Youth and Development: Round 4 Preliminary Findings

Young Lives

This fact sheet presents preliminary findings from the fourth round of the Young Lives survey in Andhra Pradesh[1] in 2013. It reports on outcomes for the Older Cohort at age 19 in terms of education, employment and marriage, showing clearly how young people's opportunities in life are influenced by household wealth level and background circumstances. Half of the young people are still in education (15% combining this with work), 26% have left school and are working, 17% are married, and 7% are not studying, working or married. Almost a third of the sample children have started university-level education, but a quarter of the children, mainly from the poorest and most disadvantaged groups have left full-time education, many without completing secondary level. By the age of 19, 36% of the girls in our sample, and 2% of the boys, are married – and 108 of them already have a child of their own (almost two-thirds of the married girls). Early marriage and child-bearing was most common for girls in rural areas, from poor households, or girls who had only completed primary education. Our findings show that in order to reap the demographic dividend of India's large youth population, policymakers must find a way to keep children in education and to ensure that the education system provides them with the learning and skills they need to find decent work and livelihoods.

Policy context

Young people aged between 15 and 29 years comprise 27.5% of the population of India today. Recognising the demographic dividend of such a large youth population, and the contribution they have to make to the economy and economic growth, the Government of India introduced a National Youth Policy in 2014. The policy aims to empower young people to achieve their full potential. The policy focuses on education, employment and skill development, and entrepreneurship as priority areas, and has as an objective that all young people should have equitable access to high quality education and be able to develop the necessary skills required for the labour market and to enable them to find decent work and livelihoods.

A second important objective is to support economically and socially marginalised young people and ensure they have equitable access to education and work opportunities. In particular, two programmes – the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and the Rashtriya Ucchtar Shiksha Abhiyan – which have been launched as umbrella programmes to support secondary and higher education respectively, have the goals of increasing access, ensuring equity, improving quality of inputs and outcomes, and promoting greater governance and accountability. The National Skill Development Agency constituted in 2013 is an autonomous body whose role is to harmonise and coordinate all skill development efforts of government and the private sector during the Twelfth Plan Period in order to bridge the social, regional, gender and economic divides in skills across all regions of the country.

Young Lives has been working since 2002 with two cohorts of children and young people in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana[2] – a Younger Cohort of children aged 12 to 13, and an Older Cohort aged 18 to 19 at the time of the Round 4 survey in 2013. As a longitudinal study, Young Lives is able to use the data collected when the Older Cohort were aged 8, 12, 15 and 19 to explore and explain how household and social circumstances early in life affect children's later outcomes. The Young Lives survey covers many of the issues addressed in the National

Youth Policy and analysis of the data will support better policymaking for young people as they make the transition into early adulthood, the labour market and family formation.

This fact sheet gives preliminary analysis of outcomes for the Older Cohort at age 19 in terms of education, employment and marriage. Half of them are still in education (with 15% balancing this with working), 26% have left school and are working, 17% are married, and 7% are not studying, working or married. At this age, 2% of boys and 36% of the girls are married.

Key findings

- 49% of the Young Lives Older Cohort were still in education at age 19: 9% had still to complete secondary education, 8% had moved on to vocational or post-secondary education, and a third had started university-level education.

- However, children from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds were the most likely to have left school, many without gaining a secondary-level certificate.

- Many young people from marginalised groups had already started full-time work, mostly self-employed or wage-employed in agriculture, with no further education or vocational skills, which goes against the equity aims of national youth policy.

- Despite the legal age for marriage being set at 18 for girls by the Prevention of Child Marriages Act, 2006, 37% of girls were married by the age of 19 (at an average age of 16.6 years, well below the age specified in the act).

- In order to reap the demographic dividend of India's large youth population, and in turn to achieve more social and economic development, there is a need for the education system to provide the learning and skills young people need to find decent work and livelihoods.

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1   The state as it existed since 1956 before its bifurcation into two new states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana on 2 June 2014.

