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# **Drop-Out from School Education**

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A Research Report

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**MATRI SUDHA**  
(A CHARITABLE TRUST)

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**RAHUL AMBAST**

BBA-LLB Student, Bharati Vidyapeeth Deemed University, New Law College, Pune

**SATPREET KAUR**

BSL.LLB Student, Manikchand Pahade Law College, Aurangabad, Maharashtra

**TARISHI AGARWAL**

B.B.A. LL.B Student, Banasthali Vidhyapith, Jaipur, Rajasthan

**ADITI SINGH**

B.B.A. LL.B Student, Banasthali Vidhyapith, Jaipur, Rajasthan

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**For any further information you may contact at**

**Matri Sudha- A Charitable Trust**

**Correspondence:** O - 35, Sri Niwas Puri, New Delhi- 110065

**Project Office:** Basti Vikas Kendra, Nardan Basti, Lal Kuan, M B Road, New Delhi-  
110044

**Email:** matrisudha2000@yahoo.co.in

**Mobile:** 9910144337: **Office Phone:** 7292045019

[www.matrisudha.org](http://www.matrisudha.org)

## Abstract

Dropout is a universal phenomenon of education system in India, spread over all levels of education, in all parts of the country and across all the socio-economic groups of population. Girls in India tend to have higher dropout rates than boys. Similarly, children belonging to the socially disadvantaged groups like Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have the higher dropout rates in comparison to general population. There are also regional and location wise differences and the children living in remote areas/urban slums are more likely to drop out of school. Failure to complete high school not only produces negative outcome for the individuals, but also widens the existing social and economic inequalities. In order to reduce wastage and improve the efficiency of education system, the educational planners need to understand and identify the social groups that are more susceptible to dropout and the reasons for their dropping out.

Keeping in view the above context in perspective, the present paper tries to examine the reasons for dropping out from school education system in intervention areas of Matri Sudha and the perspective of school authorities toward drop-out children.

The finding reveals that household and school level factors as a combination play a role in bringing children out of school and are highly correlated with each other. Although it was found that education is important for children, however, reasons for getting out of school varied from showing disinterest to studies, getting migrated, subjected to corporal punishment, sibling care, finding an alternate to studies like dance, skills development and to name few more. The views of school authorities were found interesting during the whole process as all of them were on the equal note when 'no-detention policy' was the root cause of increasing dropped-out from school. To them children living in slums does not find education as important, continuous migration and few other reasons.

The report is structured as Section I, II III and IV covered the socio-economic status and family environment. Section V and VI was focussed on the causes of dropped-out from school. Section VII talked about the kind of school environment children going to. Section VIII covered the current situation of children and future prospects. Section IX provided the views of school authorities.

## Introduction

The dropout problem is pervasive in the Indian education system. Many children, who enter school, are unable to complete elementary or sometime secondary education and multiple factors are responsible for children dropping out of school. Risk factors begin to add up even before students enrol in school that includes: poverty, low educational level of parents, the weak family structure, pattern of schooling of sibling, and lack of pre-school experiences.

With the objective of bringing children in schools the Central Government enacted the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 9 where in not only free and compulsory education would be provided but the systems of evaluation revamped from the erstwhile monthly report cards to a system of continuous and comprehensive evaluation. A provision was made in the act not to detain children till a child completes elementary education. The act also provided an opportunity for out of school children that a school-wise list would be prepared on the basis of survey and to encourage parents to send their children to schools. Further, such children would be given age-appropriate class and to provide special training so that they can bridge the gap occurred in their studies.

The research report covered two broader objectives which are as:-

- Understanding the reasons behind dropping out from school from the dropped-out children
- Understanding the views of school authorities over drop-out situation

Also the following outcomes were sought from the research report:-

- To understand the situation of drop-out children before completing school education
- Sharing of report with concerned stakeholders

Matri Sudha has been working in three blocks of Lal Kuan since 2001 on development issues like child health, nutrition, education and participation. The assessment of last three financial years (by Matri Sudha between 2012-13 and 2015-16] shows that on an average 92 per cent children are school going in three blocks of Lal Kuan where Matri Sudha works. However, there have been differences in each block in respect to number of children in school with 97-98 per cent children were school going in Block K and Block J.

Despite continued interventions some of the children have remained out of school in all the three blocks particularly among Notified/De-Notified Tribal Communities then its

corresponding blocks. Although many out of school children were re-enrolled in schools, however, some of them were not included in the process due to their reluctance to join the school again.

In order to understand the situation of drop-out school children a research would be undertaken which not only put reflection on the reasons of drop-out but at the same time the contributing factors like socio-economic status of families, family and school environment, drop-out scenario in the community, current situation and views of school authorities toward drop-out children. This research would help in developing programme planning for necessary intervention in the community.

This research will be a quantitative study OR mixed methods study. The following research would undertake 'purposive sampling method' for collection of qualitative and quantitative data collection.

- Sampling
  - The sample would include-
    - Children who have been dropped-out between the age group of 6-18 years
    - School Principal and Teachers

### **Methods of data collection**

- Field Schedule
- Focus Group Discussion

### **Limitations of the study**

- Many drop-out children were not included in the study due to their absence at the time of conducting this research and hence their reasons for dropped-out from school remained unnoticed
- Reluctant behaviour of school authorities to provide details of drop-out children

## Review of Literature

Education is the basic requirement for human development, survival of the society and economic growth (Sharma, 2007; World Bank, 1993). It is universal feature of the society by which every generation transmits social heritage to the next generation. It is education by which one can achieve over all development of body, mind and soul. The development of an individual and the progress of a nation depend on education. Education is a fundamental human right. It is a key factor in the continued economic development of the country and its ability to enhance the quality of life for its citizens as well as compete within global world markets (Okumu, et al, 2008). The dropout problem is pervasive in the Indian education system. Many children, who enter school, are unable to complete education and multiple factors are responsible for children dropping out of school. Risk factors begin to add up even before students enrol in school that include: poverty, low educational level of parents, the weak family structure, pattern of schooling of sibling, and lack of pre-school experiences. Family background and domestic problems create an environment which negatively affects the value of education (Chug, 2011). Further, students could drop out as a result of a multitude of school factors such as uncongenial atmosphere, poor comprehension, absenteeism, attitude and behaviour of the teachers, and failure or repetition in the same grade, etc.

There has commonly misunderstood interpretation which is also shown in the research report that "No Detention" policy: Lack of assessments is a major contributing factor children being dropped out from school. While the "No detention" clause is trying to achieve laudable objectives (e.g. retaining every child in the school system and giving her/ him full opportunity to complete school education, inclusiveness and minimizing the dropout rates, making learning joyful and removing the fear of failure etc.), it is often misinterpreted in schools "No assessments" or "No relevance of assessment". No detention, misinterpreted as no assessment, has led to reduced accountability among teachers, especially at primary and upper primary levels. Research exists to clearly indicate that standards-based testing leads to greater accountability among teachers, thus improving student learning outcomes (CABE Meeting Minutes).

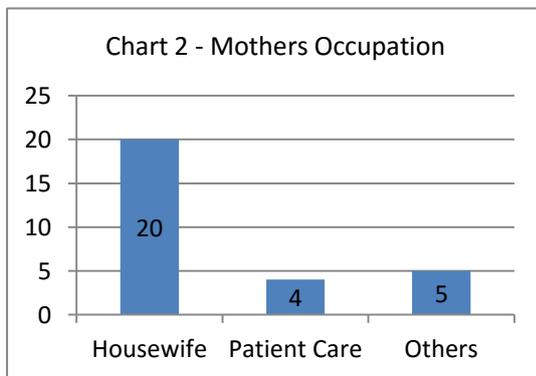
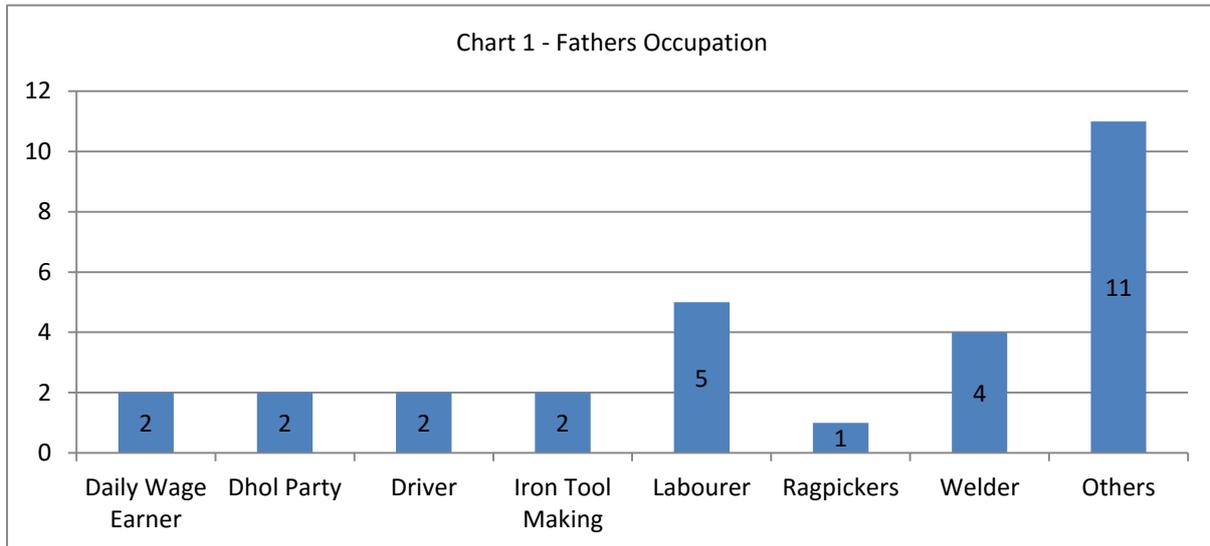
In Survey for Assessment of Dropout Rates at Elementary Level in 21 States, 21.6 per cent children in Delhi were dropped out at Primary level and which can be seen in the research report that out of 29 dropped-out children 21 were dropped at primary level. The drop-out

