

Relevance of Education for Child Labour

The Case of Child Labour Schools in Agra

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2000

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Table of Contents

I. Introduction	11
1. Child Labour And Education: A Discourse	11
2. The study under Focus: interventions by a Trade Union	15
3. Methodology	16
II. Overview Of Child Labour And Education Scenario in Uttar Pradesh	19
1. Certain Demographic Characteristics	19
2. Status of Child Labour in UP	19
3. Status of Education in UP	24
4. Government Schools in the Current Study	26
5. Child Labour And Inadequacies Of Public Schooling System	28
III. Project Area Description	30
IV. Trade Union and School Link	35
1. The Making Of UPGKMS	35
2. Looking Beyond Conventional Arena of Trade Unions	35
V. Child Labour in the Project area of UPGKMS	43
1. The Sample	43
2. Extent and Existence of Child Labour	44
3. Income Profile	47
VI. Children Going To Child Labour Schools – A Profile	51
1. I. Children Working Prior To Going To CL Schools	52
2. II. Children Not Working Prior To Joining The CL School	61
VII. Out of School Children – A Profile	68
1. I. Out of School Working Children	69
VIII. Schooling in Child Labour Schools	83
1. Infrastructure	83
2. Administration of the CL Schools	85
3. Course Curriculum	88
4. Parents and Communities Involvement	91
5. Funding Pattern	93
IX. Conclusion	96
Chart 1: Reason for Non-enrollment	72
Chart 2: Reasons for Not Aending Children to School though Not Working	76
Table 1: Number of Child Labourers	20
Table 2: Number of Adults & Child Workers Found in Brick Kilns by UPGKMS	20
Table 3: Sector-wise percentage Distribution of Child Labourers – All India	21
Table 4: Number of Child Labourers Identified by Labour Department Agra	23
Table 5: CL Schools at a Glance	30

Table 6: Families and Children Based on their Schooling Status	44
Table 7: Profile of Child Labourers in PS and PN Families	45
Table 8: Categories Of Children Interviewed	51
Table 9: Number Of Working Children Vis-À-Vis Non Working Children	51
Table 10: Earnings Of School Going Children Prior To And After Joining School	52
Table 11: Earnings Of Children: Previously Working and Continuing To Work	55
Table 12: Contribution Of School Going Child Labourers To The Family Income	56
Table 13: Patterns In Age And Contribution Towards Family Income	57
Table 14: Out Of School Children In Terms Of Their Work Status	68
Table 15: Profile of Out of School Working Children	69
Table 16: Out of School Working Children	70
Table 17: Details About Out Of School Non Working Children	74
Table 18: Age-Wise distribution of out of school not working children	75

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Paro Chaujar
Researcher
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Preface

Fifty years after the Constitution and fourteen years after the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act [CLPRA], the persistence of child labour and the absence of a commitment to universalise compulsory primary education plague the Indian society.

Given the obviously empowering capacity of education, there is something puzzling about the fact that the promotion of education as a means to eradicate child labour has received little attention from the state and its representatives. Even among civil society organisations, interventions in the area of demanding for universalisation of elementary education and for providing formal schooling for children, have been far and few in between and of recent origin. Among the Non-Governmental Organisations, the trend has been more in the direction of providing non-formal schooling, or alternate schooling to child labourers and other out of school children, rather than providing formal schooling.

Trade Union involvement in the area of campaigning against child labour has witnessed an increase in the recent past. However, their contribution in the area of intervention in the issue through promotion and provision of schooling for child labourers, has been very much limited. It was thus, very intriguing to find a workers' union based in Agra, which contended that it was running six primary schools for child labourers in three districts of Western Uttar Pradesh, with the intention of eliminating child labour. The Trade Union, Uttar Pradesh Grameen Kisan Mazdoor Sangh (UPGKMS) decided to undertake an assessment of the impact of these schools in eliminating child labour in the region, in collaboration with the Centre for Education and Communication (CEC), a labour rights, resource and documentation centre. The two organisations collaborated to conduct the impact assessment study in 1999.

The study, in particular, examined the role and relevance of education in eliminating child labour in the project area of the trade union, UPGKMS; made an assessment of the impact of the initiative of running Child Labour schools on the UPGKMS and to ascertain the empowering capacity of education for child labourers and their families.

The study was conducted in villages where the Trade Union was running schools. Information was collected from children of the age group 6-14 and their parents. The strength of the study is in its narrative. It discusses at length the impact the Trade Union run school is having on child labour in Agra - among the children who were working earlier, those who were not working earlier and among the parents of those who are enrolled in the school.

It was found that the parents were engaged in informal occupations such as agriculture, brick making, construction, brush making, pottery, carpet making, leather shoe making, stone quarries etc. They did not get employment for more than 15 days a month and that too after taking up different occupations. Working children have been contributing to the income of the families.

Trade Union managed to enroll more than 750 children in its schools in six villages in Agra

district of UP. Given the fact that large number of students flock to their schools, the trade union has been running the schools in the nature of a regular schools, adopting the existing government school curricula and maintaining official school hours. The researcher concludes that the UPGKMS has been able to prove that it is not the poverty of families as much as the poverty of the state in ensuring free and quality education and failure in mobilising the families that is the main reason for non-enrolment of children in government schools.

An interesting finding of the study has been that many children continued to work even after joining the child labour schools. This can be interpreted as a failure to prevent children from continuing to work; but it can also be interpreted as a situation wherein parents and children opting education to full time remunerative work. Even though children have been contributing to the income of the family, parents wanted their children to be in school and children too preferred to be in school. It is also significant that the union campaign for greater employment opportunities for the adults and for higher adult wages.

The study reveals that running child labour school is not just an activity of the union, but is also an ingenious strategy to unionise informal workers who cannot be organised through conventional approaches. Union gains tremendous confidence from the parents of children in schools and gives the activists room for reaching out to more workers in their places of residences and in informal settings of work. It shows that though child labour is a deterrent to unionisation, a careful strategy to end child labour can be a means to unionise adult workers.

At the same time, study raises implicit questions regarding the viability and sustainability of large scale intervention to run formal schools for child labourers by non-governmental agencies given the constraints of dependence on external sources of funds and absence of technically qualified teachers.

Notwithstanding these deficiencies, the study has shown that the shift from a situation where children were working and were deprived of education to a situation where children are also receiving mainstream formal education, is an indication of the empowerment of children, the parents, the community and the trade union.

New Delhi
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J John
Executive Director, CEC

I. Introduction

1. Child Labour And Education: A Discourse

The State

The Indian Constitution has just completed its fifty years and so have the articles enshrined in them. Of relevance to the present discussion are Articles, 24 and 45, which guarantee childhood to the Indian children. Article 24, states a Fundamental Right:

"No Child below the age of fourteen years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any hazardous employment".

Article 45, a Directive Principle of State Policy, enjoins the state to provide:

"free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years".

Further, in 1986, the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act was enacted in order to prohibit employment of children in "hazardous" occupations and to regulate their work in the non-hazardous occupations.

Fifty years after the Constitution and fourteen years after the CLPRA, the persistence of child labour and the absence of a commitment to universalise compulsory primary education plague the Indian society. As Myron Wiener had rightly commented a decade ago, India is a significant exception to the global trend toward the removal of children from the labour force and the establishment of compulsory, universal primary-school education.

Varying Perceptions

Varying perceptions about the issue of child labour have marked the discourse on child labour, among the academics, non-governmental organisations and the government. Shri. Lakshmidhar Mishra, the former secretary, Ministry of Labour, Government of India, has concisely presented three schools of thought on child labour. The first holding the perception that education is a fundamental right of every child in the age group 5-14 and maintains that any child who is out of school, should be treated as a working child. All children of school going age who are out of school should be presumed as doing some work or the other. All forms of work fall outside the concept of childhood whether, it is considered hazardous or not.

The situation where millions of children (100 million out of school children in India) are out of school spending their days at home or doing some work at home without wages or outside home for wages is unacceptable.

Further this school of thought contends that if children of the school going age are forced to work rather than going to school, on account of social, economic, and cultural compulsions, such a process is bound to result in retardation and impoverishment of their growth and they will be too bereft of physical strength and energy to be productive and responsive adults of the society.

The second school of thought as explained by Mishra, perceives that the magnitude of the problem (of child labour) is so enormous that the state will find it difficult to create the environment and provide the infrastructure, logistical support and resources to send the additional 100 million children to school, formal or non-formal. The total amount of resources required to put this 100 million children in school is to the tune of 40,000 crores, the availability of which is a mirage. This view thus contends that elimination of child labour should be viewed as a long-term goal, where the emphasis should be on prohibition of employment of children in the hazardous occupations and regulation of their employment in the non-hazardous occupations.

Finally Mishra explains the third school of thought, which in total contrast to the first two schools of thought, advocates that it should be left to the children to decide whether or not they want to go to school. If they want to go to school, the state must provide for necessary infrastructure, logistical support and environment for the same. And if the children find the educational system dull, demotivating and irrelevant and would prefer to work, instead, the state should create opportunities for forms of work that is in consonance with their physical and mental capacities.

Other than the last school of thought held by some non-governmental organisations, there is an agreement on the need for dispensing with the situation of child labour. The first school of thought is mostly held by national and international non-governmental organisations. The second, in line with the spirit of the CLPRA, is the viewpoint held in the government circles.

Poverty, Child Labour and Schooling

Poverty of families has been the oft-stated cause of the persistence of child labour. However, increasingly it is being realised and pointed out that poverty is rather, an outcome of persisting child labour, rather than the other way round. It has been argued that child labour is self-perpetuating. Child labourers, who are also children deprived of education, grow up unfit to be effectively employed, due to burn out and end up sending their children to work. The cycle of child labour and poverty, thus, continues.

The accompanying argument is the one that deals with the issue of out of school children. It is contended that majority of Indian children are out of school more due to the failure of the schooling system to provide free and quality schooling, than because the out of school children are required by the families to work. According to the Public Report on Basic

Education (PROBE), it is a myth to consider that child labour is the main obstacle for children being out of school. The report contends that a large majority of Indian children according to them are engaged as family labourers at home or in the fields, not as wage labourers. This distinction is important to understand because the scope for adjustment of working hours (to allow for schooling), is usually greater in family labour than in wage labour. Yet children remain out of school because of the "discouragement (of parents and children) effect", where there has been deep failure to create conditions favourable to quality education. Failures in the school environment have been, according to this report, in the spheres of physical infrastructure, teacher resources, activity patterns and social discrimination.

While child labour is not seen as the primary obstacle to schooling of children, expansion of schooling has been argued, by some, including Sen and Dreze, to be one of the instruments that can reduce the distressing phenomenon of child labour.

Weiner, too, in his work titled "The Child and The State in India" examined the processes adopted by several countries including the Germany, Austria, Japan, England and the United States, as well as China, Taiwan, South Korea, Srilanka, where compulsory education has been instrumental in eliminating child labour. He also contended that since education in India is not compulsory, children begin to at very young ages.

Parental response with regard to reasons why children are out of school, according to Dreze and Sen, are, in order of frequency: (1) the high opportunity cost of children's time (in terms of foregone earnings in wage labour, foregone production in household activities, foregone help with minding younger children, etc.) and; (2) lack of interest in education. Lack of interest in schooling, according to the authors, is likely to be a function of the (poor) quality of schooling in different regions of the country.

The parental responses and its implication for schooling may be understood in the light of an argument put forth in PROBE, as well as in Dreze and Sen (1997), where it is held that:

" the opportunity cost of children's time is certainly an important consideration for some parents, but school hours are short, and schooling can be combined with a substantial contribution to the household economy at other times".

Further, it has been argued that the willingness of the parents to bear these costs and to coax their children into going to school may depend crucially on the "quality" of schooling services they obtain in return.

The bottom-line in all these arguments is that poverty may be one of the primary reasons why some parents are not sending their wage-earning children to school, however, it is not primary reason why they are not sending the children engaged in assisting with family labour or household chores, to school. Thus, not sending children to school has more to do with the "push" away from school than to do with the "pull" towards requirement for child's work.

Objectives of Education

Apart from the fact that schooling of children can be instrumental in reducing the phenomenon of child labour, education has several other objectives that also impact on the situations that give rise to child labour.

Dreze and Sen, in their work titled " India: Economic Development and Social Opportunity, 1995, have presented five ways in which education, along with health, is seen to be valuable to freedom of a person: 1) the intrinsic importance of education, in the sense that being educated per se is an achievement; 2) education could be instrumental in assisting individuals to achieve functionings that they value, such as being able to make use of economic opportunities; 3) greater literacy and basic education can facilitate public discussion of social needs and encourage informed collective demands; 4) schooling can bring benefits aside from its explicit objective of education and that could be in terms of reducing child labour and of broadening the horizons of young children and; 5) Greater literacy and educational achievements of disadvantaged groups can increase their ability to resist oppression, to organise politically and to get a fairer deal.

State Apathy and Public Action

Given the obviously empowering capacity of education, Dreze and Sen comment that there is something puzzling in the fact that the promotion of education has received so little attention, not only from the state and its representatives, but also from trade unions, revolutionary organisations and other social movements. Further, they argue that in order to counter the failure of the public system, what is needed is more activism in the political organisation of the disadvantaged sections of Indian society. According to them, there is great opportunity for channeling the political activism in the direction of forcefully demanding expansion of basic education for those who are left out of the system.

Even amongst civil society organisations, interventions in the area of demanding for universalisation of elementary education and for providing formal schooling for children, have been far and few in between. It is only in the recent few years that campaigns against child labour have started demanding for the right to education as a fundamental right. Yet other campaigns are looking at education from the perspective of privatising it in the light of the belief that neither is the state financially capable of providing education for all out of school children, nor is it capable of providing effective and quality schooling.

Among the NGOs the trend has been more in the direction of providing non-formal schooling, or alternate schooling to child labourers and other out of school children, rather than providing formal schooling.

Trade Unions a Child Labour And Education

While the trade union activism and involvement in the area of campaigning against child labour has increased in the recent past, their intervention in the area of education is very much limited. However, their contribution in the area of campaigning against child labour has been widely acknowledged, including by the ILO, where it has been stated:

"The participation of Worker's Organisations in the campaign against child labour has taken quantum leap.... While the initial activity consisted mainly of awareness and sensitisation programmes for members, the trade unions have deepened the scope of their engagement in another direction..... Involved community integration activities for the purposes of better detection and surveillance of the incidence of child labour; undertaken lobbying at both the national and local government levels for policy reforms and improved services for working children and intensified its advocacy activities."

Thus, trade unions have been active in the area of campaigning on the issue of child labour but not so much in the area of education of these children. Apart from the initiative of Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, which is implementing two IPEC (International Programme on Elimination of Child Labour) action programmes of the ILO, in Pune and Hyderabad. This initiative, according to Mishra, has been successful in removing 500 children from work and rehabilitating them in formal schools through their special schools. These special schools provide a bridge course and facilitate mainstreaming of its students into the formal school system.

Thus, the involvement of Trade Union, like that of other organisations in the area of education for child labourers has been limited.

2. The study under Focus: interventions by a Trade Union

The involvement of civil society organisations in the pursuit of formal schooling for education being limited, it was intriguing to find a workers union based in Agra, which contended that it was running schools for child labourers in three districts in west Uttar Pradesh, with the intention of eliminating child labour.

This worker's union, called the Uttar Pradesh Grameen Kisan Mazdoor Sanghathan (UPGKMS) is based in Agra and is running six schools for child labourers in six villages, spread in the districts of Agra, Etah and Hathras. Details about this union and its schools, called the Child Labour Schools (CL Schools) form part of the chapters of this study.

It was decided to undertake a study to assess the impact of these schools in elimination of child labour. The study sought to examine the role and relevance of the schools set up by UPGKMS in eliminating Child Labour in the project areas. UPGKMS has set up 6 primary schools in 6 different villages across three districts in UP. These schools are in district Agra, Etah and Hathras. The distance from Agra, being between 12 kms to 100 kms. The schools were set up between 1995 and early 2000 and the first school has just passed a batch of students who have completed V standard. Due to local demand and tremendous response from the communities, the union has decided to extend the school beyond V standard. This school, the first school set up by the union also received Government recognition in the year 1999 and is also a standard, which the other schools hope to achieve.

3. Methodology

Objectives

The study of UPGKMS and its CL Schools was undertaken with the following objectives:

To examine the role and relevance of education in eliminating Child Labour in the project area of UPGKMS

To assess the impact of the initiative of running Child Labour Schools on the UPGKMS

To ascertain the empowering capacity of education for child labourers and their families.

For the purpose of the study, child labour was defined to be any child under the age of 14 years, working with or without wages, within or outside the home, with or without parents, for part or full time of the day, including activities such as household chores and child care for younger siblings.

Project area of UPGKMS is defined as the village(s) and or hamlets where the focus population of the UPGKMS resides and where the CL Schools are running. These villages are 1) Dhanoli, district Agra; 2) Fatehabad, district Agra; 3) Nagla Banjara, Fateh Pur Sikri, district Agra; 4) Nagla Daru, district Etah; 5) Gadhaiya, district Etah and; 6) Kolra, district Hathras.

Research Methods

It was decided to conduct a sample survey of the children and their parents in the project area of the UPGKMS. Other than this, interviews: with the workers of the UPGKMS, including the President; with Basic Education Officer for the district of Agra, Assistant Labour Commissioner; Agra, Managing Trustee of the Devraha Baba Trust, who provide some assistance to the CL Schools and Focussed Group Discussions with communities at three of the CL School villages, were conducted.

Unannounced visits to three government primary schools, in the villages of Dhanoli, Fatehabad and Nagla Banjara in district Agra, were made. Unannounced visits were also made to CL Schools at Dhanoli, Nagla Banjara, Fatehabad, in district Agra and to the CL School at Kolra in Hathras district.

Field observation notes have been one of the most (substantially) used information in the study.

The Sample

It was decided to interview 160 respondents of which 80 would be children and the other 80 would be the corresponding parents of the children. Families thus, became the unit of investigation, where questionnaires were administered on one child and one parent per family.

The project sample was also divided into:

Families from which at least one child was going to the CL school and
Families from which not a single child was going to any school

The ratio of CL school going families to non-school going families was 50:30. This ratio between school going and non-school going was set according to the brief analysis of the situation in the project area as given by UPGKMS. According to them the proportion of out-of-school children in their target area was lesser than the proportion of children in school.

The categorisation of the sample was thus:

Families from which at least one child was going to the CL school:

50 children going to CL Schools, codified as CS and 50 parents of children going to CL School, codified as PS.

Families from which not a single child was going to any school 30 children not going to any schools, codified as CN and 50 parents of children not going to any school, codified as PN.

Of the six villages, 14 families each (9 of CL School going children and parents plus 5 out of school children and their parents) were selected in villages Dhanoli and Nagla Daru and; 13 families each (8 of CL School going children and parents plus 5 out of school children and their parents) were selected from the rest of the villages. During the course of data collection however, in the village at Gadhaiya, it was difficult to find families from which not a single child was going to school and hence only 3 families of the out of school category could be interviewed in Gadhaiya. In order to compensate for this, two more families in the category of out of school were selected in Fatehabad.

Sample was selected randomly. For the CL School going children and their families, every fifth name on the attendance register of the CL Schools was selected and for the families from which not a single child was going to school, every third or fourth house that the investigators chanced upon was selected. However, in many villages, it was not possible to find as many families and in such a case, whichever family was encountered, was selected.

Care was taken to interview as many Mothers as Fathers, to be able to give representative data.

After the survey was completed, 8 questionnaires out of 160 were discarded due to inconsistencies. These include two corresponding sets of parent and child respondents from two families, in the school going category and two set of parent and child respondents from the out of school category. Hence, the analysis is on the basis of information gathered from 152 respondents from 76 families.

Age of Children

For the purposes of the survey, the age of children to be interviewed was restricted to children over 6 years of age and upto 14 years of age. This was to ensure that children are old enough to respond to the questionnaire.

The Questionnaires

Four Separate Structured Questionnaires were prepared, one each for the four different categories of respondents: 1) children going to CL Schools and; 2) their parents and 3) out of school children and; 4) their parents.(See the annexure)

The questionnaires were divided into various sections including personal information, household information, reasons for child labour, experiences with the UPGKMS, with schooling and so on.

Field Work

The sample survey was conducted between June 2-7, 2000. The remaining data collection, through interviews, focussed group discussions as well as visits to CL Schools and the government primary schools were completed between last week of June and the last week of July 2000.

For the sample survey, the teachers and workers of the UPGKMS actively supported the investigators in identifying households, helping with language (though the language spoken was Hindi, some of the dialects were slightly difficult to comprehend).

Limitations of the Study

This study is not free from the limitations of like any other micro study of this nature. Certain specific limitations of this study are as follows:

The subject matter of the study are child labourers and the relevance of education for them, the family is the unit of information and parents are the main source of information regarding the children, their contribution to the family income, education, etc. Hence, despite every possible caution the discussions and conclusions at times may be influenced by the parental bias.

The sample covers only the areas where UPGKMS is actively involved.

As the study focuses more on social and cultural issues and less on the economic aspects of the phenomenon of the child labour and the relevance of education, the questionnaires were designed to elicit the data accordingly. An attempt had also been made to collect data and related information on children's contribution to their respective families, a clear picture of this aspect has not been established.

Last, but not the least, time and finance were among the major constraints.

II. Overview Of Child Labour And Education Scenario in Uttar Pradesh

1. Certain Demographic Characteristics

A large part of India's total population lives in Uttar Pradesh (UP). According to the 1991 Census, UP had a population of 139 million with over 80% of its population residing in rural areas and primarily engaged in the agrarian economy.

Uttar Pradesh is also counted amongst the four Indian states with the lowest literacy levels. The literacy rate for females over 7 years of age in UP was 25% and for males over 7 years of age, was 56%, much lower than the national average of 39% and 64%, respectively. Further, while the female literacy rate for girls over seven years of age, for the whole of UP is 25%, it goes down to 19% for rural areas.

These figures become more critical once seen in the light of the fact that UP accounts for one of the largest child population (0-14 years) in the country. Compared to the national average of child population (in proportion to the total population) of 36.30%, UP child population is much higher, at 39.10%.

