FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

The following are the information about the Focus Group Discussion held at sixteen blocks / divisions relating to “Out of School Children” in Tiruchirappalli.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION – 1

Number of Participants : 12
Place : Lalgudi Panchayat Union (PU)

1. Socio-demographic particulars of Focus Group Members (Lalgudi)

The focus group covers 5 male and 7 female members. The age of the members were distributed between 22 and 58 years. Majority of the members were residing in the same panchayat union but from different habitations. They were in that locality for more than 2 years. Among the members, two parents were illiterate and others were educated. Members were a mix of lower class, middle class and upper middle class group.

2. Socio-demographic and economic profile of “Children Out Of School” (Lalgudi)

Common view of the members was that there were more than 20 children below the age of 14 years found to be out of school in the entire block. Boys and girls were more or less equally distributed across the block. Particularly boys were dropped out for earnings in automobile workshops, agriculture field, etc. and girls were engaged in taking care of their sibling. Mostly, there were more than 3 children in a family in rural areas. Compared to the status of last three years there was improvement in elementary enrolment and reduction in never enrolled category. The families of out of school children were almost surviving with poor monthly income ranging from Rs. 500 and 4000.
3. Various Factors contributing to “Children remaining Out of School” (Lalgudi)

Members opined that the children, who were studying in government school, were found to be slow learners compared to children studying in private. Children who were residing in remote villages had to walk about 1 to 2 km to reach the school in the absence of bus facility, which were not frequently available. The girl children, who were scared to walk alone, used to walk as a group of 3 to 4 children to attend the school, which makes them to drop out of school very soon they attain puberty. Children with disability had not even enrolled in any schools due to lack of facilities and rehabilitation services in their area. Though few of the out of school children were with health problems they were interested to study. Majority of the members stated that the out of school children had fear for exams. They were found to have no recognition among their peer group and they felt ashamed when their teacher beat them or scolded them in front of others. As the parents were uneducated, the proper care to the children is lacking in general. The other factors responsible for the children being out of school were migration of parents, parent’s illness and drug addiction, extreme poverty, difficult in reading English languages, etc. These factors gradually made the children not to have interest in education and in the long run they could not be forced to attend school.

4. Implications of “Children Not Going to School” for the Children and their Family (Lalgudi)

The fathers, who are addicted to alcohol, remained idle without work, used to force their children to go for work and earn for their daily life. The children with low level qualification after attaining the age of 14 years were not willing to study with the lower class students. Mothers used to go for work and they don’t find time to monitor their children’s schooling. In the beginning, these children were simply started wandering with other dropout children and at a later stage, they went for work. Both the mother and father failed to protect their children. As a result, there is lack of motivation for the children to continue schooling and they gradually left themselves out from the school and other health programmes available for them. On the other hand, the parents were more dependent on the government programmes to look after the welfare of their family.
5. Situation of Children Out of School and their Parents’ Perception about their status (Lalgudi)

Majority of the children were found working in brick kilns, hotels, grocery and garment shops. These children earn wage between 20 and 50 rupees per day and they give their earnings to parents. Members witnessed that the local employers availed the human power of young children and exploited and abused them to the maximum. The members’ perception was that children, who were not studying well, were gradually dropped out from school, as there was lack of supervision at home. These children, who were out of school, were easily exposed to bad behaviours. Parents were ignorant about the rights of the children and also were unskilled to look after their children’s development as well as to sort out their school difficulties. Negative attitude towards education is found among parents and exercised on children. The majority of the members stated that the parents were very keen enough to preserve the lands, which they own but they don’t have good opinion about their child’s learning. They feel that education is a long term process to settle in life and employment opportunities are too little.

6. Feedback on Government Programme and its benefits for “Out of School Children” and their Families (Lalgudi)

Members viewed that, though major government programmes were available for the poor families in their block, it has not reached the majority of the families of children out of school practically. Further, the members reported that the family members of children out of school avail small benefits such as ration card, assistance for flood / accident compensation, assistants for antenatal mothers, government hospital assistance and loan exemption from bank loan, which they have got already from the bank.

7. Perception and Participation of Community relating to Children Out of School (Lalgudi)

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) School teachers, Block Resource Teacher Educators (BRTEs of SSA) and village leaders discussed to meet and advise the parents of out of school children to understand the importance of education and provide help for them. Village Education Committee (VEC) is taking effort but the
outcome is poor. With the help of local non-government organizations, several children were identified and admitted in schools last year. Majority of the parents did not participate to get their effort for their child’s education. Members recorded that the community themselves are responsible for the children to stay out of school and lose their career prosperity.

8. Suggestions to make the Children to attend School and prevent the Children becoming Out of School (Lalgudi)

Members revealed that the community should to be made aware of the child rights, importance of education through awareness generation programmes such as camps, cultural activity, etc. Scholarship amount can be given to all the community students in the entire district. Initiating tuition centres by utilizing the service of educated adults at the village level is needed. The capacity building of parents to mend their children to study through Self Help Group can be introduced. To manage families’ crisis situation, financial assistance, educational assistance, free assistance to be given at school level and monitored. Village leaders, important persons should meet frequently to discuss about the out of school children issue and plan to sort it out. Parents, who are economically rich and stable, need to be punished for not sending their children to school regularly.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION – 2

Number of Participants : 8
Place : Musiri Panchayat Union (PU)

1. Socio-demographic particulars of Focus Group (Musiri)

Gender wise the members of the group constituted 3 males and 5 females. Their age group falls between 25 and 60 years. They were located in the surrounding villages of the same Panchayat union for more than 3 years. All the members were literates in the group. Participants were a combination of both lower class and upper middle class group.
2. Socio-demographic and economic profile of “Children Out of School” (Musiri)

Greater part of the members recorded their response in their area, the rate of children out of school is very low. Most of the members revealed that the boys and girls between 11-14 years dropped out from schools due to family and school reasons. Usually the girl children were forced to look after the small children at home in the absence of their parents. There were 3 to 4 children in a family and prevalence of nuclear family is high. They said that the parents believed that education is more important for boys than girls, but boys were engaged in out-station work in order to support their poor family. In general, the children’s family economic condition seems to be awful.

3. Various Factors contributing to “Children remaining Out of School” (Musiri)

Majority of the members confessed that the children attending private schools were better performing than the children studying in government schools, who were lackadaisical in nature because of poor quality of life. These children, who were out of school, have fear to go by road due to inadequate transport facility. Some children were scared to attend the exams and afraid of the teachers, as they were unable to do the home work at home regularly when they attended the school. Parents were uneducated and they do not watch whether their children were going to school. The other vital factors determining children out of school were found to be mentally retarded, lack of awareness on education, parents migrating for work, broken family and poor income in the family respectively. In addition to that, the parents are unable to give the child what is required or needed from parents and also parents’ don’t have openings to educate their differently challenged children in special schools, as they were ignorant. Most part of the members said that parents’ awareness is a must to reduce the rate of long absenteeism in school. School Management is unsuccessful to address the issues relating to inadequate learning care for each Child, who was slow learner. Parents addicted to drug were found to be the major concern for the children out of school to undertake risky work for wages.
4. Implications of “Children Not Going to School” for the Children and their Family (Musiri)

As the parents were engaged in 100 days work introduced by central government, they were not going for any other seasonal work like agriculture and remained idle for the rest of the other days and at the same time they desire that their children to earn, who have discontinued the work. When the parents (both mother and father) going for work in early morning they were unable to watch whether their children were attending the school regularly or cutting the classes. The children do not have supervision for their development. Their parents were not helping them to exercise their rights. After some time, these out of school children when they cross 13 years they find unhappy to sit and study with young children as per their qualification level. As an impact, these out of school children have no confidence to achieve big things or quality in life in future. Majority of the out of school children’s health and personal hygiene and physical development were affected, as they were not included in the school health programmes and later they become burden for their parents to look after their illness.

5. Situation of Children Out of School and their Parents’ Perception about their status (Musiri)

Members revealed that the children out of school were engaged as construction workers and agricultural workers. Majority of the children earn wages between 50 to 75 rupees per day. Members recorded that children out of school engaged into child labour are poorly paid and work long hours of time than others. Members observed that the children were exploited by local employers. Due to poor supervision of parents in remote rural areas, the children, who were weak in studies, were simply leaving the school and engage themselves in unhealthy activities as perceived by the members. Members reported of that the parents had received supplementary income through their child's work. Some children have faced difficult situation in their life like parents’ death, uncared guardian, etc and they left the school and shifted to some other places. The absence of basic skills among parents resulted in training their children to lead a poor life.
6. Feedback on Government Programme and its benefits for “Out of School Children” and their Families (Musiri)

Members declared that the benefits of the major programmes of the government were not practically to the reach of the downtrodden families of out of school. The members reported that family members of children out of school availed very less benefits but the other parents are getting the benefits like assistance from Tamilnadu Adhi Dravidar Housing and Development Corporation Limited, Group house scheme, Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), etc.

7. Perception and Participation of Community relating to Children Out of School (Musiri)

In Block Resource centre of SSA, they were spending more money for school development and there was close monitoring in the village to indentify and mainstream the out of school children. Members of Musiri block recorded that in one or two villages, there was remarkable reduction in out of school children prevalence due to continuous monitoring of school authorities and community. Awareness done in Grama Shaba Meeting (village administration meeting) and Village Education Committee meeting about preventing children engaged in work, who were below 14 years. Village leader told that they along with the SSA teacher and the BRTE, were advising the parents of the out of school children about the importance of schooling, and the assistance they could receive from them.

8. Suggestions to make the Children to attend School and prevent the Children becoming Out of School (Musiri)

Members revealed that the local community leaders should create employment opportunities with the help of government assistance. Government may give the aid to the schools or village education committee to purchase the uniform in a good quality. Local administration should give continuous cooperation for school authorities to conduct awareness programmes for parents, motivate children for vocational education and monitor all the disadvantaged children in the schools through government welfare measures.
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION – 3

Number of Participants : 11
Place : Thathaingarpet (T. Pet) Panchayat Union (PU)

1. Socio-demographic particulars of Focus Group (T. Pet)

The age groups of members were distributed between 29 and 61 years. Gender wise the members of the group constituted 7 males and 4 females. Majority of the members were residing in same locality for more than 2 to 20 years. Majority of the members are literate except their parents, whose education qualification is 2nd standard but unable to read or write. Members were one Head Master, one Teacher, one Block Resource Teacher Educator, one Teacher from Special Schools for rescued Child labourers, one Field Officer from National Child Labour Rehabilitation Project Office, one former Municipal Secretary, one Panchayat Chairman, one Representative from NGO, one Representative from Parent-Teacher Association and two parents of Children out of school. It was observed that all the members were the collection of lower to upper middle income group.