study further states that at all states level the dropout rate at the primary stage was 2.7% in 2008-09 and it increased to 3.1% in 2009-10. At the upper primary stage the dropout rate have remained almost same at 2.1% and 2.2% for the two years. At the primary stage there is a similar dropout rate for boys and girls but at the upper primary stage there is a higher percentage of boys dropping out as compared to the girls.

The research report also highlighted one case of corporal punishment wherein the child was severely beaten up by his class teacher that he had to leave the school. In personal interview with the child he reported out that *'he was severely beaten up by his class teacher over homework issue, now he does not want to go back to school again but agreed to get enrolled in open school system so that he may continue his studies'*. Government of India has recognized that 65 per cent of school going children are inflicted with corporal punishment. Government of India has recognized that 65 per cent of school going children are inflicted with corporal punishment. Strictly defined 'corporal punishment' is the infliction of pain intended to change a person's behaviour or to punish them. Though it mainly refers to physical pain either through hitting or forcing the child to sit /stand in uncomfortable positions; an evolving definition also includes within its ambit wrongful confinement, verbal insults, threats and humiliation, which are used with impunity and in utter disregard to the law of land and principles of learning. Everyone needs discipline, particularly self-discipline. But corporal punishment is not a form of inculcating discipline. Research has consistently shown that that it impedes the attainment of respect for discipline. It rarely motivates children to act differently, because it does not bring an understanding of what they ought to be doing nor does it offer any kind of reward for being good (Protection of Children against Corporal Punishment in Schools and Institutions, NCPCR, 2008).

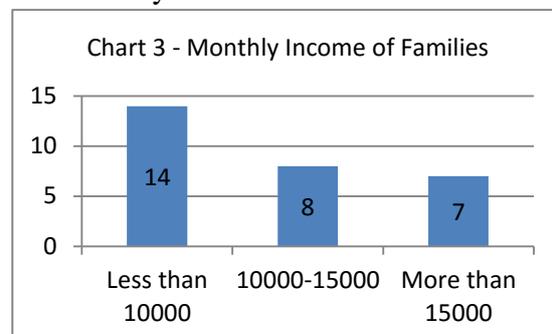
## Section – I –Economic Structure of Families

From the given graph, it can be concluded that most of the fathers of children were engaged in job that yielded not much monthly income. Some were labourers, some were welders and a few were engaged in work like daily wage earners, dhol walas, drivers, ragpickers etc.

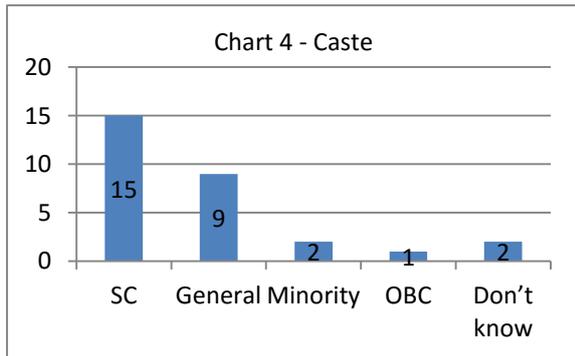


Similarly, we tried to find out the mother's occupation and her role in economic contribution in the family. The given graph shows that the mothers of maximum number of children which had dropped out were housewives. Also, there were many mothers who were involved in patient care or any other occupation.

From the above graph it can be concluded that that monthly income of most of the families that had dropped out was mostly less than Rs.10000 After that the families that earned between Rs. 10000-Rs. 15000 come. Few families were seen who earned more than Rs. 15000 also.

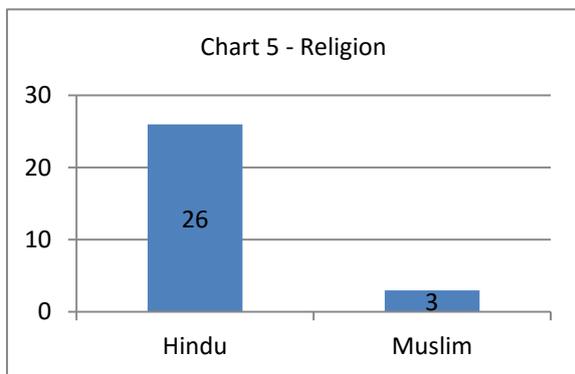


## Section – II – Social Structure of Families

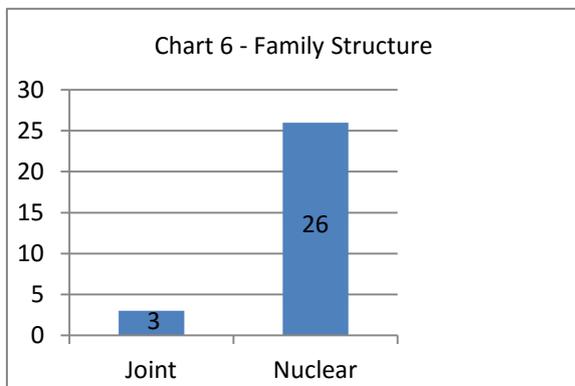


The given graph shows that the maximum number of children who have dropped out belonged to SC caste. Few people belonged to general category. Also, there were children who belonged to other minority community and other backward classes. There were certain families who did not know their caste.

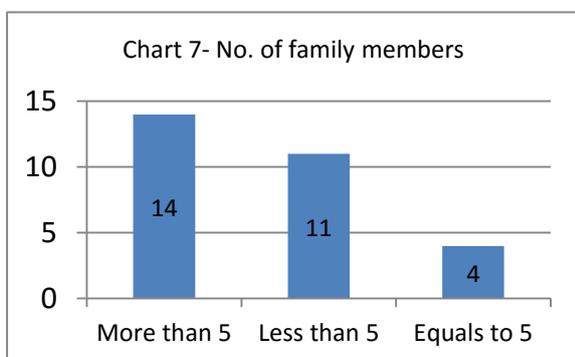
The majority of children who have been dropped out from school belong to Hindu families



followed by Muslim communities. Within Hindu families more 58 per cent children would belong to Schedule Castes, followed by 34 per cent children from General category. There were three Muslim families from where children were being dropped out who would belong to Minority and OBC category.

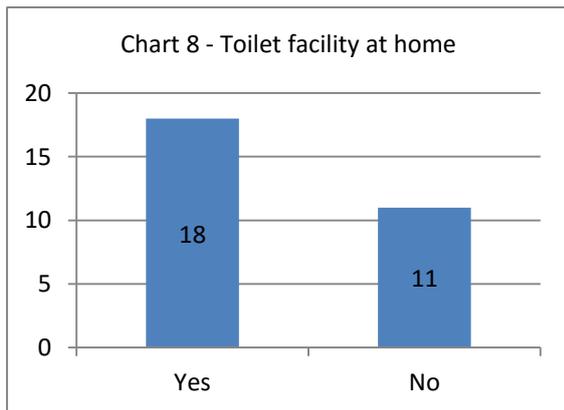


Out of total number of families twenty-six families were living in nuclear family structure while the remaining was living in joint families. We did not analyse the family structure and its impact on school education of children.



