them to avoid the costs of hiring labour and to allow boys to attend school.

Migration for wage labour is a major livelihood source. During drought conditions, both long-term and short-term migration become coping strategies. Migration from Rajasthan to neighbouring states in search of employment is common. Migrants work as labourers in mines and on construction sites for a daily wage rate. Children face multiple consequences when parents migrate in search of work. Older children mostly tend to take on additional household responsibilities, and some may be pushed into wage labour which disrupts their education. When children migrate they often make a substantial contribution to the family income. However, they tend to lose out on childhood and educational opportunities.

Given the high incidence of poverty and the low levels of income and employment, agricultural-based households often need to borrow money in order to meet their basic needs. However, the low credit-worthiness of poor households and their inability to offer collateral against loans, limit their capacity to borrow from formal credit institutions. Thus, they are largely dependent on moneylenders and landlords for loans for which they have to pay exorbitant interest charges which they can ill-afford. Smaller loans, on which they may or may not have to pay interest, are taken from friends and relatives. Households borrow for both consumption and investment (eg, to purchase seeds, manure and livestock). Poor people also borrow for social ceremonies such as marriage, death feasts and *nautra*, and to pay *jhagara* in cases of *nata*. Ill-health is also a major reason for borrowing since people need to pay for medicines and doctors' fees. The cycle of indebtedness is often difficult to break, and pushes households into further impoverishment which continues from one generation to the next.

***Education***

Rajasthan continues to present challenges in terms of access, enrolment and achievement. Problems exist at both the supply- and demand-side of primary education. Gender gaps in education reflect the unequal access to resources of a patriarchal society where girls continue to be perceived as 'homemakers'. Problems of access to schooling for children from deprived communities, such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and minorities, are further exacerbated by poor quality teaching, poor educational facilities and poor attention given to pupils by teachers.

The inability of poor people in general, and women and girls in particular, to read and write makes it difficult to acquire new skills and access information and services. Women are less likely than men to diversify occupationally and, thereby, increase their earnings. The absence of positive changes in poor women's social position, and in their skills and education, often results in poverty being transmitted to their children (Mehta and Shah 2003).

Education is often seen by the poor in Rajasthan as a route to escaping poverty. Thus, poor quality education (which means that the knowledge and skills acquired are inadequate) is likely to contribute to poverty being transferred to the next generation.

Depleting water resources in Rajasthan mean more work for children, especially girls, often at the cost of attending schooling. This may further lead to intergenerational poverty cycles.

***Health and nutrition***

The health situation in Rajasthan is still characterised by a gender imbalance which manifests in poor indicators such as low life expectancy, high infant and child mortality for girls, and unequal healthcare provision (GoR 2002). Girls are also often discriminated against in the distribution of food and nutrition. Furthermore, the low value accorded to women and girls, together with restrictions of mobility, often result in poor access to healthcare services and a lack of information on reproductive health issues. The 2001 Census of India recorded the adult sex

ratio in Rajasthan as 922 females (compared to 910 in 1991) to 1,000 males. The child sex ratio in the state declined to 909 in 2001 from 916 in 1991, which is indicative of the low value and secondary status of the girl child in a state where patriarchal norms and practices continue to operate. Modern technologies like amniocentesis are used for sex-selective abortions and have exacerbated discrimination against the girl child (GoI 2002).

There are sharp rural-urban differences in provision of basic services which have consequences for children's health. The Rajasthan NFHS-2 reports that only 28 per cent of households in rural areas used piped drinking water compared to 89 per cent of households in urban areas. Eighty-eight per cent of rural households had no toilet facilities compared to seventy per cent of households in urban areas. Moreover, in the absence of adequate transport, children from poorer families in rural areas are often denied access to adequate healthcare and education.

The health delivery system is inadequate, with poor outreach especially in remote rural areas, including the desert and tribal districts. A recent study reveals that of all sub-centres[1] running in government buildings, only 37 per cent had electricity and 40 per cent had water supplies. Only 73 per cent of sub-centres had adequate space for check-ups, 43 per cent for delivery services and 68 per cent for intrauterine device insertion (GoR 2004a).

The combined effects of poor nutritional levels, poor immunisation coverage and inadequate healthcare, along with gender bias, intensify the chances of intergenerational transfers of poverty.

***Social practices and customs***

In Rajasthan, a number of social practices, customs and values – such as female foeticide, infanticide, son preference, *nata*, child/early marriage, brideprice, and death feasts – also have implications for the intergenerational transmission of poverty. These factors facilitate or impede the lives of poor people and the development of children in particular. While many of these practices lead to the strengthening of community ties and relationships, they also put a financial strain on poor households as most have to borrow huge amounts of money to invest in these ceremonies, and enter into cycles of indebtedness which are difficult to break. However, non-adherence to these practices may also mean losing credibility within the village community and, in extreme cases, being ostracised (*jati bahar*). Some of the practices, like child/early marriage, also have direct consequences for children's mental and physical health.

Gender discrimination often exacerbates the impact of poverty on women and girls due to unequal access to resources such as food, health, wages and inheritance rights. This differential entitlement to resources and societal control over women's decision-making is transmitted intergenerationally, and limits women's abilities to realise their full potential and capabilities in Rajasthan.

***Policy framework***

It is evident that children who face situations in which they are unable to access nutritious food,

1 A sub-centre is the institution for basic health delivery provided by the Heath Department at the village level.

healthcare and quality education, and have to contribute long hours both in household activities and wage labour, are likely to be pushed into continued cycles of poverty. Effective mechanisms which involve different stakeholders are needed to help both households and children escape the long-term consequences of poverty.

In Rajasthan, several policies and programmes are in place to address issues of livelihood security, health and nutrition, and education. The state government provides employment through several poverty alleviation programmes such as: Swaran Jayanti Swarozgar Yojana; Desert Development Programme; Drought Prone Area Programme; Million Wells Scheme Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana; Indira Awas Yojana; and Famine Relief Works. In the health sector, the main focus is on reproductive and child health, including immunisation. Nutrition programmes include the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) and the Midday Meal Scheme. In the 1990s, some of the main educational programmes in the state included the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), the Shiksha Karmi Programme (SKP) and the Lok Jumbish. More recently, both Lok Jumbish and DPEP have become part of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). (See Box 7 for more information on these initiatives.) While many of these programmes have attempted to address life-course and intergenerational poverty, there is a wide gap between policy and practice.

The state initiated discussions on a child policy in 2002-03. The draft child policy, which was released in 2003, has specific components on childcare and nutrition, family environment and antenatal care, health and disability, education, and child safety and protection measures. However, the final draft policy is yet to be adopted by the Government of Rajasthan.

## 1.3 Objectives of the study

The present report is based on a two-year research study. Fieldwork was conducted in four villages in two districts (Banswara and Tonk) over a period of 15 months. It examines childhood poverty in the context of social and economic changes, social practices and attitudes, caste and gender differentials, and various policies and programmes in Rajasthan. With respect to the intergenerational transmission of poverty, the report assesses the impact of programmes which are specifically targeted at children. The main objectives of the research study are:

- understanding processes influencing deprivation of children in chronic and transient poverty situations in Rajasthan
- analysing processes of intergenerational transfers of poverty
- identifying factors leading to the breaking of poverty cycles
- drawing lessons for policy and practice.

Childhood poverty situations were examined in the light of the following key questions:

- What are the factors that shape childhood poverty in Rajasthan?
- What factors help break poverty cycles?

- What specific policies and strategies are in place to address childhood poverty?
- What are the intended and unintended outcomes of these policies? How can policies be made pro-child?

## 1.4 Research design and methodology

This research comprised a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the issues noted above and to provide an insight into the lived reality of children in the state. Both overt and covert social processes, as well as access to resources that shape the relationship between children and poverty, were studied using qualitative methods such as in-depth case studies, life histories, genealogies and time-lines. Quantitative data were collected and helped to substantiate the qualitative findings.

***Quantitative data***

Quantitative data were collected through a survey. There were separate questionnaires to collect household data, data related to children and fertility patterns. The household questionnaire focused on livelihoods and poverty, for example, occupational characteristics, assets, land ownership and use, livestock, credit, health, education and access to government programmes.

Data on children's access to crucial resources included information on schooling, healthcare and nutrition and the compilation of children's activity profiles. Three age groups (0-5 years, 6-10 years and 11-17 years) were included to capture age-specific patterns. A total of 1,281 children in these age groups were covered (454 children in the 0-5 age group, 394 in the 6-10 age group and 433 in the 11-17 age group).

***Qualitative research***

For an in-depth understanding of the experiences of poverty by both adults and children, several qualitative methods were used. These included:

*Genealogies*

Genealogies were prepared for all four villages. Genealogies helped provide a reference point for discussion of a range of issues concerning the composition and social organisation of the community. These provided a mapping of social relations in terms of kinship ties, inheritance patterns and social hierarchy. They also helped to cross-check data (pertaining to patterns of education, landholding, inheritance and fragmentation, involvement in seasonal migration and the nature of present-day intergenerational links) obtained from the household survey.

*Life histories*

Life histories were used to help understand the wider social context and provide significant insights into the lives of poor people and the dynamics of poverty. They served as an important tool for understanding the intergenerational transmission of poverty, and to show why and how people have fallen into poverty and the strategies they employed for addressing the difficulties

they faced. Life histories also helped to capture the persistent nature of poverty. Broad themes arising from the life histories included the role of migration in escaping from poverty; the impact of poor health and other shocks on the intergenerational transmission of poverty; and the role of education, child work and indebtedness in the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

*Case studies*
Eight case studies were prepared as part of this study. They looked at different aspects of children's situations, ie, children and work, children and education and the situation of the girl child.

*Focus group discussions*
A series of focus group discussions was organised with women, men and children in the sample villages. These helped to provide insights into people's perceptions of poverty and childhood, social and economic changes in the village, social practices and attitudes, children's aspirations and the impact of various policies and programmes on children. Village time-lines and profiles were compiled on the basis of these focus group discussions.

## 1.5 Study area

Banswara, a predominantly tribal district and Tonk, a drought-prone district, were selected to compare children's life situations and well-being in different geographical regions.

Banswara is located in the southern region of the state. The livelihood base is mainly rain-fed agriculture and casual labour. Agricultural land is fragmented with small-sized plots. Migration is both seasonal and long-term. Malnutrition among children is higher than in other districts in the state. Healthcare and schooling are influenced by these factors. Droughts are less frequent in Banswara than in Tonk district.

Tonk is located in the north-eastern part of Rajasthan. Rain-fed agriculture is largely practised, but one-third of the area is irrigated. Droughts affect agricultural yields and migration. A large proportion of the population is Scheduled Caste.

Two villages were identified in each of the districts – Hiriyagarhi and Sajwania in Banswara and Morda and Radhavallabhpura in Tonk district. Approximately 150 households were selected in each of the villages. A total of 563 households – both poor and non-poor – were included in the study. The fieldwork in both the districts was spread over a period of 15 months.

## 1.6 Desk study: a review of literature

A detailed review of literature was first undertaken to examine the effects of poverty on children. Given the stark inequalities in well-being in Rajasthan based on gender and caste, the paper explored how discrimination based on these social differences affects children in poverty. The

review found that no systematic analyses of childhood poverty and intergenerational poverty have been undertaken in the state. The differential access of families and children to key resources indicates that deprivation exists at many levels and, when combined, may lead to intergenerational poverty cycles.

## 1.7 Outline of report

This introductory chapter has provided the conceptual framework for understanding childhood and intergenerational transfers of poverty, and has also presented the objectives, research design and methodology of the study. Chapter 2 profiles the study areas and analyses how environmental conditions have changed over time in order to understand the implications for childhood and intergenerational transmissions of poverty. Chapter 3 provides a detailed analysis of the income levels and assets owned by the households in the sample villages in order to understand issues related to children's work, migration and indebtedness. Chapter 4 analyses the educational status of children to understand how the intergenerational transfer of poverty can take place due to a lack of human capital. Chapter 5 looks at the health and nutritional status of women and children as they are important factors in understanding childhood poverty and have serious consequences for intergenerational transfers of poverty. Chapter 6 focuses on the main policies and programmes addressing the needs of children in the state to highlight the gaps in the study area. This concluding chapter of the report presents the main findings along with the emerging policy implications.

# 2. Depleting environment and intergenerational transfers of poverty

## 2.1 Introduction

The degradation of the environment and depletion of natural resources, particularly common property resources, adversely affect the livelihoods of both present and future generations. The chronically poor, particularly those living in remote rural areas of Rajasthan, experience resource constraints as a result of ecology and climate more intensely than other groups. This chapter presents the profiles of the study areas based on time-lines[2] and village profiles. It analyses how environmental conditions have changed over time in order to understand the implications for childhood and intergenerational transmission of poverty.

## 2.2 Rajasthan: changing environmental conditions

Rajasthan is the largest state of India, situated in the north-west of the country. More than half the state lies in the arid and semi-arid regions that constitute a major part of the Thar Desert. Livelihoods are strongly determined by natural, human, social, physical and financial capitals and by the prevailing policy and institutional contexts. Distribution of, and access to, different capitals and institutional entitlements and processes are highly influenced by caste, social status and gender in Rajasthan (Aravali 2003). Assets owned by the household, employment status and fluctuations in their income and consumption are important indicators of the vulnerability of livelihoods, which can often lead to (greater) poverty. Poor people are mainly dependent on casual wage labour within and outside their community for their livelihoods. However, both demand for labour and the level of wages fluctuate seasonally (Bhargava and Sharma 2002). Poor educational status, poor health, limited access to credit and social exclusion further constrain the income-generating capacities of poor people.

Rajasthan, with its low resource productivity and low density of vegetation is vulnerable to the vagaries of rainfall, particularly the monsoons. Thus, households with a fragile livelihood base are exposed to various uncertainties, risks and stress. There is marked seasonality and variability of rainfall in the state in general, and in the western half in particular. This is dramatically exemplified by the occurrence of both droughts and floods. While often of short duration, droughts can have long-term and persistently adverse impacts and implications for poor people's livelihoods and survival strategies (eg, loss of land, cattle, household goods and valuables). Debt bondage and bonded labour are often the result of external shocks, such as droughts, to the peasant economy (GoR 2000). The impact of drought on children's lives is substantial – it impacts on children's food intake, health and education, and can push them into wage labour.

The availability of water has strongly conditioned the nature of agriculture and farming practices in various parts of the state. Rajasthan makes up about five per cent of the country's total population and

[2] All the time-lines were primarily based on people's ability to recall and might therefore present a more romanticised picture of the situation 50 years ago.

ten per cent of the geographic area, but only has a one per cent share of the country's water resources. Scant rainfall, coupled with indiscriminate tapping of groundwater for irrigation and industrial purposes, has led to a steady rate of depletion of the water table by one metre per year. A recent survey of 122 hamlets in nine districts indicated that there were serious water shortages in most areas when the drought was at its peak in large parts of rural Rajasthan in 2002-03 (Sivakumar and Kerbart 2004). One-fifth of the hamlets had no access to any functional water source, about half of the hamlets relied on a single source of water, while only a quarter had two water sources. People in 81 per cent of the hamlets reported that at least one source of drinking water had dried up, while many more were about to dry up.

Forests are another important livelihood source for poor people in Rajasthan. Approximately five million tribal people derive seasonal incomes through the collection, processing, transportation and marketing of non-timber forest produce. The high incidence of poverty in forest-based regions is related to the erosion of the entitlements of poor people to access and utilise natural resources, low levels of infrastructural development and social exclusion, all of which reinforce each other. People from Scheduled Tribes also experience problems in accessing forest produce because these are controlled by the government, which denies them 'traditional' free access. All these factors can have long-term consequences which may have an impact on children's lives, as well as lead to intergenerational transfers of poverty.

A characteristic feature of Rajasthan is the large tracts of permanent pasture or grazing lands. There are also large mountainous areas, as well as barren and uncultivable land. According to land-use classification, about 15 per cent of land was culturable waste,[3] 11 per cent was fallow, 8 per cent barren, 7 per cent under forests, 5 per cent was pasture and grazing land and 5 per cent was for non-agricultural use (GoR 2002). All the above-mentioned land is mainly used for grazing livestock. Unprotected forests and pastureland are continuously subject to degradation and a decline in agricultural productivity as a result of uncontrolled use and grazing. The regeneration of natural resources, as well as access to and returns from these assets, are generally determined according to customary norms or government-enforced laws. In most regions of the state, the endowment of common property resources (eg, forest products and grasses) determines the numbers and yield from livestock. Where common property resources are robust, communities own more livestock and their distribution is less skewed, while in areas with depleted common property resources poor people often own few livestock because they have to be stall-fed from agricultural produce.

## 2.3 Study areas

***Banswara***

The district of Banswara forms part of the region known as Bagar or Vagad. The district is located in the southern region of the state and borders Madhya Pradesh in the east and south. The western and central parts of the district are cultivable. The plains are mostly covered by black cotton soil (so named because this fertile, loamy black soil is suitable for growing cotton). The drainage system forms part of river Mahi, which originates near Dhar in Madhya Pradesh. With the completion of

[3] Degraded land which could be cultivated but is lying waste.

the Mahi Bajaj project,[4] the western part of the district has been well-irrigated. However, there is a drastic difference between the irrigated and non-irrigated areas of the district.

Banswara district is a predominantly *Bhil* (tribal) area. Nearly 31 per cent of the entire *Bhil* population of Rajasthan is found in the district. The total population of the district is 1,500,420. As of 2001, the sex ratio of the district was 978 females per 1,000 males compared to 922 for the state. The total literacy rate was recorded at 44 per cent and is the lowest in the state, with rural female literacy rates of 24 per cent (Census of India 2001).

The two villages Hiriyagarhi and Sajwania, which were selected for this study, are located in the Peepalkhunt block, one of the poorest blocks in the district. The Banswara-Ratlam (in Madhya Pradesh) road runs close to these villages. There are 182 and 165 households respectively in the two villages.

The natural resources in the area have gradually declined in the past 50 years. According to community members, 50 years ago the area had a thick forest cover and the villagers had to walk through the forest to access the Banswara-Ratlam road to use transport facilities. Very few would venture into the forest alone. People always travelled in groups with thick sticks, as there was a danger of wild animals, and most avoided walking around at night.

While the decline in forest cover may be attributed to the spread of agriculture and population pressure, the village community hold the Forest Department responsible because they feel that the officials are corrupt and are involved in the illegal felling of trees. Forest depletion has led to a decline in the consumption of fruits, the use of local herbs and the availability of fodder for cattle.

For both villages, village timelines reveal that 50 years ago there were adequate supplies of drinking water: the common wells (although few in number) and several rivulets were filled with water throughout the year. Water supply was still adequate two decades ago, and was sufficient for people's needs. However, in the last three to four years, both villages have experienced an acute shortage of drinking water because the wells and rivulets have dried up, the groundwater level has drastically receded, and many of the hand-pumps in both villages are dysfunctional.