Exceptionally high levels of mortality, fertility, morbidity, undernutrition, illiteracy, social inequality and slow pace of poverty decline mark Uttar Pradesh as one of the most backward states in the country.¹ Further, in 1987-8, almost half the population of UP was estimated to be living below the 'poverty line'. The low level of incomes in Uttar Pradesh has been a major constraint on individual and social opportunities.²

2. Status of Child Labour in UP

1

Dreze and Sen (ed.) 1997

2

Dreze and Sen (ed.) 1997, gives an analysis of diversity in development progress in the three states of Uttar Pradesh, Kerala and West Bengal.

State specific studies on child labour are far and few in between. In the absence of any specific study on the status of child labour in the entire state of Uttar Pradesh, an overview of the child labor situation in the country as a whole will be attempted. Considering that a large proportion of India's population including, children live in UP, such an overview would reflect the situation in the state.

Extent of Child Labour

As has been discussed in the previous chapter, the figures on child labour vary depending upon the perception and interest in the issue of the surveying agency/organisation. It, thus, becomes very difficult to project the exact number of child labourers in the country and even less so for specific states. For the purpose of this study however, figures from the 1991 Census will be drawn. According to the 1991 census, there were about 11.285 million child workers in the age group of 5-14 years, in India. Of these 6.18 million were males and 5.09 million were females.

For Uttar Pradesh the total number of child workers in the age group 5-14 years was about 14 lakhs (9.8 lakh males and 4.2 lakh females). Table 2.1 depicts the total child labour population for all-India, Uttar Pradesh and two out of the three districts where the current study is located, i.e., Agra and Etah. Hathras is a newly formed district and hence specific data on child labour for this district is currently not available.

Table 1: Number of Child Labourers

<i>Area</i>	<i>Total No. Of Child Workers (5-14years)</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
All India	11.285 million	6.18 million	5.09 million
Uttar Pradesh	14.10 lakhs	9.8 lakhs	4.2 lakhs
District Agra	17.45 thousand	15.27 thousand	2.1 thousand
District Etah	19.15 thousand	15.50 thousand	3.6 thousand

Source: 1991 Census of India, Office of the Registrar General, India, New Delhi.

Apart from the above-mentioned data, there is also some data (table no.1.2), on the number of child labourers particularly employed in brick making, in seven specific districts of UP where the UPGKMS operates. The information was gathered first hand, by the workers of the Union, who made visits to each of the brick-kiln sites. The entire process was spread across six months from August 1998 – February 1999. Table 2.2 gives the results of the UPGKMS survey.

Table 2: Number of Adults & Child Workers Found in Brick Kilns by UPGKMS

<i>District</i>	<i>No of Brick-Kilns</i>	<i>Adult Workers (Male)</i>	<i>Adult Workers (Female)</i>	<i>Child Workers</i>	<i>Total</i>
Agra	96	11431	4005	2391	17827

Etah	50	6045	1690	1216	8951
Hathras	34	3400	1000	1080	5480
Aligarh	31	3681	820	850	5351
Mathura	73	9400	1998	1904	13302
Firozabad	51	5661	1430	921	8012
Etawah	19	1900	510	496	2906
Total	354	41518	11453	8858	61829

Source: UPGKMS Survey

According to the survey conducted by the UPGKMS, there are 8858 child labourers engaged in brick making in seven districts of UP, alone.

Sector Profile

According to the 1991 Census, over 80% of child workers at all India level were employed in agriculture sector and in rural areas this share was around 90%. This is followed by the sector where children are engaged in Livestock (Animal Rearing), Forestry, Fishing and so on. These account for 5.67% of all child workers in the country.

Further, nine out of ten child workers in the age group of 5-14 years old lived in rural areas. It follows then, that rural child workers in Uttar Pradesh would also be engaged in the agricultural sector. The following table (2.3) depicts the sector-wise percentage share of child workers in the age group 5-14, in UP.

Table 3: Sector-wise percentage Distribution of Child Labourers – All India

<i>Sector</i>	<i>Percentage Distribution (Total)</i>	<i>Percentage Distribution (Rural)</i>
Agriculture (Cultivated and agricultural labourers)	80.2	88.7
Livestock (Animal Rearing), Fishing, etc.	0.9	0.9
Mining and Quarrying	0.1	0.1
Manufacturing at Household Industry	4.2	3.0
Manufacturing other than Household Industry	6.3	3.5
Construction	0.5	0.3
Trade and Commerce	2.9	1.1
Transport, Storage and Communication	0.4	0.2
Other Services	4.4	2.4

Source: 1991 Census of India, Office of the Registrar General, India, New Delhi

According to the 1991 Census, the order in which child labourers are spread, sector-wise, in the state of UP is: majority child labourers engaged in agriculture; followed by manufacturing other than household industry; manufacturing in the household industry; other services; trade and commerce; livestock (including animal rearing); construction and finally; transportation, storage and communication.

As per the 1991 census, the number of child workers identified in the Construction sector, which includes brick making, in the state of UP is 7050 (0.5 per cent of 14.10 lakh). Comparing this to the figure of 8858 child labourers identified by the UPGKMS, in the process of brick making specifically in seven districts of UP alone, suggests that there are several children who have not been identified in the Census. One of the reasons for this could be, apart from the methodology adopted for conducting the Census survey, is that brick making is one of the occupations where employment of children has been banned under the 1986 Child Labour (Prohibition And Regulation) Act {CLPRA}. During the course of the Census survey, it is highly possible that owners and contractors at the brick kilns could have prevented children from being at the work-site and or, the parents of these children may have, out of fear of prosecution, not shared accurate information.

It was common to find that, parents whose children were employed in the stone quarries or brick-kilns, feared sharing information on their children's working status with government officials. During the course of the present survey that was conducted as part of this study, parents said that they feared prosecution if they identified their children as child labourers. According to them, the contractors had warned them not inform the "officials" about their working children; or else they could be prosecuted.

Discussions with the Assistant Labour Commissioner (ALC), Agra region, confirmed that parents did fear prosecution. According to the ALC even though it is clear in the CLPRA that it is the employers who face prosecution, parents have been misinformed by the employers and contractors that it is they who would be prosecuted if their children were identified as child labourers. It is for this reason that during the "raids" carried out by their department, in 1997, 1999 and 2000, following the directions of the Supreme Court judgement of December 1996,³ the labour department failed to get many children identified. Most of the parents did not identify their children as workers. These fears, in addition to the public announcements of the survey, according to the ALC, were major impediments in identifying child labourers.

Interventions In The Area Of Child Labour

The data on child labour collected by the Labour Commissioners (LC) office in Agra, speaks

3

The Supreme Court Judgement, 1996 directed all states to carry out fresh investigations and survey on child labour and in addition, to carry out prosecutions against offending employers who were found to be employing children under 14, with a fine. For more details on this judgement see Mishra, L. (2000), p226-228.

volumes about the leniency adopted while addressing the issue of child labour. As per information from the LC's office, the total number of children identified in the hazardous occupations/processes for the entire region of Agra (which includes district Agra, Etah and Hathras among others in the region), year wise, is as follows:

Table 4: Number of Child Labourers Identified by Labour Department Agra

<i>Year</i>	<i>No. Of Child Labourers Identified</i>	<i>Prominent Sectors Of Employment</i>
1997	90	Carpet, Iron Foundries And Battery Making
1999	27	Stone Quarries, Carpet, Welding and Printing Press
2000	14	Stone Quarries, Carpet, Welding and Printing Press

Source: Labour Commissioner's Office, Agra, UP.

By the ALCs own confession, these figures are "very low". The reasons for this have been discussed earlier in this section.

Apart from not being able to collect accurate data on child labour in the region, the Commissioner's office also informed that until the 1996 Supreme Court Judgement, not a single case had been prosecuted under the Child Labour Act of 1986. The only records that they did have on child labour dated post 1996.

Even after 1996, the number of cases prosecuted under the CLPRA have been as low as 52. These cases have been from the sectors of carpet, automobile workshops, brick making and stone quarries. Instead of the offenders being penalised as per the Act, most of the cases have ended up with stay orders by the courts. As a result, a mere Rs 6000 has been deposited in the Child Labour Rehabilitation cum Welfare Fund,⁴ rather than Rs 20,000 per child labourer identified, per offender.

The role of the Labour department abruptly ends at mere notification of the prosecution and dispatching of the list of identified child labourers to the Basic Education Office for enrolling them in the nearest government school. The Basic Education Office, Agra was unable to provide data on the number of such children being put in schools. The likelihood of those children continuing out of school and working, is high. Their situation hence remains unchanged despite being identified.

4

One of the directions given by the Supreme Court in 1996, directing the state governments to deposit the compensation amount of Rs 20000, per child labourer in a Child Labour Rehabilitation Cum Welfare Fund. See Mishra,L (2000).

3. Status of Education in UP

One of the most recent documentation on status of education in the State of UP is found in Dreze and Sen's, *Indian Development: Selected Regional Perspectives* (1997), where it has been conclusively presented that:

“Uttar Pradesh is nowhere near the realisation of the constitutional goal of free and compulsory education for all children upto the age of 14 ...”.

And there seems to be good reasons to agree with this. A few critical observations arrived at on the basis of a sample survey carried out by Dreze and Gazdar in Dreze and Sen's (1997), are outlined below. These observations are very relevant to the subject of the current study.

Educational Provision

To begin with, the educational services available with the population are dismal. The proportion of rural settlements of 300 persons or more having primary schools in 1986 was 47.7%, almost half less than the national average of 87.6%. Moreover, the proportion of rural children aged 12-14 who have ever been enrolled in a school in 1986-1987 was 32% for females and 73% for males, again less than the national average of 72% and 86% respectively for females and males. Per capita expenditure on education for the state of Uttar Pradesh was lower than the all-India average, with less than Rs 200.

Apart from the deprivation in terms of “provision” of educational services, UP also seems to suffer from poor “utilisation” of schooling facilities. Even as a vast majority of rural population lives within short distance of a primary school, with 89% of the rural population in UP living within 1 km of a primary school, the “schooling” provided is extremely disappointing. Schooling in the sample schools (in Dreze and Gazdar's study) was marred by poor infrastructural facilities, falling and decaying buildings, teachers' absenteeism, and non-performance of teaching duties by teachers and lack of involvement of parents and local community in school management.

Teachers Absenteeism

In a sample survey on status of education carried out across four districts in UP, Dreze and Gazdar found out that the existence and accessibility of schools does not seem to be the main cause of persistent educational backwardness in that region. Instead factors such as teacher absenteeism, to the extent that two-third of the teachers in the sample schools were absent during the time of their unannounced visits, were the main reasons for educational backwardness in the region. Apart from this, it was observed that schools neither started on time nor did they complete the requisite hours. Further the investigations revealed that teachers actually performed very little teaching even when they were present.

“Shirking and absenteeism on part of the teachers was widely perceived as the fundamental problem of

government schools in all the sample villages".⁵

Enrolment and Attendance

In all the sample schools studied by Dreze and Gazdar, the number of actually present pupils was well below 50%. The proportion of female children among attending pupils was about one-third. Teachers also reported that attendance levels vary greatly over the year, the most common pattern being one of erratic attendance, with children dropping in and out of school. Further pupil absenteeism was said to be widespread during periods of high activity in the agricultural cycle – during harvest. The authors contended that apart from the fact that this kind of observation indicated the lack of sensitivity of official policy to the needs of the rural poor, a more significant finding has been that teachers did not think that actively encouraging school attendance was part of their responsibility. Clearly then, reaching out to the poor rural families has not been considered as a responsibility by the agents of the public school system.

Private Schools

Dreze and Gazdar contended that even while the official statistics point out that only 3% of all primary schools in rural Uttar Pradesh were managed by private institutions, their own field investigation suggested that unrecognised private schools account for a much larger share of all private schools. The private schools include those schools that are run by private individual for profit, as well as, those that are run by not-for-profit voluntary organisations.

The impression of the latter is that while they are few in numbers, they are often well run and well attended. The most significant comment made by the authors, with regard to these schools is

*“ The high attendance and low drop-out rates in these schools, where teachers and managers have a genuine commitment to the promotion of basic education (especially among disadvantaged groups), demonstrates that the low attendance in government schools has more to do with the abysmally low standards of teaching and management in these schools than with any lack of interest in education on the part of children and parents.”*⁶

Moving to the discussion on profit oriented private schools, it was observed that they were charging substantial fees, with the average fee being charged per child per month was around Rs 15. Further, private school teachers are generally less qualified than the government school teachers and are accountable to the parents, unlike the case with government school teachers. All this in spite of the fact that private school teachers are paid lower salaries than the government school teachers.

One of the crucial problems faced by private schools is that of obtaining government

5
Dreze and Gazdar in Dreze and Sen (ed) 1997.

6
Dreze and Gazdar in Dreze and Sen (ed.) 1997

recognition or “manyata”, without which they cannot issue recognised primary-school certificates. These certificates are necessary for the transfer of children from private primary schools to government schools.

The authors conclude by remarking that teaching and management standards in government schools are extremely poor and play an important role in persistence of low attendance levels. However, the demand for schooling has increased, inducing a larger proportion of parents to send their children to school despite the declining quality of education in government schools. Thus, the slow and steady improvements in the indicators of literacy and education in recent times have occurred *“in spite of persistence of inadequacy of public schooling at the village level, rather than as a result of positive government policies”*.

Link between Poverty and Demand for Schooling

Dreze and Gazdar examine the extent to which poverty may be linked to the demand for or rather, the lack of demand for education. They debate that while it is generally assumed that poverty is the main reason why many Indian parents do not send their children to school, the absence of firm empirical evidence on the issue it is difficult to assess the actual importance of poverty as an obstacle to widespread schooling. Rather, literacy of parents, the quality of available schooling facilities and the social support which different sections of the population receive in their pursuit of their educational aspirations have a greater bearing on whether parents send their children to school.

The willingness of parents to bear the costs of educating their child, whether it is the cost of schooling per se or of the cost of removing children from contributing to household economy, may depend crucially on the quality of schooling services they obtain in return. The positive experiences of primary schools run by voluntary organisations indicate the possibility of achieving widespread literacy in the younger age groups even when large part of the population is quite poor.

Education: Foremost Development Priority

Finally the authors conclude that the persistence of widespread illiteracy in Uttar Pradesh is an important issue both as an aspect of deprivation in that state and as a cause of other kinds of deprivation. It has been widely recognised that basic education serves diverse individual and social roles connected with economic growth, demographic change, social equity, political participation and personal development. In the light of this, then, promotion of basic education in Uttar Pradesh and other educationally backward states is undoubtedly one of India’s foremost development priorities.

4. Government Schools in the Current Study

For the purpose of the current study, visits were made to two government schools, one each in the vicinity of the CL Schools, in the two villages of Dhanoli and Fatehabad, both in district Agra. While the school at Dhanoli bore an empty look during post lunch break, the school at

Fatehabad looked almost a part of the mandi (whole sale market) that lines its boundaries. The teachers complained that the school, which does not have a proper boundary and gates, serves the purpose of an open latrine for the vendors who have set up their stalls around the boundary of the school.

This apart, the school is situated in an old building, which was built during the British regime to house the tehsil office. The building, today, is in shambles, with holes marking the arched roofs. During rains no classes are held in this school since both the verandah and the hall get wet. A total of 464 children are accommodated in one hall and one verandah. The only hall not only accommodates two classes but also serves as the office of the headmaster, who, while the classes are going on, also attends to parents, government officials and visitors (including the researcher of the current study). Coupled with the chaos of the mandi, the quality of education being imparted at this school can well be imagined.

The Dhanoli School (873 students), though better than the Fatehabad School in terms of infrastructure available, suffers from other problems, most importantly lack of teachers involvement. While not all the children had returned after the lunch break, no attempt was made on part of the teachers to either attend to the children who did come or to look out for other children. Over and above this, it was most horrifying to observe that a group of parents just walked into the school, straight to a class and dragged out a young boy of 8-9 years and beat him right outside the school. This was followed by a larger group of students just wandering out of the school to witness what was happening. Apparently there had been a fight between children and the parents had gotten into it, too. It was much later that the headmistress intervened and asked the children to get back to their classes. The other teachers did not bother to come outside the school at all.

The headmaster at the Fatehabad School, as well as, the headmistress at the Dhanoli School complained about the apathy of the education department of the district and state towards their requirements. While the headmaster at the Fatehabad school has sent numerous applications to the district as well as state education departments stating the decaying condition of the school and the threat to students and teachers alike, not only have they snubbed the issue at hand, rather they have accused him of offending the education department!

Both the schools, at Dhanoli and Fatehabad have more number of students than what they can handle. Both have expressed the need for more rooms and in fact at Dhanoli for at least two more schools in the same area! However, none of their requests have been met with. The icing on the cake has been the instructions by the education department of the state to undertake *school chalo abhiyan* (go to school campaign), whereby they are expected to their enrolment further beyond their current capacities.

Not only this, the education department perceives the problem in an entirely opposite fashion. Even as large amounts of funds have been received by the state and district departments, from the World Bank for the purposes of the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), not only are the schools unaware of this fund, their requirement for more schools and rooms are being snubbed. According to the Basic Education Officer for the Akola block, which includes Dhanoli,

there is no need for any more schools in Dhanoli. The village according to him is “saturated” with schools. Compare this to the situation at Dhanoli: a population of about 50,000, with only 3 government primary schools and 1212 children enrolled. The Basic Education Officer for Akola block must not be serious when he says that Dhanoli is saturated with schools.

Even while there are funds for improving the infrastructure of the existing schools or for setting up new schools under the DPEP, the schools situation remained unchanged and seems likely to remain status quo unless the education department takes serious note of the requirements of each of these schools.

The problems faced by the public schools in the area surveyed are not singularly limited to either infrastructural shortcomings, or lack of teachers’ involvement, or lack of involvement of parents alone. It is the sum total of all these deficiencies, coupled with the tangential approach and perception of those invested with the responsibility of ensuring the delivery of schooling that the public school system in the project area of UPGKMS makes a dismal picture.

5. Child Labour And Inadequacies Of Public Schooling System

The relation between child labour and education being clear, UP seems to be a classic case of persistence of child labour alongside failure of public schooling system to reach the rural poor children.

Beginning with the underestimation of the size of the problem being addressed, that is, the extent of child labour, to the progress made, or rather the lack of any progress made, in addressing the issue, to linking up school enrolment and retention with elimination of child labour, the shortcomings on part of the administrative system of the state are extremely high.

Dreze and Gazdar (1997) have analysed that whether it is health care provisions, or educational facilities, or the public distribution system or any essential public services, Uttar Pradesh stands out as a case of resilient governmental inertia as far as public provisioning is concerned.

Poor economic performance in terms of low per-capita incomes and slow economic growth in Uttar Pradesh is not very different from many other Indian states. What is different in the case of Uttar Pradesh, as argued by Dreze and Gazdar, is the failure of the system in transforming living conditions in the state. These failures have been in the field of *“land reforms, displacement of health care services by family-planning programmes, decay of the public schooling system, widespread corruption of poverty alleviation programmes, the suppression of women’s informed agency in society, the fragile basis of local democracy”*.⁷

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Dreze and Sen (ed) 1997 for more details on developmental situation of Uttar Pradesh

To project poverty as *the* reason for persistence of child labour and for large number of children being out of school amounts to obscuring the real reasons why these problems exist. Poverty is an all-encompassing and complex problem, which does not belong to any specific government department or agency. Thus, it is easier to look at child labour and high levels of illiteracy among the school going age group through the framework of poverty and to wait for poverty to be eliminated before any thing can be done about child labour. This in totality, has been the general attitude towards child labour in the official circles.

As will also emerge from this study, the persistence of child labour has more to do with the failure of the public schools to reach out to the rural poor families than with the internal economic crisis suffered by these families.

III. Project Area Description

Introduction

In the previous chapters, the context within which the current study is placed was established. The present chapter describes the area within which the UPGKMS is running its 6 schools. The project area of the UPGKMS implies the village and or hamlet where the UPGKMS has made interventions in order to operate their Child Labour Schools (CL Schools). Each of the six schools is located in different villages. An attempt will be made to describe each of the villages in a manner that will facilitate discussion around the subject of child labour and education, specific to these areas. To begin with a brief profile of the CL Schools will be presented.

The Child Labour Schools

A brief glance at the schools set up by the UPGKMS:

Table 5: CL Schools at a Glance

<i>Name of School</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Distance from Agra City</i>	<i>Estd.</i>	<i>Enrolment Boys</i>	<i>Enrolment Girls</i>	<i>Enrolment Total *</i>	<i>No. of Teachers</i>
CLS Dhanoli	Agra	12 km	2.10.95	101	97	198	5 + 1 ayah
CLS Nagla Daru	Etah	70 km	1.4.97	95	87	182	5
CLS Nagla Banjara	Agra	45 km	23.9.97	64	46	110	4
CLS Fatehabad	Agra	35 km	15.7.99	20	43	63	3
CLS Gadhaiya	Etah	75 km	1.2.00	68	39	107	3
CLS Kolra Hathras	Hathras	100 km	3.2.00	48	12	60	3
Total	-	-	-	396	324	720	24

Source: Primary Data and Secondary Data (Attendance Records)

* Enrollment figures as of April 2000.

Child Labour School – Village Dhanoli, district Agra

Dhanoli village is situated at a distance of 12 kilometers from the main city of Agra. Part of Dhanoli falls under the village area and part under town area. The total population is

approximately 50,000 and the village is divided into “naglas”, hamlets and wards. There are a total of 19 wards in Dhanoli. Its inhabitants include natives as well as migrants. The latter have moved in from neighbouring areas, primarily in search of better employment opportunities, since Dhanoli is close to Agra.

Most families and adult members are engaged in more than one occupation. Most of it being irregular and seasonal, the occupations vary from agriculture, construction work, brick-kilns work, pottery, brush making, ornaments making and leather shoe making. The latter four are home-based occupations in which mostly women of the household, along with the children are engaged. Both school going and non-school going children are engaged in each of these home-based occupations, as part of family labour.

There are three government primary schools in Dhanoli with a total enrollment of 1212 children (as per information given by the Block Basic Education Officer). There are also 11 private primary schools in Dhanoli that have Government recognition. For education beyond V standard, the children are either sent to private schools, in and around Dhanoli or they travel as far as Agra for Government schools.

The CL school at Dhanoli is the first school that was set up by the UPGKMS in early 1995. The school was set up in Nagla Masjid, a hamlet of the village where there was high concentration of children engaged in brush making at home.