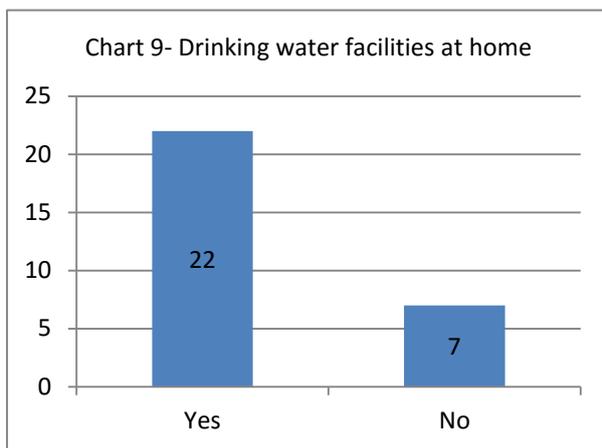
From the given graph, it can be observed that maximum number of families of dropped-out children had more than five family members. The number of family members and family structure does not directly linked to each other that even in nuclear families there were more than five family members.

### Section – III – Facilities at Households Level



From the given graph, it can be concluded that sixty-two per cent families of dropped out children were having toilet facilities at their home. The remaining thirty-eight per cent did not have toilet facilities and they defecate in open area.

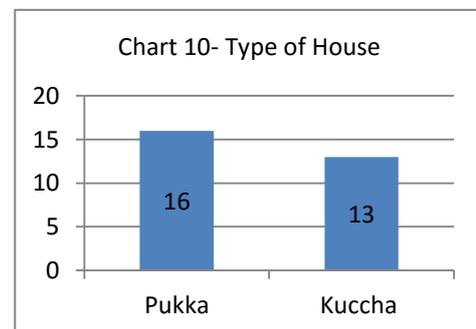
The families which do not have toilet facilities at their home go for open defecation. Some families shared their concern for girl child who go for open defecation at late evening or night. However, in our study we did not conduct an in-depth analysis of absence of toilet facilities at home and its impact on school education of children.



From the given graph it can be concluded that maximum number of families of dropped out children had safe drinking water facilities at their home. A very few number of families did not have safe drinking water facility at their home. The families which were not having safe drinking water facilities were belonging to notified/de-notified tribe families where there was no permanent

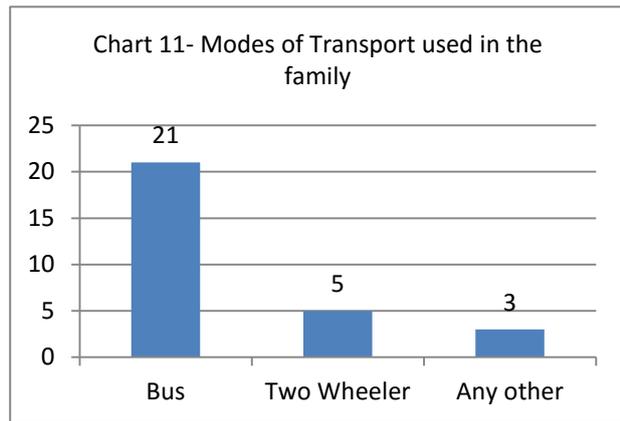
source of water. There were two source of water supply in the intervention area; the first was the tap water which was being supplied by Delhi Jal Board and the second source was supply through water tankers.

From the given graph it can be concluded that almost half of the families covered during the survey were living in pukka houses and rest of the families were having kuccha houses. Despite having pukka house many of the families were not having toilet facilities at their home. Absence of toilet facilities was found both in pukka and kuccha houses.

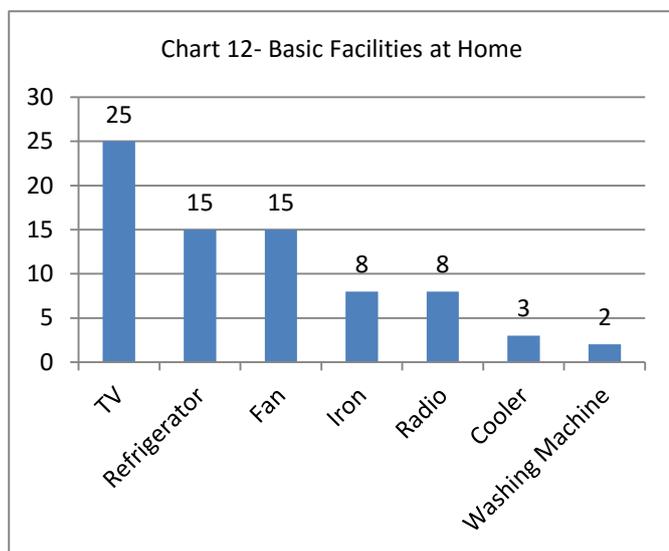


source of water. There were two source of water supply in the intervention area; the first was the tap water which was being supplied by Delhi Jal Board and the second source was supply through water tankers.

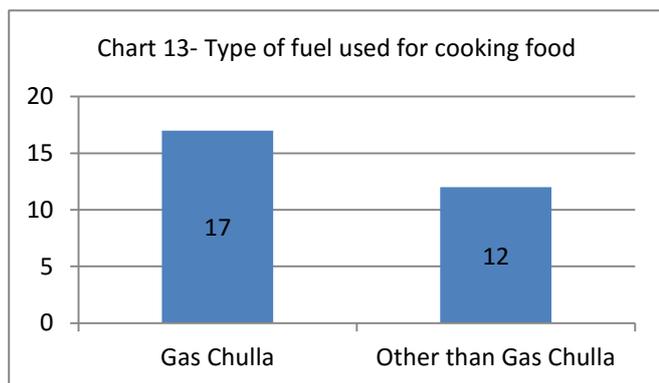
The distribution of family income goes to various expenses at household level and one such regular expense is the kind of transport used for day to day commutation. The research analysis found that Bus was the major source of transportation in the families, however, out of twenty-nine families; five of them used two wheeler and three families used other than bus and two wheelers to commute.



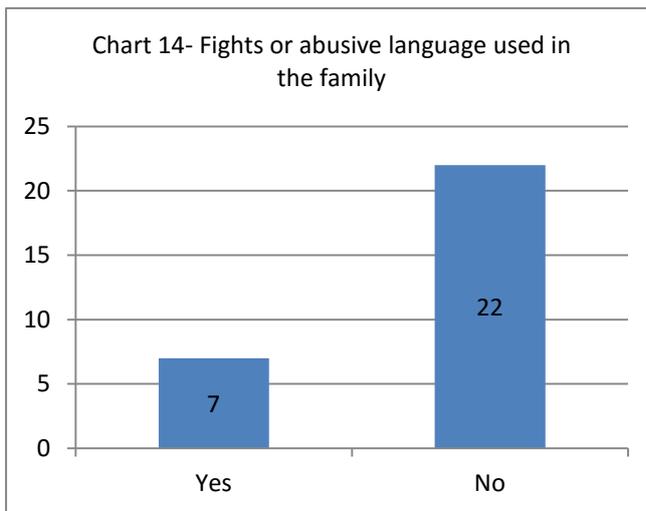
We can see from the given below chart that maximum number of families covered during the survey have TV at their homes. Although, the research analysis did not cover the availability of TV with either cable connection or DTH services, however, as per the observation of field researchers, majority of the families had DTH services. Similarly, availability of refrigerator, fan, cooler etc. shows that items for basic necessities are available, though major emphasis is on television.



The given graph shows that only fifty-nine per cent families of dropped out children used Gas *chullah* to cook food. Rest forty-one per cent families used other modes as well like wood, coal etc. Despite having other basic facilities at household level, still a large proportion of people do not own gas-chullah connection at their home.