The occupational profiles of the villages reveal that 50 years ago there was total dependence on agriculture, livestock rearing and selling wood (Sagwan or teak) from the nearby forests. Even 20-25 years ago, the majority of households were dependent on agriculture, and about 20 per cent combined agriculture and livestock rearing. In recent years, due to severe drought conditions, livestock rearing has declined. As forests have been depleted, there has been a gradual shift towards casual labour, with many households migrating in search of work.

The decline in the forest area, depleting water levels and changing occupational patterns have implications for childhood poverty and intergenerational poverty. For example, children who have the responsibility for grazing animals, fetching water, and collecting fuelwood have to go further and spend more hours on these chores which invariably affects the regularity of their schooling.

[4] A multi-purpose project started in 1959 for irrigation and power generation.

***Tonk***

Tonk is located in the north-eastern part of Rajasthan, bordering Jaipur, Sawaimadhopur, Ajmer and Bundi districts. The River Banas flows through the district and bifurcates into tributaries. The district is flat in general elevation with rocky, scrubby hills, and is divided by the River Banas. The soil is fertile, but somewhat sandy, and groundwater is also limited. The total population of the district is 1,211,343. In 2001, the sex ratio was recorded at 936 females for every 1,000 males, which is slightly higher than the state average. The literacy rate was recorded as 52 per cent; with the female rural literacy rate at 26 per cent (Census of India 2001).

The average water table is low and irrigation potential is limited because of the rock formations in the district. Agriculture is the main occupation of poor and vulnerable groups, and is characterised by low productivity. There is seasonal migration to nearby towns and cities (ie, Tonk, Jaipur and Delhi) in search of employment. Due to the non-availability of water for irrigation, the poor largely depend on rain-fed agriculture. A special feature of this district is its minority population of mainly Muslims, although there were no significant Muslim communities in either of the villages selected for this study.

The two villages selected for study in Tonk district, Morda and Radhavallabhpura, are located in Todaraisingh block. River Banas is two kilometres from Morda and five kilometres from Radhavallabhpura. A large part of the common lands has been allotted to households who have been relocated from the Bisalpur dam area.[5]

The total population of Morda is 905 (469 men and 436 women) with 138 households. There are a total of 169 households in Radhavallabhpura. The villages are mainly dominated by Rajputs, Bairwas and Gujar communities. Lower caste households from the Dholi, Bhat, Bhand and Bairwa communities are located outside the main village, which is indicative of the discrimination of lower castes. Rajput, Brahmin, Gujar and Kumawats do not socialise with Bairwas, Dholis, Bhats and Bhands. The two villages were originally located closer to the banks of River Banas, but it flooded the villages in about 1944. All the *kuccha* houses were washed away and the villagers took refuge in the upper embankment of the village pond. When the river receded, the people of other castes returned to their previous areas of settlement, but those of the Bairwa caste settled in the periphery, especially in Radhavallabhpura village.

Fifty years ago, common dug wells were constructed in the village. After the construction of Bisalpur dam, the water level in the Banas declined considerably and the wells dried up. Currently, there are private wells for drinking water, and also wells for irrigation, but the water level in all wells is receding. According to an informant in the community:

> *"Ever since the Banas River dried, there is a serious water problem in the village as there is no water in these wells. Most of the hand pumps are dysfunctional, others have saline water or contain a high level of fluoride concentrate, and only a few are providing potable water."*

There are separate wells and hand pumps for Bairwas, and they use the water for both drinking and for their livestock.

5 Bisalpur irrigation and water supply project was started in 1986, with the aim of providing drinking water to urban areas in central Rajasthan and for surface irrigation, mainly in Tonk district. Displaced people were to be provided with agricultural land for resettlement in Tonk and the neighbouring districts of Ajmer and Bundi, over a total area of 2553.90 ha.

Village time-lines reveal that common property resources (mainly grazing land) in the villages have decreased considerably over the past 50 years. Many of the people who had lived earlier in the Bisalpur flood zone have been relocated to this area. Five years ago, the government allotted the common lands to displaced persons.[6] According to the residents of the two villages, in the past, pasturelands provided a means of support for cattle. The majority of people who did not own agricultural land kept one or two cows and buffaloes so that there was no shortage of milk, curd and *ghee* (clarified butter).

Occupational patterns have changed over time. Agriculture and livestock rearing were the main occupations 50 years ago for the majority of households. Only around 20 per cent of households were dependent on casual labour. However, severe drought periods in recent years have forced more households to take up wage labour. At present, Bairwa households are engaged in both agriculture and casual labour. Among the Kumawat and Gujar communities, there has been a shift in traditional occupation – from livestock to agriculture. People report that the main difference between the past and present is that crop production per *bigha* has declined. Irrigation facilities were available and there was no shortage of water. However, today the situation has changed drastically with the depleting water table.

Fifty years ago, livestock was plentiful. However, animal husbandry was severely affected during the drought of 2002-03. People recount that there were about 5,000 sheep and goats and 500 cows/buffaloes in the village. Each farmer had a pair of buffaloes, but drought and the ensuing scarcity of fodder forced many households either to sell or abandon their livestock. This also affected nutritional intake as households reduced the consumption of dairy products during this period.

Most of the households in the village own four to five cows, buffaloes, goats and one ox. With depleting livestock, the quantity of milk has declined drastically. During the last five years, only Rajput and Gujar households have been able to take loans and invest in tractors and motorcycles. Most Bairwa households, in contrast, have had to sell their livestock, borrow money and pawn jewellery because of ill-health and for social ceremonies like death feasts and marriages in the family.

## 2.4 Changing environment and the intergenerational transfer of poverty

Changing environmental conditions, especially the depletion of land, water, forests resources and coping with recurrent drought, has impacted on the livelihood choices of people in the state. Meeting livelihood challenges in these difficult circumstances has serious consequences for children. Today, even very young children have to spend more time in household activities (eg, fetching water, fuelwood, fodder; agricultural operations; and animal husbandry). Since the distances involved have increased, the time taken to do certain tasks has also consequently increased, resulting in reduced time for study, recreation and play. Given these patterns, most children clearly lose out on their childhood and opportunities for development, which may predispose them to poverty in adulthood. Some of the issues relate to livelihood adaptations and children's work (migration patterns and the intergenerational transfer of poverty are discussed in detail in the next chapter).

6 Settlers from Banas.

# 3. Meeting livelihood challenges: children's work, migration and the intergenerational transfer of poverty

In the sample villages, rural livelihoods are mainly dependent on agriculture, animal husbandry and casual wage labour. Agriculture is characterised by small landholdings, poor quality of land, lack of irrigation facilities, animal husbandry of generally poor quality livestock, and not many wage earning opportunities. The income from these activities is so little that it needs to be supplemented through earnings from migration for wage labour. Moreover, livelihood strategies are mediated by fluctuations in agricultural output due to frequent droughts which exacerbate the vulnerability of poor households. As highlighted in the previous chapter, the failure to protect the environment over the last fifty years in the sample villages has led to severe problems relating to water and grazing lands. The present chapter examines the impact on agriculture and animal husbandry activities at the household level.

Given the existing livelihood conditions, this chapter also focuses on how and why children are engaged in certain livelihood strategies early in life. As households engage in a repertoire of low value-added activities, they require more labour, and as adults work for wages, they push children into a number of household activities. Children are particularly involved in tasks such as harvesting crops, cleaning grains, collecting fuelwood, fetching water and looking after siblings. The migration of parents also has direct implications for children's well-being, as we discuss later in this chapter.

This chapter analyses the asset endowment, income levels, wage earning opportunities, migration and indebtedness of households in the study area[7] and the implications for children.

## 3.1 Size of households

A significant challenge to livelihoods in a natural environment where productive resources are continuously declining is the increasing population. Sample villages report large family sizes which reflects the desire to have more children (especially boys), who are expected to contribute to household income and livelihood security. However, this is often at the cost of their education and the natural resources. In the sample villages, the average household size is 5.5 in Banswara and 5.7 in Tonk, with some nuclear households having as many as 11 members (see Table 1). While households currently compete for their share in the village resource endowment (eg, fuelwood, grazing lands and water), the increasing population will force future generations into even greater competition for natural resources in the future.

***Table 1: Range of household size and average size in sample villages***

| Type of household | Banswara | | Tonk | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Range | Average | Range | Average |
| Nuclear | 1-10 | 5.2 | 1-11 | 5.2 |
| Joint | 4-14 | 6.6 | 4-15 | 6.9 |
| All | 1-14 | 5.5 | 1-15 | 5.7 |

7 The data for this purpose were collated from three surveys undertaken in the four villages: viz. a household questionnaire, fertility schedule and children's schedule. For the purpose of analysis, households were classified according to socio-economic status which was based on reported income.

## 3.2 Incomes of households

Total household incomes (aggregate from all sources)[8] are low and, based on per capita income estimates, the proportion of households below Rs. 4,000 per capita per annum (the official consumption poverty line) is 91 per cent and 79 per cent in Banswara and Tonk respectively. To this extent, livelihoods are less insecure in the Tonk villages. The depth of poverty is also high, with more than half the households in Banswara and more than a third in Tonk below a per capita per annum level of Rs. 2,000 (see Table 2).

The low levels of per capita income for a large proportion of households, combined with a desire in the community for many children, suggests the potential for an intergenerational transfer of poverty. Of course, the situation could change if the communities acquired more assets, increased productivity of assets or augmented human capital to increase incomes.

***Table 2: Distribution of households by income group***

| Type of household | Banswara | | Tonk | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Income group Rs. per capita per annum | Number of households | Percentage | Number of households | Percentage |
| Up to 2,000 | 147 | 53.8 | 109 | 38.8 |
| 2,000 to 4,000 | 102 | 37.4 | 114 | 40.6 |
| Above 4,000 | 24 | 8.8 | 58 | 20.6 |
| Total | 273 | 100 | 281 | 100 |

Note: The differences in incomes of households between districts are statistically significant at the five per cent level.

## 3.3 Income from assets owned: agriculture and animal husbandry

Livelihood strategies centre around agriculture, and time off from cultivating one's own land is spent on wage labour. Thus, land is an important asset and, if irrigated, produces more food. Almost all households own land, except 0.7 per cent in Banswara and 4.3 per cent in Tonk. However, only 4.8 per cent and 7.5 per cent of households respectively own irrigated land, with the majority relying only on rain-fed crops. Table 3 summarises the land situation of households. Better-off households own more land, with the disparity in land owned higher in Tonk than in Banswara, as seen in Table 4.

***Table 3: Land owned by households in Banswara and Tonk***

| Type of household | Banswara | | Tonk | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Percentage of households | Mean size (in *bighas*) | Percentage of households | Mean size (in *bighas*) |
| Landless | 0.7 | - | 4.3 | - |
| Unirrigated land | 97.4 | 3.8 | 99.3 | 7.9 |
| Irrigated land | 4.8 | 3.6 | 7.5 | 3.9 |

[8] Household income is the total income acquired from agriculture, livestock, wage labour and other sources.

***Table 4: Mean land size (in* bighas*) by income group and type of land***

| | Banswara | | Tonk | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Income group | Irrigated | Unirrigated | Irrigated | Unirrigated |
| Up to 2,000 | 3.9 | 3.7 | 1.3 | 5.6 |
| 2,000 to 4,000 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 4.4 | 7.2 |
| Above 4,000 | 1.5 | 3.7 | 5.0 | 12.8 |
| Total | 3.6 | 3.8 | 3.9 | 7.9 |

Cultivable land is finite. The size of landholdings owned by future generations will therefore be smaller, due to the division of holdings within households, unless land becomes more productive to offset the effect of the division of land. While this could happen with increased irrigation and advanced technology, it is unlikely given the environmental and economic conditions. If the next generation retains the existing fertility levels, the situation will worsen in the future. However, land is not the most vital asset for all households as far as livelihoods are concerned (see, for example, the group with an income of more than Rs. 4,000 whose mean irrigated land size holdings is actually smaller than that of lower income groups). This is because, as we shall discuss later, they have diversified their livelihoods. This points towards opportunities in the future, but those who are not able to diversify their incomes will remain dependent primarily on their low-productive land.

Another asset on which livelihoods are based is livestock. Half the households own cattle, goats or sheep. The average herd size of cattle and buffaloes is 1.6 and 1.5 in Banswara villages and Tonk villages respectively, but their milk yield is very low (1.3 and 2.5 litres per day respectively). Maintenance of dry or low yield cattle, goats and sheep is generally assigned to children who engage in this low-productive enterprise. Better-off households own larger herds of cattle, sheep and goats and the milk yield from cattle is also higher (see Table 6). Given the deteriorating status of common lands where livestock usually grazes, the likelihood of either the number of livestock or their yield increasing is low, pointing towards an intergenerational deterioration. It is clear that increasing the productivity of cattle could free children from this activity, as quality livestock is generally stall-fed and looked after by adults.

***Table 5: Distribution of livestock in sample villages***

| | Banswara | Tonk |
|---|---|---|
| Percentage of households owning cattle/buffalo | 58.8 | 53.8 |
| Percentage of households owning goats and sheep | 50.0 | 43.8 |

***Table 6: Average number of cattle, sheep and goats, and milk yield of cattle***

| Income group | Banswara | | | Tonk | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Average number of cattle | Average milk yield (litres per day) | Average number of goats and sheep | Average number of cattle | Average milk yield (litres per day) | Average number of goats and sheep |
| Up to 2,000 | 0.5 | 1.3 | 3.2 | 0.8 | 1.6 | 3.7 |
| 2,000 to 4,000 | 1.2 | 1.5 | 4.6 | 1.1 | 2.6 | 6.9 |
| Above 4,000 | 2.1 | 1.8 | 3.3 | 2.2 | 3.6 | 7.1 |

## 3.4 Children's work

Given the above scenario in rural Rajasthan, work is part of childhood for most children. When asked about the 'main occupation' for children, households gave the following responses. For children who attend school, education was described as the main occupation. For those not attending school, responses were: looking after siblings and attending to other household chores; agriculture; cattle grazing; and wage labour (see Table 7). However, even children who go to school also contribute significantly to other activities such as collecting fuelwood and fetching water. The mean time engagement of children in all activities is indicated in Table 8 for two age groups: 6-10 and 11-14.

Children in Banswara villages spend more time in household activities than those in Tonk villages. One of the reasons is the undulating terrain in Banswara resulting in more time spent walking than in Tonk. In Banswara villages, most boys in the 6-10 age group work for three hours or more, which increases to five hours or more as they grow older. In the high income groups, children work less than those in lower income groups. In the middle income group, time engagement of boys (age group 11-17) is marginally higher than in the lowest income group, possibly because of their marginally higher land and livestock endowment. The returns from tilling land and rearing livestock are not high enough to afford hiring wage labour, thus forcing children in such households to work longer to meet the labour demand. Girls spend 33-50 per cent more time than boys in various activities in all income and age groups. This deprives them more of educational opportunities than boys.

***Table 7: Main occupation of children aged 6-14 (percentage)***

| | Banswara | | Tonk | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Activity | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls |
| Looking after siblings | 4.1 | 23.7 | 0.9 | 24.7 |
| Agriculture | 4.9 | 3.4 | 4.2 | 2.6 |
| Cattle grazing | 14.4 | 21.2 | 2.3 | 2.6 |
| Wage labour | 4.5 | 2.3 | 1.4 | 2.6 |
| Attending school | 72.0 | 49.3 | 91.2 | 67.3 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

***Table 8: Mean time engagement of children in household activities (minutes per day)***

| | | Income group | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6-10 years | | Up to 2,000 | 2,000-4,000 | Above 4,000 | All |
| Banswara | Boys | 170.5 (N=78) | 210 (N=20) | 60 (N=1) | 178.9 (N=99) |
| | Girls | 261.5 (N=61) | 260 (N=15) | 187.5 (N=4) | 253.8 (N=80) |
| Tonk | Boys | 33.1 (N=59) | 78 (N=44) | 30 (N=8) | 50.6 (N=111) |
| | Girls | 154.6 (N=50) | 111 (N=31) | 113.1 (N=16) | 135 (N=97) |
| 11-17 years | | | | | |
| Banswara | Boys | 305.67 (N=85) | 312.14 (N=28) | 335 (N=12) | 314 (N=125) |
| | Girls | 506.38 (N=60) | 437.11 (N=19) | 382.5 (N=4) | 482.4 (N=83) |
| Tonk | Boys | 156.44 (N=63) | 159.67 (N=51) | 213 (N=25) | 169 (N=139) |
| | Girls | 403.42 (N=36) | 382.73 (N=30) | 273.68 (N=19) | 362.8 (N=85) |

Parents want their children to start working at an early age, given their livelihood conditions. There is a belief among parents in Banswara that boys should start helping in agricultural work by the age of 14; about 60 per cent of households expected boys to work when they are less than 11 years old. In Tonk, at least 50 per cent of parents would like their boys to work only after the age of 14. There is a perception in some households, especially in the higher income group, that boys should start working when they are older. Girls are expected to participate in work earlier than boys.

***Table 9: Parent's preferences for the age at which they expect boys to start working, by income group (percentage of households)***

| | Age group | Up to 2,000 | 2,000-4,000 | Above 4,000 | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Banswara | 6-8 | 4.9 | 5.9 | | 4.8 |
| | 9-11 | 32.8 | 29.4 | 31.3 | 31.6 |
| | 12-14 | 36.1 | 34.1 | 37.5 | 34.6 |
| | 15-18 | 26.2 | 30.6 | 31.3 | 28.9 |
| Tonk | 6-8 | 1.1 | | | 0.4 |
| | 9-11 | 16.0 | 21.2 | 4.2 | 15.8 |
| | 12-14 | 39.4 | 28.3 | 33.3 | 33.6 |
| | 15-18 | 43.6 | 48.5 | 62.5 | 49.4 |

***Table 10: Parents' preferences for the age at which they expect girls to start working, by income group (percentage of households)***

| | Age group | Up to 2,000 | 2,000-4,000 | Above 4,000 | All |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Banswara | 6-8 | 34.1 | 27.9 | 31.3 | 31.3 |
| | 9-11 | 29.3 | 34.9 | 50.0 | 32.6 |
| | 12-14 | 27.6 | 27.9 | 18.8 | 27.8 |
| | 15-18 | 8.1 | 8.1 | | 7.4 |
| Tonk | 6-8 | 19.4 | 25.5 | 12.8 | 20.6 |
| | 9-11 | 33.3 | 18.4 | 25.5 | 25.6 |
| | 12-14 | 32.3 | 41.8 | 31.9 | 36.1 |
| | 15-18 | 14.0 | 13.3 | 27.7 | 16.4 |

The most deprived children are those who have to work for wages. As noted earlier, the proportion of children whose main occupation is wage labour is less than five per cent. Nevertheless, there are also other children who work for wages but who may also be attending school. Among children in the 11-17 age group, 18 and 9 per cent boys and 18 and 11 per cent girls work for wages in Banswara and Tonk villages respectively, when work is available. In Banswara, they engage mainly in construction work and harvesting the soya bean crops, while a few migrate with pastoralists. In Tonk, they work on construction sites, in carpentry and as conductors in private jeeps operating as local taxis. In wooden furniture manufacture, the earnings are high and children may migrate for ten months at a stretch. The average annual income of children from wage labour is higher than the per capita income of their income group. This indicates that they contribute substantially to their families, not only for their own consumption but towards the household as a whole (see Table 11).

