Bibliography


Burra, Neera (1995) Born to Work: Child Labour in India, Delhi: OUP.


Butterflies (2001) In search of Fair Play – Street and Working Children Speak About Their Rights, New Delhi; Butterflies/Mosaic.


Census of India (2003) Census of India-2001 Data Highlights, Migration Tables (D1, D1 (Appendix), D2 and D3 Tables), Delhi: Registrar General of Census, Ministry of Home Affairs, and Government of India.


Durkheim, Emile (1933) Division of Labour in Society (TR. By George Simpson, New York: Free Press.


Ehrenfels, O.R. (1941) Mother Right in India, Delhi: Oxford University Press.


Kothari, Rajni (1988c) “NGOs, the State and World Capitalism”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 21 (50), Dec 13-20, pp. 21-77.


UN Population Division (2002) *World Urbanisation Prospect, 2001* (Revision), New York: UN Population Division Economic and Social Affairs Division


UNICEF (2001) *The State of World’s Children*, Unicef,


Website

4. http://www.censusindia.net/results/slum1_m_plus.html
14. http://www.censusindia.net/results/slum1_m_plus.html
15. http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/introduction.htm (London School of Economics Centre for Civil Society's definition of civil society)
17. www.hamaraprayas.com (prayas's website)
Street girls are the most vulnerable section on the street of Delhi. They play numerous roles to eke out their livings.
Childhood is a life-stage full of laughter, prank and innocence. The childhood innocence was lost due to sexual abuse, exploitation and poverty. Girls again learnt to laugh after they stay in the shelter homes.
Expansion of capacities is crucial for exploring opportunities. Education is first key to such an expansion. Street Girls are learning in school runs by NGOs with dreams in their eyes.
Photos.4. Street Girls in the Shelter Homes of Prayas and Chetna

They are the most vulnerable sections of society. Subjected to sexual abuse, these girls are rescued by the NGOs and are in the shelter homes of various NGOS.
Learn To Live, Live To Learn

Female foeticide reveals warped goals of education

By KRISHNA KUMAR

At a recent discussion on declining sex ratio held at NCERT, senior feminist Neena Mazumdar warned against dangers of excessive abstraction. When ‘people’ are turned into ‘population’, she said, it stops being a matter of concern that family size is controlled by killing girls. She inspired the audience to wonder how our highly educated medical professionals could assist in extermination of unborn girls. The fact that husbands who force their wives to abort the female foetus have been to a school reveals the fuller truth about the failure of education.

This is no systemic failure: the system of education has expanded itself quite remarkably fast over the recent years and is all but universal in its coverage. The failure is philosophical, arising from our inability and reluctance to deconstruct ‘education’. By treating it as an abstraction and insisting that any or all education per se is good, we fail to recognise that education is an experience. Its core components are understanding and values. The experience available to our children in the name of education is mostly devoid of both.

All they get is an opportunity to proceed further in life with a chance to increase their income. Reduction of education into an opportunity is also at the heart of the current debate on privatisation, as British philosopher Christopher Winch points out. In a debate with James Tooley, the reputed advocate of total state withdrawal from education, Winch argues that education has to be viewed as a preparation for life. Education shapes personal and social futures; hence, it should be guided by a long-term view, and not by vagaries of the market.

Winch’s position, elaborated in his 1996 book Quality and Education, helps us see why exercise of parental choice in the schooling of their wards cannot be treated as a ground for justifying the state’s withdrawal.

Some critics of education in India argue for state withdrawal as a means to reduce bureaucratese interference and rigidity. They tend to associate quality with privatisation, and ask for the use of Tooley’s voucher system which confines the state’s role to handing out vouchers that parents can cash at a school of their choice. The polarised debate on private vs public responsibility in education is taking place in a grim ethos — distorted sex ratio among the educated, terrible delays in teacher recruitment and corruption in deployment, politicisation of curriculum and high rate of exam failure.

Few believe that the system can by improved by gradual reform. Those who have some faith left lack the patience to let reforms unfold over a staggered calendar.

As in other spheres of civic life, here too courts are saddled with the responsibility to uphold sanity and ethics. The Delhi high court’s order to make private schools inclusive is a fine example of the judiciary’s awareness of its historic role. Now that the Delhi government has begun to implement this order, the private vs public debate should end.

Defendants of private schooling must accept the state’s duty to regulate and the right to frame the curriculum. The state must recognise the damage done by procedural rigidity and indifference to innovation. Private donors who want to improve the infrastructure of government schools hesitate to contribute because they do not expect accountability.

Transparency is a fine idea, not just in private schools where the government demands it, but also in government schools if they want to benefit from private funds. The creative energy available in our government organisations needs to be recognised as a resource to be channelised into formal schooling. In Delhi, voluntary organisations like Katha and Askhat offer us excellent models of creative solutions for educational problems.

Katha’s children have completed their computer course a water-mapping project which is now being used to improve pipelines in the school’s neighbourhood. Both public and government schools can learn from Katha how to authorise literacy in the indigenous tradition of storytelling.