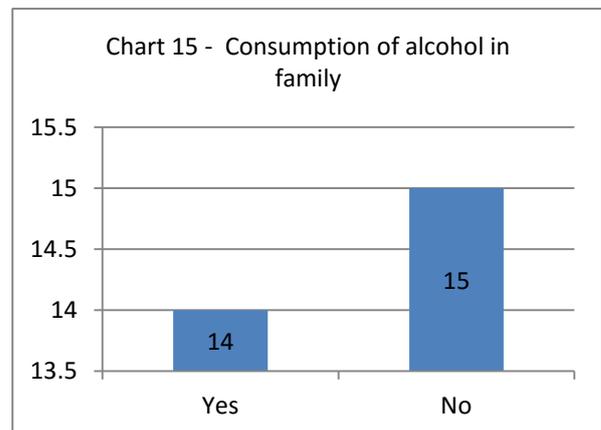


## Section – IV – Family Environment

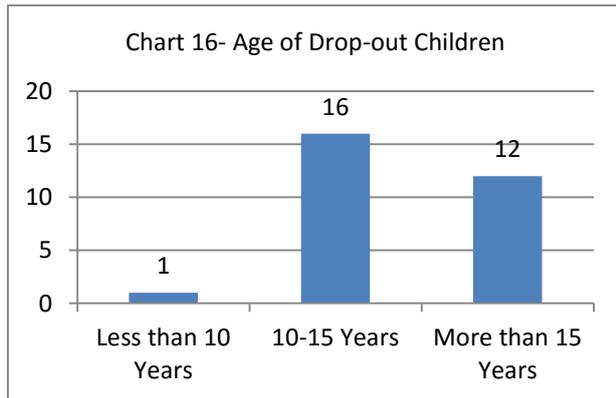


Although we tried to find out whether any abusive language used in families with either children or within household members nothing much came out of it as only seven families were found where fights happened or abusive language used in family. Many children or their mothers were found restricted on the given question and were not opened up much to answer.

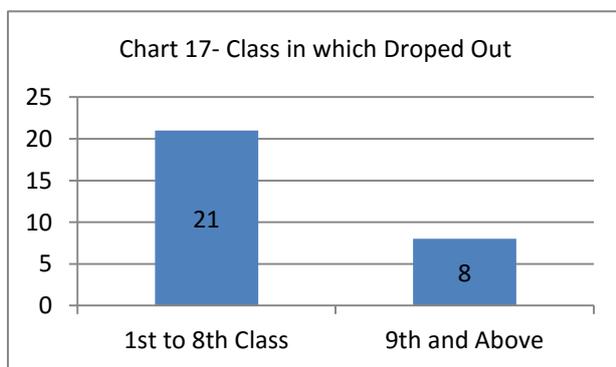
Forty-eight per cent families covered during the research study were found consuming alcohol. Consumption of alcohol in families might be one of the reasons to fight and use abusive language; however, in this research we did not find any link between the consumption of alcohol and education of children. Even the research study did not conduct any in-depth analysis of the same keeping in view the overall objective of the study.



## Section – V – Drop-Out Scenario in the Community

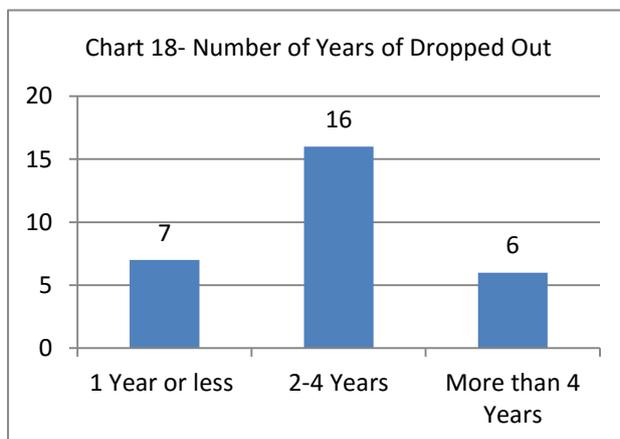


From the given graph it can be seen that the age of maximum number of children who have dropped out is between 10-15 years of age which is followed by children above 15 years of age. In total 28 children were being dropped-out between the age group of 10-18 years.



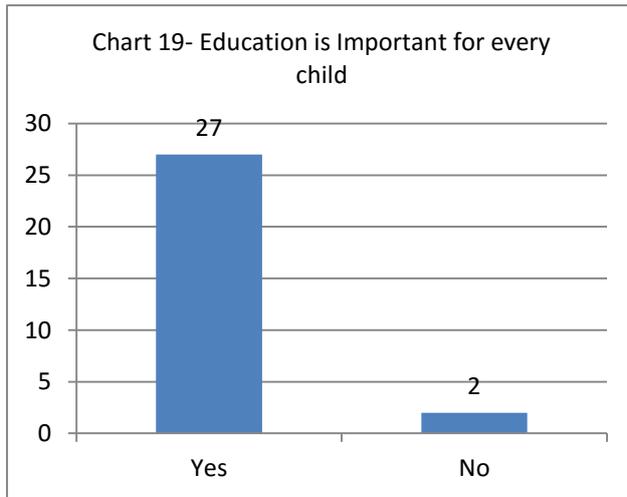
Large proportion of children who were dropped out were between class 1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> and were more than children who were dropped out in standard 9<sup>th</sup> and above.

The given chart shows that out twenty-nine children seven children were dropped in less



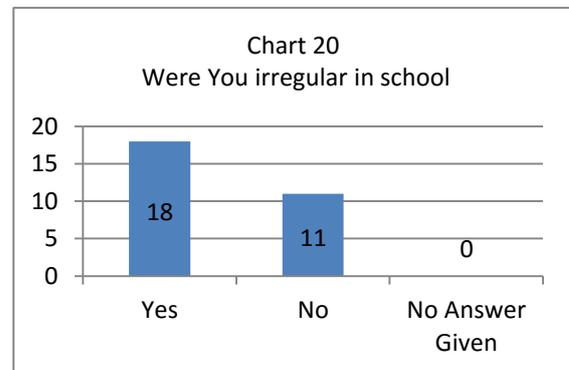
than one year before; sixteen children were dropped between 2-4 years ago and six children were dropped more than four years ago.

## Section – VI – Digging the Causes for Drop-Out

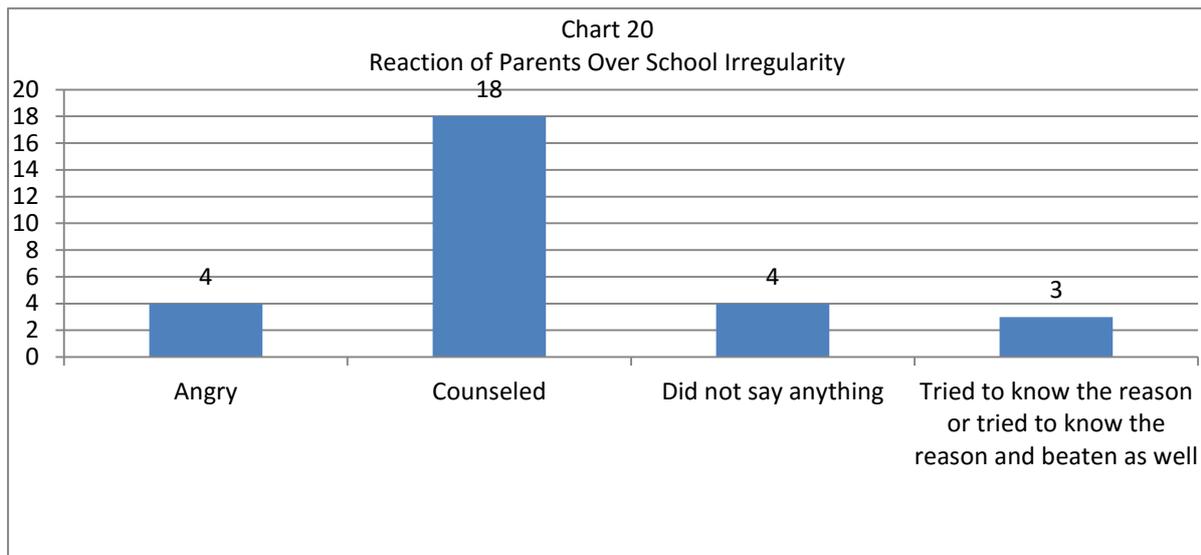


Maximum number of children realised the need of education and said that education is important for every child. Very few children did not realise the importance of education. Maximum numbers of children were enrolled in school by their parents. Very few children were enrolled in school by some other person than their parents like brother/sister or any other relative or any NGO etc.