***Table 11: Average annual income of children engaged in wage labour***

| | Banswara | | Tonk | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Income group | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Up to 2,000 | 3,394 | 3,126 | 7,600 | 1,600 |
| 2,000-4,000 | 5,000 | 2,400 | 6,550 | 2,725 |
| More than 4,000 | 7,500 | 0 | 5,750 | 0 |

The case of Shambu Katara[9] (see Box 1) provides an insight into the factors that push children into work at a young age and the hardships they face at the work site. His father, a farmer and masonry worker, had seven children and could not afford five years of primary schooling for any of them. All his children dropped out in Class 3 or 4. The land endowment of the family was not enough to produce grain to meet all the requirements of the family for the year. The father's sickness put the family into debt and forced Shambu into wage labour. Shambu is forced to work beyond his physical capacity and is ill-treated at the work site. He earns Rs. 50 per day when he gets work. In the present circumstances, like his father, Shambu will remain in a low income trap for his lifetime. Similar conditions were found in many homes in the sample villages: large family size, indebtedness, inability to afford primary education and thus a lack of capabilities, ensuring a life cycle of poverty in this and subsequent generations. The situation is even worse when families or individuals have to migrate for a long duration, as the discussion on migration indicates.

***Box 1: Shambu Katara: contributing to household income***

Sixteen-year-old Shambu belongs to a poor Scheduled Tribe family in Sajwania village of Banswara. He has four brothers and three sisters. His eldest brother is a painter and separated from the family after he got married. One of his elder sisters is also married. At present, Shambu lives with his parents and two younger sisters. His mother is illiterate and attends to domestic chores. Shambu's father studied up to Class 4 and is engaged in agriculture and masonry work. His younger sister, Manja, is 14 years old and dropped out of school after completing Class 3. Manja now also tends to domestic work. His 12-year-old sister, Leela, was not sent to school as the family could not afford it.

Shambu studied up to Class 4. His father fell ill, so Shambu could not take the final examination. As a result, he had to drop out of school. For the next two years, Shambu was mainly engaged in cattle grazing.

*Financial circumstances of the household*
Shambu's father is a marginal farmer and owns four *bighas* of unirrigated land. They own two bullocks, one cow and three hens. Besides agriculture, the family is dependent on Shambu's daily wages since the agricultural produce is insufficient to meet the family's consumption needs.

A few years ago, Shambu's father developed an eye problem. Shambu's family had to borrow Rs. 10,000 for his treatment. They also borrowed money for his sister's marriage. Both loans have yet to be repaid.

*Daily routine*
Shambu works as a mason in Banswara town, which is 30 kilometres from his village. It takes Shambu two hours to reach Banswara by jeep. He reaches the construction site at around 9am and has his lunch at 1pm. He rests for around half an hour after lunch. He works again from 2pm to 6pm. He leaves Banswara at six in the evening and reaches home by 8pm. He has to spend Rs. 20 per day on transportation by jeep. He goes to sleep after having his dinner at 9pm. Sometimes when there is less demand for work he does not get any. On such days he has to bear the transportation costs without earning anything. On average, he only has employment for 15-20 days per month.

Shambu earns Rs. 50 per day but spends Rs. 20 on travel. His earnings are used to meet the daily consumption needs of the family. He engages in wage labour for eight months per year, and for the remaining four months helps his father in agricultural activities.

[9] All names have been changed to preserve the anonymity of the individuals.

*Employer's behaviour towards Shambu*
Shambu says masonry involves very hard labour. He gets tired at noon and when he is not able to work fast, the contractor and *mistry* (supervisor) both scold him and compel him to complete his task quickly. They threaten him by saying, *"kaam dheere karoge to paise kaat lenge"* (we will deduct from your daily wages if you are slow). At such moments, Shambu feels very sad but unfortunately has to continue the work due to the financial circumstances of his family. He is given two cups of tea and a few *bidis* (local cigarettes) by his supervisor during the day. Since he does not smoke, he gives his *bidis* to his father.

*Aspirations*
Shambu wishes to become a contractor when he grows up and would like to earn a lot of money through this work. He aspires to repay the family's debts and wants to pull them from the cycle of poverty. He would like his sisters to get married and settle down. He says, "My brother left my parents after he got married. I will not leave my parents after marriage and will provide financial and emotional support to them throughout my life".

## 3.5 Understanding patterns of migration and consequences for children

Migration for wage labour used to be a livelihood option for the poorest households. In recent years, a larger number of families have been forced to migrate because they are unable to meet their livelihood needs in the village. Drought also increases migration as crops fail and there is shortage of food. Short-term migration is for a duration of four to six months, whereas long-term migration usually means that people move out of the village for more than a year, and visit the village annually during festivals. Men mostly migrate alone, although sometimes wives accompany the men, and occasionally the entire family migrates.

In Tonk villages, it used to be only Bairwas (belonging to the Scheduled Castes) who used to migrate, and even today their rate of migration is highest. Women and children are generally left behind. Most Bairwa men migrate to Delhi, Jaipur, Kota and Tonk town. Two men have also migrated to Saudi Arabia. They work as construction labourers, mechanics or carpenters. Besides the Bairwa community, Kumawats and Rajputs, both rather well-off communities, have also recently started migrating because of a lack of employment opportunities in the village.

In Banswara, migration for wage labour is a common option for households with small landholdings and few skills, as options for employment within the village are limited. The government's Famine Relief Works, implemented during drought periods, do not provide adequate employment. The main destinations of the migrating population are Surat, Ratlam, Kota, Ahmedabad, Kankroli, Udaipur, Bhilwara, Mandsor, Indore and Mumbai. They return to the village during the farming season or during festivals with the money they have earned. Earlier, only men used to migrate to nearby towns, but now there are a number of households where children accompany them, as indicated below.

Migration is increasingly becoming a viable livelihood strategy for all income groups.[10] At least one member migrated for wage labour from 15 per cent of households in Tonk and 33 per cent in Banswara across the income groups (Table 12). Children migrated from ten per cent of households in Banswara and five per cent of households in Tonk (Table 13). Children migrate with parents, except a few who migrate with shepherds. The mean annual income of children who migrate without their families is around Rs. 4,000 in Banswara and Rs. 2,400 in Tonk, the migration from the former being for a longer duration. Among such households, it constitutes a significant proportion of total income in the lowest income groups – 46 per cent in Banswara and 18 per cent in Tonk (see Table 14). Of children who migrate with their parents, 42 per cent from Banswara and 11 per cent from Tonk villages are illiterate. Of children who migrate, 20 per cent and 60 per cent respectively from Banswara and Tonk villages are enrolled in school and attend school when they are in the village.

***Table 12: Proportion of households from where at least one adult migrated in the last year (percentage)***

| Income group | Banswara | Tonk |
|---|---|---|
| Up to 2,000 | 15.4 | 33.2 |
| 2,000-4,000 | 18.5 | 35.6 |
| Above 4,000 | 18.7 | 33.7 |

Note: The differences in proportions are significant between districts at the one per cent level and are not significant across income groups.

***Table 13: Households from which children migrated in the last year (percentage)***

| Income group | Banswara | Tonk |
|---|---|---|
| Up to 2,000 | 10.2 | 5.5 |
| 2,000-4,000 | 10.8 | 2.6 |
| Above 4,000 | 4.2 | 10.3 |
| Total | 9.9 | 5.3 |

***Table 14: Child income as a proportion of household income where children migrate for wage labour***

| Income group | Banswara | Tonk |
|---|---|---|
| Up to 2,000 | 45.9 | 18.4 |
| 2,000-4,000 | 25.1 | 9.9 |
| Above 4,000 | 3.2 | 6.5 |

The consequences for children of migration are varied. In households where only male members migrate, children's household responsibilities increase: looking after crop waste, managing fodder for cattle, managing livestock, accessing markets, and even working for wages. The burden of work previously done by the father who has migrated is borne by the eldest child whose own workload is then shared with other children in the household. Children, both girls and boys, assist their mothers in doing household chores – cooking food, cleaning, washing clothes, etc. The increased

[10] A recent study by Moench and Dixit (2004) indicates that migration of men and women in search of employment and food, both within and outside the state, is common during drought. Migration can be of short and long duration and there are major intra-regional differences in migration patterns within the state. According to their study, migration was most common in the lowest income groups in the western region, with migration periods of six to nine months being most common. About 33 per cent of households surveyed reported that one or more family members had migrated. Long-term migration, ie, for more than a year, was reported by just six per cent of households and two cases of migration outside the country were reported. Their study also indicates that male members mainly migrate alone, except in a very few poor households where women migrate with men.

burden of household activities often leads to irregular schooling. However, because girls tend to be involved in more household chores, they are usually more adversely affected than boys.

In addition, in Banswara, there are cases of male children accompanying groups of pastoralists. These children are not only away from their parents, they miss out on regular schooling. When they return from the seasonal cycles with the pastoralists, their chances of joining mainstream education are very low. The case study of Vijay recounts the life of one such child in the study area. He dropped out of school when he was in Class 3 and moved with the pastoralists for two years, earning up to Rs. 900 per month. His earnings helped repay his family debt and also save some money for his own marriage. He no longer moves with the pastoralists, but having lost opportunities to attend school and acquire skills, he now works in a mine.

***Box 2: Children's migration with pastoralists: case of Vijay Marwal***

Vijay is the youngest in a family of nine. He is a 17-year-old tribal boy from the village Hiriyagarhi in the Peepalkhunt block of Banswara. His father, Jeevna, ekes out a living from agricultural labour but has been ill for a long time. His mother looks after the household chores, including animal husbandry. The family owns three *bighas* of land; however, severe drought conditions in the past three years did not produce a good harvest. He has six brothers. His eldest brother works as a casual labourer in the neighbouring villages. The family had to borrow a sum of Rs. 5,000 for the eldest brother's marriage. Vijay attended school until Class 3. He was barely seven years old when he began accompanying the Rebaris on their seasonal cycles, and as a result could never have completed his schooling. The family's acute poverty forced them to send him away from home, despite his young age.

He has accompanied the Rebaris three times. According to him, it started when he was playing outside his house and a Rebari asked him whether he would be interested in accompanying him and his family and their flock of sheep. When he agreed, the Rebari approached his family. Since many children from the same village had previously accompanied different groups of Rebaris, his parents had no hesitation in sending him. The parents entered into a written agreement with the Rebari before sending Vijay with him. As is obligatory, he gave an advance payment and informed the *panchayat* and the police about the arrangement. Vijay recounts that since other children from neighbouring villages had also done the same, he was not scared to go alone with the Rebaris. According to Vijay's family members, such arrangements with the Rebaris are common in the area. The Rebaris treat the children well and as part of their own families. They also provide the children with clothes and a wholesome diet. The Rebaris visit the homes of children from time to time and give money to the family as stipulated in the agreement.

*Migration cycle*

Vijay said that he first accompanied the Rebaris for a period of two years and received remuneration of Rs. 250 per month. Besides this, he was also given food and clothing for the entire duration. The second time, he accompanied them for a period of one year and received Rs. 700 per month. For the third time, he was gone for seven months and received Rs. 900 per month. Elaborating on his first journey with the Rebaris, Vijay recollected that they had travelled from Rajasthan to various places in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. The duration of the stay in each place was determined by the availability of water and grass/fodder. They had a total of 1,100 sheep and 3 boys shared the responsibility of looking after them. With the other boys, he accompanied the sheep for a distance of 40-50 kilometres per day. The other two boys were from the Choti Sarwan and Marwar areas of Rajasthan. Every six to seven

months they were required to accompany the sheep to Marwar, Western Rajasthan, where the wool was collected. None of the children deserted the flock or ran way.

*Daily routine*

Vijay would get up every morning at around 7am and milk the sheep, bath the younger children in the group, have his morning meal and accompany the sheep. The Rebari, before leaving the *dera* (camp), gave instructions for the route which they were to follow and where to stop. The Rebari's wife, *jiji*, would pack their lunch which they would carry with them. They would eat again when they returned in the evening. Hence they got a minimum of three meals per day. Vijay would bath once every four to five days. Very often, they had to keep awake to look after the sheep and take turns to guard the flocks. Often he had to walk with the sheep at night. Medicines for the sheep had to be ordered from Marwar, and were mixed with water and given to the sheep. Since the sheep would run very fast, he would whistle and call them back. The sheep recognised his whistle and would come back very quickly. The sheep had begun to recognise him and he enjoyed being with them. If he neglected the sheep, they would refuse to accompany him the next day.

According to Vijay, when he lived in the village his family was suffering from acute poverty and he would hardly get any food to eat. With the Rebaris, his diet included milk, *ghee*, *gur* (jaggery) and vegetables. If he ever felt a desire to eat anything special, the Rebari would fulfil his wish. The Rebari and his wife looked after Vijay and the other boys like their own children, and if any child ever ran away, the Rebari would blame his wife for not looking after them well. According to Vijay, the Rebari would visit Vijay's home every five to six months and pay his parents for his services. He would also provide Vijay with two sets of clothes and two pairs of shoes and slippers.

Vijay says, "Very often, we found time to play *Kabaddi* and snakes and ladders till midnight. Initially, when we had to walk long distances, I would feel tired but soon I got accustomed to walking and to my daily routine. During summers, we got time to rest for a couple of hours under the shade of the trees. During rains, we would pitch a tent and halt. The flocks of sheep were also accompanied by camels, donkeys and dogs".

*Some incidents*

According to Vijay, once when he was grazing the sheep a leopard picked up one of the lambs from the flock. This had really scared him. Another time, when he had taken the flock into one of the fields, they had destroyed the field. Similar incidents occurred on other occasions and conflicts had arisen between them and the farmers. On these occasions, the police had intervened and come to arrest them. The matter had been settled only after the Rebaris had apologised and compensated the farmers for the loss.

*Present status*

Vijay is no longer accompanying the Rebaris, even though they have repeatedly asked his parents to send him and have offered to pay Rs. 1,200 per month for his work. The money that he has earned has been used by his parents to repair the house, and some of it has been kept aside for his marriage as it is customary to pay brideprice.

Today Vijay is 17 years old and has been working in a mine in Kankroli, Udipur district for the past three or four years. He earns Rs. 2,000 per month plus expenses. Vijay asserts that, while he enjoyed accompanying the Rebaris, he prefers his present work because he can dress up like the 'educated' people and spend some of his money on himself, watching films and eating food at roadside *dhabas* (food and tea stalls). Says Vijay, "I do not want to go back to studies. I might get a better job in the future. Even if I don't get a better job, I am happy with my present lot".

## 3.6 Diversification of livelihoods and composition of income

Diversification of livelihoods is one way of ensuring better livelihoods and crossing the threshold of poverty. The analysis of composition of income sources reveals that in Banswara, while low income households derive 40-50 per cent of their income from wage labour (including migration), those with high income derive more than 50 per cent of their income from services and enterprises (Table 15). Agriculture and animal husbandry together provide only 30-35 per cent of the total income of the households.

Services and enterprises require a skilled labour force. As seen in Table 7, many boys and girls do not have education as their main 'occupation'. (This will be discussed more in the next chapter.) The present human capital of adults is low[11] and a majority of children not attending school is likely to face similar constraints in the future.

***Table 15: Composition of household income in sample villages by income group (percentage)***

| | Income group | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Income source | Up to 2,000 | 2,000-4,000 | Above 4,000 | All |
| **Banswara** | | | | |
| Agriculture | 38.1 | 30.9 | 11.2 | 30.0 |
| Animal husbandry | 5.3 | 6.4 | 1.4 | 4.9 |
| Wages | 43.7 | 45.2 | 31.8 | 41.9 |
| Services and enterprises | 12.9 | 17.5 | 55.6 | 23.2 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| **Tonk** | | | | |
| Agriculture | 31.4 | 27.3 | 16.0 | 23.0 |
| Animal husbandry | 5.0 | 8.9 | 5.6 | 6.6 |
| Wages | 52.7 | 50.7 | 27.2 | 40.4 |
| Sevices and enterprises | 10.9 | 13.1 | 51.2 | 30.0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

## 3.7 Liquidation of assets

In times of distress, some households liquidate their assets while others acquire assets. A larger proportion of households (19 per cent) in Tonk liquidated their assets than in Banswara (10 per cent) (see Table 16). The main reason for liquidating assets was to meet consumption needs during droughts. To some extent this shows a failure on the part of the state to provide assistance during periods of such distress. State-provided midday meals are also not available to children who do not go to school. Better state provisioning would help poor households limit the need for liquidating their assets.

***Table 16: Proportion of households liquidating or acquiring assets in the previous five years***

| Income group | Banswara | Tonk |
|---|---|---|
| Assets liquidated | 10.3 | 18.9 |
| Assets acquired | 12.5 | 11.0 |
| **Reason for liquidating assets** | | |
| Drought | 5.7 | 14.2 |
| Consumption needs | 1.8 | 1.8 |
| Festivals | 2.8 | 2.9 |

[11] The literacy rate among adult men is 51 and 69 per cent in the lowest and highest income groups in Banswara villages, and 72 and 87 per cent respectively in Tonk villages. Higher education is similarly skewed in favour of the higher income groups. The literacy rate among women is five and 26 per cent in lowest and highest income groups in Banswara villages, and 17 and 37 per cent respectively in Tonk villages.

## 3.8 Indebtedness

An analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data indicates a high level of indebtedness among the households in the sample villages. People reported that borrowing money to meet their needs was a major coping strategy. The role of moneylenders is significant, despite numerous targeted poverty alleviation programmes and schemes implemented for the poor and marginalised. Banks play a secondary role. The rate of interest charged by moneylenders ranges between 24 and 36 per cent annually. The loans are mostly used for social ceremonies such as marriage, death feasts and *nautra* and to pay *jhagara* in cases of *nata*. People also borrow money to purchase seeds, manure and livestock; illness is also a major reason for borrowing.