2   This fact sheet reports on findings for the total Young Lives sample, which was designed in 2001 to cover the three agro-climatic regions of Andhra Pradesh – Coastal Andhra, Rayalaseema, Telangana – before the bifurcation into the two new states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in June 2014.

Outcomes for 19-year-olds

Education

We found that 49% of the Young Lives Older Cohort were still enrolled in education at the age of 19 in 2013. When we had interviewed them in 2009 (aged 15), 78% were attending school and most were in upper-primary or secondary school just before the Grade 10 exam, at which point many young people's educational trajectories diverge). Of the young people still in education in 2013, 18% had yet to complete secondary school, 15% had moved on to vocational or post-secondary education, and two-thirds had started university-level education (a third of the total sample – 305 boys and girls in total).

While we see some gender differences in enrolment (57% of young men are still in education, compared with just 41% of young women), we also see substantial variation in enrolment between socio-economic groups and location with 50% of young people in urban areas full-time in school compared with just a quarter in rural areas. Similarly, while two-thirds of children from less-marginalised Other Castes were still studying, only 41% of 19-year-olds from a Scheduled Caste background, 52% of young people from Scheduled Tribes, and 44% of young people from Backward Classes were still in education. The chance of education is positively related to household wealth level – 67% of children from better-off households were still in education, compared with just 35% from the poorest households.

While it is encouraging that so many young people are continuing their education, half of the 19-year-olds who had left education had done so without completing secondary school: 14% had completed upper primary but no more, 7% had only completed lower primary, and 6% had not even completed primary level. This illustrates, again, the different life trajectories and gaps in opportunities that open up early in life for different groups of children.

Starting work

While a third of young people were studying full-time and a fifth are combining work and school, a third had left education completely and were working (in either paid or unpaid employment), and 16% were working in the home (involved in household chores or caring for others), and only 7% were not studying, working or married.

Whether young people had left school and were working by the age of 19 (in either paid or unpaid employment), was closely related to the wealth level of their families – almost 40% of young people from the poorest families were working full-time, compared with just 14% from better-off households. More young people from marginalised groups were working full-time, and there are also gender gaps – with almost 40% of boys working outside the home, compared with just 15% of girls. Similarly, 23% of the 19-year-old boys were working at the same time as studying, compared with just 8% of girls. We also find that 17% of young women who were married were working, but only 2% had continued their education after marriage.

Table 1. *Level of education of 19-year-olds currently/not enrolled in education*

	Boys	% of boys	Girls	% of girls	All	% of sample
19-year-olds currently enrolled						
Secondary	2	0.4	2	0.4	4	0.4
Higher secondary	58	12.5	24	4.9	82	8.6
Post-secondary/ Vocational	47	10.1	24	4.9	71	7.5
University	156	33.5	149	30.6	305	32.0
Total currently enrolled	**263**	**56.6**	**199**	**40.9**	**462**	**48.5**
19-year-olds no longer in school (and highest qualification achieved)						
No qualification	21	4.5	38	7.8	59	6.2
Lower primary	31	6.7	37	7.6	68	7.1
Upper primary	47	10.1	84	17.2	131	13.8
Secondary	70	15.1	80	16.4	150	15.8
Higher secondary	19	4.1	47	9.7	66	6.9
Post-secondary/ Vocational	13	2.8	0	0.0	13	1.4
University	1	0.2	2	0.4	3	0.3
Total no longer in school	**202**	**43.4**	**288**	**59.1**	**490**	**51.5**
All children	**465**	**100.0**	**487**	**100.0**	**952**	**100.0**