Child Labour School – Village Nagla Daru, district Etah

Nagla Daru is a small village in district Etah, comprising about 85 families. It is at a distance of 70 kilometers from Agra City. It is a predominantly agrarian village and people are engaged in cultivating their extremely small land holdings as well as in working as agricultural labourers on the fields of the landowners. While agriculture is the predominant occupation, people, mostly men are also working in brick-kilns and in construction. Women and children are the ones who are primarily engaged in agriculture. Majority of the families in Nagla Daru are natives.

The nearest government primary school for Nagla Daru is at a distance of about two kilometers, in a neighbouring village and the nearest private junior high school is about 3 kilometers away. These are the only two schools in the vicinity of this village. According to the village elders, about 10% of the youth population, male, of the village has completed five years of schooling.

The CL School in Nagla Daru was set up in April 1997.

Child Labour School – Nagla Banjara, Fatehpur Sikri, district Agra

Nagla Banjara is a hamlet within village Mandi Mirzakhani, at Fatehpur Sikri, in district Agra. Mandi Mirzakhani village itself is situated in the stone quarries of Fatehpur Sikri. As the name suggests, the hamlet comprises the *banjara* (nomadic) community who have settled in these quarries, some three generations ago, when they came here from Rajasthan, in search of employment. Even today, Mandi Mirzakhani is host to migrants from neighbouring districts of

Rajasthan.

Nagla banjara comprises about 25 banjara joint families and all of them are engaged in the quarries. Work on quarries is done on quantum basis and each family has an "area" demarcated in the quarry to work in. Most women and children however, are also engaged in agriculture work during peak seasons. It is common to find at least one female member of the family, adult or child, predominantly working as agricultural labourers.

The nearest government primary school for Nagla Banjara is in the main village Mandi Mirzakhan, about two kilometers away. Few children from this hamlet are able to send their children to this school and some children also go to private schools in the main village.

The CL School at Nagla Banjara was set up in September 1997.

Child Labour School – Fatehabad, district Agra

Fatehabad is a town area in district Agra, at a distance of 35 kilometers from Agra. With about a total population of twenty thousand, Fatehabad is divided into twelve wards. Fatehabad and surrounding villages being infested with brick-kilns, has pulled many migrants. As a result, about 50% of the population in Fatehabad are migrants. Again, being a predominantly agricultural area, most natives are engaged in agriculture, especially women. The migrants however, along with native men are engaged in brick-kilns. Unemployment in Fatehabad is severe and more so for the young women migrants, majority of whom are in their 20s and 30s. Not getting any work, they are forced to work at a pittance, in a cold storage (for potatoes), that too only for 3-4 months in a year.

Fatehabad has only one government primary school, one government secondary school, and surprisingly, two government high schools. Of all the villages where the CL Schools are running, Fatehabad has the highest number of private primary schools. There are as many as fifteen private primary schools, one of them being run by the Chairperson of the Fatehabad council.

The CL School in Fatehabad was set up in July 1999.

Child Labour School – Gadhaiya, district Etah

Gadhaiya is a small village situated at a distance of 75 kilometers from Agra City. It is a predominantly agrarian village with about 60% families owning about 2- 2 and a half acres of land. However, like in all the other villages, here too, people are engaged in more than one occupation. Those who are cultivating their own land also labour on the land of others or work in brick-kilns or in construction.

There is only government primary school, which is closest to village Gadhaiya is in a village at a distance of three kilometers. There are no private primary schools in Gadhaiya.

The CL School at Gadhaiya is one of the most recent of the CL Schools. It was started in

February 2000.

Child Labour School – Kolra Hathras

Kolra village in district Hathras is the farthest village from Agra City and UPGKMS head office. It is at a distance of 100 kilometers. Again, this too is an agrarian village, with about 50% families owning about 2 to 2 and a half acres of land. Apart from paddy which is the main crop (along with vegetables) grown in the clay soil in this regions, people are engaged in working on big farms of landowners, where rose is grown for the purposes of making perfumes and incense, in small factories situated in Hathras. Thus, while people are engaged in cultivating their own land, some are also working on the rose farms and in the factories. Yet many others are working in the brick-kilns around their village. Some men also work as construction labourers.

Village Kolra is one of the most inaccessible villages where UPGKMS is working. A population of 736 people (about 70-80 families) gets almost cocooned in an island of their own, once the monsoon is unleashed. Water logging at many parts makes access to the main road leading to the block, difficult. The nearest government primary school is at a distance of two to three kilometers in another village, which is separated from Kolra by a pond. During rains it is impossible to cross over the pond to the next village. There are some private primary schools about 2 kilometers from Kolra and they mostly cater to children from other villages.

Occupation Sectors?

One of the most significant aspects of the labour situation and economy in these villages is that most people are engaged in more than one occupation. There are several reasons for it. Firstly, the very nature of employment in these sectors is temporary: agriculture because it is seasonal; brick making because during rains the kilns close down and also due to non availability of raw material; brush making, pottery carpet making and leather shoe making because the provision of raw materials is not consistent; construction because it too comes to a grinding halt during monsoons and work availability is inconsistent and; stone quarries when the market demand falls. The maximum number of days that workers in this area have work is about 20. And that is on the higher side. The average number of days is about 15 in a month. Thus, the temporary nature of employment in these sectors is one of the main factors why the people in these villages are engaged in more than one occupation.

Secondly, none of these occupations brings adequate earnings. It thus becomes crucial for workers to substantiate their income by being engaged in other occupations, simultaneously. For instance, it is not uncommon to find workers in Nagla banjara, to be attending to agricultural work, early in the morning and then working at the quarries. Work at quarries is halted for three hours during the afternoon and some workers work in the agricultural fields during the “break”. Similarly, women in Dhanoli, who are predominantly engaged in agriculture, may come back home and make brushes with their children.

Thus, not only are the people in these villages working in different occupations during different times of the year, they may also be working in more than one occupation, at one time.

The mode of payment in agriculture and construction is mostly on the basis of daily wages, whereas in stone quarries, brick kilns, carpet making, brush making, leather shoe making and pottery are based on piece rate or quantum of work done, products produced.

Conclusion

From the above sections it is clear that UPGKMS project area is marked by unstable and temporary nature of employment. Unemployment has hit women the most, as is the case with unemployment anywhere else in the country. Women are thus forced to be engaged in occupations that may not necessarily be bringing in any significant amount of income. And so is the case with children. At least in the sectors of brush making and in the potato cold storage where only women are employed, women were very clear about the fact that they were engaged in these occupations for want of better opportunities. In fact mothers of children engaged in brush making even said that they would rather like that their children and they get some better paying work.

Further, the fact that many adults go without work on many days a month reiterates the rampant unemployment in these villages. Children too are affected by this unemployment and are thus seen assisting parents in their work rather than engaging in work independently.

The other significant characteristic of the project area of UPGKMS that has emerged from the above description is that the provision and access to government schools in these villages is very limited. Not only are the government schools far, they are too few. The quality of schooling provided in the government schools in some of these villages has been discussed in Chapter 2. It is thus, amply evident that the provision, access and quality of schooling in the government schools in the project area of UPGKMS is doleful.

The following chapters seek to analyse the intervention of UPGKMS through its Child Labour Schools programme, in the context of this description of the project area.

IV. Trade Union and School Link

1. The Making Of UPGKMS

Uttar Pradesh Grameen Kisan Mazdoor Sanghathan (UPGKMS) was born on February 10, 1993 and formally registered under the Trade Union Act, on June 6, 1995. It was the creation of Mr. Tula Ram Sharma, an erstwhile active member of Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) and also the general secretary of the Indian National Rural Labour Federation of the INTUC. Frustrated by the lip service offered to the rural workers by the Unions and disappointed with the absence of focus on the rural unorganised sector, Sharma decided to initiate another union, specifically for protecting and advocating the rights of the rural unorganised sector. Thus, Uttar Pradesh Grameen Kisan Mazdoor Sangh was born.

The Union as mentioned above, had a clear focus on rural workforce and a mandate for ensuring “employment guarantee for the rural worker, which comprised the first set of demands made by the Union. They carried out awareness campaigns across villages, in several blocks in the districts of Agra and Etah, conducted a signature campaign and handed over a memorandum to the then Labour Minister Mr. P A Sangma. The minister appreciated and applauded the efforts of the Union and commented that it was the first time that he had seen a Union demand on behalf of 34 crore rural workers of the country.

Hailing from a small farmer’s family, Sharma has lived and experienced the pangs of deprivation himself. While they could afford proper meals every day, Sharma could not be educated beyond X standard. He needed to work to support the family and himself, too. This situation had a very significant impact upon Sharma and his philosophy. He began thinking about the hundreds in his village and beyond, who could not afford two proper meals a day. He thought about their children and the childhood lost in labour and or deprived of opportunities to better their life chances. He kept feeling that children of the unorganised sector were born in this sector, lived their lives within this sector and died within it. There were no opportunities for them to get out of the drudgery that their parents were engulfed in.

2. Looking Beyond Conventional Arena of Trade Unions

While Sharma was working as a labourer with an agricultural implement’s shop, he chanced upon a few members of INTUC and Youth Congress at a tea stall. He was inspired by them and motivated to join the INTUC. Observing his keen interest in the Union’s work, he was sent

for Rural Leadership Development Training programme by the CWEB (Central Workers Education Board), in 1982. His greatest learning at this training programme was that 80% of the country's population lived in rural areas and 65% of these lived below the poverty line. This further reinforced his conviction to work for the rural workers and he became a full-time worker with the INTUC.

He went on to become General Secretary of the Agra unit of the Indian National Rural Labour Federation. In a period of seven months, with extensive travels and meetings across villages, Sharma had been able to mobilise and motivate 1500 rural workers to become members of the Union. All throughout, Sharma was facing severe financial crisis, since he was not earning any longer and neither were any resources made available for the kind of travel he was undertaking. He depended on his family to support as much as they could.

In the years that followed and later in the capacity of the General Secretary of the District Congress Committee, Sharma got deeply involved in assisting villages in accessing development schemes for construction of roads, building hand pumps, accessing widow pension schemes for widows and so on. He built rapport with the BDOs and CDOs and helped villagers in writing applications for different schemes. He sent memorandums to the Labour Minister and the then Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi to set up a Board for the rural workers that will channelise all the schemes for them. The demand for employment guarantee to the rural workers went along side.

In 1990, Sharma along with seven other members that he had formed for Indian National Rural Labour Federation, got together and started an NGO called Grameen Mazdoor Vikas Sewa Parishad. Under the aegis of this banner, they were able to access some funds in the form of projects from funding agencies such as the IUF (International Union of Foodworkers). They got a project for six months to organise workers in two blocks, of Agra. From the given resources, they were however able to cover four and gradually eight blocks, where they organised rural workers. The resources expired soon and they were without finances once again.

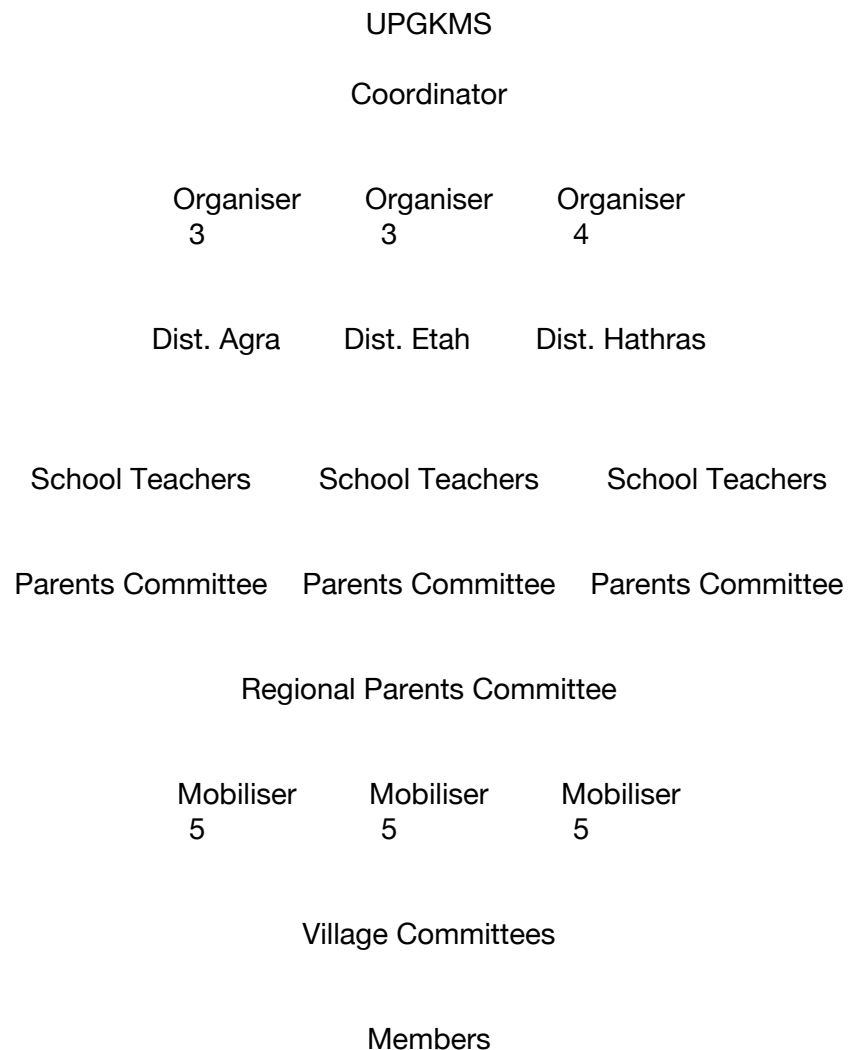
Nonetheless, the work continued and in March 1993, with a signature campaign carrying signatures of five lakh rural workers, Sharma set off with 500 members on a "padyatra", a march, from Agra to New Delhi. The memorandum which was submitted to the then Labour Minister PA Sangma, demanded setting up of a rural workers welfare Board and ensuring employment guarantee for the rural workers. This event marked a watershed in the plans of Sharma to set up a separate Trade Union, specifically for the rural workers. The idea got a shape and direction and the UPGKMS was born.

In 1995, UPGKMS started its first Child Labour School (henceforth CL School), in Dhanoli Agra. By February 2000, they had six CL Schools spread in six different villages in districts Agra, Etah and Hathras. Details about these are described in subsequent sections.

Organisation Structure, Aims and Objectives of the UPGKMS

UPGKMS has been registered under the Trade Union Act

Following is the organisation structure of UPGKMS:



Area of Work:

UPGKMS has spread its work in 14 districts in west Uttar Pradesh with more concerted work in the 3 districts of Agra, Etah and Hathras.

Members:

UPGKMS has membership of about 50087 rural workers, of which 9087 are regular and active members. 30% of the union members are women.

Portfolios and Elections:

UPGKMS hold elections every three years and the pattern of these elections has been that not many changes are introduced. According to Mr. Sharma, "good" workers continue to hold the offices where they are performing their tasks effectively. In the current portfolio's, apart from Mr. Sharma who is the President of the union, there are the following office holders:

Vice-President: Smt. Sayeedan, an agricultural worker from Etah; General Secretary: Shri. Ramnath Valmiki, a Safai karamchari from district Etah; Joint Secretary Smt. Pinky Jain, erstwhile child labourer, currently CL School Teacher from Agra and; Joint Secretary: Smt. Savitri Devi, erstwhile construction worker, currently CL School teacher, Etah.

Objectives of the UPGKMS are as follows:

To remove child labourers from labour and direct them towards education and thus, to organise/set up formal schools for these children.

To increase the membership of the Union so as to make the Union financially stronger.

To create awareness amongst the unorganised rural labour.

To campaign for the implementation of labour laws.

To organise signature campaigns for realisation of rights of the rural labour and for demanding amenities for them and; to submit memorandum to the Government, to this effect.

UPGKMS believes that the rural labour force cannot be categorised into mutually exclusive occupational categories. This is because according to them, the rural worker is generally engaged in more than one occupation. Seasonality and the temporary nature of most occupations available to the rural working class, such as those in brick-kilns, construction, stone quarries, agriculture and so on, force the rural worker to seek work in whichever sector it may be available. It was very common for the researcher to find workers who were engaged in more than one or two occupations in a year. For instance, work at the brick-kilns stops during the rains and sometimes during excess of production or lack of raw material. During such times, the workers at the brick-kilns seek work either in agricultural fields or in any other sector such as construction, etc., wherever work may be available. Thus, UPGKMS works with and for rural workers, regardless of the sector which employs them. These include construction workers, agriculture workers, stone quarries' workers, barbers, "dhobhi", cobbler, shoe makers, black smiths, potters, brush makers, carpet and durrie weavers, sweepers, small and marginal farmers and so on.

UPGKMS is very keen to highlight this nature of the rural unorganised labour force and to campaign for employment guarantee for these workers. They have made several demands to this effect at the levels of BDO, DM, in Agra and with the Ministry of Labour as well as to the Prime Ministers. Though they have received acknowledgements for their work and assurance for their demands they feel that nothing concrete has come out of their demands yet. A very concrete demand made by the UPGKMS has been the implementation of an Employment Guarantee Law for the state of Uttar Pradesh in line with the existing law in Maharashtra.

Apart from this, the Union has also been demanding equal wages for equal work, for the women workers.

Sharma emphasises that not only is the UPGKMS concerned about the plight of the rural adult workforce, they are equally concerned about the situation of child labour in the rural areas. They believe that lack of education has been one major reason why the adult workforce in rural area has remained ignorant and unorganised. According to them, poverty coupled with the lack of education among the rural poor is the main reason why their children become labourers. Given this analysis, UPGKMS incorporated education for child labourers as one of their agendas.

The bottom line for UPGKMS is to ensure economic, social and political justice to the unorganised rural labour force through organising them. Their consistent demand has been “Education for All and Employment for All”.

The Education Agenda

Focus on the rural work force being clear and the mandate for organising them in place, UPGKMS had its own unique way of addressing the problems of the rural workers. Firstly, they realised that merely conducting meetings and awareness campaigns for the workers was not enough for motivating them to organise. Their current requirements of roads, drinking water facilities and support for the worst off amongst them, widows, disabled, also needed to be addressed. It was therefore crucial for the union to be able to provide such assistance. This way they would be able to earn the faith and confidence of the workers in their sincerity. Secondly, all throughout, during the phase with INTUC, with the National Rural Labour Federation, the memorandum always included the **demand for free and compulsory education for all under 18 children** of the rural workers. It is significant to note that this demand was consistent all throughout and was made even before the wave of actualising Article 45 hit the civil society across the country. It stemmed from Sharma’s understanding and philosophy regarding education of children of the unorganised rural workers.

The main issue here was the way in which education to these children could be ensured. The Government schools, in their view, had failed to enroll and retain these children because they were oblivious to the peculiar situation of these children and they couldn’t care less about intervening in the situation. What was required was sensitivity on part of the schools towards these families. An understanding of the factors that prevent them from sending their children to school was considered crucial. According to Sharma, the schools need to be able to address the issues that impinge upon a child’s education. Since they were and are convinced that the current set of Government schools will not be able to ensure education for all children of the rural workers, they decided to set up their own schools.

Sharma’s conviction regarding education and its importance in preserving childhood as well as in opening avenues for bettering life chances becomes explicit in one particularly significant incident.

The tea stall opposite the INTUC office, where Sharma worked, was run by a young girl about 8 years old. She had lost her father and mother was too ill to work. Sharma was disturbed at her situation and offered to help the family. He requested the mother to take over the tea stall and assured them that all

members of the Union would take tea from their stall only. Then he offered to support the little girls education in a government school nearby. This girl grew up to become the Headmistress of the first school run by UPGKMS.

Education was perceived by the Union as a means to organise the rural workers, as well as an end in itself for the children of the rural workers. The adoption of education of children as an agenda for the Union emanates from the belief that “ the soul of India lies in villages and if the soul is weak and ill then progress is not possible” (as quoted by Sharma). According to them, lack of education and illiteracy are the illnesses and education is the remedy. Education has been perceived as a means by which children of rural unorganised workers could hope to break out of the cycle of continuing in the unorganised, impoverished state. Sharma further pointed out that education will not only bring about behavioural change in children, it will enable them as adults to be able to identify and access Government schemes for themselves. It will help them get informed about the laws of the country especially those concerned with labour. Furthermore and more importantly, he commented, an educated workforce is less likely to be exploited and more likely to unionise effectively. This as maintained by the UPGKMS, is as far as the benefits that education is expected to accrue to the children.

The other prong of the education agenda is that if the Union is able to provide for the education of these children, they will be able to reach out to their parents who are the rural workers. Sharma succinctly wrapped up the purpose of education in the following comment:

“ if we educate children of unorganised labour who are mostly child labourers, it will earn us the goodwill of their parents who will then be agreeable to becoming members of the Union and when children are in schools and not working, adult unemployment will decline as adults will begin to replace child labour”.

With these intentions in mind, UPGKMS decided to start running primary schools for children of the rural unorganised workers who were child labourers themselves. They decided to call such schools: “Child Labour School”. However, they felt they would be unable to access funds, donations for the schools as a Union and thus they decided to form an NGO which they called Uttar Pradesh Rural Labour Education Institute (UPRLEI) and which was registered under the Societies Registration Act, in 1996.

The idea was to identify children at work, enlist them, speak to their parents, motivate them and enroll the children in the school. The first such school was started under a tree, with 70 children and two teachers, in a hamlet in the village of Dhanoli, Sharma’s native village. The teachers were two women members of the Union. Almost all children from this hamlet, Nagla Masjid, were engaged in brush making, a home based, family occupation. (all details of the schools in another chapter).

Spiritual Anchor – yet another Influence on UPGKMS

A very significant influence in the life and trajectory of both, Sharma and UPGKMS, has been that of a spiritual guru, Devraha Baba. The Devraha Baba, who died in 1990, set up an “ashram” on the banks of river Yamuna, in Vrindavan, about 80 Kms from Agra. The Ashram is currently being headed by Bade Maharaj, followed by Chotte Maharaj, who normally executes the decisions of the Trust. The Ashram receives devotees of the Devraha Baba who come to

visit his “samadhi”, or shrine and who approach the saints for advice and blessings. The devotees come from all over the country and comprise the rich and the famous and also the poor from villages far and away.

The interview with the “Maharaj” was held, in the Ashram, to ascertain the role of the Ashram/ Trust in supporting the UPGKMS initiative. All members of the TU and most importantly Mr. Sharma keep referring to the blessings of the Baba in their initiative. They had also mentioned that the Trust has occasionally distributed blankets, books, notebooks and bicycles to the children of the CL schools. Mr. Sharma especially has repeatedly referred to the moral support that he has had from the Baba and the ashram during the trying years of establishing the Union and during the phase of working out the plan and implementation of the Child Labour School programme.