2. Socio-demographic and economic profile of “Children Out of School” (T. Pet)

Majority of the members stated that though there was gradual decrease in the rate of children out of school, still some 30 to 40 children were out of school at block level particularly in remote areas and this varied from one village to another. Members substantiated, that the out of school children, who have crossed the age of 11 years, were not attending school regularly school due to family situation. Subsequently the boys were going for work to get daily wages locally and girls were engaged in domestic work for take-home pay. Some girls were tightly kept on doing the household chores in their own house even to watch the baby, who might be their sibling. Members were mentioning that they have seen that in poor households there were more than 3 children due to want of boy child the parents were keep on give birth. The poor income level of the parents of out of school children was very common at the entire Panchayat Union.
3. Various Factors contributing to “Children remaining Out of School” (T. Pet)

Majority of the members have perceived that the children studying in private schools are gifted, as their parents were affordable to educate them in English medium school but the children studying in government schools were unable to study even Tamil language, due to poor motivation of their parent. The parents felt that the education for their children were out of their means. Even if the children were willing to study, the long hours of travel and sometimes going by road makes the children less interested to study. While attending the schools, the children have faced the psychological problems like neglected by teachers or peers, as they performed poor in exams and these children automatically pulled out from schools. Majority of the members felt that parents need to be responsible and caring for their children to continue schooling. Parents were not in good status, separated, having too many children, leaving the children at home and going for work, very low income and poverty in the out of school children’s family, lack of love and care to these children, ignorance of disadvantage community, adamant and aggressive attitude of the children to discontinue schooling, children’s negative response to attend school, unmanageable school system failed to concentrate on out of school children, parents’ negative behaviour and bad habits were highly prejudiced the children to be away from school for long time. Children with chronic ill health and severe disability seemed to be dropped out and had not enrolled in schools due to inadequate special school facilities in their village. Children out of school in Thathiangarpet block were found to be mentally retarded hence they are not enrolled in regular schools. Due to absence of counseling facilities at school the teacher was unable to deal with children’s problem. In few schools at Thathaigarpet block, children parliament was functioning with 5 representatives from five classes, who were well performing students, fixed with the responsibility to meet the out of school children and make them to rejoin the mainstream of education.

4. Implications of “Children Not Going to School” for the Children and their Family (T. Pet)

Majority of the members confirmed as parents going to job in early morning, they don’t see that children have to go to school and their children usually cut the
class with the non-school going children either to play or work. The children after completing 4th standard, who have been out of school for more than 2 years, have the shyness to continue education with small children at school. The children seem to be wandering without any goal and not obeying or respecting the parents in later period. Parents felt bad about the children’s poor status but they were not having the capacity to protect their children with basic needs. The exposure of the children to the work has made them to suffer with unhealthy living condition. Majority of the children out of school were malnourished. On the other hand, as these children were not covered in welfare programmes offered in schools, the attention of parents diverted towards their illness instead of going to work to run the family, which have resulted them to face financial crisis.

5. Situation of Children Out of School and their Parents’ Perception about their status (T. Pet)

Members recorded that though the rate of child labour was reduced to an extent, majority of the children, who were out of school were engaged in child labour practices with poor wages (Rs.10 to 75 rupees per day) and had to work for long hours (more than 10 hours per day) than adults. Majority of the children, who were out of school were engaged in unskilled labour like beedi rolling, preparing match box, working in brick kilns / hotels / grocery shops, goat rearing, etc. Some children are wandering or going for fishing and girl children are engaged in household work in their own house. Beggary among children was prominent in Thathaingarpet block. Majority of children out of school were malnourished and exposed to infectious diseases. Child marriages have been controlled to a great extent. But, parents engaging their children in household works, goat rearing, mat weaving, work at company / shops at local level, etc. and they think that they can gain more money if their children also involved in assisting them in work. Gradually, the children show their interest to work when they start to see money in hand and also they support their parents who have very low earnings. Once they engage in work they start to adapt bad habits like cigarette smoking, taking alcohol, watching adult movies, etc. Parents have least knowledge about child rearing and the basic rights of the child. In some families, the children were found to be worried due to loss of either father or mother, poor care of parents, parents’ illness, etc. and they were not covered under welfare
activities of the government. Owing to poor care of parents, the children’s survival at school and community was pitiable. The overall opinion of the members for the disgraceful situation of children out of school and their parents was poor skill of parents to support their children.

6. Feedback on Government Programme and its benefits for “Out of School Children” and their Families (T. Pet)

The members reported that the efforts were taken to cover the children out of school under bridge course (preparing the students to join mainstream education from temporary school to regular school) arranged by National Child Labour Projects (NCLP) and Sarva Shakshi Abiyan (SSA) Programmes. The children were provided with eggs, bus pass, scholarship, note books, etc available for the disadvantaged children. Adhi dravida welfare department has provided stipend for all girl children in elementary school during 2005, but now the stipend is given to only limited children category in some schools. But the widespread opinion of the members was the poor families of out of school were unable to get the benefits from government schemes such as land for housing, construction of houses and improvement of business with the support of loans offered by nationalized banks, etc. Normally the poor families attach themselves to some local self-help group activities run by NGOs.

7. Perception and Participation of Community relating to Children Out of School (T. Pet)

The Block Resource Teacher Educators have conducted bridge courses to encourage the dropouts to join the mainstream school. The teaching assistants under SSA scheme and teachers of NCLP Special Schools have taken much pain to advise the poor parents of out of school children and also the students, who tend to drop out of school to attend the school continuously. The regular school teachers expressed that they have gone for home visits to all the children’s house to educate them about the importance of education. The teachers said that they don’t have idea to provide handhold support for the families of out of school children to get loans from government for their family welfare. As of now many children at primary level are promoted to higher standards so children are gradually not showing interest in education. However efforts were taken to all children were now enrolled in schools in
our area. Parents – Teachers Association (PTA) meeting in schools were conducted to improve the schooling, which have to be reinforced in all places.

8. Suggestions to make the Children to attend School and prevent the Children becoming Out of School (T. Pet)

Members revealed that everyone in the society should coordinate as a team for the poor children’s education in their community. Continuous awareness should be created among the general public and students. Counseling to parents on child rearing, child rights and education should be done. The Government should take new initiatives to increase more teachers. Adequate assistance for the education and rehabilitation of differently abled children in villages should be given. The government’s assistance for families should be monitored at the school itself by opening a separate wing under various welfare departments. Government should increase the benefits for continuous and permanent income for parents, which is the need of the hour to save the children from risk and dangerous life. Steps need to be taken for admitting the children who were physically challenged to continue their education in integrated schools. To bring changes in the education system including all private school, which may help students studying in government school not to discontinue the school and join in private school.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION – 4

Number of Participants : 9
Place : Thuraiyur Panchayat Union (PU)

1. Socio-demographic particulars of Focus Group (Thuraiyur)

The gender category of focus group covers 4 male and 5 female members. Their age was distributed between 25 and 57 years. Majority of the members were residing in the same panchayat union but from various rural communities. They revealed that they were in that locality for more than 3 years. Majority of the members were literate and one parent was an illiterate member. Generally, as the group was a diversified one, the members’ occupation differ from one another like
Teachers, Head Master, Field Officers, Panchayat Chairman, Representatives from NGO and Parent-Teacher Association and poor parents of out of school Children. Thus, income status of the members was a mix up of lower class, middle class and upper middle class group.

2. Socio-demographic and economic profile of “Children Out of School” (Thuraiyur)

Widespread outlook of the members was that there were around 30 to 70 children below the age of 14 years were out of school across the Panchayat Union. Both boys and girls were more or less equally distributed among the out of school category. Boys were dropped out for earnings in automobile work shop, which were more in that locality and some of them migrate to nearby district such as Namakkal district, where the motor vehicle weld shops were highly prevalent and they easily absorb child labourers. Girls were engaged in taking care of their sibling. Mostly there were 3 to 4 children in a nuclear family in rural areas. Tribal people were most prevalent in this Panchayat union. The family units of out of school children approximately exist with low level income, which varies from Rs. 500 to 5000 per month based on the number of family members involved in work.

3. Various Factors contributing to “Children remaining Out of School” (Thuraiyur)

Majority of the members felt that the children, who were dropped out from government school have showed only moderate results in exams while the children dropped out from private school excelled, but not continuing education due to instability and crisis in their family. Children out of school were dwelling in rural areas and they had to travel about 1 to 2 km to reach the school, which was not comfortable for them. The girl children were dropped out of school immediately after attaining puberty period and they were held up in providing care for their youngest sibling, as their parents were at work. The differently challenged children had not even enrolled in any regular schools due to their prolonged stage of disability. A few children, who were dropped out from school due to ill health, were also willing to study, if they were restored from their illness. There were the children having difficulties in face the exams. Normally they try to avoid going to school, as the
teachers ask questions relating to the subjects. Out of school Children’s parents were mostly illiterate and they show less interest in their children’s education. The other related causes for the children being out of school were migration of parents, parent’s illness and drug addiction, extreme poverty, etc. Further, the functioning of the schools was imperfect, even children did not understand Tamil language, which was one of the subjects but children had the skills of questioning in the class room. For more number of children there are few teachers only. Student – teacher ratio is inappropriate. Poor sanitation and hygiene in the school environment has made the children to be out of school. This has also reflected in the decline in the enrollment rate of the school in Thuraiyur block. Teachers were not available in schools located in remote village areas to cover the tribal children who were out of school. Members also stated that when there is no proper building, toilet facility, mats or chair in the school how the parents will send their children to the school.

4. Implications of “Children Not Going to School” for the Children and their Family (Thuraiyur)

Parents with laziness attitude remained idle without work and they force their children to go for work and earn for the family survival. Out of school children, having minimum primary level education were unwilling to admit themselves in the eligible class due to age factor and shyness to study with the small children. In remote villages, the ignorant father and mother don’t show much interest in monitoring the children’s schooling except their earnings from their work. Initially the children used to engage in some petty works as a part time and then they shift full time work by discontinuing the studies permanently. Parents of the children out of school did not care about the rights of the children. In the long run children were excluded from getting the benefits of health welfare measures at school level and consequently the parents suffer to take care of the children with poor health and seek for others help.

5. Situation of Children Out of School and their Parents’ Perception about their status (Thuraiyur)

Members stated that it was evident in their Panchayat Union that young children were working in automobile shops, brick kilns, hotels / grocery shops, etc.
At the age of 11 years, children earn between 30 and 60 rupees per day and they spend on their own for eatables and also give the balance money to their parents. The employers were keen enough to catch the children for cheap labour. According to the perception of members, the children, who were below average in studies were pulled out as there was lack of supervision at school as well as the parents do not watch the status of children at school. These children, who were out of school, were likely to adapt adult behaviours in working environment. Unskilled parents were unable to monitor their children’s growth. Members recorded that the Government was responsible for the children to stay out of school and lose their career prospects because of loopholes in existing welfare measures and thereby prevented the children from studying and attaining personal development.

6. Feedback on Government Programme and its benefits for “Out of School Children” and their Families (Thuraiyur)

Focus group members stated that very few selected families of children out of school were covered under major government schemes available for the welfare of disadvantaged group. The members also expressed that in general all the families of out of school children avail benefits such as ration card, assistance for flood / accident compensation, assistance for antenatal mothers, government hospital assistance, etc.

7. Perception and Participation of Community relating to Children Out of School (Thuraiyur)

School Teachers have been ensuring that the parents of out of school children were sensitized on importance of education. But at the same time they were unable to bring coordination among the community members to support the school to work for prevention of children being out of school. The efforts of Village Level Education Committee (VEC) seem to be ineffective. With the help of local non-government organization, few unreachable children were canvassed and admitted in schools last year in tribal areas. Parents show less involvement in their effort to their child’s education. Community themselves were responsible for the children to stay out of school and misplace their better life.
8. Suggestions to make the Children to attend School and prevent the Children becoming Out of School (Thuraiyur)

Community needs to be made aware of the child rights, importance of education through awareness generation programmes. The welfare programmes for the families of out of school children can be supervised at school level in order to cover all the real poorest parents at the field level as well as tribal people, who were more prevalent in that union. The teachers pointed out that the students like schools if it is a good place for playing and the teachers narrate stories, songs, etc. Basic facilities and good ambiance should be available in schools. Adequate transport from their home to school and back to homes is needed. This can be monitored by the village level leaders at the community. In Thuraiyur block, there are well to do business people, they can come forward to discuss the issues with local leaders and teachers and to sort out the issue for reducing the rate of children becoming out of school as well as on its prevention aspects.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION – 5

Number of Participants : 12
Place : Manachanalloor Panchayat Union (PU)

1. Socio-demographic particulars of Focus Group (Manachanalloor)

The members of the group comprised of 7 male and 5 female members. Their age group falls between 30 and 62 years. They were residing in various places of Manachanalloor Panchayat union for more than 4 years. Among the members, twelve were well educated and the remaining two parents were uneducated and unskilled. The members were a mixture of all level of income group from lower to upper middle income group.