A high proportion of households is indebted: 84 per cent in Banswara and 93 per cent in Tonk. In Banswara, the mean amount of debt is Rs. 5,800 and does not vary significantly across income groups. In Tonk, the mean debt is Rs. 37,000, varying significantly across income groups. The difference in the mean value of debt between Banswara and Tonk suggests that households in Tonk have a greater capacity to repay, and their creditworthiness is greater. Well-off households become moneylenders.[12]

***Table 17: Mean value of debt incurred by households***

| Income group | Banswara | Tonk |
|---|---|---|
| Up to 2,000 | 5,905 | 28,856 |
| 2,000-4,000 | 5,773 | 30,592 |
| Above 4,000 | 5,300 | 66,600 |
| Total | 5,803 | 36,774 |

Note: The differences in means are significant between districts at the one per cent level of confidence. They are also significant between income groups in Tonk at the one per cent level of confidence. In Banswara, the differences in means are not significant across income groups.

### *Indebtedness and intergenerational transfers*

The cycle of indebtedness is often difficult to break, and invariably happens when households are unable to repay loans on time. In such situations, moneylenders double the rate of interest which pushes the household into greater impoverishment, and which continues from one generation to the next. The following case of Rajaram Bairwa is illustrative of people's inability to escape debt and poverty traps. Even when children add to the earnings of the household, the debt is not always cleared.

[12] In Morda and Radhavallabhpura villages in Tonk, there are two main castes which are involved in moneylending: the Gujars and the Bairwas. The amount of money they lend is between Rs. 50,000 and Rs. 60,000, with an interest rate of 24 per cent. Moneylenders in Tonk own large tracts of land, livestock and farming equipment like tractors and trolleys. The people of the Bairwa community usually borrow money from them for marriages and *mausar* (death feasts). However, due to recurrent droughts, in the last four to five years people have borrowed money for household expenses, like illness in the family for migration purposes and to purchase seeds, manure and livestock. They occasionally borrow from moneylenders in the neighbouring villages, and also from relatives. The amount borrowed from moneylenders is between Rs. 30,000 and Rs. 60,000.
In Sajwania village in Banswara, there are two moneylenders. Both own land and have large numbers of livestock; their earnings from agriculture and selling fish are also high. They lend Rs 5,000 to Rs. 150,000 at a high rate of interest, usually 24-36 per cent and double the interest rates if the loan is not repaid in time. In such cases, land is also mortgaged and the moneylender uses the agricultural produce from the land. Community members also borrow from moneylenders in the neighbouring towns of Danpur and Banswara. In Hiriyagarhi in Banswara, there is no moneylender within the village. In times of need, community members go to Danpur and borrow money, usually by pawning jewellery. In such cases, the borrower receives about half the value of the jewellery pawned as the loan amount. If the borrower is unable to repay the loan, he/she has to forfeit the jewellery.

***Box 3: Rajaram Bairwa: trapped in a vicious cycle of indebtedness***

Rajaram Bairwa was born in 1948 to a large family of 11 members. His father, Choturam, settled in Morda in 1943 and used to work in the fields of the local Rajput landlord.

During his childhood, Rajaram had a comfortable life as his family was economically well off. When Rajaram was seven years old, he was enrolled in the government primary school in Mor Bhatiyan because there was no school in Morda. Since his father was illiterate, he was keen to educate his children. However, Rajaram dropped out of school after completing Standard 8 as his elder brother died and his father wanted him to help in agricultural activities.

Rajaram was married at the young age of 14 when he was in Class 7 and the *gauna* took place when he was 20 yeas old. His wife gave birth to six children; four girls and two boys.

*The turning point*
In 1975, Rajaram's father died and a number of problems arose. Soon it became difficult to make ends meet, as the small piece of land did not give a substantial economic return. There were no other livelihood options in the village and Rajaram had to borrow money to help get through the difficult circumstances.

*The stay in Saudi Arabia*
Given the dire situation, Rajaram decided to go to Saudi Arabia to work in 1984. He contacted an agent in Tonk who told him that it would cost him Rs. 18,000 to migrate. Since Rajaram did not have the money, he sold his wife's jewellery and 20 goats to make the payment.

After a few days, he got his passport and visa, and a job offer for 700 Riyals. When Rajaram reached Saudi Arabia, he was informed that his job entailed looking after a poultry farm. He was made to sign a contract, which stated that he would only be paid 400 Riyals. When Rajaram protested, the poultry farm owner charged him with killing 2,000 chickens and had him arrested. When the case was heard, he was told that he could either get his job back and be paid 500 Riyals, or he could go back to India.

Rajaram decided to stay and worked for a period of two years and three months before returning to his village. He returned with Rs. 30,000 which he used to pay off his debts and marry off two of his daughters. Recalling his stay in a foreign country, he stated that he had problems related to food, language and the owner of the poultry farm who ill-treated him.

*Back in the village*
On his return, Rajaram went back to farming. During the drought of 1987 there was little agricultural produce. The drying up of the Banas River also led to a severe water crisis in the area. Between 1989 and 2002, Rajaram again borrowed Rs. 42,000 from the moneylender and relatives for the marriage of his other daughters. The relatives charged him a high interest rate of 24 per cent. He has not been able to repay his debts and is trapped in a vicious cycle of indebtedness.

Today, Rajaram is 56 years old but continues to struggle to make ends meet. He grazes his livestock and is also engaged in casual labour. His eldest son works as a casual labourer and earns Rs. 1,200 per month, which ensures that the family can have two meals a day.

Rajaram laments, "My children will only inherit my indebtedness and poverty and I cannot give them anything else".

## 3.9 Conclusions

This chapter has outlined how and why children are pushed into poverty traps.

It is clear that the carrying capacity of the environment is being driven to the margins by the increasing population. Households therefore require more time to access resources in the commons. This primarily falls on children who spend considerable time in low-value enterprises such as fetching water, collecting fuelwood and grazing livestock. Small pieces of rain-fed land with low yields are labour-intensive and demand the involvement of children, especially during peak periods. Migration of one or more parents further shifts the burden of work onto children. Overall, at the household level there is a demand for labour, not only to engage in these low-value enterprises, but also to attend to domestic chores such as looking after siblings. In the poorest households, children also work for wages.

Households, therefore, consider engaging children in work to be a rational decision. The social construction of gender roles leads to girls working more hours than boys. Large family size, indebtedness, inability to afford primary education and engaging in unpaid or low paid work are factors that lead to a lifecycle of poverty in this and subsequent generations.

In the undulating terrain of Banswara, time engagement of children is almost double that of children in the Tonk villages, which are located in the plains of the Banas River. In Tonk villages, livelihoods are less insecure and are more diversified, especially in the higher income groups with a significant proportion of household incomes derived from services and enterprises. Their perception of children's work is different from that in Banswara. A smaller proportion of households in Tonk asserted that they prefer children to work from an early age because they have diversified livelihoods and more educational opportunities. The next chapter attempts to understand the constraints and opportunities in building human capital through education.

# 4. Building human capital: education and intergenerational transfers of poverty

This chapter analyses the education status in the sample villages to understand how intergenerational cycles of poverty are transferred or broken.

The preceding chapter showed that asset-poor households will not be able to sustain a livelihood from limited agricultural land and small herds of livestock in the future. Livelihoods would then depend less on traditional means and more on the quality of human capital in demand by services and enterprises. In such a situation, the quality of education for children is of critical importance to asset-poor households. For children from such households, education is likely to break cycles of poverty. Without education they will be pushed into deprivation, continuing to work, like their parents, as casual wage labourers.

There are many challenges to acquiring education. The opportunity costs of education are high; the returns to education are discounted at a very high rate; and education fails to be a priority when current livelihoods are at stake. Despite this, there is an overall motivation among parents for educating children and they realise that education is an important tool for enhancing the future prospects of their children. However, their willingness is inhibited by a number of supply-side constraints, such as the availability of functioning schools in remote areas, teacher absenteeism, lack of women teachers, poor quality education, and inadequacy in upper primary schooling infrastructure. There are additional deterrents to girls' education in particular. There is a distinct gender difference in the educational aspirations for boys and girls, with marriage being a central consideration for girls and education, therefore, not a priority. Besides, parents are reluctant to allow their daughters to attend upper primary school outside their village because of safety concerns for them.

## 4.1 Intergenerational shifts in educational attainments

A distinct intergenerational shift can be seen in educational attainments in the study areas (see Table 18). Focus groups discussed the educational attainments of the last 5 generations, covering a period of around 50 years. In the first two generations, no men or women were literate in the sample villages. In all four selected villages, the village time-lines reveal that schooling facilities have only been available in the last two decades. Early educational initiatives were provided by individuals who taught children to read and write. More specifically, in Banswara tribal children were not allowed into neighbouring schools as education was not regarded to be for tribal children. Only children from landholding Rajput families had access to education. The third generation had some men with rudimentary reading and writing skills, but still no women were literate. Only in the last 20 years has there been an increase in the number of educated people, far more in the Tonk villages than in Banswara villages. Only 12 per cent of men in Banswara

and 40 per cent in Tonk have education above primary level. Only in the last ten years have adults entered services and enterprises because of their educational attainments.

***Table 18: Intergenerational shift in education***

| | Generation 1 | Generation 2 | Generation 3 | Generations 4 and 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Education** | None | None | Initiated | Increased awareness of education |
| | | | Low literacy rates among men | Increased level of education |
| | | | Women's education: none | Introduction of women to education |
| | | | | Adults start entering into services because of educational attainments |

## 4.2 Desired level of education

Interaction with parents about the years of schooling they envisaged for their children revealed major differences in parents' perceptions between the two districts. In the Tonk villages, parents desired far higher educational attainments for their children than those in Banswara. While in Tonk, no parents wanted to limit boys' education to the primary level, as many as two-thirds of parents in Banswara only desired primary education for boys (see Figures 1 and 2). This could be attributed to the significant differences in adult educational attainments between the two districts: male literacy rates in Banswara are 56 per cent and are 75 per cent in Tonk villages. Men in Tonk have also attained higher educational levels (see Table 19). Educational levels of adults influence what they desire for their children; in Tonk villages one-third of parents desired higher secondary education for their sons compared to only 12 per cent in Banswara villages. Undoubtedly, there is not a clear intergenerational transfer of poor levels of education in both districts, but the aspirations of parents in Banswara are far lower than those in Tonk.

In both districts, most parents desire more education for boys than they had themselves, but they desire far less educational attainments for girls. The differences are glaring. In Tonk, for example, all parents desire boys to study above the primary level, but 44 per cent want their girls to study to no more than the primary level. Even when the father is literate, girls' education is not a priority and girls may not be enrolled in schools. In the genealogical chart presented in Figure 3, we have a case where both parents are literate, and they have six children of whom five are of school age. Of the three girls, only one is sent to school, while both boys are attending school. In another household where both parents are literate, all three sons of school age are enrolled in school. In yet another household with five sons and one daughter, where both parents are illiterate, only two of the boys go to school. There is clear evidence that, even when parents are illiterate, they try to send their children to school. However, when there is a large family, the likelihood of children being educated is low and girls are discriminated against even if parents are literate. We elaborate on girls' education in the following section.

*Figure 1: Desired education level for boys: Banswara and Tonk*

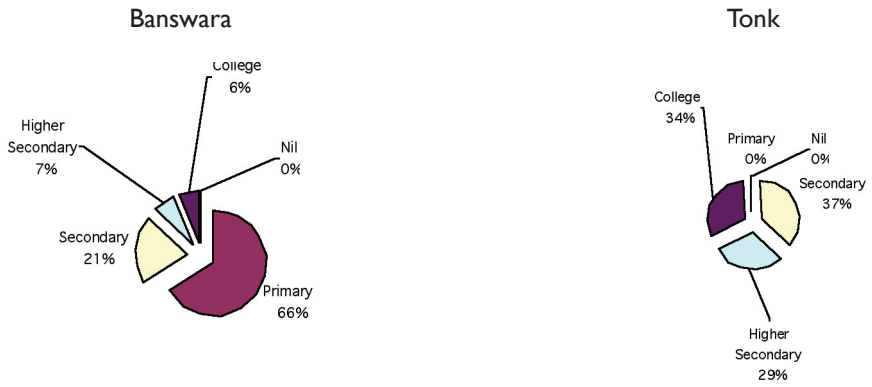



*Figure 2: Desired education level for girls: Banswara and Tonk*

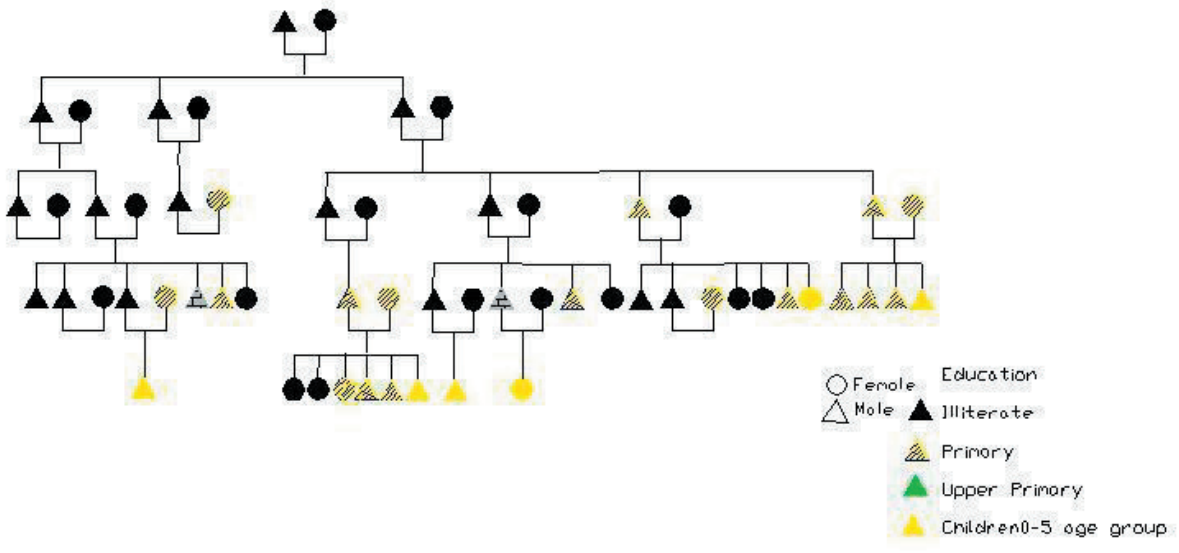

*Table 19: Education levels of adults (19-49 age group)*

| | Male | | | | Female | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Income group | Up to 2,000 | 2,000-4,000 | Above 4,000 | All | Up to 2,000 | 2,000-4,000 | Above 4,000 | All |
| **Banswara** | | | | | | | | |
| Illiterate | 50 | 40 | 31 | 44 | 95 | 88 | 77 | 90 |
| Neo-literate* | 13 | 16 | 16 | 14 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 4 |
| Up to primary | 28 | 31 | 25 | 29 | 2 | 7 | 12 | 5 |
| Above primary and up to higher secondary | 9 | 13 | 28 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 1 |
| College | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| **Tonk** | | | | | | | | |
| Illiterate | 30 | 26 | 12 | 25 | 84 | 79 | 66 | 78 |
| Neo-literate* | 10 | 17 | 6 | 12 | 5 | 9 | 5 | 7 |
| Up to primary | 29 | 21 | 16 | 23 | 11 | 9 | 18 | 11 |
| Above primary and up to higher secondary | 29 | 33 | 44 | 33 | 1 | 3 | 12 | 4 |
| College | 2 | 4 | 22 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Note: Primary requires 5 years and higher secondary 12 years of education. Differences across districts and income groups are significant at the five per cent level.

* Those who did not receive formal education but can read and write.

*Figure 3: A genealogical chart of education level*




Source: Field survey

## 4.3 Gender, education and intergenerational transfers

Gender inequalities in education are one aspect of the systemic discrimination against girls and women in Rajasthan, and reveal how notions of gender relations are transmitted from one generation to another. There are gender differentials not only in chances of school entry and retention, but in the kind of environment provided at home where social norms and customs determine the roles women and men can perform in the family and community. The social expectations for girls revolve around domestic chores and are influenced by considerations of marriage, which is regarded as the ultimate goal for a girl. The two case studies presented in the following pages illustrate this point.

The first case study illustrates that gender inequality in educational participation is clear in the sample villages. It is evident that upper primary education is still elusive for girls. Even if a girl wishes to study, the choices are limited as few girls are encouraged to pursue their education (see Box 4).

***Box 4: Kamlesh Kanwar: missing school***

Fourteen-year-old Kamlesh lives in Morda, Tonk. She is the eldest of three siblings: two sisters and one brother. Her brother is enrolled in Class 9 and her younger sister is in Class 5 in a private school. Her mother is not literate and her father studied up to Class 4. They live in a thatched house with two rooms and there is a covered space for the livestock.

Kamlesh dropped out of school after finishing Class 5. She wanted to study further, but there was no upper primary school in the village and her parents did not want to send her to a school outside the village. Also, since Kamlesh hails from a Rajput family, there are restrictions on her mobility.

Kamlesh's father is a farmer and owns 12 *bighas* of land, a mare, buffalo and a pair of oxen. The land does not yield much, as there are no sources of irrigation. The mare is often rented out during the marriage season, as it is customary that the bridegroom ride a mare at marriage. Kamlesh's father earns around Rs. 6,000-7,000 during the year. During the recent drought, he also worked in the Famine Relief Work. However, since his earnings were little, he also had to take a loan of Rs. 15,000 for meeting household consumption needs which is yet to be repaid. Kamlesh's mother decided to work and started doing embroidery (with sequins) to supplement the family income.

Kamlesh, and her mother and sister embroider one *chunari* (big stole) in two days. When eight to ten stoles are ready, Kamlesh's brother takes them to Toda Raisingh, sells them in the market and comes back with new orders. All the money earned, which is used for household needs, is kept by her mother. Kamlesh spends about six hours per day on the embroidery work.

In January 2004, the school teacher approached Kamlesh's father and told him that if Kamlesh cooked the midday meal in the school and spent about two hours in the school, she could earn some money. Kamlesh's father agreed to send Kamlesh to the school.

Kamlesh cooked and served the *ghooghry* for the midday meal in the school for two months. She was paid Rs. 400 for one month. The teacher told her that the department had only released the money for one month. Kamlesh gave the money she earned to her mother who bought her two sets of clothes.

Kamlesh feels disappointed that she could not study further. She also feels that Rajput women have too many restrictions and cites this as the main reason for her withdrawal from school. Kamlesh is allowed to visit her friends but does not eat or drink in their homes. She is not allowed to go out of the village on her own.

She says, "I wish I could have studied further, I too could have taken up a job and earned a living". Her parents feel that if they were to marry Kamlesh to an educated boy, they would have to pay a large sum as dowry, which they cannot afford.

The second case study, as with the focus group discussions, clearly reveals that attitudes to girls' education are shifting, albeit slowly, with increasing numbers of women desiring education for girls and also wanting their daughters to achieve higher levels education than their own. This study demonstrates that when there is parental support girls do get a chance to study.