The meeting with the Bade Maharaj was very brief and informative. He mentioned that supporting education initiative for the children of the poor and marginalised was a mandate of the Ashram. They were concerned about the lack of education in the villages and especially geographically inaccessible areas such as those in the Himalayas. They have been supporting many schools in and around Agra, which have either been started by their followers or those that they have chanced upon during their visits to Amarnath, etc. Thus UPGKMS schools are not the only ones receiving support from the Ashram.

Education, they believe is the only way for societies to progress. Progress in terms of learning basics of cleanliness and hygiene, “vyavhaar” (code of conduct), getting out of destructive habits of gambling, drinking and of eating non-veg. According to them, education of children will better equip them for exploring job opportunities outside of the exploitative ones that their parents were engaged in.

He mentioned that it was actually the interest area of the Chhote Maharaj to support such initiatives and at the time of this interview, he was actually attending the inauguration of one such school, set up by a devotee, in Agra.

So far, as informed by Sharma, the Ashram had been providing only material support to the schools. It was during the interview that they announced a draft of Rs. 51000 as contribution towards the CL schools. This news came as a pleasant surprise to Mr. Sharma and the teachers of the schools who had accompanied the researcher to the interview. This was the first time that the Trust was actually supporting them financially.

The Ashram gets funds from the donations made by the devotees. They have recently come up with the idea of requesting **every devotee to donate notebook** instead of garlanding the maharaj. This way he feels that they will be able to garner more support for such schools.

While the material and financial support from the Trust, to the UPGKMS schools has been off and on and not on a regular basis, the major influence of the Ashram on UPGKMS has been in the tremendous moral support that Sharma drew from them during the struggle periods. Mr. **Sharma said that he believed it was his calling** to set up schools for the child labourers and that it would be only through the blessings of the Baba that this calling could be realised. Mr.

Sharma had first visited the Baba and his Ashram when he was going through the difficult period financially which was preventing him from starting the schools. He firmly believed that it is because of the blessings that he has been able to achieve whatever he has. Thus, **the influence of Baba on the Communities is through Mr. Sharma** and to the extent that he has introduced prayers of the Baba in the school and has put up his pictures on the walls of the school. Other than this, neither are the communities active followers of the ashram nor are their rituals significantly influenced by the Baba. Some villagers, mostly men, have visited the ashram during a programme organised by the UPGKMS and some of the villagers have attended the prize giving function of the school in which the Chhote Maharaj gave away the awards.

In all the six villages that we visited, the influence of the Ashram/Baba though of varying degrees has been through Sharma. At the minimum, they are informed about the Baba through the pictures in the school and because of reference to him by Sharma. At the most they have visited the Ashram and have heard the speeches by the Maharaj where they have been encouraged to give up drinking, gambling and eating non-vegetarian food. The latter has happened mostly in the case of the villages at Dhanoli and the hamlet Nagla Banjara at Fathepur Sikri.

Thus, the Devraha Baba and his Ashram have played a very significant role in shaping and in the growth of the UPGKMS.

Non-Workers as Members of the Union

Thus, UPGKMS earned membership from parents of these children. An interesting observation here is that even non-workers are included as members of the Union. Parents of children going to their schools who are non-workers, for instance, mothers who are engaged in non-economic household activities, men who have been handicapped and who are not working any longer, are members of the Union. And so are the teachers of their schools. While some of their teachers have been erstwhile workers, some of them were not. Thus, UPGKMS has not restricted its membership to workers only.

Conclusion

A trade union with a difference. This, in short, is the description of UPGKMS, as emerging from the above. Not many trade unions have the distinction of addressing the issue of child labour through *actually* setting up and running schools for them. And it is doing so with the dual objective of reaching out to workers through the children who attend the CL Schools as well as that of eliminating child labour through provision of schooling to children.

V. Child Labour in the Project area of UPGKMS

1. The Sample

The survey was conducted in six villages in the districts of Agra, Etah and Hathras, in U.P., where the UPGKMS is running its Child Labour Schools (henceforth CL Schools). The geographical area of the survey was canvassed to the target area within and around the villages and or hamlets where the CL schools were located.

As mentioned in the chapter on Methodology, the unit of investigation was the family and hence accordingly, the sample size selected was of 80 families. On the basis of the extent of child labour and schooling situation in the project area, as briefed by the UPGKMS, it was decided to divide the sample into two categories:

Families from which at least one child was going to the CL school and
Families from which not a single child was going to any school

The ratio of CL school going families to non-school going families was 50:30. This ratio between school going and non-school going was set according to the brief analysis of the situation in the project area as given by UPGKMS. According to them the proportion of out-of-school children in their target area was lesser than the proportion of children in school.

It was also decided to interview one parent and one child each from these categories. The total number of questionnaires administered were thus, 160. The categorisation of the sample thus selected was as follows:

Families from which at least one child was going to the CL school:

50 children going to CL Schools, codified as CS and 50 parents of children going to CL School, codified as PS.

Families from which not a single child was going to any school

30 children not going to any schools, codified as CN and 50 parents of children not going to any school, codified as PN.

After the survey was completed, 8 questionnaires out of 160 were discarded due to inconsistencies. These include two corresponding sets of parent and child respondents from two families, in the school going category and two set of parent and child respondents from the out of school category. Hence, the analysis is on the basis of information gathered from

152 respondents from 76 families.

2. Extent and Existence of Child Labour

Of the 76 families surveyed, including both the categories of families sending children to CL schools, as well as, families from which not a single child was going to any school, 39 families, more than half of the families (51.31%) reported that their children were working, at the time of the survey. A total of 56 child labourers were identified across 39 families.

Table 6: Families and Children Based on their Schooling Status

	<i>School Going</i>	<i>Non-School Going</i>	<i>Total</i>
No. Of Families	48	28	76
No. Of Families With Child Labourers	26	13	39
No. Of Child Labourers	40	16	56

Source: Primary Survey

Of the 48 families who were sending at least one child to the CL school, 26 reported that there were working children in their families. Thus, 54.16% families from which at least one child was going to the CL school at the time of the survey had child labourers and 46.42% of families in the PN category had child labourers.

Problem With Identifying Children As Workers

It must be mentioned here that these figures could well be underestimates. It was experienced during the survey that parents found it extremely difficult to identify some of their children engaged in non-income earning activities, such as household work and animal rearing and also some of the children they perceived as “merely assisting” them in work, as child labourers/working children. It took a lot of probing and discussion before they could identify these children as labourers. Thus, it is possible that many parents may still have not identified some of their children as child labourers.

There could be several ways of analysing parents’ inability in identifying some children as “working”. Though the exact reasons for this are not clear, here are some possibilities. One could be the unwillingness on part of the parents to accept their child as working. And if the child is not recognised and accepted as a worker, it is likely that the parent does not feel the pinch of depriving the child from going to school. Whereas it is possible that the parents who are sending their children to school, do feel the pinch of depriving their children or making their children work and hence were more amenable to sending their children to school. Thereby, satisfying the guilt that they may be experiencing at making the child work. None of this is to suggest that parents are making children work for vested interests of their own. As will be seen

in the following chapters, the parents and families do seem to need the contribution of their children, in paid or unpaid work. What is however being raised is that at what point does children's work (paid or unpaid) strike the parent as labour and thus unfair and which perhaps encourages them to send their children to school.

It is possible that parents, whose children are engaged in income earning activities, experience this sense of deprivation (of their children) more than parents whose children are engaged in non-rewarding activities (in terms of absence of monetary gains). Is it then that parents who end up sending their children to school are those of the former category?

Sending children to school as a matter of their right is perhaps something that parents in the former category are more likely to do, than parents who do not see their children as working and hence as deprived.

As will be revealed in the course of the following chapters, children engaged in non-rewarding activities are more likely not to be identified by their parents as workers and this was more so in the case of out-of-school children.

Profile Of Child Labourers

The profiles of the working children who were identified in the course of the survey, in terms of their age, sector and income as deduced from Table No.5.2, follows. It must be borne in mind that while the information has been gathered from both parents and children, income from children has been taken from the parents' questionnaires since not all children were able to respond accurately in this regard. However, care has been taken to ensure that any disproportionate disparity is verified across questionnaires.

Table 7: Profile of Child Labourers in PS and PN Families

S. No	Working Children under 14	Age of Working Children (in years)	Income from working children (per month)	Total family Income (per month)	Percentage of CL contribution towards family Income	Occupational Sectors of Children
ps1	1	13	333	4833	6.89	Carpet making
ps2	3	8,5,4	Inclusive mother	1280	Inclusive mother	Brush Making: 3
ps5	2	10,14	inclusive mother and 1200	2790	43.01	Brush Making and Construction Work
ps7	2	12,6	inclusive mother	1620	inclusive mother	Brush Making: 2
ps8	1	9	0	1840	0	Animal Rearing
ps9	3	14,11,6	300	md	md	Carpet making, Household chores and Carpet making
ps19	1	10	350	1850	18.91	Shoe Making
ps20	1	10	0	3000	0	Animal Rearing
ps23	1	14	inclusive mother	500	inclusive mother	Brick Kilns
ps35	2	11, 13	inclusive parent	md	inclusive parent	Agriculture:2
ps36	1	11	200	2100	9.52	Agriculture:

ps37	2	10,7	240	660	36.36	Agriculture:2
ps39	1	10	300	1500	20	Agriculture
ps40	2	14, 12	md	1650	md	Grass Cutting:2
ps42	1	14	0	975	0	Household Chores
ps11	2	11,9	400	1300	30.76	Stone Quarries:2
ps12	1	13	0	1800	0	Safai Karamcharis
ps14	1	11	inclusive parent	md	0	Stone Quarries
ps16	1	14	200	1100	18.18%	Stone Quarries
ps17	1	13	300	1400	21.42	Stone Quarries
ps27	1	9	300	3350	8.95	Agriculture
ps29	1	12	275	3025	9.09	Agriculture
ps30	3	10,12,8	300	1650	18.18	Agriculture:3
ps34	1	10	300	800	37.5	Agriculture
ps46	2	13,11	0	1600	0	Vendor (migrant) Household Chores
ps47	2	12,10	0	md	0	Cattle Rearing:2
Pn 15	1	13	learning skill	2900	0	Carpet making
Pn 21	2	11,8	0	1000	0	Household chores and animal rearing
Pn 23	1	11	0	1500	0	Animal Rearing
Pn 7	1	14	700	1800	38.88	Agriculture
Pn10	1	12	0	500	0	Animal Rearing and Household Chores
Pn 16	1	12	inclusive parent	1500	0	Agriculture
Pn 17	1	7	600	3900	15.38	Agriculture
Pn 18	2	12,9	650	1050	61.90	Cloth Shop:2
Pn 19	1	11	0	3900	0	Animal Rearing
Pn 20	1	14	275	3825	7.18	Agriculture
Pn27	1	13	0	900	0	Household chores
Pn 2	1	12	0	850	0	Animal Rearing
Pn 26	2	10,8	450	450	100	Vegetable Vendor:2

Source: Primary Survey.

PS and PN Numbers given indicate the code number of the parents

Sector Profile

Of the total 56 child labourers, 16 children were engaged in Agriculture; 8 in Animal / Cattle Rearing; followed by 6 in Brush Making; 5 in Stone Quarries; 5 in Household chores 4 in Carpet Weaving; 2 each in Cloth Shops, Grass Cutting, Vegetable Vending and; one each in Brick-Kiln, Construction, Shoe Making , Ice cream Vending and one as Safai Karamchari. The remaining one child reported that she was engaged in both, animal rearing and household chores.

It is interesting to note that agriculture accounted for 28.57% of child labourers in the sample and that in both the categories, of PS as well as PN, majority children were found to be in the agriculture sector. This is closely followed by 25% of children engaged in non-rewarding

activities such as animal rearing and household chores.

3. Income Profile

a) Rewarding and Non-Rewarding Activities

Income of the child labourers is found to be very much related to the sector they are engaged in. To begin with, there are occupations and engagements that are monetarily rewarding and those that are not. Animal/cattle rearing for one's own household and engagement in household chores are two such "non-rewarding" activities where work is not paid for and thus, income reported is "nil". In the current sample, 14 out of 56 child labourers identified belonged to this category, i.e., about 25 % children identified as working were engaged in the non-rewarding activities.

Certain clarifications are warranted at this junction. The reference to the term non-rewarding, when referring to activities such as animal rearing and household chores, is by no means an attempt to disrobe these engagements of their intrinsic work value. Rather it is to refer to the absence of gains in monetary, financial or in kind, terms. While these gains accrue to children engaged in rewarding activities, they do not accrue to children engaged in non-rewarding categories.

This figure of 25% may well be an understatement because it was found during the course of the survey that parents found it most difficult to identify children engaged in such activities as "working". They were merely regarded as "doing nothing" or at best "helping around in the house". It is precisely due to the no-income, no-concrete return nature of their work that the parents are unable to perceive and identify these children as working. The cases that are reported in the survey are those that have been culled out from children's responses, after much persuasion and probing with parents.

Implications of such perception towards child labour that debars their identification as child labourers on account of lack monetary returns, are serious. Not only do they disallow a fair enumeration of child labour, they impact parents and civil society behaviour towards these children. While it pricks the conscience of parents to be earning out of their children, having children engaged in house related activities including rearing of cattle are perceived as "harmless" and not incorrect. Especially in the case of the girl child where her identity as a woman is perceived as that shaped by the home and the hearth, her involvement in household chores is not necessarily viewed as any kind of deprivation. On the contrary it is viewed as "preparing" her for an adult woman's life.

In the current times of heightened sensitivity of parents towards child labour and the deprivation accompanying it, most specifically in terms of disabling them from getting educated, parents are likely to work towards ensuring that children who are earning or contributing towards family income do get an opportunity to go to school. In the process, children who belong to the category of non-income earning, are likely to be marginalised. Coupled with the fact that most of them will be girls, whose education is not a priority, many

girl children will continue to toil away.

Recognition of this reality is crucial for all interventions aimed at eliminating child labour and ensuring universal elementary education for all.

b) Inclusive Incomes

The other category of kinds of income earned by child labourers is that in which the child's income is included with the parent(s). This is mostly in the case of home based activities such as brush making, Pottery, carpet making and also in other sectors like Brick-Kilns and Agriculture. In the case of the former three sectors, payments are made in terms of quantum of work done/products produced, regardless of how many persons, adults or children are engaged and for how long. Thus children do not have separate income for the work they do. 11 out of 56 children who were identified as child labourers fall in this category. Thus, 19.64% of child labourers in the sample did not have any separate earning/income from the work they did.

Brick-Kiln was the only other occupation outside of home that too made payments on the basis of quantum of work completed and where the child was reported as not having separate income.

From these cases, another interesting fact has arisen. Most of these children are considered as help/assistant to parents in completing their work. The primary worker is identified as the adult parent and the children as those who are helping around. The tendency of parents of these children was of saying that these children did not earn and that the payment was made to the parent concerned. Coupled with the complexity in calculating contribution of each child/family member towards the income, it was extremely difficult to ascertain the income of the child/children.

There is yet another category of working children within this category. This is the case where even the parent does not earn any income from the work s/he does. Rather the payment for the work done by the parent is in kind. This is the singular case of a family that belongs to the "safai-karamchari", or the sweeper caste of the village, wherein the woman receives vegetables in return for the service she provides to the community. Her daughter in this case, assisted her in this work and hence, their "returns" were included with the mother's, in kind.

c) Income Earning Child Labourers

Finally the category of children, who were reported to be earning from the work they did. 25 out of 56 child labourers were earning separate income from the work they did. Thus, 44.64% of working children were earning separate income from the work they did. This income ranged from an amount of Rs 200 per month for children aged 11 and 12 years, in agriculture, to Rs 1200 per month for a fourteen year old child engaged in construction work.

The contribution of income from working children to the family income varied from 7.18% from one child engaged in agriculture to 100% in the case of two children, aged 10 and 8, who were

engaged in vegetable selling. The latter is an exceptional case here. It is the case of a family where the principle bread earner, the father of the 2 children is dead and the 2 sons earn income for the family by selling vegetables grown and picked by their mother from their small land.

In fact, it is worth noticing that in the case of families with working children and from which not a single child was going to any school (PN families), 4 out of the 13 families, were single women-headed households where all 4 women were widows. Against this, only one family from amongst the 26 in the categories of those families where at least one child goes to school and which also has child labourers, was a single-woman headed household, where the woman was a widow. These figures suggest that perhaps one of the factors that has prevented children from going to school could be the loss of principal bread earner of the family.

In the case of brush making, an attempt was made to calculate the earning per child per month. Though it was extremely difficult but for the sake of presenting their case, it was considered important. It was found that the maximum monthly income per child from brush making would be around Rs 60. Considering the case of a family with 3 children engaged in brush making, it amounts to Rs 160, from the three children towards a family income of Rs 1280. The contribution amounts to 12.5%, a significant one for a family living well below the poverty line.

Brush making has been found to be the worst paying activity, which engages women and children in their homes. House after house in Dhanoli village area was engaged in this activity. Upon questioning the lower returns of this activity, many women responded that there was little else that they could take up. In fact they said that since there was no other work available they were doing this. At least, they said, they were earning something.

Children working at retail outlets (cloth shop), followed by children in construction, agriculture and stone seem to be making larger contributions than the rest.

At the end of these categories, it must be mentioned that it was an extremely difficult exercise to ascertain income for children and family members who were engaged as part of family labour, where payment was being made on the basis of quantum of work completed. It was difficult to ascertain exact earnings of each of these. More so, it was difficult to calculate the contribution being made by children towards the family income.

Summing Up

Following is the summary of the profile of child labourers in the project area of UPGKMS:

Of the total 76 families surveyed, 48 from the PS category and 28 from the PN category, 39 families reported that their child/children were working, i.e., 54.16% of families from the PS category and 46.42% of families from the PN category reported that their child/children were working.

A total of 56 working children were identified of which:

40 were in the PS category and 16 were in the PN category.

Majority, i.e., 28.57% were in agriculture.

14, i.e., 25% of children were engaged in non-rewarding activities such as household chores and animal rearing.

11 out of 56, i.e., 19.64% had no separate income of their own. Their income was counted as inclusive with the parent.

25 out of 56, i.e., 44.64% were earning separate incomes, which were contributing between 7.18% to 100% towards family income. The average contribution towards family income being 29.73%.

Thus, it is clear from the sample that a little more than half the families (51.31%) surveyed had working children of which exactly half were earning separate income from the work they were engaged in. Further, a considerable number of children (25%) were engaged in non-rewarding activities and about 20% was engaged as part of family labour. The sector where most children are working is agriculture and the least paying sector is that of brush making.

Having a clear picture of the situation of child labour in the project area, this study moves on to examining the specific situation of children who were interviewed.

VI. Children Going To Child Labour Schools – A Profile

Introduction

In the previous chapter, an overview of the child labour situation in the project area was given. The occupational sectors, age and gender of child labourers in the project area were profiled. The current chapter moves on to specifically examine the situation of the 48 child respondents in the category of children going to the Child Labour Schools. It attempts to locate the differences, if any, in the situation of the child, prior to and after joining the school, more specifically in terms of the child's labour and income profile. The total number of children interviewed in each category is given below:

Table 8: Categories Of Children Interviewed

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
No. of CL school going children (CS)	48	28	20
No. of non-school going children (CN)	28	13	15
Total No. of Children interviewed	76	41	35

Source: Primary Data

The following table gives a break up of the number of children going to C L Schools in terms of their working situation.

Table 9: Number Of Working Children Vis-À-Vis Non Working Children

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Total number of children working prior to going to CL schools	22	11	11
Total Number of children not working prior to going to CL Schools	26	17	9
Total number of children enrolled in CL school	48	28	20

Source: Primary Survey

This chapter is divided into two sections:

- I. Children working prior to going to CL schools
- II. Children not working prior to joining the CL school

1. I. Children Working Prior To Going To CL Schools

Of the 48 CL School going children interviewed, 22 said that they were working prior to joining the school and 26 reported that they had never worked before joining the school. Thus, nearly half, i.e., **45.8% of children going to CL Schools were child labourers prior to going to the CL Schools.**

The following Table attempts to draw a picture for the child labour situation of the 45.8% of CL School going children who were working prior to joining the CL School and traces the change in their situation after they joined the CL School.

Table 10: Earnings Of School Going Children Prior To And After Joining School

<i>Cs. no.</i>	<i>Age of Child</i>	<i>Occupational Sector</i>	<i>Earning Prior (Rs.Per Month, unless specified otherwise)</i>	<i>Earning After (Rs. Per Month, unless specified otherwise)</i>
Cs1	13	Carpet Making	Not Working Prior To School	333.33
Cs2	8	Brush Making	Inclusive Mother	Don't Know
Cs4	9	Brush Making	Inclusive Mother	Stopped Working
Cs5	9	Brush Making	Don't Know	Don't Know
Cs7	12	Brush Making	Don't Know	Don't Know
Cs20	10	Animal Rearing	Nothing	Nothing
Cs35	13	Agriculture	Inclusive Parent	Rs. 20. Per Day
Cs36	11	Agriculture	150	200
Cs37	7	Agriculture	100	180
Cs39	10	Agriculture	300	Now Only Assisting Parent
Cs41	7	Brick Kilns	Inclusive Mother	Stopped Working
Cs11	9	Stone Quarries	200	200
Cs14	11	Stone Quarries	Inclusive Mother	Inclusive Mother
Cs16	14	Stone Quarries	200	200
Cs17	13	Stone Quarries	300	300
Cs27	9	Agriculture	Don't Know	Don't Know
Cs28	10	Brick Kilns	Inclusive Parent	Stopped Working
Cs29	12	Agriculture	275	275
Cs30	10	Agriculture	300	Rs 300

Cs32	10	Tailoring	Inclusive Parent	Stopped Working
Cs33	10	Brick Kilns	200	Stopped Working
Cs34	10	Agriculture	300	300
Cs44	10	Agriculture	Not Earning	Stopped Working

Source: Primary Survey

Three critical issues arise from this Table (6.3). All are extremely pertinent to any planning and or evaluation of strategies for eliminating child labour and universalising elementary education. These are:

- a. Some child labourers stopped working completely after joining the CL School and;
- b. One Child who was not previously working, started working after joining the CL School
- c. Some children continued to work along with going to the CL School.

a) Children Who Stopped Working After Joining The CL School

One of the most striking findings from the Table (6.3) given above is that some children stopped working completely after joining the CL School:

- i. six of them, i.e., 27.2% of children working prior to joining the CL School stopped working completely after joining the CL School
- ii. Most of these children (83.33%) were those who were working with their parents and who did not earn any separate income from the work they did.
- iii. Only one child who used to earn Rs 200 per month from the work s/he did before joining the school, stopped working after joining the school.
- iv. Four of them were aged 10 years and the remaining were 7 and 9 years old each.