2. Socio-demographic and economic profile of “Children Out of School” (Manachanalloor)

Most of the members reported that in their surrounding places, the rate of children out of school is slowly decreasing for the past 10 years. Members revealed
that the boys and girls between 9 and 14 years of age remained out of schools, as they were assisting the parents in their traditional work. Some girl children were forced to look after the small siblings when their parents were not available. The family size was between 4 and 6 members and there were more than 2 children in a family. They believed that the education is more important for boys than girls, but both boys and girls were engaged in work for wages. Majority of the parents of out of school children were struggling for better living standards. The monthly income of the family of out of school children falls between Rs.500 and Rs. 5000. This unsteady monthly income of the family depends on either the earnings of father or mother or both or guardian, who works on daily basis.

3. Various Factors contributing to “Children remaining Out of School” (Manachanalloor)

The members have formed a general opinion that though the education system have been improved in government sector, the parents, irrespective of being poor or wealthy were fond of the English medium and private schools education for their children. These children, who were out of school, find it difficult in getting buses which were not frequent in remote places. Some of these children experienced failures in exams and they also fear the teachers who were strict. The other factors for children out of school were mental retardation, poor awareness on education, parents’ migration, disorganized family and families without income. Further, the parents are not capable to give the required support to their child and don’t have the skill to run the family efficiently. The responsibilities of the parents play a vital role in reducing the irregularities and continuous absence of their children at school. School authorities were struggling to provide individual attention to the children out of school. Drug addiction among the fathers was the major issue to push the children out from schools.

4. Implications of “Children Not Going to School” for the Children and their Family (Manachanalloor)

The parents were engaged in 100 days work introduced by central government and they were not going for any other seasonal works and remained idle for the rest of the other days concurrently they expect their children to earn, as they have
discontinued the school. The parents who were doing own business, they expect their children to involve in their work to assist them as family labour to gain money instead of engaging labours from outside. In some families, both the parents were going for work in early morning itself and they were unable to watch whether their children were attending the school regularly or cutting the classes. This makes the children to escape from the supervision of their parents, who were also not concerned about their child’s rights. After some time, these out of school children when they cross 12 years find unhappy to sit and study with young children as per their qualification level. As an impact, these out of school children have no confidence to achieve big things or quality in life in future. Majority of the out of school children’s health and personal hygiene and physical development were affected, as they were not included in the school health programmes. Later they become a burden for their parents to look after their illness because of which their parents’ productivity to earn got disturbed.

5. Situation of Children Out of School and their Parents’ Perception about their status (Manachanalloor)

Members revealed that the children out of school were engaged in artificial gem cutting unit, agriculture field, construction field, flower farms, rice mill, coolie, goat rearing, etc. Majority of the children earn wages between 50 and 75 rupees per day. Members recorded that most of the children out of school engaged as child labour in flower farms during a particular season. Members observed that these children were poorly paid and working for long hours than adults. Due to poor supervision of parents in remote rural areas, the children, who were weak in studies, were simply leaving the school and they engage themselves in unhealthy activities as perceived by the members. Members reported that the parents had received supplementary income through their child's work. Members reported that children were less interested to study and going for fishing when they don’t have works to earn. The ignorant parents do not take much strain for the children to attend school. The children also voluntarily go for work to gain money and often support their families.
6. Feedback on Government Programme and its benefits for “Out of School Children” and their Families (Manachanalloor)

Members declared that the benefits of the major programmes of the government do not practically reach majority of the downtrodden families of out of school children. The members reported that family members of children out of school availed very less benefit but the other parents are getting the benefits like assistance from Tamilnadu Adhi Dravidar Housing and Development Corporation Limited, Group house scheme, Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), etc.

7. Perception and Participation of Community relating to Children Out of School (Manachanalloor)

Members recorded that constant awareness and motivation to be given to parents by the Village Education Committee (VEC) members regularly. Due to the continuous effort of the Block Resource Teacher Educator, Head Masters and teachers of the local schools and contribution of the local donors for the poor children’s education, several difficult children between 6 and 14 years were identified and enrolled in schools to prevent those children becoming never enrolled or dropped out every year in that panchayat union. Local donors were encouraged to supply free note books, uniform, etc.

8. Suggestions to make the Children to attend School and prevent the Children becoming Out of School (Manachanalloor)

Members revealed that various employment opportunity with the help of government assistance as well as business development sector to be offered for poor parents. There should be a continuous cooperation of the local people to the school authorities for conducting awareness programmes, mobilizing and monitoring all the disadvantaged children to attend the schools and get the benefits through government welfare measures. Individual child learning supervision to be done at schools and Individual child monitoring to be done at micro level by the village level leaders at the community
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION – 6

Number of Participants : 8
Place : Marungapuri Panchayat Union (PU)

1. Socio-demographic Particulars of Focus Group (Marungapuri)

There were 8 members and their age group falls between 33 and 58 years. Half of all members were males and half were females. Majority of them were located in same Panchayat Union for more than 5 years. The group is the mixture of literates and illiterates. The illiterates were parents and also the village leader. Other educated members were Head Master, Teachers, Field Officers from National Child Labour Rehabilitation Project Office, Panchayat Chairman, Representatives from NGO and Parent-Teacher Association. Regarding the economic status of the group members, all of them were from lower to upper middle income sections of the society.

2. Socio-demographic and economic profile of “Children Out of School” (Marungapuri)

Most of the members have declared that though there was slight awareness on children’s education in their area, still it was a challenge that they need to prevent the drop out children, who were between 70 and 150 in the block. These children need to be motivated to attend school. Particularly girls who were out of school in village sides were long absentees in the schools. The members believed that the family background of out of school children was liable for all 6 to 14 years age group of children to stay out of school. Members confirmed that the girl children were high in their area and also the female illiteracy exists in all the villages. Usually the boys were going to school till primary level and then they were engaged in work for wages. Girls were also going for agriculture work. Most of the girls considered to be the care taker for siblings on full time basis, as their parents were daily labour. Parents never mind to give birth to more than 4 children even though they don’t have the ability to feed the baby. More or less all the families of out of school children lead a poor quality of life.
3. Various Factors contributing to “Children remaining Out of School” (Marungapuri)

A sizeable part of the members view was that the out of school children find it not easy to study in government school and the private schools were not reachable to them. Marungapuri is a very big Panchayat. The secondary level schools were somewhat distant for the children to travel. So the parents decided that as they cannot send their children for secondary level education to other villages, the present primary level education alone may not be a necessary one for their children. As parents do not encourage their children, the children also lack interest in learning. The emotional aspects like love and care, support for education, etc. were also contributed to pull the children from schools. All the children were invariably having the fear to write exams and answer the teacher for not completing the homework. Parents’ incapability, below standard living, extramarital affairs, more uneducated girl children in one family, considering women’s major role as giving birth, poor income, lack of knowledge about the ill effects of being uneducated, failure to cope up the wavering children, irresponsible attitude, schools’ fewer initiative to bring back the children to school becoming ineffective, etc where the reasons for the children to be out of school besides several welfare programmes. The out of school children have developed bad habits in the work spot. Further, differently abled children, who were in the prolonged stage, were unable to attend the school available in some other villages.

4. Implications Of “Children Not Going to School” for the Children and their Family (Marungapuri)

Most of the members revealed that the parents in their villages leave to work in the morning itself and there was no one to take care of the children to follow up whether they attend the school or not. Children don’t want to continue education if they have left the school in young age. When the children do not even complete primary education, they don’t set any dreams or goals for their development. These children want to enjoy life. The parents also do not have knowledge to guide the children in correct direction. The children were exposed to the unhealthy living condition. As the children were not going to school, they were malnourished due to unhealthy food practice and also they were not covered in welfare programmes.
offered in schools. Moreover, the parents concentrate towards their children’s illness instead of going to work to earn living.

5. Situation of Children Out of School and their Parents’ Perception about their Status (Marungapuri)

The children, who were working, earn between Rs. 10 and 50. Members have noticed that the poor children were working in the local area. These out of school children were not in good health condition and adapted bad habits in young age. These children were engaged in household works, goat rearing, agricultural field, etc. Their parents think that they can earn more money if their children also involved in work. Initially, these children started their work with the parents and then after seeing the money they showed full interest in the work in order to support their family and they did not go to school. Majority of the members’ perception was children, who were not clever become easily dropped out and engaged in unhealthy activities due to inadequate monitoring mechanism by the parents as well as the school at rural areas. This is because of the irresponsibility of the parents in rural areas. These children have adopted bad habits like taking alcohol, watching adult movies, etc. The basic rights of the child were not followed even by the parents due to their ignorance. Some children were worried due to loss of their parents, lack of love for parents, chronically ill parents, etc. and they were also not covered under welfare activities of the government. The parents did not care about their children’s survival, which was pathetic. The members felt that the appalling situation of the children out of school can be changed only with the support of their parents.

6. Feedback on Government Programme and its benefits for “Out of School Children” and their Families (Marungapuri)

The members stated that the government has contributed a lot to cover the children out of school under bridge course (preparing the students to join mainstream education from temporary school to regular school), special schools [by National Child Labour Projects (NCLP)] and Alternative Schools [by Sarva Shikshya Abhiyan (SSA) Programmes]. The children were provided with eggs, scholarship, note books, etc. Stipend for all children in elementary school was only to limited category. Members opined that poor families of out of school were unable to get the benefits
from government schemes such as land for housing, construction of houses and improvement of business with the support of loans offered by nationalized banks, etc. Some of the poor families by themselves have joined the local self-help groups.

7. Perception and Participation of Community relating to Children Out of School (Marungapuri)

The SSA – Education department teachers have motivated the dropouts to join mainstream school through camps and awareness activities. The teacher and the NCLP staff have taken a lot of efforts to sensitize the ignorant parents of out of school children and also advised the children, who were potential drop outs. The primary school teacher expressed that they have gone for home visits to meet the parents of out of school children and have educated them about the children rights. Generally the teachers’ opinion was they don’t have the basic information to guide the out of school children’s parents to get the benefits from government welfare programmes relating to their family welfare. Members felt that many children at primary level were promoted to higher standards and were gradually not showing interest in education. Majority of members stated that imperfect functioning of the Village Education Committee (VEC) was often reported.

8. Suggestions to make the Children to attend School and prevent the Children becoming Out of School (Marungapuri)

Majority of the members revealed that the parents and children as well as the local community have the full responsibilities for the children to continue education. The Government may provide additional teachers to the school so that the children can get individual care for learning. Moreover, all the members have stated that the accountability to be fixed with School Management in order to meet the basic needs of parents, who were below the poverty line and the transparent measuring scale to be applied to track whether the government schemes reach the poor parents in need or not.
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION – 7

Number of Participants : 11
Place : Uppiliapuram Panchayat Union (PU)

1. Socio-demographic particulars of Focus Group (Uppiliapuram)

The gender of focus group covers 5 male and 6 female members. The age groups of members were distributed between 25 and 60 years. Majority of the members were residing in the same panchayat union but from different villages. They were in that locality for more than 1 year. Among the members, two parents and one village leader were illiterate and others were educated. Members were a mix of lower class, middle class and upper middle class group.