This is precisely what the National Curriculum Framework, approved by Central Advisory Board of Education, advocates, at the risk of being misunderstood by critics across the ideological divide. Another misunderstood idea has also been applied by Katha in its attempt to use knowledge and skills acquired by children at their working class homes to engage, often critically, with topics dealt with in the classroom. One sees them bring material and ideas from home, to express and try out in the presence of their benign teacher.

Katha has marked a breakthrough in teacher training too. The fact that Katha’s over-thousand children do not hurt or tease Zarina, the cat who lives in the school, certifies it for serving as a vision for the future. This cat’s relaxed presence would mean little to critics who worry about education but have no time to study pedagogic relations as a factor of reform.

Why education has failed to make husbands feel equally happy with sons and daughters cannot be gauged without examining the psychological character of syllabus and pedagogy. The battle for educational reforms must focus on filling the moral and emotional vacuum that inhibits most school courses.

The writer is director, NCFE.
Below 18 and married: 6.4m
10 Million Women In The Country Live In Bigamous Wedlocks

By Chirdeep Bagga
TIMES INSIGHT GROUP

If you thought child marriages are largely history in India or fast disappearing at any rate, Census 2001 has a different story to tell. Data on marital status released recently reveal that 6.4 million Indians under the age of 18 are already married. And if one takes into account the legal marriageable age (18 for females and 21 for males), the data are even more shocking — 11.7 million (4.9 million females and 6.9 million males) married underage.

That’s not all. As many as 1.3 lakh girls under 18 are already widowed and another 56,000-odd have been divorced or separated. Similarly, among men under 21, 90,000-odd have already lost their wives and more than 75,000 have seen their marriages break up. The total number of underaged men and women who have been married at least once thus rises to about 12.1 million.

The data also indicates that bigamy or polygamy, despite being illegal, is not quite as uncommon as we might assume and nor is it confined to any one community. Among those enumerated as married at the time of the Census, women outnumbered men by about 5 million. Since monogamous marriages would mean exactly the same number of married men and women, this is obvious evidence of polygamy. There could, therefore, be up to 10 million Indian women living in bigamous marriages.

The incidence of child marriages is expectedly higher in rural India, but not as low as you might expect in cities.

Divorces not just in cities: P8
Pregnancy can be the most wonderful experience life has to offer. But it can also be dangerous. Around the world, an estimated 529,000 women a year die during pregnancy or childbirth. Ten million suffer injuries, infection or disability.

To David Haig, an evolutionary biologist at Harvard, these grim statistics raise a profound puzzle about pregnancy. "Pregnancy is absolutely central to reproduction, and yet pregnancy doesn't seem to work very well," he said. "If you think about the heart or the kidney, they're wonderful bits of engineering that work day in and day out for years and years. But pregnancy is associated with all sorts of medical problems. What's the difference?"

The difference is that the heart and the kidney belong to a single individual, while pregnancy is a two-person operation. And this operation does not run in perfect harmony. Instead, Haig argues, a mother and her unborn child engage in an unconscious struggle over the nutrients she will provide it. Haig's theory has been gaining support in recent years, as scientists examine the various ways pregnancy can go wrong. His theory also explains a baffling feature of developing fetuses: the copies of some genes are shut down, depending on which parent they come from. Haig has also argued that the same evolutionary conflicts can linger on after birth and even influence the adult brain.

New research has offered support to this idea as well. By understanding these hidden struggles, scientists may be able to better understand psychological disorders like depression and autism. As a biologist fresh out of graduate school in the late 1980s, Haig decided to look at pregnancy from an evolutionary point of view. NY Times Service.
Liquor drowns childhood of these young ‘bartenders’

Kids Supply Liquor To ‘Car-o-Bars’ In Noida, Gzb For Tips, Dregs

By Lalit Kumar/TNN

Ghaziabad: A swig is drowning their childhood. Street children, some as young as five years old, can be seen working as “bartenders” in front of liquor vends across Noida and Ghaziabad. And officials claim they are not even aware of this form of child labour.

These boys and girls slog for over 10 hours a day—buying liquor bottles and namkeen for customers waiting in cars. Many of them start drinking at an early age, from the alcohol left in the bottles.

This is a familiar sight in front of liquor vends in Noida and Ghaziabad. Children as young as five can be seen working as “bartenders” to supplement their family income.

Ghazipur: A swig is drowning their childhood. Street children, some as young as five years old, can be seen working as “bartenders” in front of liquor vends across Noida and Ghaziabad. And officials claim they are not even aware of this form of child labour.

These boys and girls slog for over 10 hours a day—buying liquor bottles and namkeen for customers waiting in cars. Many of them start drinking at an early age, from the alcohol left in the bottles.

By Lalit Kumar/TNN

Ghaziabad: A swig is drowning their childhood. Street children, some as young as five years old, can be seen working as “bartenders” in front of liquor vends across Noida and Ghaziabad. And officials claim they are not even aware of this form of child labour.

These boys and girls slog for over 10 hours a day—buying liquor bottles and namkeen for customers waiting in cars. Many of them start drinking at an early age, from the alcohol left in the bottles.

By Lalit Kumar/TNN

Ghaziabad: A swig is drowning their childhood. Street children, some as young as five years old, can be seen working as “bartenders” in front of liquor vends across Noida and Ghaziabad. And officials claim they are not even aware of this form of child labour.