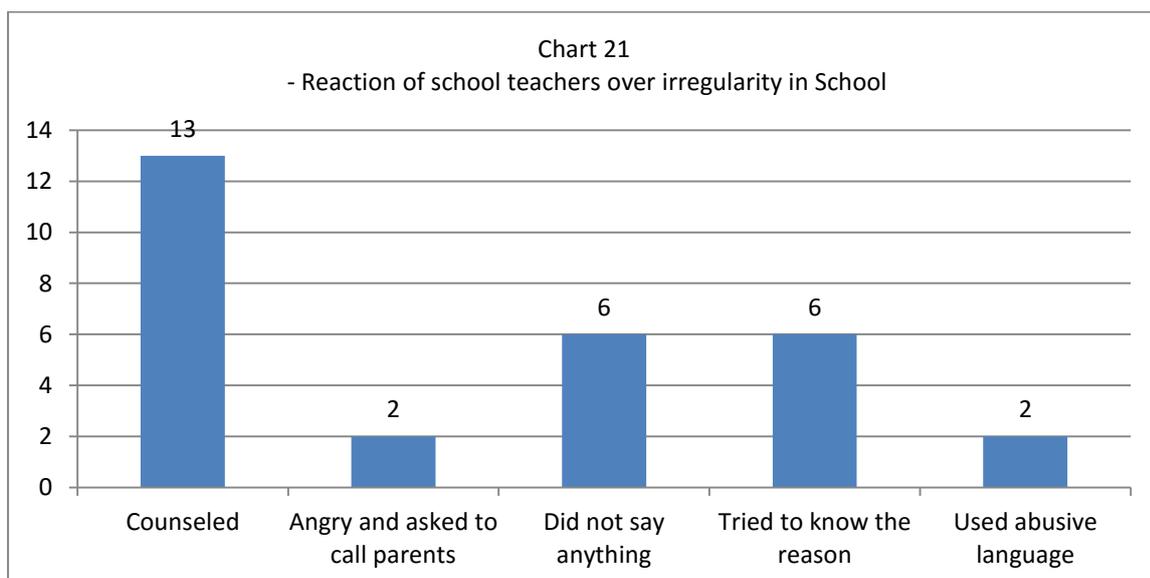
Out of the total sample forty per cent children were irregular in school before finally being dropped-out from school. It was quite interesting to know that in eighty-three per cent families, parents asked from the child the reasons for becoming irregular in schools, however, none of the family members prevented from being dropped-out of school.



In fourteen per cent families, parents became angry over irregularity in school; in sixty-two per cent case parents counselled their child to regularly attend the school; in ten per cent case parents tried to know the reasons and beaten the child as well; and, in fourteen per-cent case parents did not say anything to their child.



In respect to the reaction of teachers over irregularity of children in schools, it can be seen that in forty-five per cent case teachers counselled the children to become regular in attending school. The remaining fifty-five per cent teachers became angry, did not say anything, tried to know the reason or used abusive language.



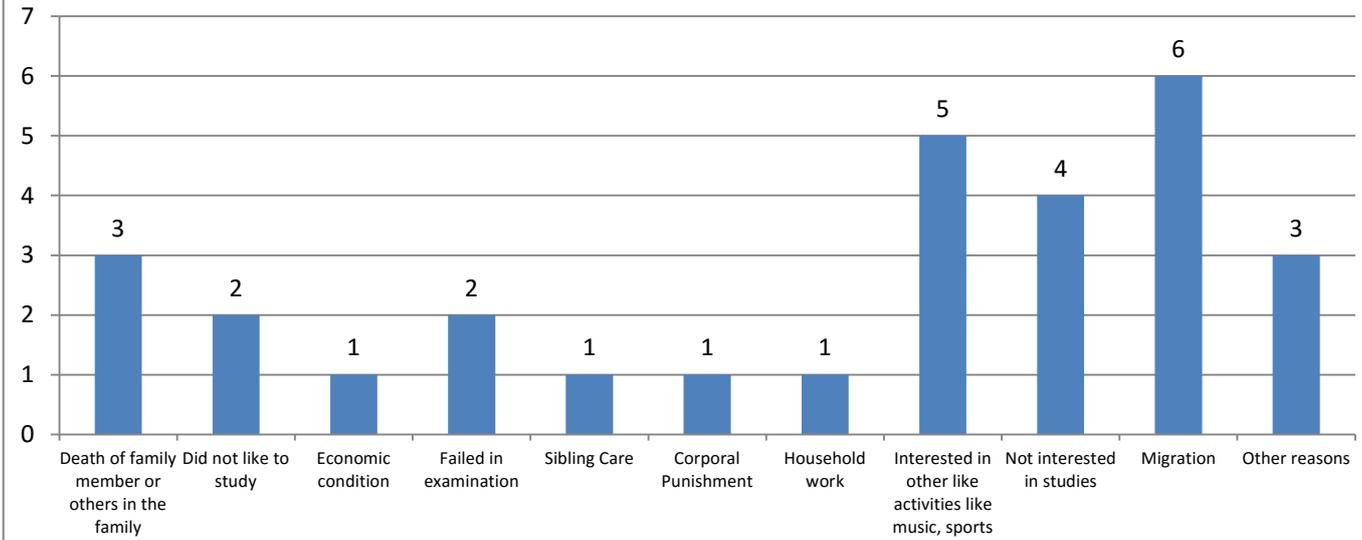
The below given chart provides a detailed information as to the reasons for being dropped-out from school. We can see that most of the children leave schools due to migration as parents occupation is not fixed; the ratio of children involved in household work in almost equal as parents go for labour work and the elder one has to take care of all siblings and even do household work.

As one more reason of dropout also comes from the environment of the children where they used to live in, some of the children in their neighbour or friends were also not interested in studies and as peer-groups they sometime lost interest in studies.

Corporal Punishment was also among one the causes of school drop-out. During our research we found that one of the students left the school just because he was unable to do the homework as he was busy in completing works of others subjects and the teacher had beaten him so vigorously that he was unable to attend school for almost 3 months. As a result he left the school.

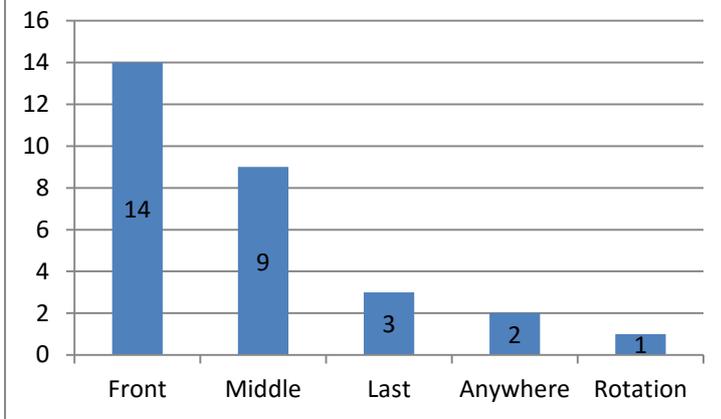
The children who were dropped-out from school were found interesting in other activities like music, sports and other co-curricular activities. There were instances when children were failed in examination and never went to school again. Children were stop going to school due to economic condition of family; death of any family member.

Chart 22  
- Reasons to leave school



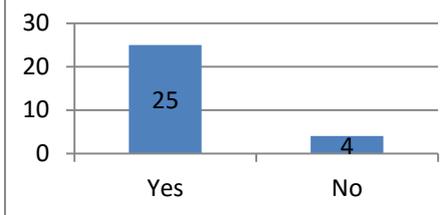
### Section – VII – School Environment

Chart - 23 Sitting Arrangements



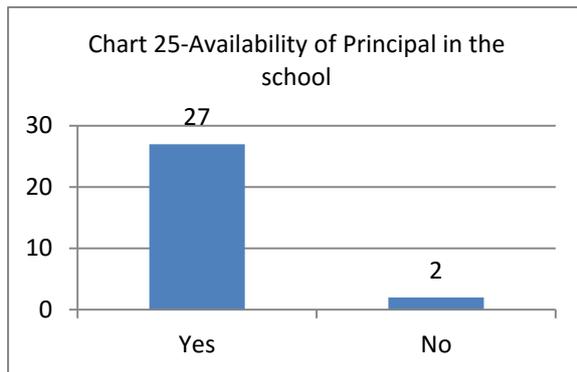
Many of the children who were dropped-out from school were either used to sit in front or middle rows followed by certain children who used to sit in the last row, anywhere and on rotation basis.

Chart 24 Class teacher use to come regularly



The graph provides as maximum no. of class teachers use to come regularly. As there are exceptional in every case and situation some doesn't come regularly due to some household work or other activity.

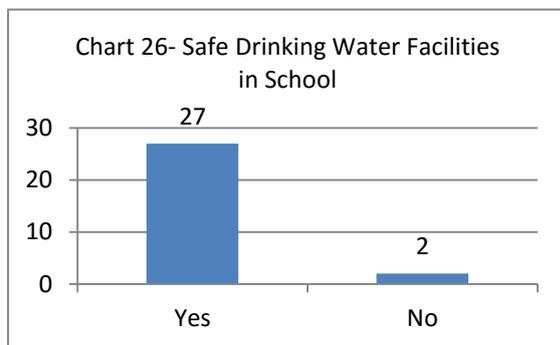
## Availability School Principal and Teachers in Schools



According to the survey held almost every school has principals but as we can see from the graph two students have said that there school do not have school principal.