2. Socio-demographic and economic profile of “Children Out of School” (Uppiliapuram)

General observation of the members was that there were more than 40 children below the age of 14 years found to be out of school in that Panchayat Union. Both the boys and girls were more or less equally distributed in the out of school category. Mostly the boys were dropped out for earnings and girls were engaged in taking care of their small siblings. There were around 3 to 4 children in a family in remote places. Though there was improvement in the enrolment status of the school there were still children out of school. Their families were leading a poor status of life with meager income.

3. Various Factors contributing to “Children remaining Out of School” (Uppiliapuram)

Majority of the members stated that the children, who studied in government school face difficulties to read compared to the children, who studied in private school. This was because of the poor support of parents to the children, who were studying in government school. Out of school children were residing in very remote villages and they avoid school as they have to travel for long time. Girls usually fear to go to school by road. The differently challenged children, who were in prolonged stage had not even enrolled in any schools due to lack of adequate facilities in that
locality. Children with health problems like to study in school. Fear of exams and teacher was common among the children who were out of school. Most of the parents were illiterate and so there was no proper concern to the children having learning difficulties. The other reasons for the children being out of school were lack of employment opportunity, migration, poverty have been reported by members as factor for children to be out of school. Sibling care has been reported as an issue to prevent child from attending school. Thus, there were multiple factors to make the children not to have interest in education and in the long run they leave the school permanently.

4. Implications of “Children Not Going to School” for the Children and their Family (Uppiliapuram)

Both the parents were going for agriculture work in early morning as daily labour and they don’t mind about the children’s schooling, as they were struggling for day to day survival. Out of school children found difficult to continue their studies after a long gap with the students, who were younger than them. Parents do not generate any of the opportunity for the achievements of their children apart from their household chores. At first, these children were truant and they wander with other dropout children for fishing, etc. Then, they go for work to earn. Their mother and father do not bother for their children’s poor schooling and the children become out of school element and not covered under school health programmes. Their parents become more dependent on the government programmes to look after their family for long term survival.

5. Situation of Children Out of School and their Parents’ Perception about their status (Uppiliapuram)

Most of the children were found working in tea shop, automobile workshop, garment company and agricultural work. Majority of the children earn wage between 10 and 20 rupees per day. Development of unhealthy behavior such as stealing, robbing is reported among the children. Few children work as domestic labours without earning any wages. Members witnessed that local employers even physically abuse them to extract work. All the members’ opined that the children were gradually drop out as there was lack of proper supervision and support at home. These children,
who were out of school, were easily exposed to bad behaviours. The ignorant parents were unknown about the rights of the children as well as their children’s development.

6. Feedback on Government Programme and its benefits for “Out of School Children” and their Families (Uppiliapuram)

Members viewed that majority of the families of children out of school were not covered under major government schemes available for the welfare of disadvantaged group. Majority of the members felt that none of the families of children out of school were benefitted under major government schemes available for the welfare of disadvantaged group. Children received government support only in school and not at times out of school. The members reported that family members of children out of school avail benefits such as old age pension assistance, SHG Loan, widow pension assistant, ration card assistance, assistance for antenatal mothers and housing patta.

7. Perception and Participation of Community relating to Children Out of School (Uppiliapuram)

The village leaders and SSA teachers of local school discussed about meeting the parents of out of school children to make them understand the importance of education. The Village Level Education Committee was taking effort to prevent the children from going out of the school but unable to stop the children discontinuing their education. The teachers and the local non-government organization have taken effort to identify and admit many children in the nearby schools last year. Parents were not involved fully in the efforts being taken by government to provide education to their child’s education. All the members stated that the community and the family are responsible for the children to continue education. Majority of the members stated that the Grievance day meet is not being conducted in all Panchayats, hence it was unable to look into the problems of the out of school children.
8. Suggestions to make the Children to attend School and prevent the Children becoming Out of School (Uppiliapuram)

Majority of the members revealed that the local community people need to be sensitized on continuous basis about the child rights, education, behaviour change communication, etc., which may be inculcated through various awareness generation projects. Teachers require special training to handle the issues of children. School counseling may be introduced to help children to effectively deal with their issues. The government may take the initiative to manage out of school children’s families’ welfare by providing the welfare measures like financial assistance, etc. at school level itself. The village leaders have to supervise the development of each of the out of school children as well as the potential drop out children so as to avoid the children becoming out of school category.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION – 8

Number of Participants : 8
Place : Thottiyam Panchayat Union (PU)

1. Socio-demographic particulars of Focus Group (Thottiyam)

Gender wise the members of the group constituted 3 males and 5 females. Their age group falls between 35 and 58 years. They were located in the surrounding villages of the same Panchayat union for more than 3 years. Majority of the members were literate. Participants were a combination of both lower class and upper middle class group.

2. Socio-demographic and economic profile of “Children Out of School” (Thottiyam)

Majority of the members recorded their response that in their area, there were more than 10 children out of school. Most of the members revealed that the boys and girls between 11 and 14 years of age remained dropped out from schools due to family circumstances. More often the girl children were forced to look after the small children in the absence of their parents. There were 3 to 4 children in a family and
prevalence of nuclear family is high. They said that the parents believe that education is more important for boys than girls, but boys were engaged in out-station work in order to support their poor family. In general, the children’s family economic condition seems to be bad.

3. Various Factors contributing to “Children remaining Out of School” (Thottiyam)

Majority of the members recorded their response to factors determining children out of school as having too many children, inadequate Income, Parents carelessness, family circumstances, poverty, search for job, parents’ illiteracy, ignorance and incapability to educate children. Parents are forced to send the children to work due to poverty and they were working in hotel, weaving, dying workshop, matchbox factory, catering contractor, agricultural fields and willing to go to any place for work. The other factors such as lack of awareness, number of members in the family being high, many students’ understanding capacity is low, children were not interested in studies, no income to buy books, uniform, etc. Parents were worried about the children not obeying or responding to their advice. Examination was a burden for these children. Majority of members opined that the children studying in private schools were talented but children studying in government schools were careless and not interested in their studies. Majority of the members viewed that the out of school children have fear to go by road to school in the absence of a transport facility. Some children fear to attend the exams and afraid of the teachers, as they were unable to do the home work at home regularly when they attended the school. School Management is unsuccessful to address the issues relating to inadequate learning care for each individual. Parents addicted to drug were found to be the major concern for the children out of school to undertake risky work for wages.

4. Implications of “Children Not Going to School” for the Children and their Family (Thottiyam)

As the working opportunity for the parents were limited inside their villages, they were migrating for work. Parents were remaining idle for many days and they hardly searched for work, as their children were going out to earn and support the family. Children were not monitored properly by the parents. Their parents were not
helping them to exercise their rights. After some time, these out of school children when they cross 12 years they find unhappy to sit and study with young children as per their qualification level. As an impact, these out of school children have no confidence to achieve big things or quality in life in future. Majority of the out of school children’s health and personal hygiene and physical development were affected, as they were not included in the school health programmes and later they become burden for their parents to look after their illness.

5. Situation of Children Out of School and their Parents’ Perception about Their status (Thottiyam)

Majority of the children are found working in construction unit and agriculture field, mat weaving unit, hotels / grocery, etc. Majority of the children earn between Rs. 25 and 100 per day and they were spending for sweets, eatables and cinema. Some children were giving the amount for family’s daily expenditure. They were working for low wages in a poor working environment. Children when they stop going to work they hesitate to continue education again. These out of school children when they were not going to work, they were engaged in fishing, goat rearing, cinema, gambling, having quarrels in villages, playing, following parents’ instruction and work and taking care of the sibling and assisting to manage the home, cooking and doing all the household work. During free time the boys were wandering with other bad friends and the girl children engaged in tailoring and going to stationary shop, etc., The adamant and aggressive attitude of the children made to discontinue schooling, children have a lot of households work and worries. Other worries faced by the children were parents’ death, uncared guardian, etc and they left the school and shifted to some other places.

6. Feedback on Government Programme and its benefits for “Out of School Children” and their Families (Thottiyam)

Under Sarva Shkshi Abiyan scheme the children out of school were motivated to join education in regular school, where activity based learning methodology is adopted. The parents of out of children were provided with loans for goat rearing business, ration card benefits and a very few have received free house benefits under housing scheme, roof house, old age pension, etc. The children have received stipend
from National Children Labour Project, scholarship from backward caste community programs, etc. Majority of the parents have not approached government offices for help as they don’t have proper awareness about government schemes. Children who studied in National Child Labour Project Special School during previous years were now continuing education in regular school and getting good marks. Members declared that the benefits of the major programmes of the government were not practical to the reach of downtrodden families of out of school children. The members reported that family members of children out of school availed very less benefits but the other parents are getting the benefits like assistance from Tamilnadu Adhi Dravidar Housing and Development Corporation Limited, Group house scheme, Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), etc.

7. Perception and Participation of Community relating to Children Out of School (Thottiyam)

The SSA school and NCLP special school have taken efforts to make the children to join regular school. They have motivated out of school children to join NCLP special school where they get Rs.100 per month as stipend and after completing 1 year education in special school they join mainstream education. The teachers with the help of NGOs have taken effort to counsel the parents and clarified the educational assistance provided for the children. Members recorded that the community themselves are not aware about child rights and importance of education. Parents should be motivated in village level education committee meeting regularly. The Block Resource Teacher Educator, Head Masters of the schools, teachers and donors have taken effort to identify children, who were deprived of education between 9 and 14 years and mainstreamed them in regular school. Awareness created among the public to prevent the children becoming never enrolled in that area, as for the last few years, students enrolment in Government schools was found to be decreasing in Thotiam block.

8. Suggestions to make the Children to attend School and prevent the Children becoming Out of School (Thottiyam)

Members revealed that the community needs to be made aware of the child rights, importance of education through awareness generation programmes such as
camps, cultural activity. Vocational training for out of school children to be organized through local village administration and the village leader has to monitor the reach of government programmes to all the disadvantaged children through the local schools. The Strict enforcement of compulsory education and providing benefits for the families who were sending their children must be supervised properly. The parents who were taking effort to send the children continuously to schools should be appreciated. Firstly, the parents should be educated and given proper awareness. Teachers association can plan activities through government schemes for effective implementation. Parents should educate the child not to discontinue education, must approach the teachers without hesitation and gain knowledge to develop the children.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION – 9

Number of Participants : 11
Place : Manikandam Panchayat Union (PU)

1. Socio-demographic particulars of Focus Group (Manikandam)

   The age groups of members were distributed between 32 and 54 years. Gender wise the members of the group constituted 7 males and 4 females. Majority of the members were residing in the same locality for more than 2 years. Majority of the members were literate except the parents, whose education qualification is 3rd standard but unable to read or write. Members were one Head Master, one Teacher, one Block Resource Teacher Educator, one Teacher from Special Schools for rescued Child labourers, one Field Officer from National Child Labour Rehabilitation Project Office, one Panchayat Chairman, two Representative from NGO, one Representative from Parent-Teacher Association and two parents of Children out of school. It was observed that all the members were from the collection of lower to upper middle income group people.