Figure 1. *Current education/employment of 19-year-olds by caste/ethnicity (%)*
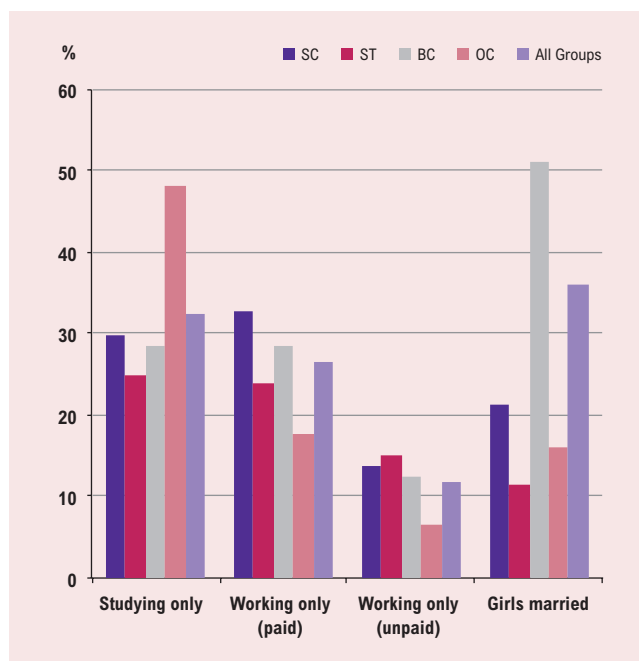
Marriage and fertility

By the age of 19, 36% of the girls in our sample were married, and 2% of boys – and 108 of them already had a child of their own (59% of the married girls). The average age at marriage was 16.6 years and the girls most likely to have married and had a child at a young age were from the poorest groups: 38% of SC girls and 43% of BC girls were married, and 46% of girls from the poorest households. Girls' age of marriage as well as age of first child is closely related to their own mother's level of education i.e. 44% of the girls married by age 19 were those whose mothers had had no formal education. Most of the girls who already had children had left school, and more than half of them had only completed primary level education (and just 21% had completed secondary school).

Table 2. *Marriage and fertility age 19 (2013)*

	Boys	**%**	**Girls**	**%**
Single (never married)	456	98.1	308	63.2
Married or cohabiting*	9	1.9	174	35.7
Widowed, divorced or separated	0	0.0	5	1.0
Total	**465**		**487**	
Has had a child	6		102	

*Only 1 young man was living with his partner, not yet married.

Educational aspirations

The education aspirations of all children at age 12 were high (and higher for boys). Assuming there were no constraints and they could stay on at school as long as they liked, 76% of the 12-year-old boys and 61% of the girls had said they would like to go to university when we asked them in 2009. Their parents also had high aspirations for them, with 67% of boys' caregivers and 43% of girls' caregivers saying they would like them to attain a university degree.

Most of the young people who were still in education at age 19 had reached the level they aspired to at age 12. For instance, among those who said they hoped to complete secondary education, 53% of boys and 44% of girls were in university education, around 20% are in higher secondary, and 20% of boys were studying at post-secondary level. A similar trend is observed with caregiver aspirations for boys: 64% of boys were at university but their caregivers had expected that they would only complete only post-secondary education. It is encouraging to note that many girls whose aspiration had been to complete post-secondary school have achieved much higher levels of education than they hoped: 65% of them were in university while 18% were in post-secondary and 18% in higher secondary education. Most of those girls were now in higher level of education, exceeding the expectations of their parents.

The picture was not so positive for young people who were no longer in school: 30% of these boys had wanted to complete secondary education but 50% did not even achieve that and only completed primary school. Similarly, 48% of the girls who at age 12 wanted to complete secondary school, and 34% of girls who would have liked to go to university, were only able to complete primary education. Our data show that although almost all children start with high aspirations, for many children, especially from rural areas or poor backgrounds, household circumstances or events intervene. We see in our qualitative sub-sample interviews many instances of children's education being interrupted because of economic shocks such as drought, family illness or death or because they are needed to care for siblings or other family members.

Employment aspirations

When they were age 12, 54% of boys and 62% of girls hoped that when they were 20 they would be working in a professional job not in the agricultural sector. The reality is that, at the age of 19, 43% of boys were studying, 35% of them were doing agriculture-related work, and 13% were in regular salaried work in the non-agricultural sector. By and large, a similar pattern is observed for girls, although interestingly, while only 17% of the girls hoped to be studying at age 19 or 20, 54% of them had continued their education.