These imply that children who completely stopped working, after joining the CL Schools, were mostly those who didn't have any separate income of their own and had been working (assisting) with their parents as part of family labour. Also, children who are aged 10 and under are more likely to stop working after joining the CL school than the others. However, there were also children aged 8 and 9 years old who did not stop working.

b) One Child who was not previously working, started working after joining the CL School:

This was the case of a girl, aged 13 and studying in standard V at the CL School at the time of the interview. She must have been 8 years old before she started going to school, in 1995. She reported that she was not working prior to getting into the school. Perhaps she was considered too young to be put to work and hence she does not have a history of previous work. However, as she grew up and was considered "old enough" to be working, she started working (in the carpet making at home), while she was well into the school system. She reported working after school hours and during holidays.

During the course of the interviews and focussed group discussions with parents, later, it was found that most parents had a certain yardstick for determining when a child is considered old

enough for working and too old for schooling (the latter will be discussed in another chapter). In most cases, children under 8 were considered too young to work, unless they were engaged in household chores or in animal rearing. And if they did work elsewhere, they worked with their parents and parents did not consider their work as “work”. They would remark that these children were *just being with the parents* (at the worksite).

It is thus possible that while only this particular girl in the sample reported that she was not working prior to going to school, she may have been engaged in non-rewarding activities like animal rearing or household chores.

c) The Phenomenon Of Co-Existence Of Child Labour With Schooling

A large majority of over 77.2% of children, who were working prior to joining the CL school, continue to work even as they are going to school. The number of children continuing to work after joining the CL school was 17. However, the total number of children found working while going to the CL School was 18 since one child started working after she joined the CL School. (See also Table 6.4 on next page)

What are the implications of this co-existence? The figure seems to suggest that for a large number of child labourers going to school has not meant complete “liberation” from labour. What are the reasons for this? Poverty of the family and their dependence on the child’s income has been one of the oft-accepted arguments for persistence of child labour. Is it true for the families of these children too? The how are they able to send their children to CL Schools? What about the children who stopped working after joining the CL School. Were their incomes insignificant? And finally, if they are continuing to work, how does it impact their schooling? Following is an attempt to understand these questions.

Reasons for continuation of children's work

Both parents and children were asked about the reasons why the children were working. Most parents, 58.82% responded that their children were working to supplement family income and two (20%) within these also said that their children worked in order to assist them. About 11.7% parents said that their children were working because there was little else to do. 5.8% parents said that the child was working both to supplement family income and also because there was nothing else for the child to do.

As far as the children’s responses are concerned, a majority (70.58%) said that it was necessary for them to work. Of these, over 66% children said that they needed to work to earn to support the family, 16.6% said that they worked to earn to support the family as well as, because their parents asked them to work. 8.3% children said that they worked because their parents had asked them to and yet another 8.3% said that they worked because there was nobody else (to do the work s/he was doing).

Income and support from children certainly seems to be one of the major reasons why children are working. In order to understand the income factor in continuation of children’s labour, the following grouping would be useful:

Table 11: Earnings Of Children: Previously Working and Continuing To Work

<i>Groupings</i>	<i>No. of Children Previously Working</i>	<i>No. of Children Continuing to Work</i>
Children Not Earning Any Income	2	1
Children Not Earning Any Separate (from Parents) Income	10	6
Children Earning Separate Income	10	10
Total No. Of Children Continuing To Work	22	17

Source: Primary Survey

From the above it is clear that those children who are working and earning from the work they do are likely to continue working even after joining school. While one of the children earning prior to joining the school stopped earning after joining the school, yet another child who was previously working as part of family labour started earning after joining the school. Then, again, while one child who was previously earning did stop working after joining the school, another child who was not previously working started working after joining the school and also earning from it. This way the total number of children earning prior to and after joining the school remains constant. Thus, it seems that children earning from the work they do are more likely to continue to work after joining the school, than other categories of children.

In comparison, children who are working with the families as part of family labour are more likely to discontinue working after joining school. 40% of children, who were working as part of family labour prior to joining the school, discontinued working after joining the school. However, a majority (60%) within them still continued to work.

Finally children who were not earning from the work they did, continue to work in the sector of animal rearing but discontinued in the case of agriculture work.

Thus, of the 17 children who were working along with going to the CL Schools, a majority of 58.82% were those who were earning from the work they did? Of the remaining, 35.2% were those who did not earn any separate income and only 5.8% (i.e., only one child in the sample) continued to work without earning any income. While most of them continued to earn the same amount even after joining the school, 28.57% experienced an increase in income of about 33% and 80%.

While the cases of child labourers discontinuing to work after joining school may hint towards the dispensability of their labour (to the family) the larger figure of children continuing to work, whether they were earning (separate income) or not, suggests that perhaps their labour was considered significant.

We try and assess the significance of their labour in terms of the contribution made by these children towards the family income and then corroborate it with the response from parents

interviewed.

Table 12: Contribution Of School Going Child Labourers To The Family Income

<i>Cs. no.</i>	<i>Age of Child</i>	<i>Occupational Sector</i>	<i>Earning After (Rs. Per Month, unless specified otherwise)</i>	<i>Total Income of the Family (Rs. per month)</i>	<i>Percentage Of Contribution Towards Family Income</i>
Cs1	13	Carpet Making	333.33	4833	6.94
Cs2	8	Brush Making	Don't Know	1280	-
Cs5	9	Brush Making	Don't Know	2790	-
Cs7	12	Brush Making	Don't Know	1640	-
Cs20	10	Animal Rearing	Nothing	3000	0
Cs35	13	Agriculture	Rs. 20. Per Day	Md	Md
Cs36	11	Agriculture	200	2100	9.52
Cs37	7	Agriculture	180	660	27.27
Cs39	10	Agriculture	Now Only Assisting Parent	1500	-
Cs11	9	Stone Quarries	200	1300	15.38
Cs14	11	Stone Quarries	Inclusive Mother	Md	Md
Cs16	14	Stone Quarries	200	1100	18.18
Cs17	13	Stone Quarries	300	1400	21.43
Cs27	9	Agriculture	Don't Know	3350	-
Cs29	12	Agriculture	275	3025	9.09
Cs30	10	Agriculture	300	1650	18.18
Cs34	10	Agriculture	300	800	37.5

Source: Primary Data (Survey)

Md: missing data

It is clear then from the table above that most working and earning children who were working alongside going to CL Schools were contributing towards family income. While 58.82% of children were directly contributing towards the family income (through separate incomes), 35.29% of children were contributing as part of family labour where incomes were inclusive. It follows thus, that

- a. income from children has certainly been a factor why the majority of working and earning child labourers continue to work after having joined the CL Schools and
- b. even when children are not bringing in separate income, their work as part of family labour is valued enough to qualify for continuation (after joining school)

Age, Income and Contribution Towards Family Income

The following table reveals extremely interesting patterns in the age and contribution towards family income by children who continued to work and earn alongside going to CL Schools:

Table 13: Patterns In Age And Contribution Towards Family Income

<i>Age Group (in years)</i>	<i>Minimum Earning (Rs. Per month)</i>	<i>Maximum Earning (Rs. Per month)</i>	<i>Contribution towards Family Income (percentage)</i>
7-9	180	200	15.38 to 27.27
10-12	200	300	18.18 to 37.5
13-14	200	333	6.94 to 21.43

Source: Primary Survey

Children in the age group 10-12 years are contributing more towards family income than the other age groups. At the same time, it is interesting to note that children in younger age group of 7-9 are contributing more than children in the age group of 13-14 year olds.

The average family income of this group is about Rs. 2028 per month, with the minimum family earning being Rs. 660 and the maximum being Rs. 4833 per month. It is also clear that children from families with lower incomes are contributing more towards family income than are children from families with higher incomes.

Implication of Coexistence on Schooling

These children reported that they worked after school hours and during holidays and vacations. Apart from one child who said s/he sometimes worked during school hours all other said that they worked outside school hours, either before going to school, or after coming back from school, and or during vacations/holidays.

From the attendance registers of the schools too, it was evident that during periods of intense agricultural activity, the months of March-April, mostly, absenteeism would increase. This was either because the children were directly involved in agricultural work during that period or that they were holding fort at home while the mothers were away in the field. The latter was particular in the case of the girl child. These observations were further confirmed during the course of group discussions in the villages where the CL schools have been set up. This absenteeism also impacts their examinations, which are held during the same months. The teachers of the UPGKMS schools deal with this absenteeism by taking extra measures with these children in preparing them for the exams and rescheduling them wherever possible.

Coexistence of Child Labour with Schooling: An Analysis

It is generally assumed that once child labourers are put in schools, child labour is “completely” eliminated. Thus, if an erstwhile child labourer is put in a school, s/he will stop working. This was also the assumption with which this investigation was carried out. However, it was found that a majority of children, who were working prior to joining the CL School, continued to work even after joining the CL School. Not only this, they continued to earn from this work too.

This majority of earning children continuing to work is closely followed by the category of non-earning, child labourers with inclusive incomes, where many children who were assisting parents/family in the work they did, continued doing so. Thus, children's work is also valued in cases where they may not be bringing in separate income but where they are part of family labour and families depend upon their assistance.

It is striking to note that of the total 48 children in the school going category, there were 22 who were working prior to joining the school and of these 16 continued to work even after joining the school. Thus, 72.72% of children who were working prior to joining the CL School continued to work even after joining the school. The fact that most of them were also contributing towards family income shows that families with lower incomes, are sending their children to school and are also earning from the work that the child does along with going to school.

The coexistence of child labour with schooling suggests that families have struck a compromise between the desire to educate their children and the families need for the assistance of child labour, regardless of whether it significantly contributes to the family income or not.

If it is true that these families are poor and dependent on their children's labour yet they are sending their children to school, it points out that:

- ◇ there is a desire to send children to school
- ◇ children can and *are* working outside of school hours
- ◇ poverty is not a deterrent from sending children to school, because children from poor families are going to school and continuing to work and earn, or assist.

What are the implications of the coexistence of child labour and schooling on the intervention for elimination of child labour? After all, the objective of the UPGKMS schools has been to eliminate child labour. However, going from the statistics we have, there has been no elimination of child labour in "absolute terms". How does then, one assess the intervention under study.

According to Sharma, President of the Union, they have a long way to go. Their ultimate goal and emphasis is on total elimination of child labour. To begin with, at the least, he feels, they have been able to bring these children to school, provide them the opportunity to learn and thereby the opportunity to improve their lives. He feels that greater awareness amongst parents is required so that they do not encourage their children to work. According to him, parents are sending children to work not so much as to substantiate income but to assist as part of family labour. While there is no significant loss of income from these working children, the parents feel that children's work assists them.

This has been corroborated in the figures discussed over the last few sections, where children, who were working even while they were going to school, were working with their parents as part of family labour and that they were not bringing in any separate income. It is clear that the parents' value children's work almost as "assistance" to them as much as in terms of

"monetary" gains. This view is supported by the observations made during focussed group discussions in one village

Most parents feel that the quantity of work output of the children was very less and that if the children were not assisting them, there would hardly be any significant loss in terms of income.

This perception of parents seems to contradict their practice where despite this understanding they continue to have children assisting them. This again points out that parents do perceive that children's work is of "assistance" to them, even if there is not much of monetary gain involved.

The coexistence of child labour with schooling is a phenomenon that makes a very significant comment on the state of child labour in the project area and can be generalised for the entire country, too. The comment being that despite poverty, parents are willing to and wanting to send their children to school. They are trying to reach a compromise between their actual and or, perceived need for child labour and the desire and aspiration for their children to make use of the opportunity to go to school, study, learn and thereby use the opportunity to better their life situation. The mandate of the parents surveyed was very clear. It was in favour of educating their children as far as possible. 44 parents (91.6%) responded that they wanted their children to study beyond standard V.

It must be borne in mind that most of the children in the CL Schools are first generation learners, with 64.58% parents (in the category of CL School going) being illiterates. The fact that UPGKMS has been able to motivate a generation of illiterate parents to send their children to school, is in itself a commendable achievement. Their strategies and interventions have been directed by the understanding that parents who themselves have never been to school or at best have dropped out before completing primary, secondary school, will need more input and encouragement to send their children to school, than parents who have received education.

The phenomenon of coexistence of child labour with schooling is definitely far from the aspired goal of eliminating child labour through effective schooling, but not too far.

Examining this phenomenon, in the context of a definition put forth by the Campaign Against Child Labour and one that is in consonance with the definition adopted by the International Labour Organisation, will help assess the success of these interventions.

According to the CACL, "Child Labour includes children prematurely leading adult lives, working with or without wages, under conditions damaging to their physical, social, emotional and spiritual development, denying them their basic rights to education, health and development. ..."

According to the ILO, "Child Labour includes children prematurely leading adult lives, working long hours for low wages, under conditions damaging to their health and to their physical and mental development, sometimes separated from their families, frequently deprived of meaningful education and training opportunities that could open up for them a better future".

Given the above understanding of child labour, it can be deduced that providing opportunities for education and thereby providing opportunities to better life situation is most certainly a step towards reducing the extent of deprivation of childhood that accompanies child labour. It is a move in the direction of eliminating child labour.

And if it is a move in the direction of eliminating child labour then, **co-existence of child labour with schooling should be considered as a transitory phase in this process.** These findings corroborate with the findings of and conclusions by Neera Burra in '*Born To Work*', where she points out that it has been a misconception to believe that compulsory education means that children will not be allowed to work at all.

“Children in all societies which have introduced compulsory education have combined schooling with work, but the priority has been *education first and work later*”

Children's own preference for studying rather than work further reiterates the priority to education. When the CL school going children who continue to work were asked about their preference between work and school, 76.47% children voted for school. Only two children vouched for both school and work and only one child gave work preference over schooling.

Further, Dreze and Gazdar in Dreze and Sen (1997) contended that while the “opportunity cost of children's time is certainly an important consideration for some parents, but school hours are short and schooling can be combined with a substantial contribution to the household economy, at other times”.

The Government and its concerned departments need to look at this situation from the perspective of the parents and seriously look at the scheduling of the academic calendar to suit the requirements of the poor rural household. It is not to assist in the continuation of child labour but more for making it possible and convenient for the children to attend schools regularly.

Conclusion of Section I

In this section the situation of children who were working prior to going to the CL schools has been analysed. It was found that of the total sample, 22 children, i.e., 45.8% of children were working prior to joining the CL schools. Of these, 6 children (27.2%) stopped working completely after joining the CL School, 77.2% continued working and of these 80% even earned from the work they did. It was indeed reassuring to learn that a certain percentage of children were actually able to stop working. The efforts of the UPGKMS schools in this regard must be commended.

However, the most significant learning from this study has been the unfolding of a realistic situation wherein many children have continued to work alongside going to the CL School.

Labour and schooling have been considered as mutually exclusive categories in the past and current discourses on child labour. It has been argued that children who are not in schools

should be counted as child labourers. Further, as a corollary then, children who are in schools should not be child labourers. However, the findings of the study have nullified the “absoluteness” of these hypothetical statements. The study has revealed that children enrolled and attending school can also be working alongside, i.e., after school hours and during vacations.

Coexistence of child labour along side schooling is not an indication of the failure of schooling to eliminate child labour but points out that schooling, though a major player in the process of elimination of child labour, at the first instance, will not necessarily eliminate child labour. Elimination of child labour will not happen over night. And it will not happen if it is not supported by other interventions, including the realisation of people's right to organise to strengthen their bargaining capacity, which in turn will ensure better wages for them. The process of elimination will be marked by phases beginning from enrolment of children in schools and their retention till they complete 14 years of age; accompanied and followed by better wages for adult workers; followed by the first generation learners (current and potential child labourers) not sending their children to work and rather sending them to school. Initiatives for universalising elementary education must be supported by other interventions that will lend adequate wages and social security to marginalised families.

Co-existence of child labour with schooling is certainly not an end in itself. It is a transitory phase for first generation learners and it must be understood in this spirit.

It must be borne in mind that the very fact that these children, whether they continued to work or not, were enrolled and are attending the CL schools and that it has been the strategies adopted by the CL schools to enrol and retain the students that we have been able to find these children in schools, at the very least. The role that has been played by the UPGKMS in this regard has been discussed in Chapter VIII.

In fact during discussions and interviews parents shared that if there was no CL school, most children would have continued working without having the opportunity to go to school and those of them who could afford it would send their children to private school and those of them who had no other option would have tried to put their children in the government schools, only to see the children drop out soon.

2. II. Children Not Working Prior To Joining The CL School

Introduction

The previous section dealt with the situation of the 45.8% children who were working prior to joining the CL Schools. This section will focus on the situation of the remaining 54.16% who reported that they had never worked before joining the CL Schools. Going back to Table No. y in the previous section, a total of 26 children (17 boys and 9 girls) reported that they had never worked before joining the CL school.

What is the implication of the fact that there are more than half of children in this sample of school going children reported that they never worked before joining the CL school? Then what were they doing? Were they in any other schools? If they were, why did they shift to the CL School? If they were not in any other school, either, what were they doing? Why were they not in school? The following section seeks to respond to these queries.

The Age Factor

It was very interesting to note that most of the children in this category were children in the age group of 6-8 years. Their distribution on the basis of age is as follows:

Table 6.7 Age-Wise Distribution of Non Working School Going Children

Age Group	No. of Children
6-8	14
9-11	6
12-14	6

Source: Primary Survey

It follows then, that one of the reasons why these were not found working prior to joining the school is that they were “too young” then. If most of them are currently, in Std I, II or III, we are talking about a situation 2-3 years ago, when they were between the ages of 4-6. While instances of children working even at this younger age are found, it seems that in this particular sample the children were not. An attempt was made to find out from the parents why these children were not working, The parents voiced that it was because at the time that they went to the CL School they were young so there was no question about them having worked before.

Previous School

Three children aged 8, 10 and 12, mentioned that they were enrolled in other schools before they joined the CL school. The reason for leaving the previous schools was related to high fees and disinterest on part of the child.

Apart from these no other explicit reason was found in the case of the others who were neither working nor going to any other school prior to going to the CL School. The only explanation, perhaps is that probably these children were considered “too young” to work by their parents. Did they start working once they grew older? Yes, in the case of one girl, aged 13 now, who reported that while she never worked before she joined the CL School, she started working later, after having joined the CL School. None of the others reported that they had started working after joining the CL School.

Child Labour Situation in their Families

Another interesting fact is that only 5 out of these 26 children came from families that had child

labourers. The rest of them came from families where there was not a single child labourer. It may well be that in all these families children are too young to be labourers. Or that these are families who do not believe in sending their children to work. As for the five who did come from families where their siblings are child labourers, it is possible that they will start working sooner or later, perhaps combining schooling with work, like the others described in the previous section. These five children along with the others in the category of never worked before children may also be described as potential child labourers. These however remain mere projections of what may happen.

Invisible and Potential Child Labourers

Three very significant issues emerge. One is regarding the problem with accurate identification of children as child labourers. As was mentioned in the previous sections, parents had a tendency not to identify the children engaged in non-rewarding activities as child labourers. This means that it is possible that some of the children in the category of never worked before were perhaps working but were not identified as such. This is not to suggest that there are no children who were not working, but just a word of caution while examining the figures.

The second issue is about the categorisation of these children. If age has been the factor why these children were not working earlier, chances are that sooner or later they would join the child labour force. In which case they should be regarded as potential child labourers.

Third and the more significant of these issues is regarding schooling. If these are children who were not working, why were most of them (those above 5 before the CL School were initiated) not in any other school? What were the factors that prevented them from sending their children to school? The fact that these parents did eventually send their children to the CL School signifies that they were amenable to sending their children to school. That they did not send their children to any school previous to the setting up of the CL School points out towards the failure of the other schools in reaching out to them.

The fact that UPGKMS has made efforts to reach out to the parents and children for schooling in the CL Schools is the main factor why any of these parents, whether of working or non working children, sent them to the CL Schools.

Implications

The situation described above has very significant implications for strategies to eliminate child labour. Which is:

1. if children are identified early, when they are “too young” to be working, if not entirely prevent, it can at the very least delay their entry into the labour force and reduce the number of full time child labourers.
2. once they are in the schools, they receive the opportunity of education and the subsequent benefits of it, which they may not have received otherwise.

Thus, the existence of a large number of children in the category of never worked before,

reflects that the CL Schools have managed to bring into schools children even before they get into the labour force and thereby assisting in delay and or prevention of child labour. Prevention of supply of child labour to the market, through ensuring enrolment and retention of children in schools, coupled with improving per capita investment by the State, have been listed as the most important and crucial segments of the “virtuous spiral” described by Prof. D.P.Chaudhry, required to eliminate child labour.

In bringing this category of children to school, UPGKMS has been able to address this segment of the virtual spiral essential to move from a stage of a greater number of full time child labour towards, at the least, a stage of reduction in the number of full time child labourers, existing and potential.

A more extensive discussion on this issue of existence of large number of children in the never worked-never gone to any school before category and its implications for strategies for elimination of child labour, will be taken up in the following chapter, where the case of children not going to any schools will be addressed.

UPGKMS: ROLE AND INTERVENTIONS

Having gone through the profile of children in this category, the chapter will now discuss how these children got to be in the CL Schools in the first place, how they were retained and what has been the relationship between the UPGKMS, their schools and the families of these children.

Membership with the UPGKMS

All the 48 parents of children going to the CL Schools said that they came to know about the UPGKMS and its school through the teachers and or members of the UPGKMS, including the President of the union, who visited them individually and organised meetings in their villages. 76% parents said that they were involved in the process of setting up of the school from the very beginning, while the remaining said they became part of the process after the schools were set up. Most of them (67.39%) said that they became members of the Union just after the school was set up. Only 13% had become members before the school was set up and about 6% became members just as the school was being set up.