2. Socio-demographic and economic profile of “Children Out of School” (Manikandam)

   Predominant part of the members stated that though there was slow decrease in the rate of children out of school, still some 20 to 100 children were out of school
at block level particularly in rural areas and this varied from one village to another. Members confirmed that the out of school children, who have crossed the age of 11 years, were not attending school regularly due to their poor family situation. Consequently the boys were going for work to get daily wages locally and girls were engaged in domestic work for take-home pay. Some girls were engaged in household chores in their own house even to supervise the babies, as their parents were unable to see their siblings due to daily labour. Most of the members revealed that in poor households there were around 3 to 4 children due to fond of getting male baby. Thus the parents keep on giving birth to female babies until they get a male baby. The poor income level of the parents of out of school children was very common at the entire Panchayat Union.

3. Various Factors contributing to “Children remaining Out of School” (Manikandam)

The largest part of the members have perceived that the children studying in government schools were unable to study even Tamil language, due to poor motivation of their parents, also the parents felt that the education for their children were out of their means. Children avoid going to school if it is not close to their home. Children like to play in schools, but they were not allowed to play, as the school situated on road side. Some schools were very strict in controlling the students shouting at play. Out of school children have faced the psychological problems such as parents negligence, neglected by teachers or peers, as they performed poor in exams and these children automatically pulled out from schools. There were children, who got pulled out from school if they were hurt by the teachers, who used to scold them in front of other students. Some children leave the school due to home work load. Parents do not purchase and give study material, negligent attitude of parents, poor income in family, parents separation, having too many children, leaving the children at home and going for work, deprivation of love and care to these children, ignorance of disadvantage community, adamant attitude of the children to discontinue schooling, teachers’ ill-treatment, teachers’ partiality toward students, bad condition of school building, teachers not coming to school regularly, students were forced to write exams frequently and not allowed to play, other students teasing the deprived children comparing with media people, fear of teacher, children’s poor
health, etc. were the reasons responsible for the children to be away from school for a long time. The facilities available for the chronically ill children were not sufficient in rural areas and the parents hesitate to send their children to outside places for providing the rehabilitation services for their children.

4. Implications of “Children Not Going to School” for the Children and their Family (Manikandam)

Most of the members confirmed that as parents going to job in early morning, they don’t see that children to go to school and their children usually cut the class with the non-school going children either to play or work. The children, who were out of school for more than 2 years without having touch in education, have the shyness to continue education with small children at school. The children out of school develop the inferiority complex. Most of the children seem to be wandering without any goal and not obeying or respecting the parents in later period. Though the parents realize the bad behaviour of their children they were not having the capacity to protect them with basic needs. The children were exposed to unhealthy living condition. Majority of the children out school were suffering due to ill health and malnourishment and as these children were not covered in welfare programmes offered in schools, the attention of parents diverted towards their illness. Therefore, the parents were held up in settling the health problem of their children instead of going to work to run the family, which have resulted them to face financial crisis.

5. Situation of Children Out of School and their Parents’ Perception about their status (Manikandam)

Majority of the children, who were out of school were engaged in work and poorly paid between Rs. 10 and Rs. 60 for long hours of work. If the parents have got any loan, then the children were sent to work for wages to set right the interest and loan. Members have seen the young children spending their time in the work spots to receive a meager pay from the local employers. Parents engaged their children in agriculture field, goat rearing, automobile shops, hotels, etc. and they thought that they can gain more money if their children also involved in assisting them in work. The children show their interest to work when they start to see money. Members reported of that the parents had received supplementary income through their child's
work. Members of Manikandam block reported that children were less interested to study and going for fishing and other works to earn money in order to meet their own expenses. Poor performed children were out of school due to the deprivation of proper support from parents in rural areas. Once they engage in work they started to adapt bad habits like cigarette smoking, taking alcohol, watching adult movies, etc. The children out of school have frequent fights and quarrel with local dropped out students and they also have stealing behaviour. Parents were unaware about child rearing and the basic rights of the child. In some families, the children were found to be worried due to loss of either father or mother, poor care of parents, parents’ illness, etc. and they were not covered under welfare activities of the government. The parents were not cared about the children’s survival at school and community. Members opined that the disgraceful situation of children out of school was due to their parents poor skill to support their children and the school management not offering child friendly education.

6. Feedback on Government Programme and its benefits for “Out of School Children” and their Families (Manikandam)

Majority of the members stated that the efforts were taken to cover the children out of school under bridge course (preparing the students to join mainstream education from temporary school to regular school) arranged by National Child Labour Projects (NCLP) and Sarva Shakshi Abiyan (SSA) Programmes. The children were provided with eggs every week, bus pass, scholarship, note books, etc available for the disadvantaged children. But the common opinion of the members was the poor families of out of school children were unable to get the benefits from government schemes such as land for housing, construction of houses and improvement of business with the support of loans offered by nationalized banks, etc. Normally in the poor families they engage themselves in some local self-help group activities run by NGOs. Conducting awareness programmes to send the children to school, having close interaction, and counseling with father mother and motivated them to send their child to school. Giving punishment if not obeying and overburden the children, not fulfilling their needs including compulsory education.
7. Perception and Participation of Community relating to Children Out of School (Manikandam)

The Block Resource Teacher Educators have conducted bridge courses to encourage the dropouts to join mainstream school. The teaching assistants under SSA scheme and teachers of NCLP Special Schools have taken much pain to advise the poor parents of out of school children and also the students, who tend to drop out of school to attend the school continuously. The regular school teachers expressed that they visited all the children’s house to educate them about the importance of education. They also added that the availability of counselors and family welfare officers at field level will help the poor parents to get the help immediately from government (to provide handhold support). As of now many children at primary level are promoted to higher standards so children are gradually not showing interest in education. However efforts were taken to enroll all children in schools in the village.

8. Suggestions to make the Children to attend School and prevent the Children becoming Out of School (Manikandam)

Members revealed that everyone in the society should coordinate as a team for the poor children’s education in their community. Continuous awareness should be created among the general public and students. The government assistance for families should be monitored at the school itself with a help of opening a separate wing under various welfare departments. Government should increase the benefits for continuous and permanent income for parents, which is the need of the hour to protect the children from risk and dangerous life. Play facility in school was most essential in order to attract children to attend school regularly. The approach of teachers should be child friendly manner. The teachers can give rewards to the poor students, who were potential drop outs, for their small improvements in learning in order to encourage them to attend the school regularly. The National Child Labour Project Special Schools’ Teachers have tried to give awareness about government schemes to their parents, but unable to follow the process with the government departments. In some villages the parents were very stubborn to not to send their children to schools. Government should provide assistance in order to develop poorest people in a limited time frame. This helps the children with poor academic performance to continue education without any fear.
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION – 10

Number of Participants : 9
Place : Anthanalloor Panchayat Union (PU)

1. Socio-demographic particulars of Focus Group (Anthanalloor)

The gender of focus group covers 6 male and 3 female members. The age groups of members were distributed between 26 to 49 years. Majority of the members were residing in same panchayat union for more than 2 years but they were from different villages. Among the members, except two parents all the others were educated. Members were a mix of lower class, middle class and upper middle class group.

2. Socio-demographic and economic profile of “Children Out of School” (Anthanalloor)

Most of the members view was that there were more than 30 children below the age of 14 years, who were out of school in the entire block. Gender wise female and male children were equally distributed across the block. The boys were dropped out from school to work for daily wages and girls were responsible in taking care of their siblings. There were 2-3 children in one family in rural areas. The status of last three years shows that there was improvement in elementary enrolment as well as the reduction in the rate of never enrolled group of children. The parents of out of school children were almost surviving with low level earnings.

3. Various Factors contributing to “Children remaining Out of School” (Anthanalloor)

Majority of the members opined that the children, who were studying in government school, were found to be easily dropping out from school compared to the children studying in private. The out of school children who were residing in very remote villages had to walk for few distance due to lack of frequency of buses. Girl children, who were not comfortable to walk alone, used to cut the classes. The children with severe disability had not even enrolled in any schools due to non availability of required services in their locality. Few children, who were not going to
school due to health problems were very much interested to continue their study. The
parents were uneducated and they were not providing proper care to the children.
Various other factors responsible for the children to be out of school were migration
of parents, parent’s illness, drug addiction, extreme poverty, children finding it
difficult to read English language, etc., which makes the children to not to have
interest in education.

4. Implications of “Children Not Going to School” for the Children and
their Family (Anthanalloor)

Majority of the members stated, normally the fathers, who were alcohol
addicted remained idle without work, used to compel the children to go for work for
daily life. As the children, who have minimum qualification to their age, after
attaining the age of 14 years don’t have the willingness to study with the young age
students. The mothers also used to go for work and they allotted time to see the needs
of their children for their proper schooling. Sometimes these out of school children
were simply wandering with other dropout children and at a later stage, they were
engaged in work for wages. The mother and father were not capable to provide safe
living condition for their children. Consequently, there was lack of encouragement
for the children to continue school and they discontinued the school slowly. The
school health programmes were out of reach for the poor children who were dropped
out from school, which leads them to depend upon their parents. In turn, the parents
were unable to go for work and they depend for the government assistance. Quarrel is
reported between parents at times when children are at home not attending school.
Children are harassed and abused often directly or indirectly.

5. Situation of Children Out of School and their Parents’ Perception
about their status (Anthanalloor)

A considerable number of the children were found working in agriculture, hotels,
grocery and garment shops. They earn wages between 50 and 60 rupees per day and
they give their earnings to the father or mother, as an additional income for the
family. The members have witnessed that the young children were exploited in the
work spot. Majority of the members’ perception was that due to parents’ poor
supervision, the children, who were not studying well easily dropped out from school
and they became adapted to bad behaviours from others. Majority of the parents did not contribute to their child’s education. The rights of the children were ignored by the parents and their children’s difficulties were unattended.

6. Feedback on Government Programme and its benefits for “Out of School Children” and their Families (Anthanalloor)

Majority of the members viewed that the major government programmes were not accessed by the families of children out of school. However, the members recorded that the family members of children out of school have received the assistants like ration Card, natural calamity / disaster / accident compensation, stipend for antenatal mothers, free health check up in government hospital and loan exemption from bank loan.

7. Perception and Participation of Community relating to Children Out of School (Anthanalloor)

SSA teacher and village leaders used to discuss the issue of the out of school children in order to create awareness about the importance of education among the poor and disadvantaged sections. The field level Village Education Committee was functioning ineffectively to address the issues relating to the children out of school. But the teachers of SSA and NCLP have taken steps along with the non-government organizations to motivate and admit lot of children to join regular schools in their locality. The parents don’t take part in supporting the initiatives effort of the education department, as they were not provided with government measure for their family. The members recorded that the community themselves were responsible for the children to not to enter the mainstream of education.

8. Suggestions to make the Children to attend School and prevent the Children becoming Out of School (Anthanalloor)

Majority of the members’ opinion was that the continuous awareness to community people is needed in their panchayat union. Further, the families of the out of school have to become under the supervision of the school managements so that the Head Master of the school can demand the parents not to escape from sending their children to school even after receiving the assistance from the government.
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION – 11

Number of Participants : 12
Place : Pullambadi Panchayat Union (PU)

1. Socio-demographic particulars of Focus Group (Pullambadi)

The gender of focus group covers 7 male and 5 female members. The age groups of members were distributed between 29 and 48 years. Most of the members of the focus group were residing in the same panchayat union but from various localities. They were in that panchayat for more than 2 years. One parent and one village leader were illiterates and others were educated. Members were a mix of lower class, middle class and upper middle class group.