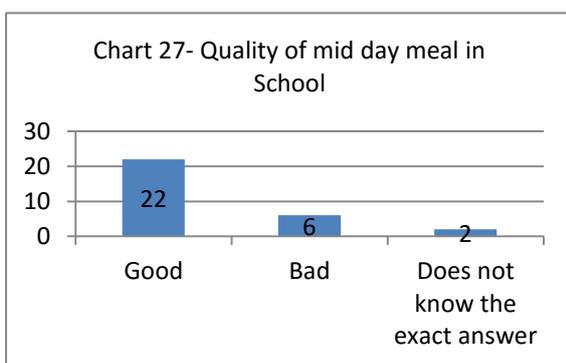
During the discussion it was not informed by the respondents as for how long the vacancies were there in their school.

## Basic facilities which were provided/functional in schools



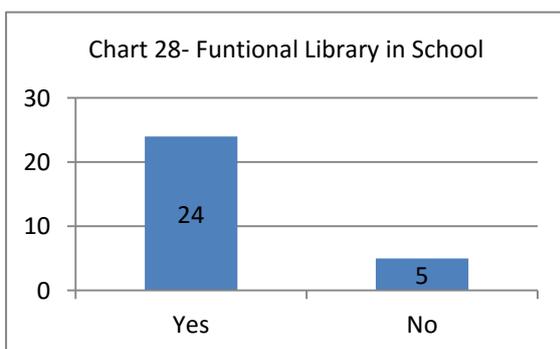
From the graph it can be concluded that the maximum number of schools have safe drinking water facility. A very few school did not provide safe drinking water facility at their school. No further details were provided by the respondents as to the reasons for unsafe drinking water in the school.

In the above chart it shows that in most of the school good quality of mid-day meal was being



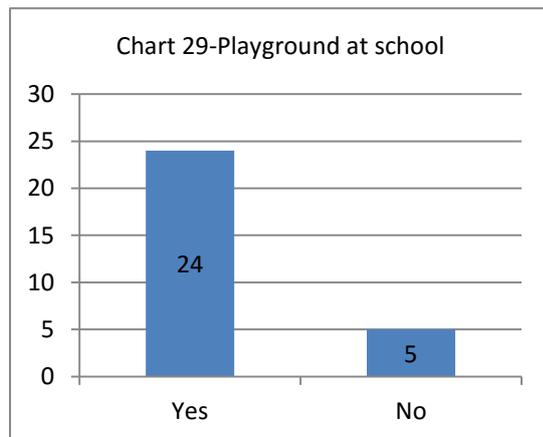
provided to students. The respondents further informed that they found mid-day meal good only if it tastes well while eating.

We did not find any direct linkage between mid-day meal and school enrolment from the respondents.



Some of schools does not have functional library. Library should have number and various types of books and even benches should be provided so students can sit and can read the books as some schools floor covers instead of benches. No such information was provided by the respondents instead the informed that

separate libraries were there in the school which were functional and accessed sometime by students.

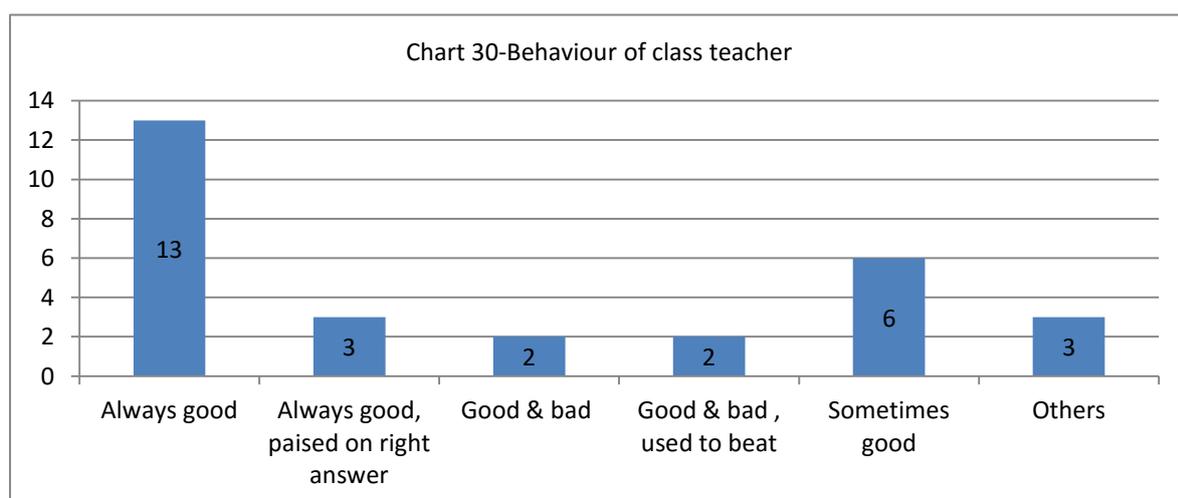


The given chart shows the non-availability of playgrounds in five schools. Right to Education Act, mandated that every school should have playgrounds where students can play and spend time in recreational activities.

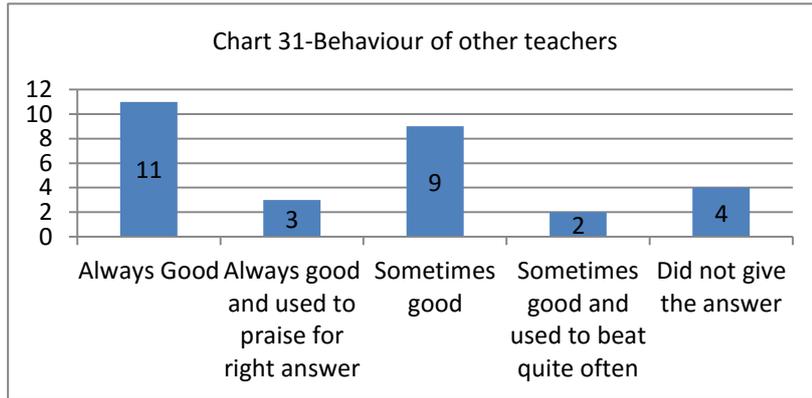
However, unavailability of playground in these schools must have restricted the physical work the students would get involved into during sports period, physical exercise, playing outdoor games etc. Out of twenty-nine respondents who were studying in these schools seven students informed that no sports equipment's were provided to them while they were in school.

### Mapping of Behaviour with Children

As we can see behaviour of class-teachers were always good with thirteen respondents, while with other they used to praise as well, and a combination of good and bad, used to beat, sometimes good. There was a mix response from the students over behaviour of class-teacher. Among the respondents, there was one student who got dropped-out from school as he was beaten serious by the class-teacher.

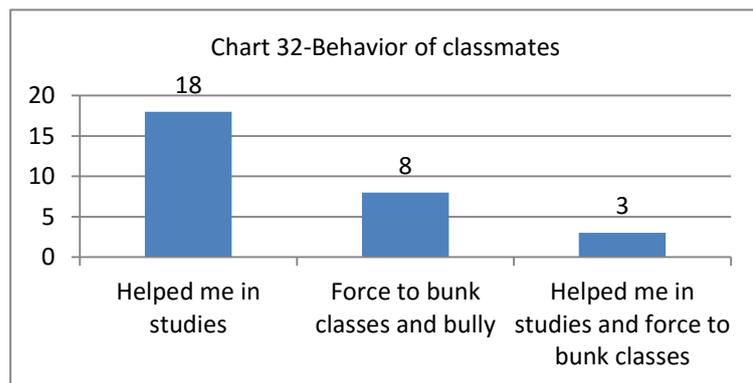


We also tried to capture the behaviour of other school teachers with students in which the percentage went down when only eleven respondents informed that behaviour of teachers

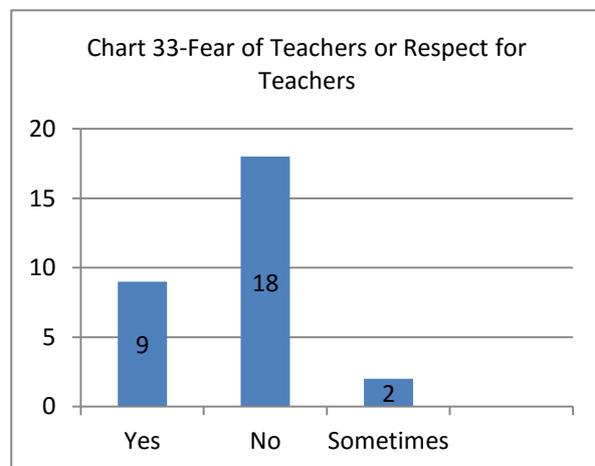


were good when they were in schools. Many of the school teachers either behave sometime well and beaten up the students. Four respondents did not want to give any specific reply for this question. Contrary to the behaviour of class-teacher and other school teachers, twenty-one respondents informed that behaviour of school principal had always been good with them, while six respondents responded 'No'. There was one instance in which the respondent never saw the school principal while he was in school.