***Box 5: Laxmi Choudhary***

Sixteen-year-old Laxmi is the most educated girl in Radhavallabhpura. She is also the first girl to learn how to ride a bicycle, which she uses to get to school. Laxmi's father is a farmer and owns 15 *bighas* of land, 10 goats and a buffalo. The agricultural yield is poor as there is no irrigation, and the drying up of the Banas River has also impacted on most of the land in this area.

Laxmi has two brothers and a sister. Her elder brother grazes the livestock and goes to the market to sell milk. He carries six kilograms of milk in cans to the market on a bicycle and sells it for Rs. 12 per kilogram. The household earns Rs. 2,000 per month from the milk.

Laxmi's older sister never attended school and was married six years ago. But she has been living with her parents for the last two years as her husband has severe psychological problems. Laxmi's younger brother is in Class 9 in Khareda.

When Laxmi was ten years old and in Class 5, she was married off to Shivnarain from Vivola in Tonk district, on the same day her elder sister was married. Her *gauna* (formal send-off to marital residence) is yet to take place. Laxmi's parents intend to send her off only when the boy gets a job. Laxmi's husband completed his secondary schooling and has passed the exams for entry into the Central Reserve Police Force, and is awaiting his letter of appointment.

Despite her early marriage, Laxmi did not drop out of school. Her parents continued to send her to school and she is now in Class 11. Laxmi plans to complete her BA degree and become a teacher.

She wakes at 5am and gets ready for the day. She studies from 7am to 9am. She goes to school at 9.30am on a bicycle. Her younger brother accompanies her as he is at the same school. She returns home at 5pm and goes to fetch water from the handpump. She makes the tea in the evening for all the family members. She plays with her nephew and then studies for a few hours in the evening. Laxmi has also been teaching her friend, Chandrakala, who did not attend school and is from a poor family.

## 4.4 Social exclusion, education and intergenerational transfers

Despite the emphasis in policy about reaching out to children from traditionally excluded groups, especially the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the schooling experiences of children from these groups indicate that their enrolment and achievement continue to be lower than that of children from more privileged households.

A distinct pattern of social exclusion, although covert, is discernible in the sample villages in Tonk. In Radhavallabhpura, the pattern of social habitation indicates that there is geographical segregation between Bairwa households and the main village, which has a mixed population of upper castes and 'other backward castes' (OBC). There are no children from the Bairwa dhani (hamlet) attending the school in the main village, as all the children in this hamlet are enrolled in the Rajiv Gandhi Swaran Jayanti Pathshala[13] (RGSJP) which was started in 1999. Until this school was started, no girl ever went to school in the main village, although some boys did. Most

[13] Rajiv Gandhi Swaran Jayanti Pathshalas were started in 1999 in remote rural areas of Rajasthan where there were no educational facilities.

girls joined the RGSJP for the first time. The only teacher in the school is also from within the community.

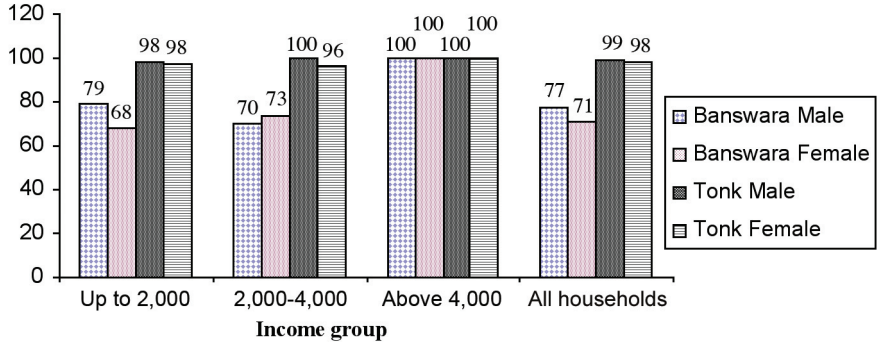
On the other hand, in Morda, the Shiksha Karmi[14] school caters to children belonging to OBC and Scheduled Caste households. The total number of children enrolled in classes 1-5 in the school is 111: 69 boys and 42 girls. Only six girls and no boys belonging to OBC households are enrolled in the school. The remaining 105 children belong to Bairwa households. Most children from upper caste households attend private schools in the vicinity. It was observed during fieldwork that teachers in the school asked OBC girls to fetch water rather than Scheduled Caste (ie, Bairwa) girls. It is also evident that social distance is maintained, as children from Scheduled Caste households do not mix easily with children from better-off communities. Even if they do, there are restrictions on drinking or eating with children from these households.

Caste is one of the defining characteristics of the larger social structure in Rajasthan, and educational institutions reflect and reproduce these hierarchical social relations. Children internalise these social relations which continue into adulthood.

## 4.5 Income levels and access to education

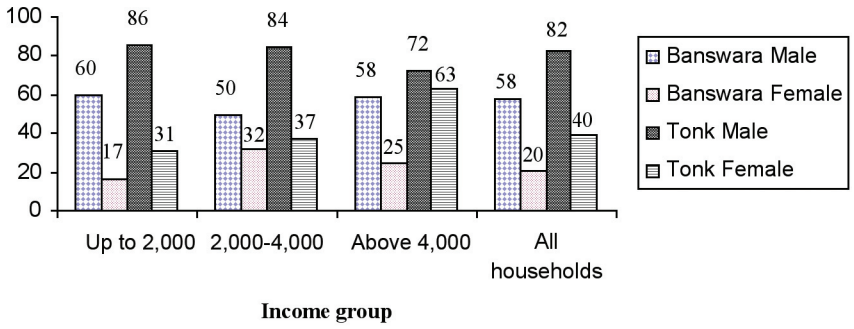
In the sample villages, school enrolment in the 6-10 age group is higher among the high income groups in Tonk than in Banswara. This is because of the greater time spent by children in Banswara contributing to livelihoods, as seen in the last chapter. Given the nature of gender roles in the state, more girls than boys are out of school in both districts (see Figures 4 and 5). In the 11-14 age group, around 60 per cent of boys and 25 per cent of girls in Banswara, and 80 per cent of boys and 45 per cent of girls in Tonk, are enrolled in school. Attendance on a 'normal' day shows that absenteeism is high. If we look at actual enrolment in school, it is evident that girls' enrolment continues to be lower than that of boys.

***Figure 4: Percentage of children aged 6-10 enrolled in school, by income group***




[14] The Shiksha Karmi Programme took over dysfunctional schools in areas where teacher absenteeism was acute and enrolment and retention of children in the 6-14 age group was poor. These schools were revitalised by appointing local teachers from the village. The training provided to the teachers focused on innovative ways of teaching and learning.

*Figure 5: Percentage of children aged 11-14 enrolled in school, by income group*




## 4.6 Absenteeism from school

In the past few years, there has been an emphasis on organising *Praveshutsav* (intensive enrolment drives) at the beginning of the school term to enrol children in the 6-14 age group. These enrolment drives are organised by the teachers with help from the community. As a result, enrolment has increased in schools. However, enrolment does not mean regular attendance, nor is it a guarantee that a child will continue in school.

Observation by the research team over a period of five days in Hiriyagarhi revealed that of 168 children enrolled, the average school attendance was not more than 24 children. One of the reasons given by the teachers was that the children were involved in harvesting activities and could not attend school regularly.

In Rajasthan, a number of factors are responsible for children not attending school, eg, distance to schools, irregularity of teachers' attendance, poor quality teaching, children's involvement in household work, absence of women teachers, teacher attitudes, children's disinterest and the costs of schooling. A recent study on retention among children at the primary level in nine DPEP districts revealed that, in addition to engagement in household activities, the main reasons for children dropping out are that they need to work for wages and migrate for work (Bhargava 2004).

In the sample villages in Banswara, almost 50 per cent of children in the 6-10 age group were not attending school on a 'normal' day; in Tonk it was around 12 per cent. Absenteeism was higher in the 11-14 age group (see Tables 20 and 21). It is clear that since a large number of children are engaged in activities such as domestic and agricultural work, they are unable to attend school. This is higher in Banswara because the time engagement of children in various activities is higher. An additional factor in Banswara is the hilly and undulating terrain: during the rainy season, the small streams fill up and overflow, making it difficult for children to get to school. Teachers' irregular attendance is also a contributing factor, as is explained later.

***Table 20: Children not attending school (6-10 age group) a day before the survey (as a percentage of children enrolled in school)***

| | | Income group | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Up to 2,000 | 2,000-4,000 | Above 4,000 |
| **Banswara** | Male | 52.4 | 42.9 | 0.0 |
| | Female | 47.5 | 36.4 | 75.0 |
| **Tonk** | Male | 13.8 | 14.3 | 12.5 |
| | Female | 16.3 | 0.0 | 6.7 |

***Table 21: Children not attending school (11-14 age group) a day before the survey (as a percentage of children enrolled in school)***

| | | Income group | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Up to 2,000 | 2,000-4,000 | Above 4,000 |
| **Banswara** | Male | 52.9 | 57.1 | 58.3 |
| | Female | 85.0 | 68.4 | 75.0 |
| **Tonk** | Male | 23.8 | 31.4 | 44.0 |
| | Female | 77.8 | 63.3 | 36.8 |

## 4.7 Type of school

An analysis of the type of school (ie, government or private) attended by children from households in different income groups reveals that, in Banswara, very few children in the 6-10 age group attend a private school. There is only one school in the vicinity of the village and a few children living near the school have enrolled in it. In Tonk, more children of the higher income group attend private school. The general perception is that the quality of education is better in private schools; however, only a few can afford them (see Tables 22 and 23).

***Table 22: Type of school attended (6-10 years) (percentage of children)***

| | | | Income group | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Up to 2,000 | 2,000-4,000 | Above 4,000 |
| **Banswara** | Government | Male | 96.7 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| | | Female | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| | Private | Male | 3.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| | | Female | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| | | | | | |
| **Tonk** | Government | Male | 93.2 | 88.1 | 66.7 |
| | | Female | 88.4 | 88.0 | 71.4 |
| | Private | Male | 6.8 | 11.9 | 33.3 |
| | | Female | 11.6 | 12.0 | 28.6 |

Note: Differences between male and female in low-income groups in Tonk are not significant but differences between income groups are significant at the ten per cent level.

*Table 23: Type of school attended (11-17 years) (percentage of children)*

| | | | Income group | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Up to 2,000 | 2,000-4,000 | Above 4,000 |
| **Banswara** | Government | Male | 90.2 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| | Private | | 9.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| | Government | Female | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| | Private | | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| | | | | | |
| **Tonk** | Government | Male | 85.2 | 86.0 | 83.3 |
| | Private | | 14.8 | 14.0 | 16.7 |
| | Government | Female | 100.0 | 90.9 | 91.7 |
| | Private | | 0.0 | 9.1 | 8.3 |

## 4.8 School facilities and infrastructure

All four villages have a primary school which children from all castes attend. However, children have to go out of the village to pursue upper primary education. The distance covered by children to reach school is between one and two-and-a-half kilometres in Banswara; the official government norm for school proximity is one kilometre.

Schooling facilities have been made available under different educational programmes in the state. For instance, Hiriyagarhi has a mainstream government primary school which was established in 1980; the school in Sajwania is a Shiksha Karmi school which was taken over by the SKP in 1991. It also has two RGSJP schools. Radhavallabhpura has a mainstream government primary school, as well as a RGSJP school in the Bairwa hamlet. Morda has a Shiksha Karmi school, and children also attend private schools in the neighbouring village.

When the RGSJPs were started in 1999 in remote areas without a schooling facility, they were conceptualised as alternative centres of learning. Para-teachers (ie, teachers with lower qualifications who are paid less to supplement regular teaching staff) were appointed in these schools. The response to these schools at the community level has been mixed, and they also suffer from a range of inadequacies such as poor quality teaching and teacher irregularity.

While there has been an overall improvement in the infrastructure of schools within the state, in the sample villages, especially in Banswara, school infrastructure is still poor and inadequate. There are two *pucca* rooms in Hiriyagarhi – one room is used as a classroom which accommodates 168 children, and the other is used to store the cooking materials for making the midday meals. In Sajwania, the school has two rooms and a third which is partly constructed; they accommodate 67 children. There is a handpump close to the school in both villages. In the RGSJP in Sajwania there is no school building and classes are held in the open or in the courtyard of a house in the village.

In Radhavallabhpura, the school building has been repaired and maintained by an NGO, World Vision. In Morda, two new classrooms have been constructed under the aegis of the DPEP, but the doors and windows have not been fitted yet. Both schools have access to drinking water. The RGSJP in Radhavallabhpura has a building and a handpump near the school, although the water is saline.

Under the Operation Blackboard scheme,[15] blackboards have been provided in all the schools in the sample villages. Maps and charts have also been put up in all the schools. Only the schools in Morda and Radhavallabhpura have a boundary wall. In Radhavallabhpura, World Vision has provided swings for children in the primary school and the RGSJP.

## 4.9 Role and absenteeism of teachers

The social background of teachers is more diverse today than it was in the past. The village profiles and time-lines in Tonk revealed that early initiatives for educating children in the village were taken up by *Babaji* (holy men) who were mostly upper caste Brahmins. In Banswara, too, teaching was only carried out by Brahmins; tribal children were not encouraged to study.

Teachers in government schools and RGSJPs in the sample villages belong to upper castes, Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe and OBC groups. In the sample villages, out of a total of 12 teachers, 5 were women. While it is often assumed that the presence of a female teacher is an impetus for girls' enrolment, it was evident that the presence of a woman teacher did not have a significant impact on the enrolment of girls in school.

Irregularity of teachers' attendance is common in the primary schools in Hiriyagarhi and Radhavallabhpura. The two female teachers in Hiriyagarhi often come to school on a rotation basis. As a result, one teacher is always absent. They travel daily from Banswara and reach the school much later than the official starting time of 10.30am, and usually leave by 4pm instead of 4.30pm, stating that they have to attend to other school work in the *gram panchayat*. They often leave a notice on the board stating the reason for their absence from school. Both teachers have young children who accompany them to the school; school children, both boys and girls, take turns in looking after their children.

In Radhavallabhpura, one of the teachers lives in the nearby village and travels by motorcycle to school. Field visits revealed that his attendance is irregular: he was only present for teaching on three occasions between October 2003 and February 2004. The other teacher, who is a local resident, shoulders most of the responsibility of the school.

Morda and Sajwania both have Shiksha Karmi schools. In Morda, there are three teachers who are all local residents of the village. In Sajwania, while both teachers are residents of the village, one often goes to his second wife who lives in another village. Because the teachers are local, the Shiksha Karmi schools open regularly and the teachers also record the attendance. However, it

[15] Operation Blackboard was launched in 1987 by the Government of India, with the aim of ensuring that every primary school had a minimum quota of facilities and aids, ie, two reasonable all-weather rooms; separate toilets for boys and girls; at least two teachers, one of whom was a woman; and essential teaching and learning materials, including blackboards, maps, charts, a small library, toys, games and some equipment for practical work.

was observed that actual attendance was not the same as what was recorded. There was very little teaching or learning activity in the school.

It was also observed that one of the teachers in Morda came to school in a drunken state. Parents have often complained to officials from the education department about this teacher but no action has been taken against him. The teacher is also a moneylender, and community members are thus hesitant to push the matter.

The teachers complained that they are expected to do extra work such as participate in the Pulse Polio campaign and the census, and maintain school records. They also said that parents are not interested in the education of their children:

> *"We have to keep sending them messages that they should come to school and meet us. The parents want the children to work on the fields and it is difficult for us to ensure regularity of children in school."*

## 4.10 Quality of education

While the issue of access has been addressed with a fair amount of success, the problem of quality of education remains a crucial concern. It is evident that many of the teaching and learning practices of the Shiksha Karmi pedagogy are not being followed. The teachers observed in the study taught in a routinised manner and no innovative methods were used in the classroom. Activity-based teaching, which was central to the Shiksha Karmi pedagogy, was not being followed. The community members in Morda complained that nothing was happening in the school and that the children have not gained from attending school. Many of the parents have withdrawn their children from this school and are sending them to private schools and other government schools in neighbouring villages. In Hiriyagarhi, the parents commented that: "*Sarkari school mein padhai nahin hoti, Panchvi tak padh kar bhi inhe kuch nahin ata*" (No studies take place in the government school, even after studying till standard 5 their levels are poor).

The deterioration in the Shiksha Karmi schools can be linked to the overall weakening of management of the project since 1999 after the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) withdrew support because of India's nuclear explosions. The lack of regular support and monitoring has resulted in poor educational outcomes. The motivation of Shiksha Karmis have also suffered a setback as the future prospects of the project remain uncertain.

In the RGSJPs in Banswara, the levels attained by children are poor because of the irregular attendance of teachers. The children in the 'ungraded' classes (Class 1 and 2) could not read the alphabet or count. The teacher defended herself and insisted that the problem lies with the children as they speak a different dialect and do not understand Hindi. She also stated that most of the men in the village were drunk and that she felt insecure going to the village. In the RGSJP in the Bairwon ki Dhani in Radhavallabpura, the general awareness levels of children were high and it was clear that the teacher took a great deal of interest in teaching them. The teacher had

made efforts to increase the enrolment of children in the school by establishing door-to-door contacts.

In the primary school in Hiriyagarhi, the children, though hesitant and shy, were able to read and write. The children in the primary school in Radhavallabhpura attended regularly and the teacher took a great deal of interest in them. Classes were held regularly and the children were encouraged to take part in other extra-curricular activities.

## 4.11 Role of incentives

In the sample villages, all children enrolled in the Shiksha Karmi schools have been given textbooks, uniforms, slates and schoolbags. In Radhavallabhpura, World Vision has also provided items such as schoolbags and water bottles to children in the school, which has led to improved attendance.

The distribution of midday meals was different in the four villages. In Hiriyagarhi, *ghooghry* was cooked and distributed before the teachers arrived. However, the *ghooghry* was cooked only if there were 15 children attending school on a particular day. Similarly in Sajwania, the *ghooghry* was not cooked regularly and depended on attendance. If there were 30 children present, the *ghooghry* was cooked by the teacher and the children. In the RGSJP in Sajwania, where 50-60 children were enrolled, *ghooghry* was distributed on only two to four days a month when the teacher came to school. However, according to official records it was distributed daily.

In Morda, *ghooghry* was prepared regularly by a helper who was paid Rs. 500 per month. Both sweet and salted versions of *ghooghry* were prepared. The *ghooghry* was also distributed to the children who were enrolled in the Anganwari Centre (AWC).[16] Children who were absent on a particular day still came to collect the meal during the lunch hour. Some children who attended private schools also collected the midday meal.

In Radhavallabhpura, *ghooghry* was distributed regularly during the recess by older children. In the RGSJP in Bairwon ki dhani, a helper was appointed to cook the meal and was paid Rs. 500. Children who were not enrolled here also collected the midday meal.