2. Socio-demographic and economic profile of “Children Out of School” (Pullambadi)

In general all the members were of the opinion that there were about 30 children below the age of 14 years, who were out of school in the entire block. The children of both the sexes were more or less equally distributed across the panchayat. These children were either pulled out or pushed out from school due to either school problem or family problem respectively. It is well known fact that the male were involved in work for wages and the female children were answerable to look after their siblings at home in the absence of their patents. There were more than 3 children in one family in remote villages. Though there is considerable number of children enrolled in primary level education, still there were children out of school due to parents’ carelessness and their poor unsteady income, which starts from Rs. 500 and goes up to Rs. 3000 per month.

3. Various Factors contributing to “Children remaining Out of School” (Pullambadi)

Most of the members perceived that the children from socio-economically poor background were studying in government school and they have poor learning capacity due to inadequate support and care from parents. The out of school children were facing difficulties in going to school regularly by travelling. Differently
challenged children find difficulty in studying with normal children. If the children have health problem they find difficulty in studying even though they were willing to study. Attending examination is the general fear for all the out of school children. As the teachers were very strict, the children out of school were not comfortable to study there in the school. The parents were uneducated and they fail to give adequate care to the children. The other causes like parent’s illness, drug addiction, extreme poverty, children’s learning difficulties, etc. were also liable for the children out of school.

4. Implications of “Children Not Going to School” for the Children and their Family (Pullambadi)

The drug addict fathers were remaining idle without work and they were forcing their children to go for work for daily living. 14 year old children, who have below the level of qualification disliked to learn with other regular students owing to their low level of confidence to study further. As the mothers were going to work early in the morning, they don’t have time to look after their children’s education. Truancy was common among the children out of school and they were going for work to earn. These children were not protected by both the mother and father. This resulted as lack of motivation for the children to continue schooling and ultimately they were not covered under school health programmes available for them. On the other side, the parents were taking care of their unhealthy children. They become more dependent, as a result of their inability to go to work.

5. Situation of Children Out of School and their Parents’ Perception about their status (Pullambadi)

The members stated that the children were found working in brick kilns, quarry and construction works. These children earn wages between 30 to 50 rupees per day and they give their earnings to parents. All the members have witnessed the young children working in an unsafe environment. The members’ perception was the children, who were not studying well were gradually drop out as there was lack of supervision at home. These children, who were out of school, were easily exposed to bad behaviours. Parents were unaware about child rearing and the rights of the children, since they were struggling for their day to day living. Children, who were
out of school, faced crisis situation like death of their parents, broken family, uncared guardian, etc. The support rendered to recover these children was found to be inadequate. Majority of the children left their schools, when they faced adjustment difficulties in their school. Members reported lack of skill among parents to support their children, who were out of school, to accomplish good education as they themselves were becoming unskilled labourers.

6. Feedback on Government Programme and its benefits for “Out of School Children” and their Families (Pullambadi)

Majority of the members reported that family members of children out of school availed benefits such as ration card, assistance for flood / accident compensation, assistants for antenatal mothers, government hospital assistance, exemption from bank loan, etc. However, the equal preferences were not given for all families of out of school children in major welfare programmes such as Tamilnadu Adhi Dravidar Housing and Development Corporation Limited, Group house, Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), etc. As a result of this, the people who are below poverty line did not receive the required welfare packages and were unaware about the details of various government programmes.

7. Perception and Participation of Community relating to Children Out of School (Pullambadi)

At village level, the activity of Village Education Committees seems to be ineffective. However, the SSA teachers and village leaders have taken action to sensitize the ignorant parents of out of school children to understand the importance of education and to send their children to schools. The members of the Village Education Committee (VEC) were not much involved in tackling the issues of out of school children. The VEC was always concerned about building schools, expenditure of government funds, etc. rather than taking innovative steps to help the out of school children and their family. The efforts of SSA team have resulted in making several innocent children to join the mainstream education. Majority of the parents did not participate in their effort to get their child’s educated.
8. Suggestions to make the Children to attend School and prevent the Children becoming Out of School (Pullambadi)

Most of the members revealed that the community needs to be made aware of the child rights, importance of education through awareness generation programmes such as camps, cultural activity, etc. In order to make the parents to manage families’ crisis situation, the major financial assistance have to be given at school level. Village leaders, important persons have to sort out the issue of children out of school at least once in a fortnight.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION – 12

Number of Participants : 10
Place : Manapparrai Panchayat Union (PU)

1. Socio-demographic particulars of Focus Group (Manapparrai)

Gender wise the members of the group constituted 8 males and 2 females. Their age group falls between 30 and 55 years. They were located in the surrounding villages of the same Panchayat union for more than 2 years. Except three members, all the other members were literates in the group. All the members were a combination of both lower class and upper middle class group.

2. Socio-demographic and economic profile of “Children Out of School” (Manapparrai)

Majority of the members recorded their response that in their area, the existence of children out of school was there but reduced to some extent. Members revealed that the boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 14 years remained dropped out from schools due to parents’ migration. Frequently the girl children were forced to look after the small children in the absence of their parents. There were 2-4 children in one family and prevalence of nuclear family is high. The members perceived that the parents believe that education is more important for boys than girls, but boys were engaged in out-station work in order to support their poor family. The economic condition of these children was found to be in low level.
3. Various Factors contributing to “Children remaining Out of School” (Manapparrai)

Addiction to alcohol and drug use by parents was reported as a reason for their children to be out of school. Addicted fathers used to beat and prevent their children from going to school and forced them to earn. Majority of Members reported that there were lots of wine shops, which had been opened in recent years. Members’ opinion about the children’s capacity was that those who were attending private schools were quickly understanding than the children studying in government schools, who were uncared by parents. Children, who were out of school, have feared to go by road to attend school. Children were scared of their examinations and their teachers as well and they were unable to do the home work regularly. Other major reasons that leads the children to be out of school were found to be mentally retarded, lack of awareness, parents were migrating for work, broken family and poor income in the family, etc. Further, the parents were unable to give the child the required care and also parents did not have the basic skill to educate their differently abled children at home. The most essential thing was that parents responsiveness towards the children’s attendants in school was lacking. The issues relating to inadequate learning care for each individual in schools were not fully achieved by the management of the schools. Members opined that the children out of school may be supported by employing a special person to monitor the performances.

4. Implications of “Children Not Going to School” for the Children and their Family (Manapparrai)

Both the mother and father were working for particular season of six months and remained idle for the rest of the days. As the parents were going for work in early morning they were unable to watch whether their children were attending the school regularly or cutting the classes. Thus, the children have to face no supervision for their development and their parents also not helping them to exercise their rights. These out of school children, who were over aged, were unhappy to sit and study with young children as their age and qualification level varies. As an outcome, these out of school children don’t have the confidence to achieve big things or quality in life in future. Most of the out of school children’s health and personal hygiene and
physical development were affected, as they were not included in the school health programmes and later they become burden for their parents to look after their illness.

5. Situation of Children Out of School and their Parents’ Perception about their status (Manapparrai)

Majority of the members stated that the children out of school were involved in agriculture field, construction unit, automobile shops, grocery shops, garment business, goat rearing, etc. A considerable number of the children earn wages between 40 to 70 rupees per day. The members reported that the children out of school were found to be cheap child labourers and also they have observed that the children were exploited by local employers. The failure of supervision of parents resulted in the children to perform poor in schools and they adapt the unhealthy activities. Further, members stated that the parents were receiving supplementary income through their child's work. The members also added that the children, who were less interested to studies, were going for fishing and other works to earn money in order to meet their own expenses. Parents were ignorant to provide proper care for the children to attend school. Sometimes these children also voluntarily go for work on full time basis to gain money and they often support their families. These children have faced difficult situation in their life like parents’ extramarital relationship, parents’ death, uncared guardian, etc and they left the school and got themselves shifted to some other places.

6. Feedback on Government Programme and its benefits for “Out of School Children” and their Families (Manapparrai)

Majority of the members declared that the benefits of the major programmes of the government were not practically reaching the weaker section families of out of school children. The members reported that family members of children out of school availed very less benefits but the other parents are getting the benefits like assistance from Tamilnadu Adhi Dravidar Housing and Development Corporation Limited, Group house scheme, Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), etc.
7. Perception and Participation of Community relating to Children Out of School (Manapparrai)

Members recorded that the community themselves were unaware about the child rights and importance of education. The village level education committee members should take initiative to motivate the parents regularly and to address the issues relating to out of school children. As a result of the continuous effort of the Block Resource Teacher Educator, Head Masters and Teachers of the schools, several children were identified and enrolled in schools to prevent the children becoming never enrolled every year in that block. Members recorded that the Government was responsible for the children to stay out of school and lose their career prospects because of loopholes in existing welfare measures and thereby prevented the children from studying and attaining personal development.

8. Suggestions to make the Children to attend School and prevent the Children becoming Out of School (Manapparrai)

Most of the members revealed that the community required more jobs opportunities with the help of government assistance. The community people should continuously cooperates with the school authorities in conducting awareness programmes for parents, motivating children for vocational education and monitoring all the disadvantaged children in the schools through government welfare measures. Members realized the need for special care to slow learners so as to complete the basic minimum education required for specific vocational training. De-addiction Centre at panchayat / ward level was needed for treating addicted Parents. One stable earning adult in a poor family should be monitored by government.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION – 13

Number of Participants : 12
Place : Thiruvarambur Panchayat Union (PU)

1. Socio-demographic particulars of Focus Group (Thiruvarambur)

The gender of focus group includes 6 male and 6 female members. The age groups of members were distributed between 25 and 47 years. Majority of the
members were residing in the same panchayat union but from different villages. They were in that locality for more than 2 years. Among the members, two parents were only uneducated and others were educated persons. The members were a mix of lower class, middle class and upper middle class group.

2. Socio-demographic and economic profile of “Children Out of School” (Thiruvarambur)

General opinion of the members was that there were around 100 children below the age of 14 years were out of school in the entire block. Both boys and girls were more or less equally distributed among the out of school category. Predominantly boys were dropped out for earnings in quarry field, automobile work shop, hotels / tea shops, etc and girls were engaged in domestic work for wages or engaged in sibling care. In most of the families, there were around 3 or 4 children. There was little improvement in the enrolment of primary school and reduction in never enrolled category. But there were out of school children being dropped out before entering the secondary school education, as their families were surviving with poor income, which is from Rs. 500 to Rs. 4000 per month.

3. Various Factors contributing to “Children remaining Out of School” (Thiruvarambur)

Majority of the members opined that the children, who were studying in government school, were found to be slow learners. The children who were residing in very remote villages had to walk about 1 to 2 km to reach the school in the absence of transport facility. Girl children were scared to walk alone to school after they attain puberty. The children, who were differently challenged, have not enrolled in any special schools due to ignorance of parents. Some children with health problems like to study in school but they were unable to attend school. Children feared of examinations and strict teachers. The uneducated parents were unable to provide proper care to the children in general. Majority of the members viewed that though the parents had to face difficulty in admitting their children in school since they had to submit particulars like age proof, ration card etc., which were not available during migration to other places, they were unable to get welfare assistance from government without ration card identity. The other factors responsible for the
children being out of school were migration of parents, parent’s illness and drug addiction, extreme poverty, children finding difficult in reading English languages, etc. These factors gradually make the children not to have interest in education and in the long run they cannot be forced to attend school.

4. Implications of “Children Not Going to School” for the Children and their Family (Thiruvarambur)

The fathers of out of school children were alcohol addicts and they were remaining idle without work most of the days. The mothers used to go for work and their poor monitoring towards their children’s schooling have made the children to quit the school. The children out of school with primary level qualification after crossing the age of 13 years were not willing to study with the lower class students. The children usually join the work with disinterest and later after seeing few earnings they get involvement in work for wages on full time basis. The parents (both the mother and father) failed to protect and safeguard their children. Therefore, there was lack of motivation for the children to continue schooling and they gradually left out from school health programmes available for them. Conversely, the parents were more dependent on the government programmes to look after the welfare of their family.