Reasons for membership

Among the reasons cited for becoming members of the Union, the reason with the highest frequency was that they became members of the Union so as to enrol their children in the CL Schools. This was closely followed by the reason that they became members of the Union because they were asked to do so by the union leaders. The other reasons given were, in order of their frequency, for better bargaining power, for protection against exploitation and finally because their friends/relatives urged them to do so.

Reasons for sending children to School

Apart from the 48 children, who were going to the CL Schools, it was intriguing to learn that some of their siblings too were enrolled in the CL Schools. Thus, in addition to the 48 children interviewed, 33 more children were also reported to be enrolled in the CL Schools.

The most prominent reason for sending children seems to be that it provides better employment opportunities. However, at another glance what also appears is that a majority of parents have listed those benefits of education that are intrinsic to the process of education as reasons for sending their children to school. Among these they have listed the opportunity to learn, to play and to develop one's personality as the reasons why they are sending their children to school. In fact some parents in a discussion later, even said that they did not believe that by going to school children will automatically get better jobs but they would definitely become more aware and informed and will be better able to take care of themselves as adults.

Yet another significant reason that has been cited is that they are sending their children to school for improving their social status. Education definitely credits a certain status to the educated people, which seems to be valuable to these parents.

The other reasons given were to do with better marriage prospects for both girls and boys, protection from exploitation as adults, to keep children occupied and away from work.

The reasons for educating boys and girls were not very different from each other but for the fact that with girls many parents also cited that they would want their girl children to be educated so that in times of crisis after she is married, at least she will be able to inform them. Yet another reason for educating the girl child was that if she is educated, she will be able to teach her children and if she becomes financially independent, her children will not need to do manual labour. This last reason is a very significant one from the point of view of the link between female participation in the rewarding work force and the existence of child labour. It is possible that with increasing participation of women in economically rewarding activities will also enhance the family income, which in turn will probably shift the burden of economic earning from children to adult women. In turn also replacing child labour with adult labour. This issue however requires further research.

All parents wanted their children, both boys and girls, to complete at least primary school. A majority of over 90% said that schooling was important for both girls and boys.

Out Of School Siblings

While it was heartening to learn that 33 siblings of those interviewed were also going to the CL School, it was also learnt that from among 16 families in this category, at least one child under 14, was still out of school. The reasons for this were mostly that those children were needed for other activities for earning income, supporting at home and with family labour. The other major reason given for non-enrolment of some of the children was that the children were themselves disinterested in schooling? This was followed by the reason that they considered schooling expensive.

Apart from this two parents mentioned that before the CL School was started in their village, there was no school near where they live and they did not want to send their daughters to study far away. Now they felt that their daughters were too old (though they were still under 14) to go to school.

Parents Involvement In The Schooling Of Their Children

Parents involvement in the schooling of their children ranged from attending meetings of the UPGKMS, to attending PTAs conducted at the end of every month, to mobilising other parents to send their children to CL Schools and to actually enrolling other's children in the CL Schools.

In 4 out of 6 villages where the CL Schools have been set up, parents have contributed in terms of labour at the time of construction of the school building, in Dhanoli as well as in construction and repair of the thatched roof under which classes are run in the villages of Nagla Daru, Fateh Pur Sikri and Hathras. In the villages of Nagla Daru and Hathras, the Gram Pradhan has also pledged the gram sabha land towards the school. In the remaining two villages, the school is being run under rented premises.

Besides this, in Fateh Pur Sikri, when it rains, one or two families who have slightly bigger and better rooms in their thatched houses, give space to children to sit and for classes to be conducted. In Nagla Daru, parents have not only contributed in the construction of the thatched roof but have also put up a hand pump for the school. They also said that they were willing to contribute some money and or labour for construction of a pucca building on the gram sabha land.

Through all the three focussed group discussions held in three villages where the CL Schools are running, the parents said that there could be no better vigilance on a school than its being in the village, where parents and villagers can keep an eye on their children as well as on the school.

In fact there have been some cases of children being transferred from other schools to the CL School. At least three parents from Fateh Pur Sikri said that they transferred their children from other Government and private schools to the CL School after they witnessed the teaching standards in the CL Schools.

Assessing the Intervention of UPGKMS:

In this Chapter, the situation of children of the CL Schools has been analysed. It was found that a little less than half of these children were working prior to joining the CL School and a majority of them continued to work alongside going to the CL School.

While the intervention has succeeded in removing 27.2% of children completely from work, it has also led to the reduction in the number of children working full time as child labourers, simply by virtue of the fact that these children were spending a significant part of their time in school.

Children's continuing to work not only reflects the dependence of families on their income but also their requirement for assistance in family labour.

It was also pointed out that coexistence of schooling with child labour needs to be looked upon as a transitory phase and that in all societies where education has been made compulsory, this coexistence has been found.

The role played by the UPGKMS and its CL Schools is the most crucial element in this transition. Had it not been for the way in which the CL Schools operate, perhaps none of this could have been achieved. All the parents interviewed said that they enrolled their children in the UPGKMS school because either one of the teachers of these schools or one of the members of the Union, including the president had met with them, discussed with them and convinced them to send their children to the CL School. What sets apart their strategy from the other schools will be discussed in detail in Chapter IX. For now, it should suffice to conclude by saying that for a large number of children currently in the CL School, education would have remained a distant reality and full time labour, drudgery and marginalisation would have been their suffering.

VII. Out of School Children – A Profile

Introduction

Over thirty seven percent of the total sample comprised the category of non-school going children and their parents. This ratio between school going and non-school going was set according to the brief analysis of the situation in the project area as given by UPGKMS. It is important to mention the two assumptions that were made before conducting the survey. One, it was assumed that locating families from which not a single child was going to any school, would not be a tough task. However, during the course of the survey, the investigators, as well as, the teachers of the CL Schools who were assisting them, found it difficult to find families from which not a single child was going to any school. It was heartening at one level because it meant that at least some children in each family were going to school. At another level, it upset the plan of selecting the sample.

In fact in one of the villages where one of the CL Schools is running, not enough families in this category could be identified and hence the rest of the sample was selected from the other CL School areas. The sample size however did get completed. The point being raised here is that the areas in which the CL Schools are running, it is difficult to locate families from which not a single child is going to any school. The credit for this definitely goes to the interventions made by the UPGKMS.

The second assumption was that all the children out of schools would be child labourers. This assumption, too, like the first one was proved incorrect. A glance at the following table would explain this.

Table 14: Out Of School Children In Terms Of Their Work Status

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Total number of children working and not going to Schools	13	6	7
Total Number of children neither working nor going to Schools	15	7	8
Total number of children not going to schools	28	13	15

Source: Primary Survey

It is evident from the table given above that a large majority of children in the category of non-

school going were not working. 53.57% of children in this category thus, were neither in schools nor working. The remaining 46.43% reported that they were working.

On the basis of these two categories then, this chapter is divided into two sections:

- I. Out of School Working Children
- II. Out of School Not Working Children

1. I. Out of School Working Children

A glance at the following table would throw light on the profile of out of school working children

Table 15: Profile of Out of School Working Children

<i>Cn no.</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Sector</i>	<i>Child's Income (Rs. per month)</i>	<i>Total Family Income (Rs. per month)</i>	<i>Percentage Of Child's Contribution</i>
Cn15	13	m	Carpet Making	Learning	2900	0
cn21	8	m	Animal Rearing	Nothing	1000	0
cn23	11	m	Animal Rearing	Nothing	1500	0
cn07	14	f	Agriculture	700	1800	38.88%
cn10	12	f	Animal Rearing and Household Chores	Nothing	500	0
cn16	12	f	Agriculture	Inclusive parent	Md	Inclusive parent
cn17	7	f	Agriculture	600	3900	15.38
cn18	12	m	Cloth Shop And Animal Rearing	400	1050	38.09
cn19	11	m	Animal Rearing	Nothing	3900	0
cn20	14	f	Agriculture	275	2825	9.73
cn27	13	f	Household Chores	Nothing	900	0
cn2	10	f	Household Chores	Nothing	850	0
cn26	10	m	Vegetable Selling	450	450	100*

Source: Primary Survey

Cn no.: Code for families in this category

md: Missing Data

*it must be mentioned here that this child along with his 8-year-old brother was selling vegetables, which their mother was growing. While there is no direct income from the work done by the mother, her contribution towards this income is intrinsic and is not intended to be disregarded.

Sector Profile

One of the most significant findings of this study is that majority of out of school child labourers were engaged in non-rewarding activities. 46.15% of out of school child labourers were engaged in either animal rearing or household chores or both. It is interesting to note that an equal and larger number of children were engaged in agriculture and in animal rearing. 33.33% each, were found to be engaged in the two sectors. This is closely followed by 16.66% children engaged in household chores. One each, i.e., 8.3% each were found to be involved in carpet making and vegetable vending. One single case also reflects that children may be engaged in more than one occupation. As shown in the table, two children were working in more than one occupation.

A very interesting case is of one child who is reported to be engaged in carpet making as a “learner” and hence reported not earning any income.

Gender profile:

It was interesting to note that in this particular category, only girls are seen to be engaged in agriculture and an equal number of boys and girls were engaged in non-rewarding activities.

Age Profile

Age profile of these working children is as follows:

Table 16: Out of School Working Children

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>No. of Child Labourers</i>
6-8	2
9-11	6
12-14	5
Total	13

Source: Primary Survey

Maximum number of children working in this category was in the age group 9-11 years.

Income Profile

It is striking to note that a majority of children, i.e., 46.15%, out of school and working, were engaged in non-rewarding activities. This was followed by 38.46% of children who were earning income from the work they did. Apart from these, there was one child who was earning inclusive income and another who was reported as “learning” and thus, not earning.

Of the children who were earning, the minimum earning was Rs. 275 per month for a child, aged 14, engaged in agriculture and maximum earning was Rs. 700 for another child, aged 14

also engaged in agriculture. This big gap in income earned by two children of the same age and gender (both were girls), maybe explained in terms of availability of work and crops grown since the two girls belonged to two different villages. The girl earning Rs 275 per month, belongs to village Nagla Daru, an area where only a single crop, paddy, is grown, while the girl earning Rs 700 per month belongs to the village Mandi Mirzakhan in Fatehpur Sikri, where multiple crops, including wheat and bajra (maize) is grown.

Looking at the contribution made by these children towards family income, it is seen that the percentage ranges from 9.09% to 100%. The latter is the case of a child who had lost his father and along with a younger brother, aged 8, he was assisting his mother by selling vegetables the mother grew on their small piece of land. This is the only source of income with this family and they are dependent on the support of relatives for sustenance.

Apart from this case, it was also intriguing to note the case of a 7 year old contributing to as much as 15.38% towards family income. The contribution by other older children aged 12 and 14 years larger at, 38.09% and 38.88% each.

Comparing these contributions with those made by school going working children, as seen in Chapter VI, it seems that the contribution made by out of school working children is greater than the contribution, made by school going working children. The average contribution towards family income by school going working children, as given in Table 6.3, chapter VI was 18.16% and that made by out of school working children is 25.52% (this is calculated excluding the singular case of 100% contribution).

Reasons For Children's Working

One of the most striking elements in the profile of these working and out of school children was that four out of 13 (30%) of them had lost their father, the main bread earner of the family. In fact one of the parent, a widow said that she and her sons could survive only because the children were working. It can thus be said that loss of principal earner in the family forces children to become principal earners, giving no scope for their schooling. In fact both the children reported that they had to leave school and get into labour after their father died. A clear case of children pushed out of school and into labour.

Besides this, when parents were asked about the reasons why children work, most parents (41.66%) response was that the child was working due to the poor financial situation of the family. One parent of a girl who was engaged in household chores said that they require the girl to take care of the house while they are away at work. Yet another parent, whose child is engaged in animal rearing said that they were poor (total family income being Rs. 1500) and could not afford to send their child to school. And since they did not want their child to sit idle, they ask him to tend to the animals.

History of Previous Schooling

Of the 13 children who were found to be working and out of school, only 5 (38.46%) responded that they had been to school earlier. All of them had dropped out. Of these five, three had been

to a private school and the remaining two said that they had attended the UPGKMS school in their village for a period of one or two months only. Among those had been to private schools, two had dropped out after their father had died and one dropped out because the teacher did not allow him to continue. It is not uncommon to find references to this reason in other studies, too. Teachers' being aggressive with children is one of the main deterrents to their schooling.

It was surprising to find two children who said they had dropped out from the UPGKMS schools because according to the UPGKMS, not a single child enrolled in their school had ever dropped out. Upon learning that the children had dropped out within the first two months of going to the CL School it became clear that they were not enrolled at the UPGKMS Schools. The CL Schools teachers informed that, as strategy, they did not confirm any child enrolled unless they witness the child attending regularly and for about one to two months at a stretch. Both these cases were of children who were irregular to begin with and later dropped out within the first two months.

One of these children dropped out because the parents had withdrawn the child from school due to economic reasons and the other said that the teachers did not allow the child to continue in the school.

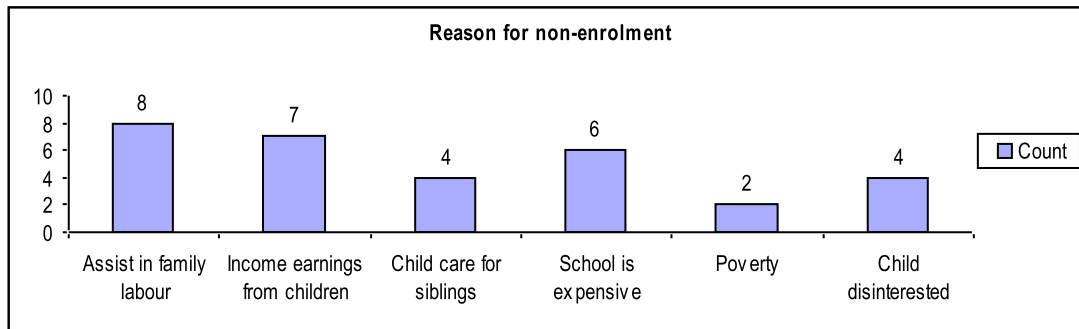
Reasons for non enrolment

Reasons for non-enrolment of out of school children, whether working or not working, must be understood in the light of the fact that most of the parents of out of school children were illiterate. 82.14% of parents interviewed, were illiterates.

An attempt was made to understand why parents of children in this category (working and out of school), were not sending them to any school. From their responses it was clear that the main factor preventing parents from sending their child/children to school was that the parents required the children for other activities. Among the other activities, as can be seen in chart af they cited children' assistance in family labour and involvement in income earning activities that prevented them from sending their children to school. Apart from this the other reason cited was that children were required for taking care of their younger siblings.

Almost equally significant reasons cited by parents were that schooling was expensive and that they were too poor to afford it. Further parents cited that their children were disinterested in going to school.

Chart 1: Reason for Non-enrollment



Other reasons given for not enrolling children in schools were: poor teaching standards in schools, schools being too far, the child not being bright enough, parents not being interested and constant migration of the family.

A critical image emerges. The explanation of children being out of school has as much to do with the families dependence on their labour as to do with the failure of the schooling system to reach out to these families. Disinterest on part of child, distance of schools, expenses involved in schooling and poor standards of teaching are reasons located outside the crisis in these families and inside the schooling system.

Contact and Relationship with the UPGKMS

These families being within the project and target area of UPGKMS, it becomes relevant to understand the role and impact of UPGKMS and its interventions with these families. Why are they not sending their children to the UPGKMS Schools? This analysis will be done separately for children who are working and out of school as well as for children who are neither working and nor in schools.

Parents of seven out of twelve children who were out of school and working, said that they were aware of the UPGKMS and the CL Schools being run by it and in fact 5 were also members of the Union. Yet another four who were not aware of the UPGKMS said that they knew about the CL School. Of these only five said that they would consider sending their children to the CL School to study and one said that though they wanted to send their child to the CL School they could not pay the fees.

Of those who said that they never considered sending their children to the CL School, 4 said that they would not be able to afford it and two said that they were not aware of the schools till the survey was conducted.

Highlights

- i. Majority of children (46.15%) in the category of out of school working children, were engaged in non-rewarding activities.
- ii. Contribution towards family income, made by out of school working children (25.52%) is greater than the contribution, made by school going working children (18.16%).

- iii. A large number of these children (30.76%) had lost their fathers, the principal earning member of the family and hence their family's survival depended upon their labour. Thus, specific situations of these families have been the major factor forcing children to become sole bread earners at an early age and thereby preventing them from going to school.
- iv. The main reason cited for children's working was poverty. The average family income for this category being Rs. 1798 per month.
- v. Parents dependence on earnings of children and on the assistance provided by children, as well as, the failure of the schooling system in reaching out to these families, have been major impediments to children's schooling.

I. Out of School Not Working Children

The previous section examined the situation of children who were out of school and working. This section deals with yet another critical finding of this study that as many as 53.57% of children who were out of school reported that they were not working.

These children who are neither in schools nor working, have been variously classified as potential child labourers and as "no-where children".

No where children has been defined as a category of children who are either reported as doing nothing, or performing household work which is not counted as economic activity. These would also include children engaged in child-care and in rearing animals.

A look at the profile of these children suggests that perhaps some of these children may be involved in the non-rewarding activities, discussed earlier and in the preceding paragraph. However, they have not been "reported" as working. On the basis of the fact (as revealed in this study) that children in the sample come from poor families with children either directly or indirectly involved in income earning activities or where they are engaged in household chores, animal rearing and child care for siblings, it will not be incorrect to project that the children who are currently reported as neither in school nor working, may well, either be engaged in non-rewarding activities or would be entering the (child) labour force, sooner or later. In which case, despite the reporting of these children as not working, they could be working and or be at best described as "potential" child labourers.

Table 17: Details About Out Of School Non Working Children

Cn_no	Age	Sex	Ever Attended School	Total family Income
Cn1	13	f	n	1200
Cn3	7	m	y	1200
Cn4	10	m	y	1000
Cn5	12	f	n	4700
Cn11	9	m	n	800
Cn12	8	m	n	1500
Cn13	9	m	n	2000

Cn14	13	f	n	2200
Cn22	12	m	y	Md
Cn24	10	f	y	300
Cn25	9	f	n	1200
Cn06	13	f	y	675
Cn08	6	f	y	500
Cn09	11	m	y	500
Cn28	13	f	n	1000

Source: Primary Survey

Cn.no.: indicates code number for children in this category

This trend however needs to be thoroughly researched especially since the growth in the number of children in this category, throughout the country, too is on an alarming increase, with the total number of children in this category touching 97.7 million in 1991 (D.P.Chaudhary 1996).

Gender Profile

It is interesting to note that more boys than girls in this group had ever been to school. While 4 out of 7 boys had been to school at some point, only 3 out of 8 girls had ever been to school.

Age Profile

From the following table (7.5) it is clear that most children in this category were found in the age group of 9-14 year olds. Had the composition of this category of children (neither working nor in school) been largely that of younger children, one could have surmised that they were not working perhaps because they were considered too young. However, as is the case with this sample, most of these children were older and yet not working.

Table 18: Age-Wise distribution of out of school not working children

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>No. of Children</i>
6-8	3
9-11	6
12-14	6

Source: Primary Survey

Family Income:

The family income for this category of children ranged from a minimum of Rs 300 a month for a woman headed household comprising a widow and her 5 children, to a maximum of Rs. 4700 for a family with 7 members of whom 4 adult were earning incomes. The average income for the families in this category is Rs. 1136. The poverty is apparent.

Previous School history:

Of the 15 children in the category of neither working nor in school, seven (46.66%) reported that they had been to school at some point in time. Three of them had enrolled in the UPGKMS Schools and the rest used to go to private schools in and around their village.

According to the children, they stopped going to school primarily because either the teachers did not allow them to continue in the school (were inefficient, used to beat up the child), or because the school was too far or, because the child did not wish to continue. One of these children, a girl, who dropped out from the UPGKMS School said that she could not continue to go to school because she got married.

Reasons for non-enrolment

As was mentioned in the previous section, reasons for non-enrolment of out of school children, whether working or not working, must be understood in the light of the fact that most of the parents (82.14%) of out of school children were illiterate.

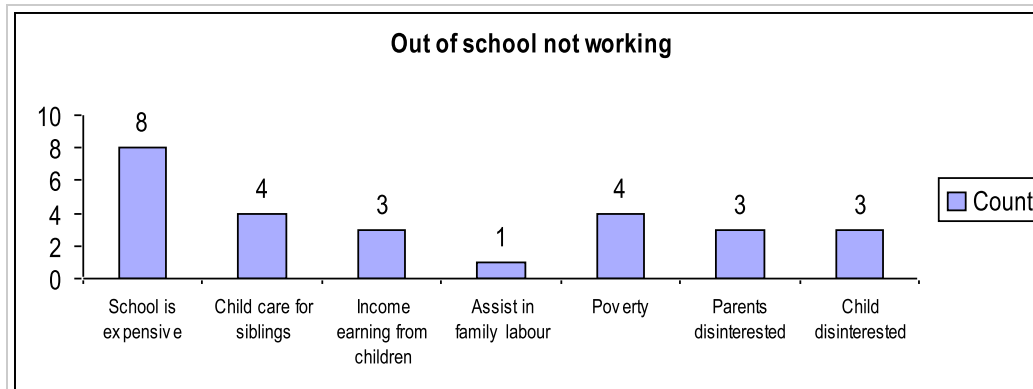
Of those children who never went to school, majority referred to parents' inability to pay for their schooling, as the reason for their never having been to any school.

When parents were asked why their children were not going to school, most responded by saying that schooling was expensive and they could not afford it. This was closely followed by the reason that children were required for other activities, among which child-care for siblings and involvement in income earning activities were cited as the reason why they did not send their children to school. Some parents categorically stated their low income as the reason why they were not sending their children to school.

Again, another reason cited here, has serious implications for interventions in the area of education that parents said that not only did they consider that their children were disinterested in schooling, they themselves were disinterested in educating their children. Yet others reasoned that either the school was too far, or the child was ill, or that the teaching standards in the schools were poor. Parents of one particular girl child said that since their daughter was married they did not send her to school. This case suggests the possibilities of prevalence of child marriage in this region and comments on the impediment that it causes to girl child education.