The role of incentives (especially cooked meals) in improving school enrolment and attendance has been positive. During fieldwork, it was clear that on the days on which the meals were distributed, more children attended school. The parents demanded an improvement in the quality of the meals. However, the need to monitor the regularity of distribution of midday meals was clear. Dreze and Goyal (2003) note that with adequate resources and safeguards, the midday meal can play a major role in improving school attendance, eliminating classroom hunger and fostering social equity as children across castes eat together.

[16] These centres are supposed to provide nutritional inputs to pregnant and lactating mothers, and to children in the 0-5 age group.

## 4.12 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the challenges and opportunities in building the human capital of children. The process of acquiring formal education in the sample villages was initiated not more than two generations (20 years) ago. The majority of children are, therefore, first generation learners. Differences between Banswara and Tonk villages are striking. For example, there are differences in attitudes exhibited by parents regarding desired educational attainments for their children, enrolment and attendance in schools. However, there are some parents in Banswara, mainly those who are well off, and some in Tonk, mainly the poor, who exhibit attitudes that are not characteristic of their villages. Some literate parents may still not be able to send their children to school because they are unable to meet their livelihood challenges. Engaging their own children in work is therefore an economic necessity, affecting their attendance in schools and also, therefore, their learning capabilities. Many households deny girls opportunities of education even where they could afford to educate them, although there are a few instances where a gradual shift in attitudes is discernable.

Exclusion of girls from education is nowhere near comparable to the exclusion of children from Schedule Caste households, which is far more serious. Teachers continue to discriminate in classrooms, reproducing hierarchical social relations and ensuring an intergenerational transfer of social inequity.

Infrastructure facilities and teachers' attendance and attitudes also influence school attendance. Conditions in Banswara villages are far worse than in Tonk villages despite various incentives to increase enrolment.

# 5. Building human capital: health and intergenerational transfers of poverty

This chapter analyses the health and nutritional status of women and children in the sample villages because they are important factors in understanding childhood poverty and have serious consequences for the intergenerational transfer of poverty.

The health situation in Rajasthan is characterised by poor availability of health services, poor nutrition among children and women, and high infant and maternal mortality rates. Low levels of information combine with a high dependence on local healers and limited access of women to healthcare services. Available data reveal a picture in which poor health is likely to be a strong route through which poverty is transferred intergenerationally. Half of all children in the state are undernourished and 90 per cent of women are anaemic. One-third of children have a low birth-weight and about one-third of women (36 per cent) have a BMI below 18.5 indicating a high prevalence of nutritional deficiency (NFHS-2 1998-1999). Nearly two-thirds of girls (65 per cent) get married before the age of 18, and only 22 per cent of deliveries are conducted in healthcare facilities, with the remaining 78 per cent of deliveries taking place at home. Only 33 per cent of deliveries conducted are safe; these are either institutional deliveries or home deliveries by doctors, nurses and auxiliary nurse midwives (ANMs). Only 37 per cent of children are immunised against six preventable diseases (diphtheria, tuberculosis, pertussis, tetanus, polio and measles) (GoR 2004a).

## 5.1 Health-seeking behaviour of women

Many interrelated factors impinge upon and shape the health and nutritional status of women and girls in Rajasthan. On the one hand, patriarchal values and norms of female subordination permeate and define social relations and family and kinship ties. They also play an important role in structuring gender relations. Women's rights are severely curtailed, and decision-making remains largely with men; this affects rules and negotiating processes in the family. Women continue to be seen primarily in reproductive roles – as homemakers and child-bearers – with their identities and status being closely linked to their ability to bear sons. On the other hand, geographical hardships also affect health-seeking behaviour and delivery of services. Many areas in Rajasthan are drought-prone which leads to hardship and struggles with respect to crop production and food and water shortages. This in turn impacts on the health of women, men and children in the state. Furthermore, women's health-seeking behaviour is closely associated with several characteristics including age, marital status, religion, caste, education, exposure to mass media, and work participation.

Because of the low value attached to a girl's life from birth, healthcare, even when it is available, does not reach a large proportion of the female population in the state. A large number of women continue to work late into pregnancy. Illness often goes unreported when the patient

is a woman. It is not surprising that women in Rajasthan suffer from health problems which are rooted in their experiences as women, many of which are largely neglected in the official interventions, as they require much more than clinical solutions. The fact that a young girl becomes part of the health system mostly as a pregnant woman is evidence of the traditional attitude towards women, ie, that women are useful only in their reproductive capacity and only in relation to men as wives and mothers (NFHS-1, 1992-93).

## 5.2 Age at marriage

In Rajasthan, sharp gender differentials in health-seeking behaviour are part of the culture. Most women in Rajasthan do not have access to healthcare facilities, despite many programmes addressing the health needs of women and children. Women do not treat either their own health or that of their daughters as a priority. While women display disturbingly low levels of awareness about health (including antenatal care, contraception, immunisation and nutrition during pregnancy), the health delivery system continues to be insensitive in its response to women's needs and to provide poor outreach, especially in remote and distant areas. The low self-esteem of women impacts on their reproductive choices and decision-making ability.

Early age at marriage is a norm. Parents generally prefer early marriages for their children. Some change can be seen in high income groups where 20-30 per cent of mothers have reported a preferred age at marriage equal to or beyond the statutory age of marriage: 21 for boys and 18 for girls. However, 70 per cent of parents would like their children to marry below the statutory age of marriage. Marriage is not immediately followed by cohabitation with the husband, especially if it has occurred at a very young age. Cohabitation generally starts with a ceremony called *gauna*, which usually takes place when the girl reaches puberty (see Table 24).

***Table 24: Percentage of mothers, by income group, preferring marriage for boys and girls above the statutory age***

| | | Income group | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Up to 2,000 | 2,000-4,000 | Above 4,000 |
| **Boys** | Banswara | 4.4 | 13.9 | 19.0 |
| | Tonk | 8.9 | 10.9 | 20.8 |
| **Girls** | Banswara | 6.3 | 12.7 | 23.8 |
| | Tonk | 13.4 | 19.3 | 29.2 |

It is evident that across income and social groups, the majority of girls get married before the age of 18. Fieldwork revealed certain caste differences. In Tonk, girls from the Bairwa caste are usually married between the ages of 10 and 17. The *gauna* takes place after the girl reaches puberty. Gujar and Kumawat girls get married between the ages of 6 and 10, but the *gauna* takes place at the age of 14 or 15. Rajputs usually marry off their daughters between the ages of 18 and 20. In Banswara, too, most of the girls in the tribal communities get married early – between the ages of 14 and 17.

## 5.3 Early pregnancy and childbearing

When women marry early, the likelihood of early pregnancy and childbirth increases. The data collated from the study area reveal that more than 50 per cent of women in Banswara and more than 40 per cent in Tonk had their first pregnancy below the age of 18, and almost 90 per cent before the age of 21 (Table 25).

***Table 25: Age at first pregnancy by age group (percentage of households)***

| District | Age group | Income group | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Up to 2,000 | 2,000-4,000 | Above 4,000 |
| **Banswara** | 13-16 | 21.4 | 16.5 | 23.8 |
| | 17-18 | 40.9 | 38.0 | 33.3 |
| | 19-21 | 25.2 | 36.7 | 33.3 |
| | Above 21 | 12.6 | 8.9 | 9.5 |
| | Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| **Tonk** | 13-16 | 17.0 | 16.4 | 18.8 |
| | 17-18 | 34.8 | 40.0 | 22.9 |
| | 19-21 | 35.7 | 30.0 | 47.9 |
| | Above 21 | 12.5 | 13.6 | 10.4 |
| | Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Note: Differences between districts and income groups are not significant.

## 5.4 High fertility rates and a desire for sons/daughters

Data collected and focus group discussions with women indicate that women preferred to have two sons. Notable is the two-daughter preference of tribal women because of the custom of brideprice (see Table 26).

***Table 26: Women's preferred number of sons and daughters (percentage of households)***

| | | Income group | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Up to 2,000 | 2,000-4,000 | Above 4,000 |
| **Sons** | | | | |
| Banswara | 1 | 8.8 | 22.8 | 19.0 |
| | 2 | 73.6 | 70.9 | 71.4 |
| | >2 | 17.6 | 6.3 | 9.5 |
| Tonk | 1 | 17.9 | 27.3 | 31.3 |
| | 2 | 80.4 | 70.0 | 68.8 |
| | >2 | 1.8 | 2.7 | 0.0 |
| **Daughters** | | | | |
| Banswara | 0 | 1.3 | 0.0 | 4.8 |
| | 1 | 38.4 | 59.5 | 52.4 |
| | 2 | 53.5 | 40.5 | 33.3 |
| | >2 | 6.9 | 0.0 | 9.5 |
| Tonk | 0 | 3.6 | 6.4 | 6.3 |
| | 1 | 47.3 | 59.1 | 62.5 |

Note: Differences are significant at the six per cent level in Banswara and are not significant in Tonk.

## 5.5 Institutional delivery

Childbearing starts at an early age and most deliveries take place at home and are conducted by the village *dais* (traditional birth attendants), most of whom are not trained (see Table 27). Only in cases of emergency are women generally taken to a hospital. The fieldwork team came across only one trained birth attendant in Morda village in Tonk district. Jamna Bai has been attending to women during childbirth for the last 30 years. She underwent one month's training at Toda Rai Singh some years ago. However, if a delivery is complicated the compounder (medical assistant) is called from the primary health centre (PHC) in Kareda. The compounder charges Rs. 200-500 per visit. The *dai* conducts deliveries for all castes and receives Rs. 50 or more and clothes from the family for the services she renders.

In Hiriyagarhi, too, most deliveries take place at home, and are usually conducted by untrained birth attendants or relatives. The *dai* charges Rs. 100 if a son is born and Rs. 50 if it is a girl.

***Table 27: Women opting for institutional delivery (percentage)***

| | Income group | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| District | Up to 2,000 | 2,000-4,000 | Above 4,000 |
| **Banswara** | 9.1 | 6.7 | 0.0 |
| **Tonk** | 5.2 | 3.7 | 31.8 |

Note: Differences are significant at the two per cent level in Banswara and the one per cent level in Tonk.

## 5.6 Contraception

Field observations revealed that early marriage exposes adolescent girls to the risk of teenage pregnancy, but the use of contraception to delay first pregnancy is virtually non-existent. Girls also face family pressure to start bearing children quickly and the use of contraceptives is disapproved of.

In Tonk, it is apparent that there is awareness among women regarding the use of contraceptives. They are also aware of tubectomy as a permanent method, but are scared of not receiving any post-operative care. Although we came across a few women belonging to the Gujjar and Kumawat communities who had undergone tubectomy after the birth of two or three children, there is a general myth that tubectomy makes women weak and that they become unable to do hard labour in their fields. On the other hand, it is also a common belief that if men undergo a vasectomy they will lose their virility. During field visits, we came across only one woman who admitted that she was using contraceptive pills (Mala-D tablets) which she procured from Kareda village.

In Banswara, most women expressed the opinion that an ideal family consists of two boys and two girls. While some women have information about contraceptives and have asked the ANM for oral contraceptives, they have little knowledge about other spacing methods. About 21.9 per cent of the female respondents had undergone sterilisation.

## 5.7 Health delivery system

The health delivery system is so weak that even tetanus vaccinations are not available to a large proportion of pregnant women in both districts. Data from the study area show that only 41 per cent of women from high income groups in Tonk had access to vaccinations. The proportion of institutional deliveries is also very low – less than 10 per cent in Banswara and less than 6 per cent in low income groups in Banswara and Tonk, while 32 per cent of women from high income households underwent an institutional delivery (see Table 27).

***Table 28: Women having the first and second tetanus vaccinations during last pregnancy (in the last three years) (percentage)***

| | Income group | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Up to 2,000 | 2,000-4,000 | Above 4,000 |
| **First tetanus** | | | |
| Banswara | 16.2 | 24.4 | 14.3 |
| Tonk | 37.9 | 40.7 | 40.9 |
| **Second tetanus** | | | |
| Banswara | 12.1 | 17.8 | 7.1 |
| Tonk | 36.2 | 29.6 | 40.9 |

Note: Differences between districts are significant at the one per cent level. They are not significant across income groups.

## 5.8 Mothers' diet during pregnancy

The quantity and quality of food intake during pregnancy varies significantly across income groups in both districts: vegetables and milk are consumed in small quantities (see Tables 29 and 30).

***Table 29: Food intake during last pregnancy (percentage of women)***

| | Income group | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Up to 2,000 | 2,000-4,000 | Above 4,000 |
| **Banswara** | | | |
| Little | 28.3 | 16.5 | 9.5 |
| Adequate | 71.1 | 79.7 | 85.7 |
| More than adequate | 0.6 | 3.8 | 4.8 |
| **Tonk** | | | |
| Little | 26.8 | 25.5 | 10.4 |
| Adequate | 65.2 | 68.2 | 68.8 |
| More than adequate | 8.0 | 6.4 | 20.8 |

Note: Differences between districts are significant at the one per cent level. They are not significant across income groups.

***Table 30: Proportion of pregnant women reporting adequacy of various food items during last pregnancy***

| | Little | Adequate | Nil |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Vegetables** | | | |
| Banswara | 43 | 55 | 2 |
| Tonk | 34 | 61 | 4 |
| **Milk** | | | |
| Banswara | 22 | 2 | 76 |
| Tonk | 35 | 7 | 58 |
| **Cocunut/*tilkutta*** | | | |
| Banswara | 5 | 2 | 93 |
| Tonk | 15 | 3 | 82 |

Looking at the dietary habits of pregnant women, it was found that very few women consume milk or have a special diet during pregnancy. Caste differentials are evident in the post-delivery feeding practices in Tonk district. It was observed that in Morda, women belonging to the upper castes (Rajputs) consume sufficient quantities of milk and *ghee*. In contrast, Bairwa women consume very little milk and *ghee*. In Radhavallabhpura, the OBCs, mainly Jat and Charan women, have a better diet both during and after pregnancy compared to women of other castes. One reason for this is that upper caste households own greater numbers of *milch* cattle and can therefore afford to provide women with *ghee*, milk and milk products.

In the tribal area in Hiriyagarhi village, women are not given any special diet during pregnancy and very few women consume milk. Some women have access to *ghee* but most women's diet includes *dalia* (porridge) and some *gur*. Women whose children were delivered at their natal homes usually got a better diet after delivery.

## 5.9 Rest period after delivery

Caste and class hierarchies also mediate with respect to rest periods after delivery. In Tonk, field observations revealed that women belonging to lower castes (ie, Bairwa and Kumawat) work during the entire nine months of their pregnancy. In Radhavallabhpura, pregnant women have to continue fetching water from a distance of one kilometre during their pregnancy and soon after delivery. They also begin household work 15-20 days after delivery and resume agricultural work within a month. Bairwa women work on their own fields and also on the fields owned by Rajputs. They earn around Rs. 50 per day and are therefore keen to resume work. In contrast, Rajput women do not work in the fields and resume household chores approximately five to six weeks after delivery. Gujar women work only on their own farms and therefore resume work when they feel fit enough.

In Hiriyagarhi, Banswara district, pregnant women continue to work until full-term and return to work two months after the delivery.

## 5.10 Breastfeeding and top feed

One of the major determinants of the nutritional status of children is the top feed (solid or complementary food in addition to breast milk) which they receive between the ages of 9 and 12 months. It was found that while most children are given *roti* (flat bread), less than six per cent receive pulses (*dal*), and less than 18 per cent receive vegetables across income groups and districts (see Table 31).

***Table 31: Percentage of children given top feed in the age group 9-12 months***

| | | *Roti* | *Dal* | Vegetables |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Banswara** | N=29 | 37.9 | 3.4 | 17.2 |
| **Tonk** | N=38 | 97.4 | 5.3 | 13.2 |

Focus group discussions revealed that in Tonk district, among almost all caste groups, newborn babies are breastfed for two years or until the next child is conceived. Children over nine months of age are also fed with solid foods.

In Banswara district, children are usually breastfed until the age of two to three years, and a top feed is a rarity. The young child is usually left with an older sibling, and women who do not have older children often leave their children with a neighbour. The women come back to feed the children and then return to work.

## 5.11 Early childbearing and implications for children's health

Early childbearing also has serious consequences for the infants concerned. Beyond staying alive, good physical development depends largely on nutrition and physical care, and is crucial in terms of poverty transfers. A closely related aspect of childcare is good nurturing which promotes all aspect of a child's development. Both these areas crucially depend on adequate family assets, not only to secure necessary food, but also to enable sufficient parental or other adult caregiver time for childcare and nurturance (Harper, Marcus and Moore 2003). In Rajasthan, it is common for very young and weak mothers to give birth to weak babies; they also often lack the basic information and knowledge to provide nurturance.

Common childhood infections often exacerbate malnourishment while undernourishment also reinforces the consequences of such infections. Malnourishment reduces the resistance of babies to disease and infections, which in turn further drain the body of nutrients. In cases of extreme poverty and malnutrition, infection and disease result in high rates of mortality (Nayyar 1991). Adequate nutrition is thus critical for child health and survival, as well as for overcoming the potential vicious cycle of poverty and under-nutrition (GoI 2002).

The weight-to-height ratio of all children in the sample households was measured to analyse their nutritional status. The proportion of 'wasted'[17] children in the age group 0-5 was 7-8 per cent in Banswara and 18-19 per cent in Tonk (see Table 32). An overwhelming majority of children (80 per cent) was found to be chronically energy deficient according to their BMI[18] in the age group 11-17 years (see Table 33).

***Table 32: Children aged 0-5 in the wasted category (percentage)***

| | | Wasted children |
|---|---|---|
| **Banswara** | Male | 8.6 |
| | Female | 7.3 |
| **Tonk** | Male | 19.6 |
| | Female | 18.2 |

Note: Differences between districts are significant at the one per cent level.

***Table 33: Proportion of children with chronic energy deficiency (grade III/severe) based on BMI of children by income group (age group 11-17)***

| | | | Income group | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Up to 2,000 | | 2,000-4,000 | | Above 4,000 | | All households | |
| *District* | *Sex* | *BMI class* | *No.* | *%* | *No.* | *%* | *No.* | *%* | *No.* | *%* |
| **Banswara** | Male | <16.0 | 55 | 65 | 19 | 68 | 8 | 67 | 82 | 66 |
| | Female | <16.0 | 37 | 62 | 11 | 58 | 2 | 50 | 50 | 60 |
| **Tonk** | Male | <16.0 | 35 | 56 | 23 | 45 | 15 | 63 | 73 | 53 |
| | Female | <16.0 | 16 | 44 | 11 | 37 | 12 | 63 | 39 | 46 |

## 5.12 Consumption of nutrients

Food grain is important as it provides the basic nutrients for survival. Considering a basic norm of 450 grams which is used in poverty estimates (ie, the poverty line norms per capita per day), we found that around 45 per cent of households in both districts consumed less than 33 per cent of the norm at the time of survey. In both districts, the difference is significant across income groups. The number of households where children did not consume milk and pulses on the day before the survey is substantially high (see Table 35) and there are significant variations between income groups. The incidence of non-consumption is lower in the high-income groups (see Table 34).