These boys and girls slog for over 10 hours a day—buying liquor bottles and namkeen for customers waiting in cars. Many of them start drinking at an early age, from the alcohol left in the bottles.

By Lalit Kumar/TNN

Ghaziabad: A swig is drowning their childhood. Street children, some as young as five years old, can be seen working as “bartenders” in front of liquor vends across Noida and Ghaziabad. And officials claim they are not even aware of this form of child labour.

These boys and girls slog for over 10 hours a day—buying liquor bottles and namkeen for customers waiting in cars. Many of them start drinking at an early age, from the alcohol left in the bottles.

By Lalit Kumar/TNN

Ghaziabad: A swig is drowning their childhood. Street children, some as young as five years old, can be seen working as “bartenders” in front of liquor vends across Noida and Ghaziabad. And officials claim they are not even aware of this form of child labour.

These boys and girls slog for over 10 hours a day—buying liquor bottles and namkeen for customers waiting in cars. Many of them start drinking at an early age, from the alcohol left in the bottles.

By Lalit Kumar/TNN

Ghaziabad: A swig is drowning their childhood. Street children, some as young as five years old, can be seen working as “bartenders” in front of liquor vends across Noida and Ghaziabad. And officials claim they are not even aware of this form of child labour.

These boys and girls slog for over 10 hours a day—buying liquor bottles and namkeen for customers waiting in cars. Many of them start drinking at an early age, from the alcohol left in the bottles.
Childhood slips on a tightrope here

These Children Perform On Roads For A Living

By Neha/TNN

New Delhi: She is Jugnu. And like her namesake, this five-year-old's life also revolves around flashing lights, at the traffic signal. Born into a family of acrobats, she performs not on stage or in a stadium, but on dusty city roads. Jugnu is not the only one. There are several children like her who perform along the under-construction stretch of Metro on Barakhamba Road, making the best of traffic which stops by. As the signal turns red, Jugnu starts playing the dholak and moves her head in circles so that the tail attached to her cap whirls. Her three-year-old sibling, moves on the beats, sliding his tiny body through iron rings. Motive, to earn a livelihood.

On job since 8 in the morning till around 7 in the evening, childhood or playtime just means more performances for them.

"I come with my mother in the bus. When I feel hungry, I perform more tricks to forget hunger. And when I am thirsty, I ask the bus drivers for water," said Jugnu with a smile on her face painted red to entertain motorists.

"I learnt it from my brother. Mere papa bhi rassi ka khel dikhate hain (my father shows the rope trick too)," said three-year-old Johni who has six sisters and two brothers.

"I do not go to school, but can read the number of the bus I have to take to come here, and know how to count money. Sometimes, we earn as much as Rs 300, sometimes nothing. Once in a while, gore leg (foreigners) even give us Rs 100," said seven-year-old Karan, who lives in the slums of Nangla Machi. "We all belong to the same family," he added. His mother could be seen at a distance, playing the dholak for her other kids.

"We came from Chhattisgarh to earn money. These kids are our only source of income. Even if we make them study, we can't pay the bribe to get them jobs. And even at a job, they earn the same amount," reasoned Johni's mother Savita.

Wearing clothes soiled by performance on bare roads, Johni still smiles. She has not seen the world beyond her family and acrobatics, and has no dreams to move out of this. "I don't want to go to school. Mujhe khel hi karna hai (I only want to perform)." For kids like her, childhood begins and ends with drum beats and rope tricks. And they don't expect more than Rs 40 for a day's performance.
Hope floats for abandoned children
But Official Apathy Stands In Way Of Family Reunion

By Anuradha Mukherjee/TNN

New Delhi: First the good news: Of the 2,000-odd abandoned children taking shelter in homes being run by the Delhi government, about 300 kids have some chance of being re-united with their families. But the bad news is that the official machinery has not been too efficient about doing its primary job — restoration of children. Ensuring the protection of these children is the other part of their mandate.

Professionals working in the field for abandoned kids say about 283 children are staying on in Delhi government homes despite the department of social welfare admitting that these kids can be sent back home. "We had been informed that the social welfare department has enough information to restore 283 children to their families. But things have not exactly been moving too fast. It was only recently that the department has shown interest in addressing this issue," said Raj Mangal Prasad of Association for Development, an NGO working with abandoned or neglected children.

The social welfare department, on the other hand, cites problems like lack of manpower and hurdles in liaising with other departments involved in the process of restoring children to their families. Social welfare director Jitendra Narain said the department plans to rope in NGOs to assist it in sending these children home. "As a priority, we are looking at restoring children from Nepal and Bangladesh. Intra-country cases will be taken up later," said Narain. The Juvenile Justice Board has reportedly asked the department to expedite the restoration of children from neighbouring countries.

While the authorities may have finally pulled up their socks, others say it is too little too late. Officials say the problem was a legacy that will take time to solve. "Shortage of staff is a major problem. There are 200 vacancies in the department. You may have information, and funds for restoring a child. But if you do not have manpower, how will you send the child back home?" asked a social welfare department official.