We also tried to capture the behaviour of classmates with the respondents while they were studying in school. We can see from the given chart that out of twenty-nine respondents in eleven instances other classmates forced the respondents to either bunk school classes or helped in studies together with class bunk.



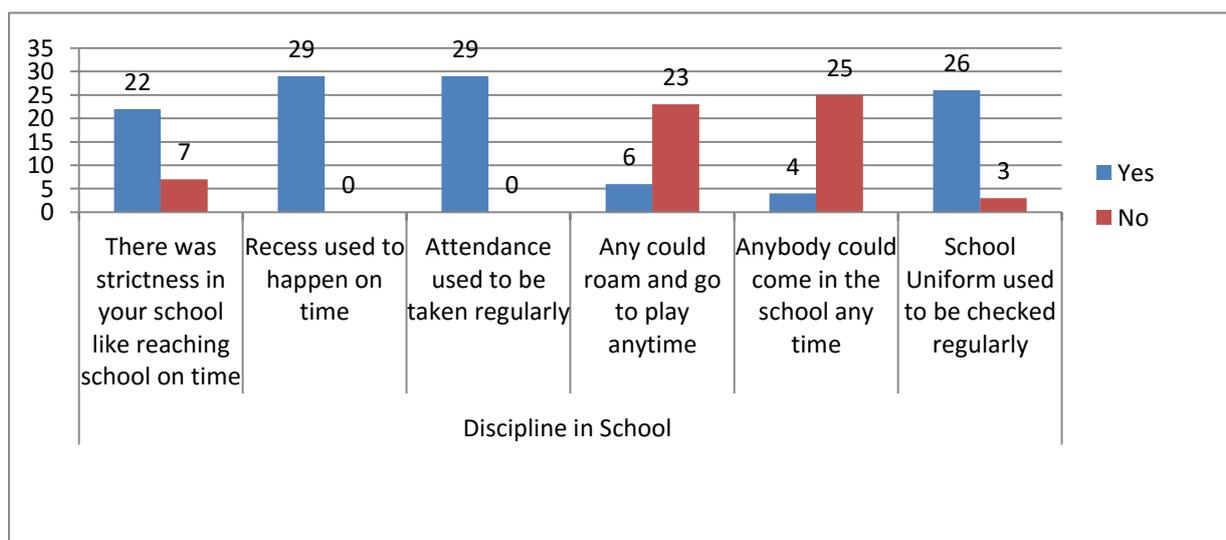
Surprisingly, there was neither fear of teachers nor respect for them in maximum cases during their school time which was a matter of concern while writing this report as 'where we are leading to' what could have been the reasons for increasing dis-respect among the school students. We have not dig in much in this aspect due to research limitations.



It should be part of research analysis as to the factors or reasons creating a bridge between students and teachers.

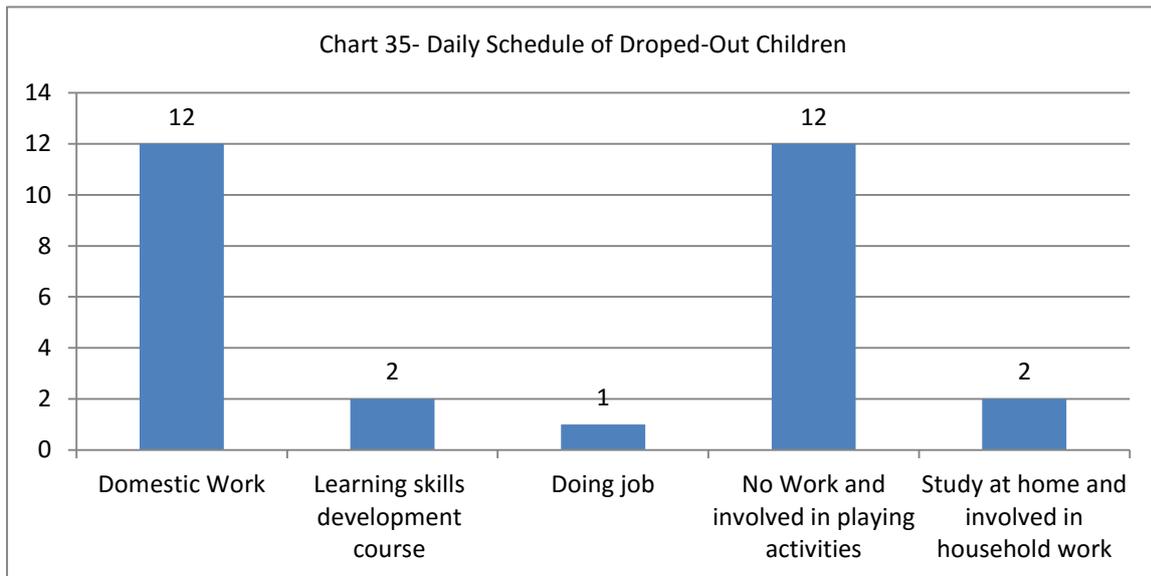
### School Discipline

From the given chart it can be seen that the school environment in which the respondents studied show that the school authorities provided time for recess and were concerned about the attendance of the child. There was strictness in many schools and only a few respondents said that there was no strictness at all in their respective schools. The school uniform used to be checked in almost every school. Also, maximum number of respondents informed that they could not roam and go to play around at any time or come to school at any time. Again, a very few respondents said that they could roam and go to play around at any time or come to school at any time.

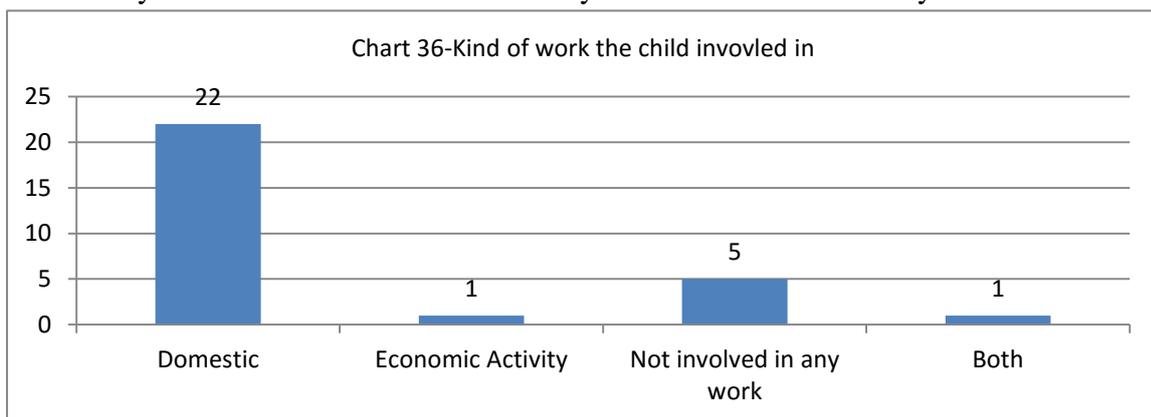


### Section – VIII – Current Situation and Future Prospects

From the given chart it can be seen that after observing the daily schedule of the respondents it was observed that the maximum number of them were either involved in domestic activities or they did not do any kind of work and were involved playing activities. Only two respondents were involved in skill development course and study at home and involved in household work together.