***Table 34: Per capita grain consumption per month (percentage of households)***

| | Banswara | | | Tonk | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Income group* | *33% below normal* | *Normal* | *Above normal* | *33% below normal* | *Normal* | *Above normal* |
| Up to 2,000 | 55.8 | 19.0 | 25.2 | 70.6 | 19.3 | 10.1 |
| 2,000-4,000 | 34.3 | 24.5 | 41.1 | 55.3 | 21.9 | 22.8 |
| Above 4,000 | 29.2 | 25.0 | 45.8 | 48.3 | 19.0 | 32.8 |
| Total | 45.5 | 21.6 | 33.0 | 47.8 | 20.3 | 19.9 |

[17] An international World Health Organisation reference, the weight-to-height ratio of a child, is used to measure 'wastage'. Children whose weight is two standard deviations below the international reference median for a particular height are considered to be 'wasted'.

[18] The BMI (Body Mass Index) is defined as the ratio of weight (in kilograms) to the square of the height measured in metres.

*Table 35: Percentage of children who did not consume any milk or pulses the day before the survey*

| | | Income group | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Milk*** | | **Up to 2,000** | **2,000-4,000** | **Above 4,000** |
| Banswara | Male | 59.0 | 60.0 | 100.0 |
| | Female | 45.9 | 80.0 | 50.0 |
| Tonk | Male | 54.2 | 45.5 | 12.5 |
| | Female | 56.0 | 51.6 | 43.8 |
| ***Pulses*** | | | | |
| Banswara | Male | 50.0 | 45.0 | 0.0 |
| | Female | 52.5 | 40.0 | 75.0 |
| Tonk | Male | 67.8 | 61.4 | 87.5 |
| | Female | 87.8 | 71.0 | 75.0 |

## 5.13 Immunisation coverage

Focus group discussions revealed that immunisation coverage in the sample villages is poorer in Banswara than in Tonk. In both villages in Banswara, an ANM has been appointed and is required to visit the village once a week. However, field observations revealed that the ANM only visits the village once a month. During her visit, she only attends to those children and pregnant mothers who are able to reach the AWC. The ANM usually only informs the village community two or three days before her visit, with the result that only those people living close to the AWC benefit from her visit.

The majority of children only receive the BCG vaccination and polio drops. The ANM records in a register the number of children to whom the diphtheria, polio and tetanus (DPT) and measles vaccinations have been administered. However, we found that the number of children actually covered is much lower than the number recorded. Very often, mothers do not bring the children to the AWC because of a lack of information. Many pregnant women are not vaccinated because of a lack of awareness, and they also do not inform the ANM if they are pregnant.

The situation in Tonk district was comparatively better. Although there is no ANM in either village, there are higher levels of immunisation awareness among the villagers and they visit the PHC at Kareda for immunisation of mothers and children. A compounder from the PHC visits Radhavallabhpura village twice a year for vaccination coverage, but records showed that he did not cover any children from the Bairwa community. Overall immunisation rates are higher among higher income groups though a substantial proportion of children in both areas remain unimmunised.

Although the Pulse Polio campaign has been a major area of focus for the health delivery system, a large number of children have still not been covered.

*Table 36: Status of vaccination of children (age group 0-1 year) in sample villages (percentage)*

| | Banswara | Tonk |
|---|---|---|
| BCG | 30 | 38 |
| DPT 1 | 25 | 28 |
| Polio 1 | 50 | 60 |
| Children not receiving any vacintation | 48 | 33 |

*Table 37: Status of vaccination of children (age group 0-1 year) in sample villages, by income group (percentage)*

| | Income group | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Up to 2,000 | 2,000-4,000 | Above 4,000 | All |
| **Banswara** | | | | |
| BCG | 32 | 31 | 40 | 30 |
| DPT 1 | 24 | 25 | 40 | 25 |
| Polio 1 | 46 | 63 | 60 | 50 |
| Children not receiving any vaccination | 46 | 44 | 60 | 48 |
| Number of children | 37 | 16 | 5 | 58 |
| **Tonk** | | | | |
| BCG | 44 | 32 | 50 | 38 |
| DPT 1 | 33 | 18 | 50 | 28 |
| Polio 1 | 56 | 73 | 75 | 60 |
| Children not receiving any vaccination | 33 | 36 | 50 | 33 |
| Number of children | 27 | 22 | 4 | 53 |

Note: The differences are not significant across income groups.

No primary health facility is available in the sample villages in Tonk district. People have to go to Tonk or Kareda for healthcare which is 7 kilometres from Morda and 4.5 kilometres from Radhavallabhpura. One compounder and one ANM are available at the PHC; both villages have AWCs. There is no public transport available for reaching Kareda.

## 5.14 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed some health concerns related to building human capital. The starting point has been the various deprivations faced by women in their life cycle which leads to childhood poverty in a number of ways. Women are 'weak' on two accounts. First, low levels of health awareness (including antenatal care, contraception, immunisation and nutrition during pregnancy), low self-esteem, restricted reproductive choices, subordination due to patriarchal norms and poor decision-making abilities make them socially 'weak'. Second is their physical weakness: a majority of girls become mothers without institutional support, and before the age of 18. They experience a very restricted rest period during and after pregnancy and a high fertility rate because of the pressure to have babies until there are at least two sons. Mothers transfer their 'weaknesses' to their children. A significant proportion of children are wasted and an overwhelming number are chronically energy deficient. Mothers do not make a demand for immunisation, nor is health delivery adequate, which leaves children prone to health risks. There is a likelihood that these mothers will marry their daughters at an early age, and they will have the same attitudes and aspirations and push them further into intergenerational cycles of poverty.

Nevertheless, some women in the high income groups, and fewer in other income groups, have shown positive changes. They would like their girls (and also boys) to marry beyond the statutory age. They also tend to have a better diet and opt for institutional delivery and immunisation for themselves and their children. Extending these health-enhancing practices across the income spectrum is an important policy challenge for tackling intergenerational transmission of poverty.

# 6. Intergenerational transfers of poverty: policies and programmes

The preceding chapters have outlined a number of factors related to children's livelihoods, education and health that account for life-course and/or intergenerational transfers of poverty in the sample villages covered by the study. This chapter discusses how far existing policies in these sectors address intergenerational poverty transfers and how they could do so more effectively. The main factors contributing to intergenerational transfers are:

- There is a deterioration of environmental resources which burdens children with low-value-added activities.
- There is subdivision of already small agricultural landholdings among members of large households which contributes to: children's increased work on family farms as adults migrate for wage labour; boys being pushed into wage labour; and girls' increased involvement in looking after siblings when mothers go out to work.
- While large households mean more helping hands, which in turn means more potential income, they also often contribute to indebtedness, ill-health and an inability to afford education, thus leading to life cycles of poverty.
- While there are some positive intergenerational shifts in perception of the importance of education, many less educated parents do not prioritise education, especially for girls.
- Intergenerational shifts in hierarchical social relations have hardly taken place and social inequity persists, which is detrimental to the overall development of deprived castes.
- While there have been intergenerational improvements in the availability of school facilities and teachers, access to schools is still denied to many children for the reasons mentioned above.
- The norm of early pregnancy and adolescent mothers, together with the livelihood conditions of parents, resulting in children who are vulnerable to poor health.
- Changes in women's status have been slow as is reflected in their low health awareness, restrictive reproductive choices, early pregnancy and so on.

This chapter analyses current policies and programmes for children in the context of the intergenerational shifts in poverty in the sample villages. An examination of the transmission of poverty over a life course and between generations reveals that policies and programmes have been inadequate. Why do programmes fail? Is it because of the implementation processes, or because of deficiencies in these programmes? Is the understanding of childhood poverty inadequate? Most importantly, do programmes and policies address the intergenerational transfers of poverty? The following section begins with a discussion on how child poverty is

understood by the Government of India and by the UN agencies which exert a strong influence on the government. It then considers how different programmes in the arenas of livelihoods, education and health could more effectively address intergenerational poverty transfers.

## 6.1 Child poverty, the UN agencies and the Indian Constitution

The UNDP endorses a definition of child labour provided by Burra (1995) that all children who are out-of-school are working children. A working child is defined as a child in the 5-15 age group who is engaged in labour, either paid or unpaid, working within or outside the family: ie, a child who is deprived of the right to education and childhood. Similarly, the Constitution of India provides for a definition of child labour in hazardous work, but does not take notice of children involved in any other form of work.[19]

The limited understanding of childhood poverty in terms of children as either working or non-working leads to strategies that withdraw children from work, or delay their entry into work. The primary focus of UNICEF has been *preventing child labour through primary education*. The UN system also advocates that primary education be more accessible and effective. It especially concentrates on disadvantaged and marginalised children, including child workers. A number of programmes have been initiated by UN agencies on their own or in collaboration with the Government of India (see Box 6). These programmes have been successful in providing school facilities and education to children. However, they fail to appreciate that a large number of children either do not enrol in school or drop out after a couple of years because of livelihood constraints.

***Box 6: The UN system in India: position paper on child labour***

The UN system supports a wide range of activities and programmes directly related to the elimination of child labour in India. Chief among these is the ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, which aims progressively to eliminate child labour through education, social mobilisation and awareness raising, legal enforcement and strengthening of institutional capacity.

UNICEF has also played an important role in the elimination of child labour in India by supporting government and NGO activities in the area. The primary focus of UNICEF has been preventing child labour through primary education. It has provided financial and technical support for legal enforcement studies along with workshops and discussions on child labour at the national and state levels.

There are also several joint initiatives within the UN system in India focusing on this area. The most important is the Joint UN System Support for Community Based Primary Education. This includes UNICEF, UNDP, ILO, UNESCO and UNFPA, and aims at supporting government efforts on universal elementary education and making primary education more accessible and effective. It especially concentrates on disadvantaged and marginalised children, including child workers.

Source: *UN System in India: Position Paper on Child Labour* (see http://hdrc.undp.org.in/childreninpoverty)

[19] The Constitution of India, both in the Directive Principles of the state policy and as a part of the Fundamental Rights, has stated that the state shall direct its policy towards securing the health and strength of workers, men and women, and tender age children. Article 39 clearly states that: "The state shall, in particular, direct its policies towards securing that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and conditions of freedom and dignity and that children and youth are protected against moral and material abandonment. The state is directed to take measures so that childhood and youth are to be protected against exploitation and no child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory or engage in any other hazardous employment".

The National Human Development Report (NHDR) 2001 identifies a number of correlates of child labour – poverty, inefficient schooling and migration of parents. Poverty is regarded as the most important reason that children enter the labour market. They are often prompted by their parents to work in order to contribute to the survival of the family. Girls are invariably involved in domestic work. This is reinforced by the cultural and social context, particularly in rural areas (see GoI 2002, p. 97).

This approach to childhood poverty as principally a child labour issue means that the connections with other aspects of childhood poverty are often downplayed and child welfare addressed through sectoral interventions that are not well co-ordinated with one another. Furthermore, while there is adequate knowledge about the situation of children in the state, there seems to be a failure to translate knowledge into *effective* policies or programmes. Policies in the livelihoods, education and health sectors, as well as the policy gaps emerging from our research on intergenerational transfers of poverty, are summarised in Table 38. The following sections comment on the existing policy framework, programmes and implementation, and suggest how policy gaps could be filled.

## 6.2 Critique of existing policies and programmes: livelihoods

***Deterioration of environmental resources***

The state has several programmes such as watershed development, afforestation and pasture land development that, if implemented, could reduce children's time in accessing water, fuelwood and fodder. Most schemes are implemented in a participatory manner which involve the community. However, children's needs and their involvement have not been considered. We recommend involving children in these programmes so that they become part of environmental education; this follows the experience of some community based organisations (CBOs) in the state that have been instrumental in addressing the needs of children through various innovative initiatives.

For example, the Social Work Research Centre, Tilonia in Ajmer district, initiated the formation of *Bal Sansads* (Children's Parliament). The rationale was for children to learn how a democracy functions, the importance of voting, standing up for their rights and not allowing themselves to be exploited because they are poor. The children elect their own parliament and their own ministers, and make decisions about the running of their schools, even dismissing teachers who neglect their duties. The children can also have their say in matters concerning their village, such as the supply of water and electricity (SWRC 2000). Similarly, other organisations like Urmul Trust, Bikaner and Consumer Unity and Trust Society in Chittorgarh district have also made efforts to create awareness among children and communities around children's rights. Today, children in different parts of the state are beginning to influence decision-making processes at the micro-level, although not necessarily at the wider policy level. Although there is no evidence of children being involved directly in natural resource management, it is clearly possible for them

to do so. It would not only help protect the environment, but also enrich children's traditional knowledge of natural resources.

The lessons from these initiatives could also become the basis for future planning efforts pertaining to children's rights. A process of education and awareness-raising is necessary to ensure that government officials, service providers and communities are aware and supportive of children's rights and agency.

***Subdivision of agricultural land***

The subdivision of agricultural landholdings has left the poor with few livelihood opportunities. This has forced adults to migrate for opportunities in the uncertain wage labour market and burdened children with greater work responsibilities. It is important that such distress migration be contained. While there are several poverty reduction programmes for livelihood promotion in the state, these have been inadequate in addressing the livelihood challenges of the rural poor. The largely inadequate employment programmes provide not more than 10-20 days of employment to a household per year.

During droughts, short-term employment is provided by the state through the Famine Relief Works. However, the number of persons employed is determined by the resources available in the state. In the absence of adequate resources, the selection of beneficiaries at the village level is ad hoc and left to village-level government officials. In addition, employment is determined by a number of factors, including caste, relationship with the local power structure (the *sarpanch*), and other factors that can promote the interest of the individual. In these circumstances, the likelihood of every poor person being employed is quite low. Therefore, a strategy that aims to enhance the resources and assets that generate income would go a long way towards guaranteeing employment and reducing poverty.

An Employment Guarantee Act to provide 100 days of employment, as a right, to all able-bodied persons willing to do manual work, has recently been tabled in the Parliament of India. When the Act is passed and subsequently implemented, it will help to ensure security of livelihoods which will impact on the life-course poverty faced by many children.

***Indebtedness***

Some children are forced to work as the household becomes indebted because formal credit institutions have largely failed to provide credit to the poor. Therefore, institutional change in formal credit institutions is recommended in order to make them more responsive to poor people's needs. Some CBOs have addressed this need through self-help groups.

## 6.3 Critique of existing policies and programmes: education

The National Policy of Education (NPE) addressed issues of quantity, quality and equity in the educational process. Based on these parameters, there have been three innovative programmes in the state: SKP, Lok Jumbish and RGSJP. The SKP and RGSJP addressed the issue of quantity, the former in areas where teacher absenteeism was high, and the latter by opening schools where there were none in the vicinity. The SKP and Lok Jumbish used a number of innovations in educational processes and pedagogy. All three programmes were concerned with gender equity. These programmes also involved the community through parents' committees and by persuading the community to send their children, especially girls, to school.

A programme supported by the World Bank, the DPEP, also addressed these issues. The philosophy of these programmes is that if quality education is ensured and parents are made aware, then children will come to school. This is true to a great extent for those parents who do not send their children to school because of poor quality education. While the overall response to these programmes has been positive, our study reveals that there are several problems related to the functioning of these schools in the sample villages. The teachers were found to attend irregularly, the infrastructure in the tribal district was of poor quality, the RGSJPs did not have a building of their own, and a single teacher was managing large groups of children. In the sample villages, the *Shiksha Karmis* (local teachers), have started to use conventional ways of teaching and classroom practices. No efforts are being made by the teachers to ensure that children are attending school regularly and to address specific needs of out-of-school children. In the study area, especially in Tonk district, school infrastructure has been improved under the aegis of this programme. However, despite training, workshops and infrastructure improvements, there has been little impact on issues such as community management of schooling and reaching the most deprived children.

Making education accessible and providing quality education to the poorest children, especially girls, continues to be a development challenge for policy-makers and planners in Rajasthan. Policy-makers, with their emphasis on issues of quantity, quality and equity, often gloss over the problems of livelihoods. The fact that children are denied education because they work and engage in domestic chores, which leads to a life course of and/or intergenerational transfers of poverty, is largely ignored. Partly, the problem lies in the fact that different government departments are responsible for education and livelihoods.

As the main provider of education in most rural areas, the government could influence the public in three different ways. A first way is the use of coercive measures. Thus far, the state has refrained from implementing any coercive measures, eg, making education compulsory for children and penalising parents who do not comply. The second way is through rewards, eg, through distribution of free textbooks and midday meals. In our sample villages, the impact of the midday meal has been marginal, as seen from the high rate of absenteeism. The third and

most important strategy is propaganda and information. Innovative programmes have used these measures by carrying out awareness campaigns, enrolment drives and forming Parent-Teacher Associations and Village Education Committees. In the absence of each individual being fully 'informed' of the consequences and benefits of education for children, some parents remain sceptical of the value of educating their children. Devolution of power to local democratic institutions (to manage and govern schools) could help impart information and persuade the public more effectively. In our sample villages, the local *panchayat*s had no role in managing or governing the schools. These *panchayat*s, when given the role of management and governance, are more likely to design educational processes so that all children are able to attend school. For example, in the sample villages, a crèche could free many girls who look after siblings, while an adult shepherd could free many children who tend cattle and so on. The costs of these activities would be far less than the opportunity costs for children engaged in such activities. Such an opportunity has not been given to the *panchayat*s which could design such mechanisms at the local level in the sample villages.

However, local institutions can maintain a social hierarchy and discriminate against deprived castes and girls. Changing these practices would require social change. This is a role for civil society but people's movements are, however, weak or absent in the sample villages. A strategic shift in thinking on the part of the state and civil society is therefore required in this context.

### *Low levels of education*

One of the impacts of low levels of education is that children are not prepared for well-paid employment opportunities. Despite the close vicinity of schools and general availability of teachers, poor children are often not able to go to school. Girls are often not sent to school. Discriminatory practices against children from deprived castes are further barriers to accessing schooling. One solution might be residential schools where all the children's food, education and health needs are taken care of. The state programme for residential schools is very small compared to the need. This needs to be greatly expanded if another generation of uneducated youth is to be avoided and the cycle of illiteracy broken.

#### *Box 7: Programmes of education*

The NPE formulated by the Government of India in 1986 defined educational priorities for the country and made an attempt to address issues of quantity, quality and equity in educational processes. Several initiatives were launched in different states of India after the policy was announced. Some of these were centrally-sponsored schemes, eg, Operation Blackboard, the National Programme for Nutritional Support for Primary Education (commonly known as the Midday Meal Scheme), the DPEP, and the more recent SSA, for which funds were provided to state governments.