5. Situation of Children Out of School and their Parents’ Perception about their status (Thiruvarambur)

Most of the children were found working in quarry industries, automobile work shop, hotels / tea shops, goat or pig rearing, coolie, etc. These children earn wages between 20 and 50 rupees per day and they give their earnings to parents and some children spend the money on their own happily. Members observed that these children also work in a pitiable condition suffer due to over workloads and get low wages. Most of the members’ perception was children, who were not studying well were step by step dropped out from school, as there was lack of supervision at home. Later, these children who were out of school learnt and adapted unhealthy practices like watching movie, moving with bad friends and developing bad habits. Parents were ignorant about the rights of the children and also equally unskilled to look after their children’s development as well as to sort out their school difficulties.
6. Feedback on Government Programme and its benefits for “Out of School Children” and their Families (Thiruvarambur)

Nearly every one of the members viewed that the families of children out of school availed only the small benefits such as ration card, assistance for flood/accident, assistance for antenatal mothers, government hospital assistance, etc. and the majority of the families were not benefitted under major government schemes available for the welfare of disadvantaged group. Most of the children out of school were motivated to join the special schools run by the National Child Labour Project.

7. Perception and Participation of Community relating to Children Out of School (Thiruvarambur)

The SSA teacher and village leaders have taken steps in visiting the homes of out of school children and advised the parents of out of school children to understand the importance of education so that they can provide help for them. Village Level Education Committee is taking effort but the outcome is poor. With the help of local non-government organizations, many children were admitted in schools last year and also provided cash assistance for the students’ education. Majority of the parents did not participate in their effort for their child’s education. Members recorded that the community themselves are responsible for the children to stay out of school and lose their career prosperity.

8. Suggestions to make the Children to attend School and prevent the Children becoming Out of School (Thiruvarambur)

Most of the members revealed that the community should be made aware of the child rights, importance of education through awareness generation programmes such as drama, literary activity, etc. As the children were deprived of proper clothing, food, shelter they were unable to concentrate in education by attending the school regularly, for which counseling services can be introduced. Further, to improve the income of the families, the financial benefits to the poor families of out of school children to be monitored at school level. Village leaders shall have frequent meetings to discuss the out of school children issue and plan to send all out of school children to schools at regular basis.
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION – 14

Number of Participants : 8
Place : Vaiyampatty Panchayat Union (PU)

1. Socio-demographic particulars of Focus Group (Vaiyampatty)

The gender category of focus group covers 3 male and 5 female members. Their age was distributed between 31 and 56 years. Most of the members are residing in same panchayat union but from various hamlets. The members stated that they were in that panchayat union for more than 3 years. Majority of the members were educated. By and large, as the group was a diversified one, the members’ occupation differ from one another like Teachers, Head Master, Field Officers, Panchayat Chairman, Representatives from NGO and Parent-Teacher Association and poor parents of out of school Children. Thus, income status of the members was a mix up of lower class, middle class and upper middle class group.

2. Socio-demographic and economic profile of “Children Out of School” (Vaiyampatty)

Common observation of the members was that there were around 20 to 100 children below the age of 14 years were out of school across the Panchayat Union. The gender of the children was equally distributed among the out of school category. Always the boys were dropped out for earnings in the same locality in automobile work shop, agriculture field, etc. or they go outside the district to work in garment companies. Likewise, girls were also engaged in work for wages to support the family and few were taking care of their siblings. Mostly there were 3 to 5 children in one nuclear family in remote areas. Most of the families of out of school children were surviving with low level income.

3. Various Factors contributing to “Children remaining Out of School” (Vaiyampatty)

Most of the members opined that the children, who were dropped out from government school have performed moderately compared to private school. The children out of school were the occupants of rural areas and they had to travel to
schools, which was not liked by them. Girl children were dropped out of school after attaining puberty and they were held up in providing care for their youngest sibling, as their parents were at work. The children, who were differently abled, have not even enrolled in any regular schools due to their severity of disability. Members reported that children out of school suffered from extreme poverty. Only few children, who stopped schooling due to ill health, were willing to study. There were children with difficulties to face the examinations. In general, the out of school children try to avoid going to school, as the teachers ask questions relating to the subjects. Their parents were mostly illiterate and they show less interest in their children’s education. Other factors for the children being out of school were migration of parents, parent’s illness and drug addiction, extreme poverty, parents’ illegal relations, irresponsibility of parents with addiction to alcohol and drug, children find it difficult to read English languages, etc. These children do not have interest in education and in the long run they cannot be forced to attend school. There were out of school children, whose parents were bed ridden or ran away due to illegal affairs or not alive, were deprived support of their parents. Ignorance of parents and villagers about child rights is found to be a key factor leading children to be out school. Negative attitude towards education is conceived among parents and exercised on children.

4. Implications of “Children Not Going to School” for the Children and their Family (Vaiyampatty)

As parents had to leave for their job early in the morning, they do not monitor whether their children were going to school or not. These children often went to work or to play other than to school. Members revealed that majority of the family members did not involve in helping the child to exercise their rights. Majority of the members stated that the parents with laziness attitude remained idle without work and they forced their children to go for work and earn for their daily living. The out of school children having minimum primary level education don’t want to be admitted in the eligible class due to age factor and shyness to study with the small children. The ignorant and irresponsible father and mother do not show much interest in motoring the children’s schooling except their earnings from their work. In the beginning, the children used to cut the class and engage in some petty works as a part
time and then they shift to full time work by discontinuing their studies permanently. Out of school children’s parents do not cared about the rights of the children. After a long gap, majority of the out of school children were not covered under health checkup regularly. This had resulted in parents to look after their unhealthy children and this in turn prevented them from attending work for their daily living.

5. Situation of Children Out of School and their Parents’ Perception about their status (Vaiyampatty)

A wide majority of members stated that it was evident in their Panchayat Union that young children were working in agriculture field, gem cutting unit, automobile shops, hotels / grocery shops, etc. Between the age of 11 and 14 years, the children earn around Rs. 50 per day and they spend on their own for eatables and also they give the balance money to their parents. Locally, the employers were eager to catch the children for economical labour. Members witnessed that local employers at industries and other work places exploited children by engaging them to work in their work places. As per the perception of all the members, the children, who were below average in studies were pulled out as there was lack of supervision by teachers at school as well as the parents do not watch the status of children at home. Later, these children, who were out of school, were likely to adapt adult behaviours as well as bad habits in the working environment. The unskilled parents were unable to monitor and provide necessary support to their children’s for healthy condition.

6. Feedback on Government Programme and its benefits for “Out of School Children” and their Families (Vaiyampatty)

The members of the Focus Group revealed that majority of the families of children out of school were not covered under the major government schemes available for the poor and weaker sections. At the same time, the members stressed that the family members of children out of school have accessed the benefits such as Ration Card, assistance for flood / accident compensation, assistance for antenatal mothers, government hospital assistance and loan exemption from bank loan, which were so common among all category of people. Members reported that government schemes are available only to those belonging to Scheduled caste and tribe in some
areas and the general socio-economically backward groups were excluded irrespective of the caste.

7. Perception and Participation of Community relating to Children Out of School (Vaiyampatty)

The school teachers were ensuring that the parents of out of school children being sensitized on importance of education and the facilities available in schools. However, the teachers were unable to bring coordination among the community members to support the school to work for prevention of children being out of school. Initiatives of Village Level Education Committee were not up to the mark to safeguard the child rights. The National Children Labour Project and also the SSA Scheme along with the local non-government organization have admitted several children in schools last year in two villages. Generally the parents were adamant and it was not easy to convince them to show interest in their children’s schooling. The family and community were responsible for the children to stay out of school and not getting covered under welfare measures.

8. Suggestions to make the Children to attend School and prevent the Children becoming Out of School (Vaiyampatty)

The members stated that there should be a continuous awareness among the general public about the child rights, importance of education through awareness generation programmes, etc. Based on the child’s interest in nature of work, vocational training can be given as a motivation to gain skillful training and education. The major welfare programmes for the families of out of school children can be supervised at school level in order to cover all the real poorest parents in the villages. The people, who were well off should come forward to discuss the issues with local leaders and cooperation to be given for school activities like conduct of awareness program for parents, motivating children for vocational education, etc.
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION – 15

Number of Participants : 8
Place : Tiruchirappalli Urban (Corporation division -1)

1. Socio-demographic particulars of Focus Group (Urban- Corporation division-1)

   Gender wise the members of the group constituted 3 male and 5 female members. Their age group falls between 29 and 53 years. They were located in the surrounding of the town, urban area (covering Moovendarnagar, Thookumedainagar, Ezhilnagar, Wouraiyur, Thillainagar, Pandamangalam, Kottai station road, Valluvarnarnagar and Netharshapallivasal) under the Corporation of Tirucirappalli. They were living in these areas for more than 2 years. All the members were educated except one parent, who was illiterate in the group. Members were a combination of both lower class and upper middle class group.

2. Socio-demographic and economic profile of “Children Out of School” (Urban- Corporation division-1)

   Majority of the members recorded their response that in their area, the rate of children out of school was gradually decreasing. But still most of the children in the city life were easily be fond of fantasy life, as they were habitually watching cinema films. Greater part of the members stated that both the male and female children between the age of 11 and 14 years remained dropped out from schools due to poor family situations. Habitually, the female children were forced to look after the household works in the absence of their parents and the male children easily absorbed in the work spot in town area. There were 2 to 4 children in one family, particularly among the community of Muslim religion. The prevalence of nuclear family is high. The members revealed that the parents have some negative attitude about education, as it is a long term process. Most importantly, the boys than girls were engaged in out-station work in order to support their poor family. The economic condition of the out of school children’s family was at a very lower level to run the family in the city.
3. Various Factors contributing to “Children remaining Out of School” (Urban- Corporation division-1)

Most of the members conversed that the children, who studied in government schools, were not learning and writing properly than the children, as the learning atmosphere at home was found to be poor. Female children, who were out of school, were feared to go by road, as the schools were situated in the inner streets. Children feared about the examinations and the strictness of teachers. While attending school, most of the children were afraid of the teachers, as they were unable to do the home work regularly due to poor household structure. The other reasons that influence the children being out of school in corporation area were the lack of awareness on education among the parents, lack of attraction in the schools to retain the children in schools, parents migrating for work, disorganized family and insufficient income to run the family in urban area. Besides, the parents were unable to look after the basic needs of their children, which were the prerequisites for the children to continue education. Some children found to be mentally retarded and their poor parents were not willing to admit their children in the residential special schools available for them in the city. In spite of advising the parents to send their children to school regularly, absenteeism was found in schools. The irresponsible attitude of the parents was the main reason for the long absenteeism in school. Moreover, the school management was unsuccessful to address the issues relating to inadequate learning care for each individual in the urban schools. The parents addicted to drug and alcohols were found to be common in urban area for the children out of school to employ in hazardous works for wages.