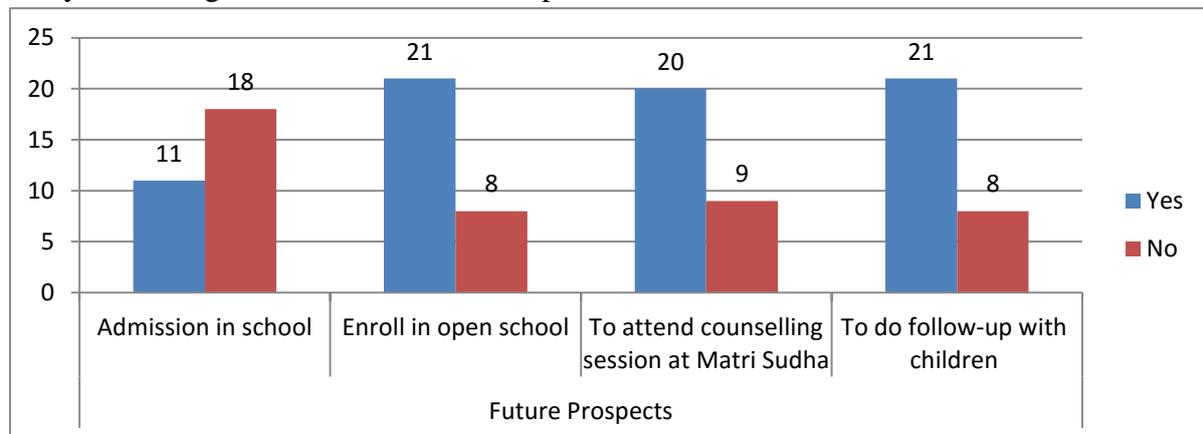


From the given chart, it can be seen that the maximum number of respondents was involved in domestic work. A majority of children who dropped out of school got involved in domestic work. Very few of them were involved in any kind of economic activity or no work at all.



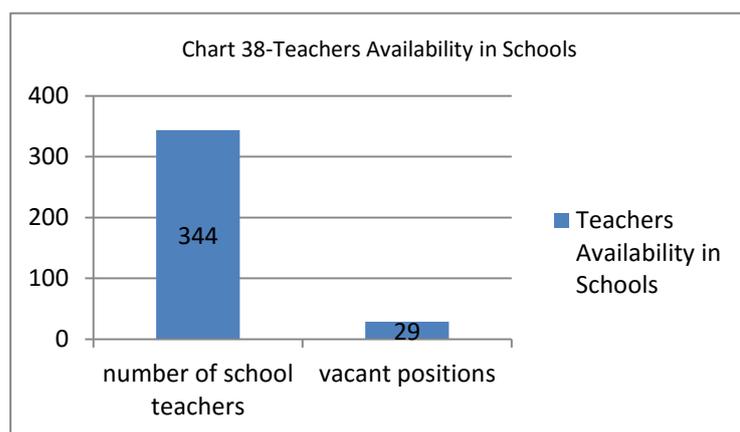
We can see from the given chart that the number of respondents who again wanted to get enrolled in school was less as compared from that of who did not want to. After a long break from studies many of the respondents had lost their interests or were engaged in some domestic work. Some of the respondents who were age 18 years and above engaged in economic activities by doing labour work or getting skills development training. Some did not want to join because of corporal punishment as well.

There was fear among respondents in going to school again as they left the school for long and how would be they treated was a matter of concern, therefore, many of them wanted to study but through distance education or open schools.



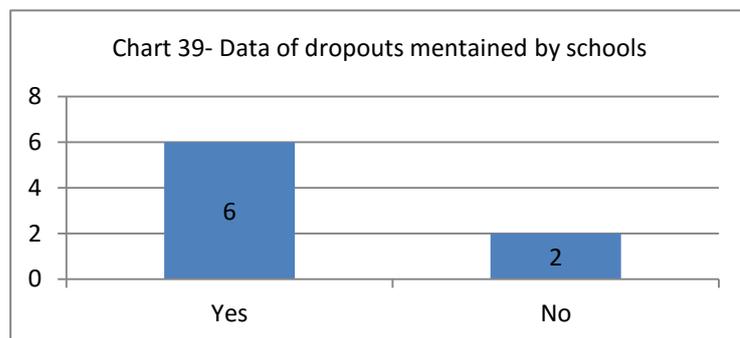
### Section – IX Views of School Authorities

We can see from the given chart that out of 8 schools covered during the drop-out assessment survey that 29 positions were vacant in the schools.



We can see from the given chart that out of 8 schools covered during the drop-out assessment

survey that 6 schools have maintained the data of the dropouts whereas 2 schools still did not maintain the data of dropout children. There were no specific reasons for not maintaining the drop-out school data.



Also out of 8 schools covered during the drop-out assessment

survey 4 schools answered in negation when question relating to corporal punishment was asked whereas 4 schools did not want to talk about this. During the assessment it was also observed that one of the schools was confused and said they do not maintain the data while approximately there might be 30-40 students from their school. Two schools gave additional information on data of the dropouts, one of which said that dropouts may be 60-70 students

from their school while another school said 150 students have dropped out from their school in last few months respectively.

During the drop-out assessment survey 8 schools were covered and all the 8 schools were questioned that “Whether you have Management committee in the school?” all the schools answered in affirmation that the school have school management committees. Also Continuous and Comprehensive evaluation of sheet each student would be maintained by each school however only one school stated that they do maintain but they have started this recently.

### **Variations in Reasons for Being Dropped Out**

As per the findings it could be seen that school authorities were given different answers in respect to the children getting dropped out from school which were as follows:

#### **No Detention Policy and RTE Act**

As per the school authorities show that the main reason for the children being dropped out is due to Right to Education Act which emphasizes on “No Detention Policy”. No Detention Policy was being considered as one of the root causes for the children

One of the School Principals was very aggressive and frustrated over and her behaviour showed that she did not like to put in extra efforts for the drop outs.

being dropped out. One of the school principals added that ‘the children know that they cannot be detained till class 8<sup>th</sup> and therefore they take their studies lightly. As a result, they do not study but keep on getting promoted to the next class. Now since the basics are not clear, when the children come in class 9<sup>th</sup>, they fail to understand what is being taught to them and as a result they get failed in examination. Also, no extra efforts are being put forward by the children and their parents’. Another principal of the school added that “No Detention Policy” makes the students carefree and they become careless for their studies and as a result

“During a conversation with a worker of the school it was seen that the school authorities did not behave well with the children. The children were beaten and abused. They were not provided with drinking water and the teachers get their work done from the children”.

get dropped out of school. The RTE Act was blamed for the children being dropped out in some other schools as well.

### **Migration**

Adding on other reasons, it was also found out that since children stop going to school when they go back to their native places for a long time, the child name is being struck off from the school and as a result he or she becomes a drop out. Sometimes, people migrate to some other place and leave the school. Some of them join schools in the other place but many do not join school after that and become drop outs.

### **Blame over NGOs**

Blame was put on NGOs for making children aware of the “No Detention Policy” and it was said that “it is due to these NGOs spreading awareness only that the students have started taking studies so lightly”.

### **Education is not important for Slum Children**

Apart from stating migration and RTE act as key reasons for children being dropped out school authorities also blamed slums for the children being dropped out. The children belonging to slums are poor. Their mentality is not good and do not give emphasis on studies. They do not want to study and do not let other people study as well. This was shared by one of the school Principals while holding discussion with him.

### **Other Reasons**

Other than the above given reasons learning household work, poor conditions of the family and employment were some of the other reasons for the children being dropped out from school. People who are poor do not think education is that important and lay more emphasis of the employment of their children. They are concerned with money so they make their children leave school and go out for work so that they can make some money.

The principal of other school said “due to household conditions children may leave school. As an example quoted by the school principal, it can be seen that the reason of the domestic conditions also prevails-“Most of the parents go outside for labour work, there has to be somebody to look after the home. So, the child does not go to school and look after his/her home. Poverty is yet another reason which makes parents think that making a child work is more important than making a child educated. On one hand where children leave school due to household work and responsibilities, on the other hand one of the other reasons stated itself by one of the school authorities is that the private school children or the English Medium

school children are given more preference than the government school children which builds up another reason for the children being dropped out.

Apart from the above analysis, there were schools that hesitated in sharing some basic information about the school. One school principal asked for the authority letter to visit the school and one of the principals behaved in a strange and hesitant manner. She cancelled the partially filled form and straight forwardly refused to share any information regarding her school.

### **Section X- Suggestive Measures to Reduce Drop-Out**

The research report puts reflection on the causes or factors of children being dropped-out from school need to relook both by the law makers and other stakeholders which carry a vision as 'education for all' and how the increasing gap between children and teachers in particular and other stakeholders in general could be bridged. Some of the preventive measures could be:-

1. Socio-economic status variables like socio economic background, family structure, etc., are unlikely to change but alterable variables such as access to schooling facilities, attendance, improvement in infrastructure, flexible curriculum and teacher motivation could be modified to improve the retention rate of these children
2. Teachers also have to make an extra effort to counteract dropout by understanding, stimulating, supporting, and guiding the students in their studies
3. Since the symptoms of dropping out such as absenteeism, poor performance in the school examination, etc., begin to show at the elementary school level, prevention strategies need to be initiated at this stage itself

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