The following charts depict the reasons why parents have not sent their children to school:

Chart 2: Reasons for Not Aending Children to School though Not Working



From the above it is clear that the reasons for out of school non working children not being enrolled in schools has more to do with shortcomings of the school than with the financial crisis of the families. Expenses involved in schooling and disinterest on part of parents and children are symptoms of an unresponsive schooling system, which proves to be the major discouragement for children's schooling.

Contact with the UPGKMS

It was surprising to note that of the fifteen families in this category, while only 3 parents knew about the UPGKMS, eight knew about their CL School. This again verifies the comment made in chapter fg that people identify UPGKMS more in terms of the CL school that it runs than as a workers union.

However, of these eight, too, only two would consider sending their children to the CL School. The rest said that they would not consider sending their child to the CL School, primarily due to their inability to pay the fees. One parent said that their child was too young (the child was six years old) to go to school and the other said that they did not know the procedure about getting their child admitted in the CL Schools.

Highlights

In the Case of out of school non-working children, the following analyses can be made:

- i. When as much as 33% parents have cited that their children are not in schools because the children are required for other activities such as child care of younger siblings and assistance in family labour and even for income earning activities, it follows that some of these children then cannot be classified as non-working. They do not qualify as no-where children either. These are children engaged in non-rewarding activities, which is the main reason why they are out of school. Recording these children as no-where children or as non-working can jeopardise the interventions to universalise elementary education since the enumeration of number of working children out of school will be incorrect and precise reason for their not being in schools will not be known and addressed. Then again, as mentioned earlier, it is still possible that the number of children who are out of school and who *seem* to be not

- working, may actually be working. Thus, the figure of 33% could well go up.
- ii. Apart from children's engagement in rewarding or non-rewarding activities the main reason cited for children being out of school has been the expense involved in schooling. Lack of free schooling thus is one of the primary deterrents for schooling. The average family income for this category was Rs.1341 per month.
 - iii. It is true that some parents said that they were not interested in sending their children to school and that even some of the children were disinterested in schooling. Disinterest in schooling must be understood in terms of the deficiency of the school system to motivate and attract children and parents. Lack of interest in schooling is another factor that discourages enrolment of children in schools.
 - iv. These families though approached by the UPGKMS have not been concentrated upon. According to the teachers of the CL Schools, they will need to spend more time with these families to create awareness about the CL School and to mobilise them.
 - v. Nearly half the children from this category have been dropouts. The main reason for dropping out from school being the inability of the school to retain the children.
 - vi. All parents of these children expressed that all children should be in schools and all children shared that they wanted to be in school.

Child Labour Situation And Dependence Of Families

The most disturbing finding of this study is that children engaged in non-rewarding activities are not recognised and identified as working children by parents and children alike. In the process of data collection, during interviews with parents, while throughout they maintain that their children were not working, an analysis of the reasons why their children were not going to school revealed that these children were "actually" working. Thus even while the data given in table 7.1 mentions that there are lesser working children out of school, through analysis, it has become clear that in fact, the number of out of school children engaged in work is more than the number of out of school children not working. Non recognition of children engaged in non-rewarding activities as workers has serious implications for interventions in the area of eliminating child labour and universalising elementary education. As has been shared in Chapter V, non-recognition of children engaged in non-rewarding activities severely affects the chances of the child being sent to school by parents.

Apart from the four children in the working category, who had lost their fathers, there should be no reason why these children cannot continue to work and go to school at the same time, just as working children enrolled in CL schools do. There does seem to be some difference in the average family income of children going to CL Schools (Rs.2028 per month) and that of working children out of school (Rs.1798 per month). The only reason perhaps can be that the UPGKMS has not made adequate interventions with this group, yet.

It is possible that after learning about the CL School and the kind of children who are attending it, the parents of these children may get motivated to send their children to these schools. In any case, all parents except two did say that they would want their children to be in schools. If the possibility of combining schooling with labour, as a transitory arrangement, could facilitate parents to send their children to the CL School, as seen in the previous chapter, there should be no reason why it should not work for this group of parents, too. Provided, of course, that

the UPGKMS intervene accordingly.

In fact it becomes imperative to share at this juncture, the experience of the research team during the present survey.

In the course of meeting with families whose children were not going to school, in Pathan Mohalla of village Fatehabad:

It seemed as if these families were just waiting for someone to approach them with the news that there is a school available that will educate their children at a nominal fees and that it was set up specifically for children who are working or whose parents cannot afford other schools. In fact while parents would begin the interview by sharing the issues of poverty, inability to afford schooling, etc., once the discussion on the CL Schools would start, their responses towards educating their children began getting positive. They were able to visualise the possibility of educating their children in a free school. In fact, such was the impact of the news that a group of people (investigators and teachers) had come to the village to take down names for a free school, that almost all families who had one or two children out of school, also gathered around for their children to be enlisted!

The mandate of the people was clear. It was in favour of education. Provided it was free and the fact that the teachers of the school were actually visiting them to mobilise them to send their children to the CL School, gave them some indication of what schooling in the CL Schools would be – serious.”

Other than the situation of these children for whom perhaps combining schooling with labour could work out, for the 4 families that have lost their principal earning member, specific interventions to help alleviate their circumstances would be required, in order to successfully bring their children to school.

Finally looking at the out-of-school-non-working children, firstly, it must be borne in mind that these children are on the verge of either getting into labour sooner or later, or getting into school, whichever hits them first. These potential child labourers are an important category to look at because it is through intervening with this group that prevention of child labour is possible. Catch them before they get into it, at least prevent them from becoming full time child labourers.

Now if their labour is not the reason why they are out of school, what keeps them out of school? The major reasons for these children being out of school seem to be the external constraints coming from the existing schooling system. Schools are considered expensive and have not been able to generate interest among parents and children alike.

Reasons for children being out of school

Apart from children's engagement in rewarding or non-rewarding activities the main reason cited for children being out of school (other than the CL Schools) have been the expenses involved in schooling. What expenses are parents referring to? The government schools charge fees, which is rarely over Rs 1.25 or Rs 2 per child, per month. These too, as per discussions with teachers of Government schools in the villages where CL Schools are running, are not

really mandatory. Children are generally not disallowed to attend school if they fail to pay the fees because the teachers fear reduction in enrolment as reflected in their register. Failure to reflect high enrolment in the register can lead to dismissal of teachers.

In addition, the cost that parents refer to include the cost of uniform, of books and stationery. Even as, at the time of this survey, the government was announcing a scheme for providing free books for all SC/ST and OBC children upto standard V and had sent notices to all schools not to teach from the previous books and to discourage parents from buying books from the open market (since they were supplying new ones to the schools), not a single government school of the three that were visited had received any of these. Further, the teachers of all government schools visited at Dhanoli, Fatehabad and Fatehpur Sikri mentioned that the number of books supplied by the government fell much shorter than the requirement. With the result that most children had to buy their own books and stationery. A cost those parents are unable to bear.

Other than this, the fact that Government schools are over enrolled, parents do turn to private schools where the fees itself is as high as Rs 25 to 40 per month per child. A cost coupled with the cost of buying books, etc that is not affordable by these parents. Hence the reference to expenses in schooling.

All this reflects that for a large number of children in the project area, “free” or almost free schooling seems to be unheard of. In fact for most families with out of school children the survey was the first time they realised that there exists an option of CL Schools where schooling is almost free but for the nominal charge of Rs 5 in most schools and 10 in some. By UPGKMS’s own sharing, these are families on the fringes of their target area and those families with whom the interactions of the UPGKMS have not been very concentrated which is why the option of enrolling their children in the CL Schools has not materialised.

It was very heartening to note that all parents, except for two, said that they believed that all children should be in schools. It follows then, that the people’s mandate on education is very clear, they want all their children in schools. What it implies for policy makers and interventionists in the area of universalising elementary education is that ways and means of addressing the hurdles that prevent parents from sending their children to school should be addressed.

It is true that some parents said that they were not interested in sending their children to school and that even some of the children were disinterested in schooling. The reasons for these need to be examined and addressed in the context that most parents in this category were illiterate and that these children would be first generation learners, if they do go to school. It is crucial to bear in mind this, since it implies that for a first generation of children going to school, the focus and nature of interventions will be specifically to abet the parents in sending their children to school.

Comparing the education status of parents sending their children to CL Schools with that of parents who are not sending their children to any school, it is found that out of the total sample of 76 parents interviewed, 22 parents were literate and only 6.5% among them were not

sending their children to school. The majority, over 93 per cent were sending their children to schools. Thus, literacy of parents does emerge as one of the important factor that determines whether their children go to school or not.

Often in discussions parents have referred to the poor quality of education in the government schools around them. The few of them who have also some experience of schooling in those schools have been more wary of sending their children to those schools. Teachers' absenteeism, lack of disciplined teaching and failure of children in government schools to actually learn something has marred the reputation of government schools.

Thus, it seems as though the main factor for not enrolling children in schools is external to the constraints of the family and more to do with the response of education system, or rather the lack of it towards this class of families where children are out of school.

As has been seen in the previous chapter that it has been possible for families to combine the desire for education along with the need for children's labour. Thus, dependence on children is not the primary deterrent for schooling. Rather it is the failure of the education system to actualise "free" schooling as well as their failure to mobilise a generation of illiterates towards education of their children. As will be discussed in Chapter rts, the success of UPGKMS lies largely in their strategy for mobilising parents as well as in demonstrating effective and disciplined schooling. Parents, including those that are dependent on the labour of their children have not shirked from paying the nominal fees at the CL Schools.

Poverty as the reason for not sending children to schools has been highly overrated in the official circles. This is aptly conveyed by S. Sinha when she maintains that, "It should be clearly understood that acceptance of the premise that poverty compels parents to send their children to work is extremely convenient to those charged with the responsibility of reducing, if not eliminating child labour because in such a case, improving the economic status of the parents becomes the focal point of attention. This is neither the responsibility of the labour or the education department and the buck can be passed elsewhere".

Conclusion

One of the most disconcerting revelations of the present study is with regard to non-identification of child labourers engaged in non-rewarding activities. The lack of recognition of their work and the subsequent non-identification as child labourers, by parents, has serious implications not only on enumeration of child labourers but on interventions that aim at universalising elementary education.

The other upsetting finding has been in terms of reasons why children continue to be out of school. It is clear through the analysis presented in this chapter that despite majority of parents wanting to send their children to school, the children are out of school. The reasons being more to do with the failure of the schooling system to actualise free and quality schooling, than to do with the dependence of parents on children's labour.

Thus, while parents do cite poverty as the main reason for not sending their children to school,

it is not “their” poverty as much as the poverty of the state in ensuring free and quality education and failure in mobilising the families that is the main reason for non-enrolment of children in schools. Child labour certainly is not a primary deterrent in non-enrolment but if children, labourers or potential labourers, are enrolled, child labour can be reduced and gradually eliminated. The relation between child labour and schooling, then is not as much in child labour preventing children from going to school but more in terms of the ability of schooling in pushing towards elimination of child labour.

VIII. Schooling in Child Labour Schools

Introduction

UPGKMS is running six primary schools in six different villages of Dhanoli, Fatehabad and Mandi Mirzakhan, in district Agra; Nagla Daru and Gadhaiya, in district Etah and Kolara, in district Hathras. All schools are situated within the village or hamlet, at a maximum distance of one to one and a half kilometers from the students. The schools are named Grameen Bal Shramik Vidyalaya (Rural Child Labour Schools). A total of 720 children, 396 boys and 324 girls receive education from these schools. A profile of these children has been discussed in Chapter VI.

The present chapter attempts at profiling the CL Schools themselves including the most indispensable ingredient of all – the teachers of the CL Schools. To begin with, the infrastructural and physical details of the schools will be mapped; followed by, their administration; the strategies adopted for enrolment attendance and retention of students; the course curriculum taught; specific initiatives in teaching methodology; profile and role of the teachers; levels of learning of the students; assessment of the CL School by the students and parents; involvement of the parents and; aspirations of the students.

It must be mentioned at this point that as a policy, UPGKMS decided to run formal schools in line with the public school system, for the child labourers, rather than running non-formal or alternate schools for them. It has been a deliberate attempt to avoid the marginalisation of child labourers and towards bringing them into the mainstream schooling. Consequently, they have also focussed on obtaining government recognition (manyata) for all their schools.

1. Infrastructure

CL Schools operating from Permanent Structures

Infrastructural facilities at each of the CL Schools differ. Depending on the extent of financial assistance received by UPGKMS, the schools are either being run under trees, or under thatched roofs, or in rented permanent structures or in a permanent structure of its own. The CL School at Dhanoli, which is also the first school of the UPGKMS, functions from a permanent structure. However, between 1995 –1997, before the building was set up, the Dhanoli School functioned under trees and from rented premises. In 1997, the land for building the school was donated by Mr. Tula Ram Sharma's family and the financial assistance for

building the five classrooms came from the IFBWW. Apart from the 5 rooms, it also has a store, a water tank, two hand pumps and some open space for children to assemble together and play. The rooms are well ventilated with windows and doors and the students are well accommodated within these rooms. This is the only CL School, which has toilets, one each for boys and girls.

The CL School at Fatehabad, functions from rented premises comprising of two halls, which accommodate children from two classes each. Interestingly, this premise belongs to one of the contractors of the Brick Kilns and is situated immediately adjacent to one of the Kilns. Apart from the two halls, there is a corridor running along the two adjacent halls and serves the purpose of accommodating students from yet another class. The halls are not as well lit as the rooms at the Dhanoli school. The Fatehabad school also has a water tank, which is filled by the teachers every morning, from a nearby private hand pump. There is some open space at the entrance of the school, which is big enough for children to run around and play.

The CL School at Gadhaiya, district Etah, also operates from rented premises. It comprises three rooms, which belong to one of the natives of the same village. There is a small courtyard at the entrance of the school but it is too small for children to play together in. While there is no separate arrangement for water in the school, a nearby village common hand pump is utilised by the children. The two classrooms are not very well lit and classes are sometimes also held outside, under a tree.

CL Schools operating under Thatched Roofs

It was commendable to note that all the three schools, which are running under thatched roofs, have been donated the village common land (the gram sabha land) by the village Pradhan (chief). Also, the villagers contributed their labour and some rupees towards construction of the roof. All the three schools were situated *in* the village/hamlet concerned.

The CL School at Nagla Banjara hamlet of Mandi Mirzakhan village, in Fatehpur Sikri was functioning under a tree, at the beginning of the survey and by the end of it, was functioning from a under a thatched roof. Similar was the situation with the CL School at Kolara, in Hathras. The school at Nagla Banjara does not have separate arrangement for drinking water in the school but children have access to the government hand pump in the hamlet, which was installed due to intervention by the UPGKMS. The open space available to the children is that which is the common open space in the hamlet.

The CL school at Nagla Daru is on the threshold of getting a permanent structure. In Nagla Daru, the villagers got together at the behest of the Gram Pradhan to install a hand pump on the gram sabha land, which had been donated for the purposes of setting up the CL School. Thus children have access to a water pump within the school premises.

Finally, the CL School at Kolara, in Hathras, was functioning from under a tree at the beginning of the survey and by the end of the survey, the school had a thatched roof. There is no separate water arrangement for children in this school. However, they have access to the common water pump of the village.

Classes do suffer during rains in the schools, which are being run under thatched roofs. During heavy rains, either classes are dispersed or the teachers, with their students, spread into different homes, to continue teaching.

Apart from the above-mentioned infrastructure available with each of these schools, all the schools had Black Boards and Chalks. The schools with permanent structures also had educational charts put up in the walls and the schools running under thatched roofs put up charts as and when required for teaching purposes. All the schools also had tables and chairs for the teachers and durries for children to sit on.

Provision of Learning Material and Uniforms

Each year, the CL Schools are able to provide books, stationery and uniforms to only 40 children enrolled in the schools. This is because they receive support only for 40 children per school, from the funding agency. The Fatehabad School reportedly, is able to provide these to 60 children since they have received more resources.

Apart from these, each year, UPGKMS tries to mobilise some resources for providing learning material for the remaining children. They approach associations like the Lions Club and also receive some support from the Devraha Baba's Trust.

The remaining children have to manage with borrowed books and copies or even buy these. Some children however, remain without books and share these with their classmates.

Both, the teachers at the CL Schools as well as the parents of the children shared that paucity of these materials was a major concern for them. UPGKMS has also been very concerned about this and is trying to mobilise resources for the same.

2. Administration of the CL Schools

A team of teachers and organisers, appointed at each school, manages the CL Schools. The organisers are workers of the UPGKMS who are basically responsible for the overall supervision of the school and provide the link between the schools and the Union. The teachers jointly manage the day to day affairs of the school, however, each school has one teacher, generally the senior most in terms of service with the CL Schools, as the informal in-charge. All teachers maintain regular attendance registers, stock registers, students' performance registers and records of the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) meetings held. Each teacher is also responsible for ensuring that parents attend the PTA meetings and are informed about their child's/children's progress.

Dhanoli school, on account of having the largest number of students and teachers, is the only CL School that has appointed a Headmistress, who apart from teaching also manages the affairs of the school. The headmistress is the same young girl who was removed from (child)

labour and assisted in schooling by Mr. Tula Ram Sharma, during his INTUC days (Chapter IV). This young girl is also the secretary of the UPGKMS.

Dhanoli school is also an exception in that it is the only CL School to have obtained government recognition. This recognition makes the Scheduled Caste students eligible for government scholarships and free books. In the academic year 1999-2000, 95 SC children enrolled in the Dhanoli CL School, received an annual scholarship of Rs.300 per child. These children also receive free books.

Obtaining government recognition for all the CL Schools has been an objective of the UPGKMS. This is one of the ways in which they want to realise the goal of providing mainstream education to their students.

Enrolment, Attendance and Retention

The strength of the CL Schools is in the strategies that they have adopted in order to enroll and retain their students. To begin with, before initiating the CL Schools and subsequently before the beginning of every academic year, the teachers and workers of the union conduct a survey to identify out-of-school children and conduct meetings with their parents, informing and mobilising them to send their children to the CL Schools. They make individual home visits, as well as, conduct group meetings of the parents.

They would identify children at: a) work sites – in the brick kilns, construction site, stone quarries and fields; b) homes – engaged in home based occupations such as brush making, carpet making, leather shoe making, pottery and so on. These would primarily be children working alongside their parents or independently but working nonetheless; c) out of school non-working children.

The process adopted by the CL School at Dhanoli provides insight into the strategies adopted. The workers of the UPGKMS identified 40 children engaged in brush making, conducted meetings with their parents for 4 months, twice every month, conducted adult literacy classes for them and then started running the school under a tree. Two members of the union, one of whom was the tea stall girl in Agra, whom Mr. Sharma had educated, were appointed as teachers. Soon the number of children attending this school grew to 70. Apart from conducting adult literacy classes, all other strategies are similar for other CL Schools too.

Once the children are enlisted, on the first day of the school, some of the teachers actually collect children from their homes, especially the younger children. This collecting of students continues for some days, till the children (and their parents) get used to attending school. More emphasis is given to children who, or whose parents, are not fully convinced and motivated about the schools, especially where children are engaged in work, rewarding or other wise.

Children are confirmed as students of the school and their names entered in the attendance register only after the teacher is satisfied about the regularity of the child. The experience of the teachers in this regard is that by and large children do stay on and get enrolled in their registers, however, a few do not continue. These are generally children who are earning

significant amount of income, or girls who are viewed as indispensable for the household or those children whose parents are not taking active interest in their schooling. After some point of time, the teachers do give up on these children, only to try again the following academic year. The exact percentage of the children who do not continue beyond a few days at the schools was not available but judging from the fact that the CL Schools almost always have more children enrolled each year, than targeted (more than 40), the percentage seems small. Out of school children who reported that they were dropouts from the CL Schools (as given in Chapter VI), were among these children.

The regular contact with parents does not cease after the enrolment is confirmed. The teachers insist on regular, once a month, meetings with the parents, during the PTAs. For parents who do not attend the PTAs, teachers make it a point to visit their homes or call them separately.

Apart from this, from time to time, UPGKMS organises meetings, awareness camps and rallies in the villages, where the CL Schools become the focal point. Parents, members or non-members, are invited to such programmes and the agenda at these includes discussions on the school, its performance, grievances of parents, teachers and children. The wider mandate of these meetings is to address parents not only in relation to their children but also as individuals and workers.

In fact, as one of the focussed group discussions (FGD) that was held in village Fatehabad, concluded, the workers of the Union announced that they would be holding an all-women's meeting in the village, to discuss the issues related to their unemployment. This was an issue raised by the women during the FGD and was immediately taken up by the Union. Such interventions on behalf of the Union have also impacted upon the people's perception towards the CL Schools and has thereby, also been one of the motivating factor for parents.

Attendance at the CL Schools is by and large satisfactory. Teachers also report about 80% regularity in these schools throughout the year, except for the months of March and April when there is large-scale absenteeism. This is a common phenomenon in most schools operating in rural agrarian societies, where the months of March and April mark the harvest season. Children are required, either directly in agricultural work during the season or to hold fort at home while both parents, especially mothers are employed for the harvest. A comparison of the attendance sheets for the months of August and March, confirms this.

Apart from this variation, there is also slight variation across all the CL Schools. Those schools that have been functional for over 2-3 years have better attendance records than those that have been newly started. This again suggests that attendance and regularity of students has been ensured through long term and consistent mobilisation efforts of the teachers as well as the organisers. Mr. Sharma also shared during the course of an interview, that this phase of lower attendance (comparatively) in newer schools is not uncommon. It is only after sufficient time and effort has been spent to ensure attendance and regularity that these are maintained. Thus, one will find that the attendance sheets of the CL School at Dhanoli and Nagla Daru have lesser absentees than the other 4 schools, which were initiated later.

Another problem faced by the newer CL Schools is that of thinning attendance after lunch

break. The CL Schools have a lunch break for half an hour when they generally go home. After lunch, it is common to find children coming back to school one by one, some earlier and some later. Some do not turn up at all. While the teachers are able to collect children from nearby homes, they are unable to bring back children who live further away. Similar irregularities are common in the government schools that were visited. The teachers shared that while they encourage parents to send “tiffin” (packed lunch/refreshments) for their children, most do not. One of the ways to address this issue is by organising and providing for mid-day meals for the children. According to the UPGKMS, while they are interested in providing these meals to children, they fall short of financial resources. As will be explained shortly, the CL Schools receive grants to cover expenses for 40 children per school and hence they are unable to provide for regular meals to all the children. As a result they compensate for this loss by providing students with occasional refreshments like biscuits and fruits.