4. Implications of “Children Not Going to School” for the Children and their Family (Urban- Corporation division-1)

Widely the parents were working for daily wages. Most of the fathers were alcohol addicts and they go for work on alternative days. Some days they were remaining idle without any work. When the parents (bother mother and father) going for work they were unable to watch their children’s schooling. Due to which the children lack supervision at home, which is must for development and their parents also not support them to exercise their rights. When these out of school children cross 12 years of age, they were unhappy to sit and study with young children as per their
qualification level, which is not equal to that regularly school attending children. This results in the decrease of self confidence level among the out of school children to have better life. Most of the out of school children’s health and personal hygiene and physical development were also affected, as they were not included in the school health programmes and later they become a burden for their parents to look after their illness. As their parents were unable to go for daily work and in turn it affects the income productivity of the family.

5. Situation of Children Out of School and their Parents’ Perception about their status (Urban-Corporation division-1)

    Majority of the members stated that the children, who were out of school, were engaged in tea shops, hotels / grocery shops / markets, garment shops, construction units, automobile shops, cheap rated cigarette rolling unit, domestic work, etc. Majority of the children earn wages between 30 and 75 rupees per day. Members reported that the children out of school were found to be a cheap labourer for long hours of work. Also, the members noticed that, the local employers were exploiting the children in order to extract more work from them. Since the monitoring capacity of parents is poor, the children, who were weak in studies while studying, were simply leaving the school and they engaged themselves in unhealthy activities, particularly the male children were easily engaging in the anti social activities, as perceived by the members. Further, the members reported that the parents were receiving the supplementary income through their child's work. These children were less interested to study and going for fishing and other works to earn money in order to meet their own expenses. The uneducated parents don’t take much effort for the children to attend school. Out of school children also voluntarily go for work to gain money and often support their families. Some children have faced difficult situation in their life like parents death, uncared guardian, etc and they left the school and shifted to some other places. The absence of basic life skills among the parents resulted in leading their children to poor and unsafe life.
6. Feedback on Government Programme and its benefits for “Out Of School Children” and their Families (Urban- Corporation division-1)

Majority of the members disclosed that the benefits of the major programmes of the government were not practically to the reach of actually suffering families of out of school children. The members reported that family members of children out of school accessed very less benefits but the other parents were getting the benefits like assistance from Tamilnadu Adhi Dravidar Housing and Development Corporation Limited, Group house scheme, Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), etc. as they have the influenced the local political leader.

7. Perception and Participation of Community relating to Children Out of School (Urban- Corporation division-1)

Most of the members stated that the community themselves were not attentive about child rights and the importance of education. The parents should be motivated by the school management regularly. All the parents need to be responsible and caring for children to continue schooling. The constant attempt of the Head Masters and teachers of the National Child Labour Project and the contribution of local city donors for poor children’s education, many children were identified and enrolled in schools to prevent the children becoming never enrolled in the city.

8. Suggestions to make the Children to attend School and prevent the Children becoming Out of School (Urban- Corporation division-1)

Majority of the members revealed that the local political leader should give cooperation to the school authorities for conducting awareness programmes to the parents, motivating children to undergo vocational education and monitoring all the disadvantaged children in the schools through government welfare measures. Teachers require special training to handle the children with problems and problematic children. Counseling in school may be introduced to help children to effectively deal with their problems. Restrict the provision of ration cards to the parents, who send their children to school regularly.
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION – 16

Number of Participants : 11
Place : Tiruchirappalli West (Corporation division -2)

1. Socio-demographic particulars of Focus Group (West- Corporation division-2)

   The age groups of members were distributed between 25 and 46 years. Gender wise the members of the group constituted 3 males and 8 females. Majority of the members were residing in same locality for more than 2 to 30 years. The locality includes in the surrounding of the west corporation area (Milaguparai, Valluvannagar, Ramamoorthinagar, Bagahvathi Ammanstreet, Varaganeri, Senthainirpuram, etc.) under the Corporation of Tirucirappalli. Majority of the members were literate. Members were Head Master, Teachers from regular schools, Block Resource Teacher Educator, Teachers from Special Schools for rescued Child labourers, Field Officers from National Child Labour Rehabilitation Project Office, Ward Member / Chairman, Representatives from NGO and Parent-Teachers Association and parents of Children out of school. All the members were the collection of lower to upper middle income group people.

2. Socio-demographic and economic profile of “Children Out of School” (West- Corporation division-2)

   Majority of the members stated that though there was gradual decrease in the rate of children out of school, still some 30 to 40 children were out of school in their areas and this varied from one ward to another. Members revealed that the out of school children, who have crossed the age of 11 years, were not attending school regularly due to their family circumstances. The male and female children were either at work for wages or simply at home or wandering on streets. Generally girls were fully engaged in their own household works including care of their siblings. The parents were worried due to their daily labour earnings. Members revealed that there were around 3 children in poor households, where the income level is very low to lead their life in the city. The poor income group spends nearly all their income on food and they were struggling to pay even their rent for the house, etc., since most of
their monthly income between ranges between Rs. 1000/- and 5000/-, (depends on the number of person working in the family). Majority of the members recorded that children remained out of school due to very poor income in the family and lack of awareness on education.

3. Various Factors contributing to “Children remaining Out of School”
   (West- Corporation division-2)

   Poverty among the out of school children’s family seem to be traditional. Yet, many children were deprived of education, love and care, playing, food, dress, school, protection, happy life, etc. were unable to go to school and forced to work. Majority of the members have perceived that the children studying in private schools were fortunate, as they were able to learn English language than the Government school children. The parents of out of school children were not efficient to take care of their children. As they were uneducated, they have negatively believed that the education system not providing employment opportunities for many, who have completed higher education in their area. Moreover, for the routine life, they were suffering with insufficient income and unable to provide proper basic needs like food and care for their children. On the other side, the children were not happy to study due to poverty. Some children do not like to attend the school even to the one situated near to their residence. The female children around 14 years felt uneasy to reach the school by road due to teasing by matured boys in their area. Children, who were out of school, used to face problems such as teachers’ partiality towards the other well performing children in examinations, strictness, etc. that made the children to be pulled out from schools. The parents were not favourable towards providing good education for the children because of various issues such as separated parents, having too many children, leaving the children at home and going for work, very low income for the family, adamant and aggressive attitude of the children to stop schooling, children’s fear of teacher and exams, school authorities’ poor encouragement for the disadvantaged children, fathers’ negative behaviour and illegal affairs, etc. highly discriminated the children to be away from school for a long time. The children who were chronically ill unable to continue education in the normal school and the facilities available were not fully utilized by the parents.
4. Implications of “Children Not Going to School” for the Children and their Family (West- Corporation division-2)

Majority of the children do not have the interest in education and do not understand the subject and are even unable to write or read. Greater part of the members viewed that as the parents were keen to earn for daily living, they don’t see that their children prepare themselves to attend school. This has made their children to cut the class and engage with the non-school going children either to play or wander. After completing 4th or 5th standard, the children who have been out of school for more than 2 years, have the bashfulness to attend the class with small children at school. Children out of school appeared to be wandering without any aspiration and not respecting the parents in later period. Children were found to be with low self-esteem and motivation, resulting in no positive goals in life. Parents were distressed about their children’s poor condition and they don’t have the ability to care for their children to attend the school. The working children were exposed to unhealthy living condition. Majority of children out school were anemic and malnourished. Obviously, these unhealthy children were not included in welfare programmes accessible in schools. Hence, the concentration of parents diverted to set right their children’s illness instead of going to work to run the family. This kind of missing out the daily income has made the parents to face unproductive life.

5. Situation of Children Out of School and their Parents’ Perception about their status (West- Corporation division-2)

Majority of the children while attending the school used to study for half a day in school and the next half a day they leave the school to play or to involve in household works and also engage in work for wages or simply wandering with bad friends. Some children going for work were vexed because of their inability to gain education, no identity in society and even no support in family. Some children were even committing suicide for not studying and getting poor marks in examinations. The differently challenged children’s condition is worst, as they don’t have happiness in life. The family situation makes the poor parents to struggle to manage the day to day life without their working children’s wages. Children out of school were engaged in work (cheap cigarette (beedi) rolling, rice mill work, small scale industry, domestic work, catering and hotel, etc.) for even less than Rs. 20 per day. Members
have observed the little children spending more time in the work spots to receive a meager pay from the employers, who were exploitative in nature. The majority of out of school children were exposed to infectious diseases. Some children were tightly engaged in household work by their parents. Progressively, the children show their disinterest towards education, they start to involve in unhealthy activities for their survival and also they start to adapt bad habits like cigarette smoking, taking alcohol, watching adult movies, etc. Even the parents who have little knowledge about the importance of education were unable to support for their children’s schooling. Most of the children were found to be troubled due to parents’ illness, loss of either father or mother, poor care of parents, negative behavior and bad habits of parents, etc. and they were not benefitted under welfare activities in the school. By and large the members opined that the situation of children out of school in urban was most horrible, as they were easily engrossed in anti-social behaviours.

6. Feedback on Government Programme and its benefits for “Out of School Children” and their Families (West- Corporation division-2)

Majority of the members reported that the efforts were taken to include the children out of school under bridge course (preparing the students to join mainstream education from temporary school to regular school) arranged by National Child Labour Projects (NCLP) and Sarva Shakshi Abiyan (SSA) Programmes. The children were provided with eggs every week, bus pass, scholarship, note books, etc available for the disadvantaged children. But the common opinion of the members was the poor families of out of school children were unable to get the benefits from government schemes such as land for housing, construction of houses and improvement of business with the support of loans offered by nationalized banks, etc. Normally the poor families manage themselves in some local self-help group activities run by NGOs. The ration card facility, flood relief assistance, bank loan, stipend for antenatal mothers, etc. were given to the families of the children out of school, particularly for the Schedule Caste and Backward Caste families. But there was no survey taken especially to evaluate the benefits that have reached the families of out of school with regard to housing patta, group house, NABARD, Nationalized bank, etc. The other people were receiving old age pension, electricity facilities etc.
The National Child Labour Project have been provided Rs.100 stipend for the children attending specials schools regularly.

7. Perception and Participation of Community relating to Children Out of School (West- Corporation division-2)

The members revealed that with the coordination of NGO, the library facilities and computer facilities have been provided by the local leaders. But, the families, who were really suffering, were not fully supported under government assistance by the respective ward leaders. The teaching assistants under SSA scheme and the teachers of NCLP Special Schools have taken efforts to advise the poor parents of out of school children and also the students, who tend to drop out of school to attend the school continuously. The regular school teachers expressed that they have gone for home visits to all the children’s house to educate them about the importance of education. Though many children at primary level were promoted to secondary level, efforts were taken to sustain the children in schools. The children were motivated to continue education in NCLP School for few days initially. Children, who have been in the mainstreamed with NCLP / non-formal school to Regular school, were again gradually stopped from attending school. Free food, uniform and awareness programme were provided to send back the children to school and also counseling their parents about education.

8. Suggestions to make the Children to attend School and prevent the Children becoming Out of School (West- Corporation division-2)

Majority of the members stated that 100 percent enrollment of children in the schools can be possible only with coordination of teacher, parent, community and the government have to work as a team on continuous basis. Teachers should conduct awareness programme by involving parents about importance of education and other government schemes for the benefit of poor. Morning half day work, and afternoon half day school facilities to be provided with vocational educational education. Stipend for the children attending the school can be given on daily basis. The additional number of teachers and new counselors may be employed to provide individual attention for the poor children. Children who were failing in exams should be shortlisted and they should be properly guided on noting their difficulties to make
them attend exam and get through at least 10th Std examination. The government assistance for families should be monitored at the school itself with a help of opening a separate wing under various welfare departments. Government should provide adequate benefits for the wellbeing of the families of children out of school in order to save the children from exploitation. There should be effective legal steps for the employers who are engaged in the work of such children.