On the whole, the employment aspirations parents have for their children are similar to the children themselves, not only when the children were aged 12 but also in what they were doing at age 19. Of the girls who thought that they would already be married by the age of 20, 28% were housewives, 9% were studying, and 48% were doing agriculture-related work. Of those who hoped that they would be able to continue with their education, 54% were studying, 14% were full-time wives and mothers, and 22% were doing agriculture-related work.

Conclusions

Despite the strong policy commitment of government to expand education for young people in order to build a skilled workforce, only half of the young people in the Young Lives Older Cohort were still in education at the age of 19. While many girls, rural young people, and economically marginalised groups had already left school, young people from other social groups have far exceeded the level of education they anticipated when they were age 12.

It is interesting to see many more girls continuing their education than they themselves had expected when they were age 12 years. But many girls, especially from Scheduled Caste groups and the poorest households, were already married and the average age of marriage of these young women was as low as 16.6 years, despite the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA) 2006 which mandates 18 years as the permissible age of marriage for girls and 21 years for boys.

All these indicate that we need to focus efforts across departments and Ministries to realise the goals of Twelfth National Plan captured in the 2014 National Policy on Youth. In order to reap the demographic dividend, it is essential that policymakers find ways to support all children and young people, particularly those from rural areas and the most marginalised groups, to remain in school and take their education as far as they can. Attention must also be paid to learning levels, to ensure that children are gaining useful skills which will help them to find secure employment and livelihoods. This will surely pave the way not only for more economic growth and better employment, but also for young people to realise their full personal and professional potential.

Table 3: *Education and employment of young people in Andhra Pradesh, age 19 in 2013*

	Studying full-time	Working full-time (paid or unpaid)	Studying and working	Married (not studying or working)	Married and studying	Married and working	Not studying, working or married	Sample size
Gender								
Male	33.8	38.4	22.8	0	0	1.7	3.2	464
Female	31.4	15.2	7.7	17.0	2.3	16.8	9.6	481
Child's ethnic group or caste								
Scheduled Castes	29.7	32.7	9.9	6.9	1.0	11.4	8.4	202
Scheduled Tribes	24.8	23.8	21.0	6.7	3.8	11.4	8.6	105
Backward Classes	28.5	28.5	16.6	11.0	0	9.9	5.5	435
Other Castes	48.3	17.7	14.3	6.4	2.5	5.4	5.4	203
Maternal education level								
No education	22.8	31.2	16.1	9.9	0.9	12.5	6.7	567
Up to 5 years	31.8	25.4	17.3	9.3	1.2	9.8	5.2	173
6 to 10 years	54.3	16.1	13.0	6.2	1.9	0.6	8.0	162
More than 10 years	90.0	2.5	2.5	0	2.5	0	2.5	40
Household wealth level (YL wealth index)								
Bottom tercile	18.2	38.3	14.7	10.2	1.6	11.5	5.4	313
Middle tercile	26.3	27.9	18.0	9.5	0.3	12.3	5.7	316
Top tercile	53.2	13.6	12.7	6.3	1.6	4.4	8.2	316
Urban or rural location								
Urban	49.3	20.1	7.6	8.3	1.4	4.3	9.0	278
Rural	25.6	29.2	18.3	8.9	1.1	11.5	5.4	667
Regions (before partition)								
Coastal Andhra	40.6	23.5	14.9	9.2	1.8	3.6	6.7	328
Rayalaseema	26.6	28.7	13.8	8.9	0.4	15.3	6.0	282
Telangana	29.6	27.8	16.4	8.1	1.2	10.5	6.6	335
Average of all children	**32.6**	**26.6**	**15.1**	**8.7**	**1.2**	**9.4**	**6.5**	
Sample size	**308**	**251**	**143**	**82**	**11**	**89**	**61**	**945**

Note: 7 young people from the full sample of 952 were not covered in these categories and are not included in this table.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND CREDITS

Young Lives
An International Study of Childhood Poverty

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