Bearing in mind the national goals of universalising elementary education, two main innovative programmes for education have been implemented in Rajasthan. These include the SKP which was started in 1987 with support from SIDA, and the Lok Jumbish Project started in 1992 also with SIDA support. The RGSJP were started in 1999 in Rajasthan with financial support from the state.

*The Shiksha Karmi Programme*
The SKP aimed at improving and extending primary education in remote rural areas of Rajasthan by addressing problems affecting primary education, ie, teacher absenteeism, low enrolment and high drop-out rates, especially of girls. The programme therefore focused on ensuring universal accessibility, providing context-based quality education to children in remote areas of Rajasthan. The crucial innovation in SKP was identifying local women and men called *Shiksha Karmis* (education workers) with the required qualifications and who, after rigorous systematic training, could teach children in primary schools (which were often dysfunctional) and ensure that all children became part of the educational process. Following the withdrawal of SIDA support in 1997, the programme continued with support from DFID.

*District Primary Education Programme*
The DPEP was launched in Rajasthan in October 1999. It is being implemented in 19 districts of the state. The programme aims to operationalise the strategies for achieving Universal Elementary Education through district-specific planning and disaggregated target-setting. It draws upon the accumulated national experience of several state-level initiatives. It moves away from a piecemeal approach and takes a holistic view of primary education with emphasis on decentralised management, community mobilisation and district-specific planning.

*Rajiv Gandhi Swaran Jayanti Pathshalas*
The RGSJPs were opened in different parts of the state in 1999 with the aim of universalising primary education in Rajasthan by providing an educational facility within proximity of villages. They were seen as alternative centres of learning. There are 18,879 *pathshalas* functioning in the state.

*Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*
The SSA is a national programme for universalisation of elementary education and covers the entire country. It was launched in 2003. The main objective of the SSA is to achieve the goal of universal primary education by 2007 and elementary education by 2010. It provides for strategies to increase enrolment through people's participation, building physical infrastructure and enhancing the professional capacities of teachers. In Rajasthan, all educational initiatives except the Shiksha Karmi project have been brought under this umbrella programme.

## 6.4 Critique of existing policies and programmes: health

One of the major criticisms of the approach to health sector development in the country is that the sector has not been sufficiently integrated with the overall process of development. The National Human Development Report 2001 states:

> *"It would not be entirely incorrect to suggest that India's approach to health sector development has not been sufficiently integrated with overall processes of development. This is reflected, for instance, in the absence of an adequate policy framework that conceives and exploits inter and intra-sectoral synergies between development processes directed at improving availability of drinking water, sanitation and public hygiene, access to elementary education, nutrition and poverty alleviation, on one hand, with awareness and access to public health and medical services, on the other."(GoI, 2002, p.83).*

The report takes account of the existing health situation: undernourished and stunted children, high fertility rates, lack of immunisation, lack of health awareness, poor access to medical services and so on. Although there are several programmes to deal with this situation, as the following discussion shows, they ignore many intergenerational issues.

Health policies and programmes in Rajasthan are not very different from those in other states in the country, despite its peculiar characteristics such as a high fertility rate over the last 50 years. Rajasthan, together with Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa will contribute to over 50 per cent of the country's population growth in the next decade. In Rajasthan in 1999-2000, the fertility rate was 4.2, which was more than double the national rate of 1.95. According to the National Human Development Report 2001, three factors are responsible for the high fertility rate: a large proportion of the population in the reproductive age group; an unmet need for contraception; and a desired high fertility (because of prevailing high infant mortality rates). However, there are other reasons for the high fertility rate. Our research on intergenerational poverty transfers shows that child marriage, early pregnancy, and social norms and attitudes have changed little through the generations. Interventions should therefore not merely relate to the efficient delivery of services such as improving female education, but also to addressing changes in social norms. The current focus is mainly on service delivery.

The Health Policy, as reflected in the Reproductive and Child Health Programme (RCH), aims to reduce infant and maternal morbidity and mortality through the improvement of the quality of services by enhancing access, availability and coverage. It is also aimed at improving women's empowerment by enhancing their health service utilisation to achieve reproductive goals and population stabilisation. There are two other programmes aimed at addressing the problem of malnutrition and women's and children's health. The ICDS provides services such as supplementary feeding to children in the 3-6 age group and to pregnant and lactating mothers; immunisation against preventable childhood diseases; health check-ups; health and nutrition education to women; and preschool education to children. The Midday Meal Scheme for primary school children aims to improve nutritional status and learning achievements as well as enrolment and attendance. (See Box 8 for more details of these programmes.)

### *The quality and regularity of services*

The present study indicates that, while reproductive and child health programmes like the ICDS and Midday Meal Scheme focus on providing needs-based, client-centred, demand-driven, high quality services to the beneficiaries with a view to enhancing the quality of reproductive life, access, availability and coverage are still problematic. Health facilities at the community level in the sample villages continue to be irregular and inadequate, especially in terms of safe motherhood such as skilled birth attendants, transport facilities in case of emergencies, antenatal care, contraception, immunisation and nutrition during pregnancy. Both the ICDS and Midday Meal Scheme services were irregular and of inadequate quality. In one of the sample villages, children from the marginalised community did not access the ICDS centre. Mamta cards[20] were not being used for recording the height or weight of the children in any of the villages covered

[20] Mamta cards are used to record and monitor the monthly height and weight of children under three years of age, and are kept at the Anganwari Centres. They are also supposed to record the health status of pregnant mothers and provide information on vaccination coverage during pregnancy and for infants aged six weeks to three years.

by the study. Health and nutrition education for pregnant and lactating mothers, and preschool education for three- to six-year-olds, were also not being provided in the sample villages. Midday meals were not cooked in some schools resulting in a drastic reduction in attendance.

### *Impact of services*

Low levels of immunisation of mothers and children leave most of the population prone to ill-health. The large number of children who are chronically energy deficient also shows that the impact of the ICDS is marginal.[21] However, the improvement in school enrolment and attendance can be attributed to the midday meal. As noted by others (Dreze and Goyal 2003) and also by our findings, it is evident that with adequate resources and safeguards, a substantial midday meal can play a major role in improving school attendance,[22] eliminating classroom hunger and fostering social equity as children across castes eat together.

#### *Box 8: Reproductive and Child Health Programme*

The flagship programme of the Department of Family Welfare (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare) is the RCH Programme supported by the World Bank. It covers the entire gamut of reproductive health, including family planning and child health, together with the package of reproductive tract infections and sexually transmitted infections diagnosis and care. The overall goal of the RCH Programme being implemented in the state is to reduce infant and maternal morbidity and mortality through improvement in the quality of services by enhancing access, availability and coverage. The programme also aims to improve women's empowerment by enhancing health service utilisation to achieve reproductive goals and population stabilisation.

The UNFPA-supported integrated population and development project is being implemented in seven districts of Rajasthan, with the aim of enhancing access to an essential package of reproductive health services, contributing to improving programme management, enabling women and adolescents to access information in order to make informed choices, and promoting gender equity and equality. The RCH Programme also receives support from UNICEF, SIDA and the European Commission.

*ICDS Programme*

The ICDS Programme, drawn up in 1975, is a scheme sponsored by the national government. It is an inter-sectoral programme which attempts to reach children in vulnerable and remote areas and give them a head start by providing an integrated programme of health, nutrition and early childhood education. The package of services includes supplementary nutrition, immunisation, health check-ups, referral services, health and nutrition education to pregnant and lactating mothers, and preschool education for three to six-year-olds. At the village level, the ICDS team comprises the Anganwari worker and a helper, who are responsible for an AWC. A record of children's health is to be maintained by the Anganwari worker through Mamta cards. In Rajasthan, the ICDS was launched in the tribal area of the Garhi block of Banswara district in October 1975. Gradually, the programme spread to all the districts of the state.

The ICDS Programme currently covers all 237 rural blocks and 20 urban blocks in the state. About Rs. 580 million was spent annually on this programme during 2000-01, and this increased to Rs. 105 million during 2002-03 because of special measures during the drought. These included:

- One hundred per cent coverage of the target population in 74 severely drought-affected blocks. Under the normal scheme, each AWC covers one hundred beneficiaries. However, it was decided to

[21] In August 2004, the Department of Women and Child Development and the Department of Health and Family Welfare took a joint decision to map all severely malnourished children in the state. A joint directive has been issued which orders that one day per month be set aside to monitor the health and nutritional status of children, which would be carried out by a medical team and an ICDS official. An additional worker (*sahyogini*) would be appointed at the AWC to track all severely malnourished children in each household of the village. However, the extent to which this initiative has been implemented, as well as its efficacy, is yet to be determined.

[22] Linking the midday meal with related inputs such as micronutrient supplementation, health services and nutrition, and education, needs further policy attention. In a recent order, the Government of Rajasthan passed a directive for the provision of full meals in schools. Full meals consist of *dal* (lentils), *bati* (wheat rolls) and rice.

cover all children and lactating and pregnant mothers in these 74 blocks. An additional 10,600 metric tonnes of nutritional items were supplied to these blocks from November 2002 to June 2003

- opening of additional sub-centres through NGOs, para-teachers, ANMs and elected representatives to implement the extended programme (GoR 2003).

Although ICDS has been one of the oldest programmes for children in the state, several evaluations (eg, Singhi, Joshi and Pal 1996) indicate that, despite ICDS having started in the poorest blocks, targeting the poorest households and aiming to change nutrition-related behaviour, the programme has only had a small impact on nutritional status, even where it has been operating for a long time.

*Midday Meal Scheme*

The Midday Meal Scheme deals with both education and food security for children of school age. At least 300 calories and 8-12 grams of protein is to be provided to each student in all government primary schools in the state. Earlier, dry rations (wheat) were provided to the children. However, in response to a public interest writ petition in the Supreme Court of India, all state governments were directed to provide cooked meals under the Scheme. The Rajasthan Government was one of the few states that fully implemented the order. It introduced the provision of cooked, hot food in the form of *ghooghry* (gruel made of boiled wheat mixed with jaggery, with oil and peanuts added in some cases) to all primary school children during recess/break. During the severe drought of 2003, the state government continued the distribution of midday meals in all primary schools even during the summer vacation (April to June 2003). The state government is spending Rs. 120 million on this programme (GoR 2003).

### *Restrictive reproductive choices*

In Rajasthan, high fertility, restricted reproductive choices of mothers, son preference and early age pregnancy have contributed to large household sizes. Girls usually marry early, attain motherhood when they are still young (less than 18 years of age), and have children who are often chronically energy deficient. Programmes such as the ICDS are curative and not preventive: they deal with weak children, but not with some of the causes, such as weak adolescent girls being pushed into early motherhood.

The state could ensure that doctors and health workers attend to their duties, and that facilities for institutional delivery exist. The state has, however, largely failed in this endeavour. The state cannot also realistically be expected to initiate processes of empowering women and girls and attitudinal change. Breaking the cycle of female disadvantage entails new mobilisation of not only women but the community as a whole, and also of the state actors. The Women's Development Programme[23] was an important initiative for empowering women in the state, which sought a tripartite partnership between government, NGOs and academics. The programme addressed a range of issues including reproductive health, child/early marriage and violence against women. However, after the initial success the programme could not be sustained because of a lack of political will and support. The role of civil society and CBOs that can influence the community in this context to bring about changes in social norms, social practices and injustices through dialogue around issues related to women's bodies, sexuality, reproductive health and violence against women, is crucial. At another level, building networks of women

[23] This programme was launched by the Government of Rajasthan in 1984. The training programmes experimented with creating a climate of questioning, reflecting, sharing, choosing, seeking and discovering, through listening and talking. The emphasis was primarily on exploring and assimilating new ideas through different modes of expression – songs, puppetry, drawing and dancing which were natural forms of expression (IDS 1988).

workers at the grassroots level, eg, the ANMs, Anganwari workers, women teachers, *mahila panchs* (women council members), *sathins* (grassroots women's development workers) – for ensuring better delivery of services to women and children, needs to be put in place through a specially designed state-level programme with a strong training component along the lines of the Women's Development Programme.

***Table 38: Intergenerational transfers of poverty: impact on children and policy gaps***

| Intergenerational transfers of poverty | Impact on children | Existing policy interventions | Impact of policies in sample villages | Policy gaps |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Deterioration of environmental resources | More work to access water, fuelwood and fodder | Indirect: watershed development, afforestation, pasture land development | Time-lines of all sample villages suggest environmental deterioration in the last 50 years | No effort to involve children in these programmes, which could become part of their environmental education |
| Division of agricultural landholdings due to population growth and high fertility rates | Shift in livelihoods from agriculture to casual labour, migration: forcing children to work to sustain livelihoods | Family planning, Employment guarantee schemes, improving farm productivity | Little awareness of family welfare campaigns especially in high income households. Very little work available within villages; available work mainly in form of drought relief | Employment guarantee schemes are not available within reasonable distance |
| Restrictive reproductive choices of parents, early pregnancies | Chronic energy deficient children Attitudes of children are often similar to those of their parents | ICDS RCH | Marginal impact Limited impact | Addressing issues of choice and later marriages with communities |
| Low levels of education, lower for girls; discrimination against deprived caste children | Children are ill-equipped for formal employment opportunities Children become part of social hierarchies early in life | Enrolment drives, midday meals in schools, innovative schooling, Village Education Committees, Parent-Teacher Associations, Mothers' forums | High enrolment, but also high drop-out rate, irregular attendance of teachers | Long-term education planning (8 years of schooling) in context of livelihood and attitudinal constraints, eg, residential schools for poor children where all their food, education and health needs are taken care of Provide equal opportunities in an enabling environment with conscientised teachers |
| Indebtedness | Children forced to work | Weak formal banking institutions failing to provide agriculture/ consumption credit to poor households | Marginal, mainly benefiting non-poor households | Formal institutions providing credit to the poor |

## 6.5 Child policy

The draft State Policy for Children has specific components on childcare, health and nutrition, family environment, antenatal care, education, and child safety and protection measures (see Box 9).

***Box 9: State Policy for Children***

The State Policy for Children outlines the goals, objectives, strategies and implementation mechanisms for the next ten years. The main areas of concern identified by the policy are:
- high incidence of infant and maternal morality
- high levels of malnutrition in children, especially girls
- marginal decreases in the birth rate
- adverse sex ratios, in addition to a high rating in population growth among major states in the country.

In Chapter 3 of the State Policy, the objectives and strategies have been detailed as follows:

- Focus on the child with specific emphasis on the girl child in all policies and programmes, considering the child as an individual.
- Create a safe, secure and conducive environment to ensure that each child, especially the girl child, has equal opportunity for survival, growth and development without any prejudice or discrimination.
- Ensure that all children get essential facilities to help in development of their full potential for contributing to society in meaningful ways.
- Ensure protection of children from exploitation and abuse.

(*Draft State Policy for Children*, Department of Women and Child Development, GoR, 2004b).

The draft policy ignores some of the intergenerational aspects that have been researched in this study. Though some important actions for tackling intergenerational poverty transfers are highlighted, others, such as improving family livelihoods or links with programmes that do so – are not addressed.

## 6.6 Conclusions

This study has attempted to enrich the knowledge base about intergenerational shifts and transfers in children's activities, community attitudes and aspirations. The research has shown that:

- Intergenerational environmental degradation continues to push children into poverty traps.
- The cycle of weak mothers – weak children – high population growth needs to be broken.
- Many poor rural children work because of livelihood needs and therefore do not attend school.
- Their low-value-added work is tiring and adds to their vulnerability.

This chapter has highlighted the fact that, although a range of programmes has been implemented by the Government of Rajasthan for improving the health, nutrition and education of children, there are several areas still requiring sustained attention.

The reasons for failures in state policy lie in: (a) inadequate knowledge of intergenerational transfers, (b) failure to implement policies and (c) excessive control over programmes that need to be devolved to local institutions. There is a need for a paradigm shift from *ex-post* appreciation of a problem and centralised control over programmes to an *ex-ante* realisation of the causes of the problem and a devolution of power to design and implement programmes. Civil society and capacity-building organisations have only partly addressed the issues of population growth, women's choices and decision-making, as well as the quality of state programmes more generally. This analysis suggests that sustained action to improve the quality of state programmes in livelihoods, education and health, and wider efforts to promote women's empowerment throughout society would have important effects in tackling childhood poverty and thus preventing poverty being passed from one generation to the next.

# Appendix

*Table A1: Size of households*

| Income group | Banswara | | | Tonk | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Nuclear | Joint family | Total | Nuclear | Joint family | Total |
| Up to 2,000 | 6.1 N=113 | 7.4 N=34 | 6.4 N=72 | 5.9 N=14 | 7.4 N=37 | 6.4 N=109 |
| 2,000 to 4,000 | 4.2 N=87 | 4.9 N=15 | 4.3 N=102 | 4.9 N=93 | 6.9 N=21 | 5.3 N=114 |
| Above 4,000 | 4.4 N=20 | 6.3 N=4 | 4.7 N=24 | 4.6 N=42 | 5.9 N=16 | 50 N=58 |
| All households | 5.2 N=220 | 6.6 N=53 | 5.5 N=273 | 5.2 N=207 | 6.9 N=74 | 5.7 N=281 |

*Table A2: Distribution of children aged 6-10 by sex, district and income groups*

| | | Income group | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Up to 2,000 | 2,000-4,000 | Above 4,000 |
| **Banswara** | Boys | 78 | 20 | 1 |
| | Girls | 61 | 15 | 4 |
| | Total | 139 | 35 | 5 |
| | | | | |
| **Tonk** | Boys | 59 | 44 | 8 |
| | Girls | 50 | 31 | 16 |
| | Total | 109 | 75 | 24 |

*Table A3: Distribution of children aged 11-17 by district, sex and income group*

| | | Income group | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Up to 2,000 | 2,000-4,000 | Above 4,000 | Total |
| **Banswara** | Boys | 85 | 28 | 12 | 125 |
| | Girls | 60 | 19 | 4 | 83 |
| | | | | | |
| **Tonk** | Boys | 63 | 51 | 25 | 139 |
| | Girls | 36 | 30 | 19 | 85 |

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*Directors: Dr Caroline Harper and Professor David Hulme*

Based on research in four Rajasthani villages,using a wide range of research methods, this report gives a detailed picture of family livelihoods, and children's work, health, nutrition and access to education. It suggests that the risk of intergenerational poverty cycles is high, and increased by recent drought and the costs of social obligations such as death feasts, both of which contribute to high levels of indebtedness. A further key factor is gender discrimination which results in women passing on poor health and nutritional status to their children and limits girls' educational opportunities. The various state and Government of India programmes operating in the study communities were doing little to tackle childhood poverty, due to a combination of under-resourcing and lack of accountability of service providers to those they are intended to serve.

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