

## Resourcefulness of the School Going and Non-school Going Girls to the Family in Rural Areas

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**ABSTRACT** The girl child who has been neglected for centuries in our country is in our focus today. The present study aimed to know the reasons for girls not attending school and their resourcefulness to the families. The total sample consisted of randomly selected 80 school going and 100 non-school going girls of 6-12 years and their either of parents. Rural areas of Northern Karnataka were the study area. Pre-tested schedule was used to elicit information by personal interview and memory recall method. Resourcefulness of the girls was assessed by their time spent on different activities. Majority of the girls were not attending school as they were required in home or field to work as unpaid labourers. School going girls also spent more time on domestic, child-care, paid and unpaid agricultural activities than on studies. Girls were helpful, thus resourceful to their families. To improve the educational status of the girls, flexible timing of school should be introduced to enable more girls to attend schools after completing their other work. Revision of content of the curriculum to increase the relevance of school learning to the real life is very essential to change the attitude of parents towards the use of education.

### INTRODUCTION

Rural girls play an important role in the family and agricultural production in India. They perform economically useful roles at home not only by undertaking productive work themselves but also making possible for the adults to undertake productive work by shouldering the burden of household work and taking care of the siblings.

But infact, in many cases people do not identify many of the tasks undertaken by the girls as labour in strict sense. Domestic chores are the best example of this. They are seen as the tasks that girls should perform automatically without any monetary compensation. Apart from this non-recognition for the work done, they are faced with a wide range of problems like poverty, lack of access to education, health facilities, inadequate sanitation, low wage rates etc. Traditions, blind beliefs also add to the drudgery of girls. For a vast majority of girls the question is not for rights but of basic decencies and basic requirements.

The present study is an effort to know the reasons for girls of 6-12 years not attending school and to assess the resourcefulness of both

school going and non-school going girls to the rural families through their time expenditure pattern.

### Review of Literature

Nair (1983) and Karlekar (1985) found that majority of the girls dropped out of school as they were required in the home or field to work as unpaid labourers.

Manjeshwar and Rayappa (1986) found that both school going and non-school going girls were actively involved in domestic, child-care, animal care, unpaid agricultural activities and paid activities.

India spends only 1.8% of the national budget on its children. About 50 to 60% of children do not go beyond their primary schooling and more than 50 millions become drop-outs. The ability to calculate the student drop-out rate should be a key to educate planners but this is one key which does not seem to be in the hands of UT Education Department (Arun 2000).

In Tamil Nadu, the workload on girls was found to be marginally higher than in boys. The educational status of girls was lower than that of boys in terms of school enrollment and attendance (Ananthakrishnan and Nalini 2002).

Khokhar et al. (2005) in their studies found that a higher proportion of girls were pulled out

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of school as compared to boys, to take care of the daily chores and their siblings. Another important reason which emerged was that parents thought that too much education for girls would make it difficult for them to get married. Kanhere (1997) in her work on woman and socialization also encountered similar results.

Das and Biswas (2006) observed that proportionate participation of adolescent boys and girls of the same families in educational, recreational and wage-earning activities did not differ; but it was significantly different for sports and household activities. Inequality in average time spent per day in relation to different socially favourable activities by the adolescents was also revealed by the study. Though almost equal time was spent by boys and girls in educational and recreational activities, boys were spending more time in sports and wage-earning activities, but girls were involved in household works for longer period of time. Participation in the household activities by the girls is almost a universal phenomenon, particularly in rural India. Probably an attitudinal change towards education of the girls might have resulted in almost equal proportion of boys and girls participating in educational activities.

Analyses of data from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, two North Indian states, revealed a positive relation between child work and schooling costs, a negative relation between school enrollment and schooling costs, and that the decrease in the probability of child work from a decrease in schooling costs is comparable in magnitude to the corresponding increase in the probability of school enrollment, implying children's work and school attendance are strongly substitutable activities (Hazarika et al. 2006).

### METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in rural areas, viz. Hebballi, Somapur, Maradgi and Nigadi Villages of Northern Karnataka during the year 2006. The total sample consisted of randomly selected 80 school going and 100 non-school going girls of 6-12 years and their either of parents. Pre-tested schedule was used to elicit the required information by personal interview method.

Open-ended questionnaire was used to collect the information on time expenditure pattern of the girl child. It was collected by asking and recording the types and duration (in minutes)

of all the activities performed by each girl, from the time of rising to the time of retiring to bed at night by observation coupled with memory recall method. This information was collected for three consecutive days. The time spent on occasionally performed activities was also recorded.

For quantifying the time spent on different activities by the girls, the activities performed by them were classified broadly into five different groups, viz. domestic activities, child care activities, animal care activities, unpaid agricultural activities and paid activities.