The most recent challenge with the CL Schools was at Dhanoli, where 31 out of the first batch of 40 children who have completed five years of primary schooling have been passed (the rest were retained in IV standard since the teachers were not satisfied with their learning). In order that these children continue schooling and also because of the aspirations of the parents and children, UPGKMS had decided to extend the school beyond V standard and to retain children thereafter. July 2000, however, class VI students did not equal in number to the children who had passed out from the V standard. Of the 31 children who had passed the standard V only 12 were attending class VI, in late July 2000 and by end of August, 26 children were attending VI standard. The remaining five students had collected their transfer certificate from the CL Schools. UPGKMS is at the stage of following up on these children to assess whether they children continue schooling elsewhere, or they discontinue.

The fact that the first batch of 40 children at the CL School at Dhanoli has been successfully retained, including those that were retained at the level of standard IV and those that have left with the transfer certificate, is an indication of the success of the CL Schools in retaining children in school.

3. Course Curriculum

In line with their vision of providing formal schooling to children in the CL Schools, UPGKMS has adopted the existing government school curriculum for their students. They also run the schools during the official hours for running the government schools. However, they have made two additions to this, one in curriculum and one in methodology. They have added English as another subject, which is taught from standard I upwards. English language is not introduced in any of the government schools in UP, at the primary school level. According to Mr. Sharma, their CL Schools are teaching English because they felt it was an important medium of communication and it was an added incentive for parents to send their children to the CL Schools than to other schools where English is not taught.

The teaching methodology followed at the CL Schools is similar to other government and private schools, i.e., of teaching children by reading aloud, through written exercises, by rote and through some games and so on. The variation they have introduced in this is that of

conducting *Bal Sabhas* (Children's Meeting) twice every week. Half a day on Tuesdays and Saturdays every week, is devoted to the *bal sabhas* where children are involved in reciting poems, reading stories, engaging in drawing and painting and playing some games. Often the subject of drawing and painting is child labour where teachers engage the children in discussion about the same and in actually drawing and painting on the subject. It is a forum where teachers do not "teach" but organise activities in which children are involved and children do most of the activities.

Other than this, the CL Schools also have a prayer in the glory of the Devraha Baba, which is recited every morning when children assemble in their classes, along with the national anthem.

The Teachers and their Role

There are a total of 24 teachers (16 women and 8 men) in the all the CL Schools. They are between the ages of 22 – 39 years and are, at the least, matriculates. Two of these teachers are also post-graduates. All of them live in, or near the villages where the schools are situated, except for two, who travel a distance of 12 to 25 kms, to reach the CL Schools. These are teachers who are not natives of those villages but have been workers of the union and decided to also teach in the CL Schools.

It was interesting to note that teachers were generally selected amongst the residents (migrant or natives) of the village where the CL School was situated, whether or not they were members of the Union. However, once they were appointed as teachers they were also made members of the UPGKMS. The teachers are identified and selected by members of the UPGKMS who are organisers for the particular village. Educated (at least X standard pass) natives of the village where the CL Schools are situated, or educated persons from neighbouring villages who are known to the UPGKMS, or educated members and workers of the union are the people from among whom teachers are selected.

Most teachers said that they joined the CL School when one of the workers of the Union approached them for the same. Few approached the union members and workers once they heard through the villagers that the union was searching for potential teachers.

Apart from three teachers who had prior teaching experience (in private primary schools), the rest of the teachers are teaching for the first time. None of them have received any formal or informal training in teaching. This is one of the greatest needs of the CL Schools. Teachers being the spine of the CL School programme need to be invested with some form of skill upgradation to strengthen their capacities in teaching.

The unique selling point of the CL Schools strategies lies in the fact that their teachers are not merely responsible for teaching children who attend their classes, but go beyond the class and school boundaries. The teachers' greatest responsibility has been to *reach out* to the children and their parents in their homes to mobilise them towards schooling and to generate faith in the CL Schools. They have also encouraged parents to share the problems they face in their work situation and in sending their children to school. Teachers' interventions have helped parents in resolving problems related to sending their children to school.

For the first CL School that was set up in Dhanoli, as mentioned earlier, the teachers also conducted adult education classes for the parents of the children, for one year before setting up the school. This was one way, they felt, they could motivate a generation of non-literates towards educating their children. In all the other areas where they set up the schools, while they did not conduct adult education classes, they organised regular meetings with the parents, at least twice every month, for about 4 months before setting up each of the school.

PTAs, which are also discussed above, have been a very crucial responsibility of the teachers whereby, they share children's performance and regularity with parents and ask them about the changes they have observed in their children.

The teachers concern for the children goes beyond the books. In the words of the teachers:

"We have gone so far as to personally attending to cleanliness of the children, sewing their torn clothes and so on."

Last but not the least, the most commendable feature of these teachers has been the sheer perseverance and commitment that they have demonstrated. Not only are they working with lower salaries ranging from Rs 1000 - Rs 1500, depending upon the financial resources available, they have also worked without salaries for months together when funds were not coming through.

According to the teachers, they have been successful in their mandate of educating almost 1000 children through the six schools. They feel they were able to retain their children because parents have recognised and appreciated the sincerity and regularity in their work.

The teachers are satisfied with their achievements and aspire to do better still. They also aspire that one day all their schools, just as the Dhanoli school, will get recognition, "manyata", from the government.

Levels of Learning

While no formal attempt was made in the current study to assess the levels of learning achieved by the children, an assessment of what they do in school every day was attempted. All children shared that a timetable was followed daily and they were taught different subjects during each time slot. When children were asked about what they liked the most in school 18 children (37.5%) replied that they liked "studying" best, this was followed by liking for the subject of Hindi, poems in Hindi, English and Mathematics. When children were asked what they disliked most about the schools, while majority were not able to respond to this, 4 children referred to beating by teachers as their most disliked part of schooling.

Beating and punishment of children by making them stand up or by hitting them is not uncommon in the CL Schools. The teachers and union leaders feel that this is the way of disciplining the child. The parents too, in the course of focussed group discussions said that they felt punishment of children was a very important ingredient in their disciplining.

Punishment and beating up of children has been the most accepted way of disciplining children whether at home or in schools in India. The CL Schools are not an exception to this attitude. The teachers and workers of the union *are* a product of the same society which has socialised them into believing that “sparing the rod spoils the child”. The progressive thought of “sparing the rod” is even today confined to the circles of modern private middle and upper middle class schools. The change in this attitude is a must for all, including the CL Schools.

Unannounced visits to three CL Schools (Dhanoli, Fatehabad, Fatehpur Sikri and Hathras) while classes were on, were a very reassuring experience. Classes were being conducted in a disciplined manner. Only, in the schools being run under a single thatched roof, the difficulty in keeping one class unaffected by the other was apparent. It seemed, however, that children were oblivious to the classes around them and continued with their own business of reciting poems, alphabets, tables, or solving mathematical sums and so on.

During these visits it was learnt that the State government had announced a new set of course curriculum to be taught in the primary schools. Further, it was also announced that schools (government or recognised) which were found continuing to use the previous curriculum would be taken to task. However, neither had the new set of books reached the government schools nor were they available in the open market. The CL Schools too had decided to follow these instructions and during the visits, therefore, the CL Schools did not have the new books, neither did they encourage parents to buy the previous books. As a result, not many children had books and teachers were teaching from previous books and following the previous curriculum.

At the Dhanoli school, standard V students were studying English to Hindi translation and vice-versa. Children were quizzed on names of colours, fruits, animals and articles in English. Both girls and boys were able to answer most questions.

When they were asked about what they have learnt in science, they shared what they had learnt about various parts of the body and the function of different organs. In geography they had learnt about the different types of soils and the types of crops that grew on them.

Children from younger classes at Hathras and Fatehabad were either learning to count numbers in Hindi, or learning alphabets, English and Hindi both, or were learning to formulate sentences. The students' performance at the each of these schools was satisfactory.

The only disconcerting factor was the teaching of English. Teachers themselves not being very adept at English tended to be incorrect in the teaching of the language.

4. Parents and Communities Involvement

As has been described in the preceding paragraphs, parents have been involved from the beginning of setting up of the schools. Subsequently, they have been involved in construction the school building, in Dhanoli; in putting up the thatched roofs in other schools; in installing hand pumps and so on. Not to forget the frequent repairs that the thatched roofs have

required. The *gram sabha* in almost all the villages except Gadhaiya have donated their common land for the purposes of setting up the permanent structure for the school.

More significantly, every school has a Parent's Committee comprising 10 parents each, who visit the school once every month to supervise the school activities. Again depending upon the number of years the school has completed, the strength of these committees differs.

The most convenient form of parents involvement in these schools is that since the schools are very near their place of residence, they are able to "keep an eye", in the words of a mother, on the school.

They have also encouraged parents and others in the village to ensure that children enrolled in the school attend it regularly. There were some mothers who said that they were asked by the teacher to see to it that no child of the school is seen loitering around during school hours and that they should bring the child to the school. The one mother who we met at village Dhanoli said:

" the teachers have told me and my neighbour, since we were close to the CL school when it was run under the tree, to keep an eye on children who ran away from school or those who left home but didn't go to school. We would take these children straight back to the school. In fact the Union members have asked us to visit the school from time to time to see whether the teachers are coming on time and whether the classes are being conducted properly...", she laughs at this.

Other than this, parents are also invited to school, every Thursday afternoon, to participate in singing of prayers and performance of "arati" in the glory of Devraha Baba. This feature too is differs across the CL schools, depending upon the extent of their contact with the UPGKMS and influence of the Devraha Baba.

Assessment of the CL Schools- Parents And Children Speak

When parents were asked whether they were satisfied with the CL Schools, 87.5% responded that they were. Only 8.3% parents said that they were not satisfied with the school because there were no buildings. Further when parents were asked about suggestions for improving the CL Schools, most (18.75%) parents said that the CL Schools should have permanent structures so that children are able to attend classes without discomfort during rains and extreme climates.

When children were asked whether they were satisfied with the school, only one child responded that s/he was not satisfied with the school. The rest all said that they were satisfied. When asked for suggestions for improving the school, only nine children responded. Their suggestions were mostly about improving the infrastructure (building, electricity, etc.) facilities, provision of learning materials (books, pens, school bag, etc.) also about having more provisions for play (bat, ball, etc.) and finally about extending the CL School beyond primary classes, i.e., beyond standard V.

Children's Aspirations

Of the children who were able to share their aspirations, more specifically regarding what they would like to become when they grew up, 9 children said that they would like to become Teachers, eight wanted to become Doctors and five wanted to work in the agricultural fields.

It was interesting to note that two children said that they would like to go to Delhi, Agra or Aligarh, in search of Jobs, another two said they would like to do some “naukri” (job) and yet another two said that they would like to join the police. One child each wanted to do business, operate some machinery and finally a girl who said that she would like to become a “good person” and do household work.

These aspirations of children certainly suggest that schooling has been able to provide them with an opportunity to think and aspire beyond their present circumstances. Further, even as most of them are aspiring to be engaged in work other than that of their parents, some though fewer in number, do want to continue in the present occupations. This is a point of departure from the various arguments put forth in the discourses on education, where it is contended that schooling of children drives them away from manual labour 5 out of 30 (16.6%) children, who responded to the question on their aspirations, did choose agriculture.

Most children said that they wanted to study beyond primary school. A majority of 47.91% children wanted to study up to standard X and XII, 14.58% wanted to study up to standard VIII and only 18.75% wanted to study up to standard V. A small percentage of 6.25% children wanted to study beyond school.

5. Funding Pattern

UPGKMS had approached IFBWW, an international federation for Trade Unions, in their Delhi office, for financial assistance for running this school. The IFBWW approached the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on behalf of UPGKMS and in November 1995, the ILO granted financial assistance to cover education for 40 children and salaries of 2 teachers, under the International Programme for Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).

Even though the ILO_IPEC grant only covered expenses for 40 children, 70 children were taught at the Dhanoli School. Impressed with their work, the ILO informed them that they would extend the grant for 3 more such schools and UPGKMS began identifying villages and child labourers, in other areas and districts. However, not only did the grant for 3 other schools not materialise, the grant for the Dhanoli School also stopped within a year.

From the year 1997 however, UPGKMS has been receiving grants for running the CL Schools, from the IFBWW. The grant covers expenses for forty children only, per school, each year. Nonetheless, the Union continues to provide education to all its 720 students within grants covering expenses for 240 children.

An Assessment

Recognition of the constraints of the rural worker's families and intervening accordingly, seem to be the significant element distinguishing the CL schools from other schools. Sharma as well as the teachers have shared during the interviews and discussions that they felt that these parents needed to be assured about the quality of the school. Mostly parents were happy to learn that a school was being set up near their homes and was specifically for child labourers. They needed assurance and some amount of discussion to weigh the pros and cons of sending children to school vis-à-vis sending them to work or letting them be at home. The fact that education would be free, except for a fee of Rs 5 or 10, per child was also an encouraging factor. The final push, towards the school, perhaps came from their perseverance. The teachers and union members constantly keeping in touch with them, almost like holding their hands while they tread the path of educating their children, lest their faith falters or they get disappointed. The constant integration of the child's schooling with the issues faced by the parents, the coupling of the school with the union work of organising workers have granted this initiative its strength.

All this was not easy to come by and a lot of hard work had to be put in by the teachers and other members of the union. There were some parents who took time to believe in sending their children to school, there were some children who would run away from the school, there were others who wouldn't attend for days together. It took time but through sheer persistence and continuous follow up, the UPGKMS has been able to ensure that children did get enrolled and that they did not drop out.

Conclusion

Visits to the the Child Labour Schools run by the UPGKMS is an experience in itself. As a contrast to the chaos which has become characteristic of most government schools, the CL Schools provides a sight of disciplined and organised teaching.

The strategies adopted by the UPGKMS to enroll and retain children, to involve parents and the commitment towards providing disciplined and regular learning opportunities to it's students, hold the key to the success in schooling of these children. Mobilising parents and fostering interest in schooling among parents and children has been an important element that has accrued success to the UPGKMS initiative.

Not only did parents get involved in the CL Schools, the communities at large also got involved. Appreciating the performance of the CL Schools, the Gram Pradhan's in all the villages except at Fatehabad and Gadhaiya, donated the common village land for the school.

It has certainly not been an easy task. Teachers and union workers have had to put in a lot of time and effort in achieving this. Under the committed leadership of Mr. Sharma and his guidance, the teachers persevered and performed their tasks. And it paid. They are satisfied with their achievements and they aspire to do better. They may not be as qualified as the government-school teachers but they are achieving the goal of educating their students.

There is no doubt that the CL Schools have been successful. Given the limited resources and limitations of not very qualified staff, they have done well. For their future aspirations and better performance, they will need to upgrade the teachers' skills and engage in the discourses on joyful methods of learning.

Children's aspirations are a reflection of the fact that at the very least, schooling has provided them with an opportunity by which they can aspire for a better future. The fact that a large number of children said that they preferred schooling to work and also that within the school they liked "studying" the best, is a reflection of the fact that they are enjoying the schooling experience. The fact that most of them want to study beyond the primary school suggests an outlook, which has been aptly elucidated by a parent as:

"Once they (the children) have gotten into schooling, they will definitely study further".

The shortcomings of the CL Schools notwithstanding, once again, people's mandate *for* education is clear. The merit for creating and fostering this mindset clearly goes to the UPGKMS and its workers.

IX. Conclusion

The Child Labour Schools have been successful in enrolling, retaining and thereby schooling 720 children across the six villages in its project area. It has been able to do so because of the specific ideology and methodology employed.

An ideology that believes in elimination of child labour through schooling marked by various phases, including prevention of children's entry into the labour force and continuation of child labour with schooling as a temporary stage. A methodology that looked upon children as part of families who are either dependent on their labour or who, owing to their own illiterate status are not motivated and interested in educating their children, or whose disinterest in education stems from the experiences of poor quality schooling.

The study started out to examine three topical issues with regard to elimination of child labour. These are: the role and relevance of education in eliminating child labour; to understand the impact of this initiative of schools for child labourers on the UPKMS and; the empowering capacity of education for child labourers and their families. Following is an attempt to comprehend the findings of the present study in the context of the objectives laid out.

Role And Relevance Of Education In Eliminating Child Labour

The preceding chapters have attempted to analyse the child labour situation in the project area of UPKMS and the factors contributing towards schooling of children. Education or more precisely, schooling of children has a definite role in elimination of child labour. However, the role needs to be understood. To put first things first, simply sending children to school is not going to lead to automatic elimination of child labour. As has been seen in the case of children going to child labour schools, a large majority of working children has continued to work alongside going to school, though a few have completely stopped working. It has been pointed out that children who were earning from the work they did are more likely to continue working alongside going to school, than children who do not earn from the work they do and those whose earnings are inclusive with the parents. Thus, while children have not completely stopped working, for a large part of the day, they are out of work and in school.

The other side of the coin is that children, who were not previously working, once in school, do not join the labour force, except in the case of one child. And this is true for more than half of the total number of children going to CL Schools. Thus, prevention of child labour seems to be one of the crucial impacts of schooling and retention of these children.

The experience of the CL Schools suggests that in the pursuit of the goals of elimination of child labour, it must be understood that the complex phenomenon will not be eliminated overnight. Nor will it be done away with, by simply putting children in school. What will happen however, is that there will be a gradual shift in the nature of child labour, from child labourers

deprived of the opportunity for schooling, to children who are able to receive formal schooling, while they continue to work. As proved in the analysis, that educated parents are more likely to sending their children to school, so will be the case with these children, who are mostly the first generation learners.

As adults, the children who are receiving schooling will be more likely to send their children to school and less likely to send them to work. The latter will be possible because as educated adults they are more likely to unionise effectively and bargain for better wages, especially educated girls will participate in non-farm "paying" occupations and thus the financial situation of these families will improve. It is at this stage that the role of education in eliminating child labour will become manifested.

The other relevance of schooling is that by enrolling children who were not previously working at the time of enrolment, they have been able to if not prevent these children from entering the child labour force, at least delay the age at which they may enter the labour force.

Yet another crucial issue in this discussion is regarding the kind of schooling initiative that can lead to this goal of eliminating child labour. It is only those initiatives that are able to creatively retain children that will succeed in escalating impact of education in eliminating child labour.

The most crucial understanding that emerges from this study is that while schooling of children is certainly the first step towards eliminating child labour, it will need some time as well as organisation of workers to actualise the elimination.

The Impact Of This Initiative On The UPGKMS

What is the impact of running CL Schools on the Trade Union? The fact that a workers union has engaged itself with the issue of child labour through direct interventions in the area of child labour raises several questions. The most important being those related to the connection between child labour and the work of the union and the other related to the impact of such initiatives on the Trade Union.

As has been put by the President of the Union, they have perceived education of child labourers, as a means to two ends. One being the means towards elimination of child labour and the other being a means to reach out to their parents, who belong to the rural unorganised work force, the primary benefactors of a workers union. As has been demonstrated in the analysis, parents have identified the Union in relation to the CL Schools rather than the other way round. The union has gained recognition amongst the unorganised rural workers through its intervention of running schools for their children.

Schools have been the focus of all other union activities in the villages where they are running. Besides, the retention of children in the CL Schools is an indication of the fact that they have been able to earn the faith of the parents. The fact that workers issues emerge from the discussions held at the schools whether during PTAs or during home visits made by the teachers, or during the meetings called by the school, further point out towards the synthesis between the schools and the union.

And finally, the fact that majority parents of the children going to CL Schools are members of the UPGKMS is an indication of the fact that they have been able to actualise the goal of reaching out to the rural workers by providing schooling to their children.

The Empowering Capacity Of Education For Child Labourers And Their Families

The shift in child labour situation, from a situation where children were working and were deprived of education to a situation where children are also receiving mainstream formal education, in itself is an indication of their empowerment.

Based on the positive schooling experience at the CL Schools, children's aspirations to study further, coupled with parents desire to educate their children further, in communities where the drop out rates are high, is a gauge of their enhanced ability to make informed choices in life.

The CL Schools have urged the parents and the larger communities to participate and contribute in the effective schooling of their children. The creation of space for parents to be involved in the infrastructural as well as functional aspects of the schools, has reversed the situation where they were hapless passive consumers of the hitherto schooling system, to a situation where they are active custodians too.

Creation of space where informed choices can be exercised and where people are in position of power to affect changes is definitely an empowering experience which the parents and the communities at large have gone through.

Child Labour, Education and the intervention of UPGKMS

With its interventions, the UPGKMS has been able to prove that it is not the poverty of families as much as the poverty of the state in ensuring free and quality education and failure in mobilising the families that is the main reason for non-enrolment of children in government schools. Child labour certainly is not a primary deterrent in non-enrolment but if children, labourers or potential labourers, are enrolled, child labour can be reduced and gradually eliminated. The relation between child labour and schooling, then is not as much in child labour preventing children from going to school but more in terms of the ability of schooling in being creative in enrolling and retaining children in school and thereby, pushing towards elimination of child labour.

Child labour certainly can be eliminated gradually by providing free and quality schooling and by involvement of the larger community. Elimination of child labour must be understood as a process that will entail a stage where families combine the desire for education along with the need for children's labour. It is a complex phenomenon and will need to be accompanied by organisation of the adult workers to bargain for better wages, among other provisions for development, along with schooling of children for its complete elimination. And finally the success of UPGKMS lies largely in their strategy for mobilising parents as well as in demonstrating effective and disciplined schooling.

CEC in Brief

Centre for Education and Communication is a Society registered in 1983 (Registration Number S/13682/83) under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.

Centre for Education and Communication is a resource centre for labour, in particular of those in the unorganised and informal sectors. It functions as a centre for workers' education and participatory labour research.

CEC creatively responded to the challenges posed by the autonomous workers' movements that emerged in 1980s. Now, it is aware of the economy's integration into the global market and the consequent changes in the structure and nature of employment.

CEC perceives its role as to

1. critically understand the changes in the employment structure,
2. positively contribute, through its various activities, to the enhancement of dignity of labour, and towards this end,
3. evolve appropriate strategies, at national and international levels, in collaboration with all trade unions and labour organisations, labour support organisations and peoples' movements.

CEC places itself in the interface of social action and academic research, aligning on the one hand with the activist groups and the struggles of formal and informal sector workers, tribals, women, victims of development, environmental groups etc., and on the other hand with the section of academic community who prefers to constantly interact with people's organisations and movements. It is a two way process; learning from the people and contributing to the enlargement of their horizon.

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