The time spent on these activities for each three consecutive days was calculated. Then the average time spent per day on these activities was calculated. The time spent on occasionally performed activities by girls was converted to time spent per day and added to the concerned group.

Mean was calculated to know the time spent by girls on different activities per day. To find out the difference in the time spent on different activities by school going and non-school going girls 'Z' test was carried out. Resourcefulness of the girls was assessed by the time spent by them on different activities.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The school enrollment of girls has been far less in rural areas. It was the known fact that majority of the girls (53%) were not attending the school as they had to share the mother's burden of work (Table 1). 'Financial problems' was the second major reason for parents not sending their daughter to school. This result is on par with the results of Hazarika et al. (2006). About 22 per cent and 17 per cent of the girls did not attend the school as they had to graze the cattle and work in the field during school hours

**Table 1: Reasons for the girls not attending the school (n = 100)**

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
1. Financial problem	41	41
2. Work at home	53	53
3. Has to look after the siblings	13	13
4. Lack of children's interest	6	6
5. Lack of parents interest	8	8
6. Distance of school from house	0	0
7. Child is young	2	2
8. For cattle grazing	22	22
9. To earn money	13	13
10. Child is not intelligent	2	2
11. Agricultural work	17	17

**Table 2: Mean time spent per day on different activities by school going and non-school going girls**

Activities	School going girls			Non-school going girls			Z-Value
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	
Domestic activities	80	198.14	66.79	100.00	283.25	125.33	6.3109**
Child care activities	21	201.33	75.59	25.00	202.12	117.28	0.0300NS
Animal care activities	21	68.01	27.05	89.00	120.61	104.46	3.2300**
Unpaid agricultural activities	49	34.70	20.89	68.00	102.16	141.65	3.8600**
Paid activities	80	22.50	29.05	100.00	367.50	238.95	14.310**

\*\* - Significant at 1% level. NS - Non Significant

Note: Mean Value indicates mean time spent in minutes per day on different activities by the girls.

respectively. Only a meager percentage of the girls (2%) were not attending school for reasons such as ‘child is too young’ and ‘child is not intelligent’. About 13 per cent of the girls utilized the time to be spent on school for earning money, as they were from low income families. Same percentage of the girls were not attending school as they had to look after their siblings. Similar results were found by Nair(1983), Karlekar (1985) and Khokhar et al. (2005). Thus, the majority of the girls were required in the home or field to work as unpaid labourers.

Regarding time expenditure of pattern of the girls, it was the expected feature that both school going (198, 201, 68, 35, and 22 minutes) and non-school going girls (283, 202, 120, 102, and 367 minutes) were actively involved in domestic, child-care, animal care, unpaid agricultural activities and paid activities. This result is similar to the results of Manjeshwar and Rayappa (1986). But there was significant difference in their mean time spent per day on different activities except child-care activities (Table 2). School going girls combined both school and work. They spent meager time on studies at home. They were rather fully occupied with the work before or after coming from the school or during holidays.

It is surprising to know that even school going girls spent some time on paid activities. They worked as paid labourers during holidays. It is obvious from the same table that both school going and non-school going girls spent almost same amount of time on child-care activities. This is probably because non- school going girls might have spent almost same amount of time on paid activities as school going girls in school.

**CONCLUSION**

Majority of the girls were not attending school just because their presence was required at home to take care of the household and other activities.

Whether the girls are ‘in or out’ of school they weren’t spared of carrying out different activities, viz .domestic, child-care, animal care, unpaid agricultural activities and paid activities. Thus, girls were resourceful to their families. It is obvious that school going girls spent lesser time on these activities than non-school going girls. But instead of spending time on studies at home, they rather were involved in performing different activities. One of the heart touching point borne out was that girls were caught in the vicious circle of poverty and had no escape from working as paid labourers.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

To improve the educational status of the girls, some changes must be made in the existing situation. More schools should be opened within approachable distances. Flexible timing of school should be introduced to enable most of the girls to attend schools after completing their other work. Revision of content of the curriculum to increase the relevance of school learning to the real life is very essential to improve the enrolment and to change the attitude of parents towards the use of education.

The idea of ‘a small family is a happy family’ should be conveyed even to the remotest villages instead of dragging the girls to protect and care for her younger siblings. Parents should be made to understand that the girl is young and she herself needs protection and care from elders. Girls must be treated as children and not as young adults.

To help out the girls working as paid labourers, ‘abolition of child labour act’ must be strictly enforced among the people and those disobeying must be severely punished.

One should identify the girl’s resourcefulness to the family and should be given her share of human dignity and opportunity,not only to make

her a better mother to the next generation or to create a more worthwhile contribution to community and country but simply because that is her basic human need.

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