



UiO : **Department of Culture Studies
and Oriental Languages**
University of Oslo

Accessing education in India

A case study of out-of-school children in an East Delhi Slum.



Friendship and rangoli-making in preparation for Diwali celebrations. (photo: the authors' own.)

Project report submitted to ISST and UiO as a part of an internship at ISST and a MA in South Asian studies from UiO, December 2011.

AAS4900
International Project Semester
Candidate number: 5454
Extent 25 pages
Fall 2011

Table of contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Slum children and Primary education in India.....	4
2.1 Right to Education Act (RTEA)	
2.2 Education for all – where are we today?	
2.3 The various reasons for non-attendance	
3. The case study – Accessing education in Kalyanpuri.....	7
3.1 Characteristics of the area	
3.2 ISSTs interventions	
3.3 Methodology and fieldwork	
3.4 Findings	
<i>3.4.1 Stories of children and their families</i>	
<i>3.4.2 Challenges in the fieldwork</i>	
3.5 Summary and main findings	
4. Conclusion.....	22
5. References.....	25

1. Introduction¹

This project will seek to elucidate on the reasons why some children are not enrolled in school despite educational facilities existing nearby or in the community itself. As its point of departure is the Institute of Social Studies Trusts (ISST) *Bachpan* programme, a programme catering to children in the slum of Kalyanpuri. Their latest addition is a small centre located right in the middle of the community, in a small, narrow *gali* known as gali nr. 18. This has proven to be immensely popular, especially with young girls, as an addition to their more formal schooling. At first it was envisioned to be a centre who would care for the community's smaller children, but it was soon clear that older children, and their families, found it very useful. Now the centre, and the only teacher Sunita, cater to two main groups of children every day. The vast majority of the older group are girls, but in the younger group it is more a mixture of boys and girls. Sometimes, the older children also bring their small siblings to class. This is encouraged, as it frees the mothers to work without having to leave their children at home unsupervised. This also, ISST believe, keeps older girls from dropping out of their education to take care of their younger siblings.

However, there are a few children who attend the centre (some of them regularly, some more sporadically) who are not currently enrolled in school. The main questions this report will try to answer, are: What are the priorities, considerations and concerns of the families where children are not being sent to school? Why do these priorities, considerations and concerns exist? How can these priorities better be taken into account to achieve a higher rate of children attending schools, and staying in schools?

My project was to learn about the different children attending the centre, especially the ones currently not enrolled in school, and to use their stories and narratives as a way of illustrating the various challenges in enrolling children from socio-economically weaker sections of the Indian society into formal schooling. How they speak about themselves not being enrolled and how they act in the *balwadi* might give us valuable information on how they “negotiate” their lives and identities.

The topic of this project report was decided in collaboration with ISST. Education is one of their highest priorities in Kalyanpuri, and as they are just starting a programme revolving around children with special needs (CWSN) and education, this project will also try to contribute to the research needed here. Could this be the reason why a few of the children are not attending formal

¹ This project report was written while the author was an intern at the Institute of Social Studies Trust, New Delhi, as part of a Masters degree in South Asian studies at the University of Oslo. This report would never have seen the light of day were it not for Ratna M. Sudarshan, the very patient director at ISST, my supervisors Geir Heierstad and Berit Thorbjørnsrud in Oslo, and last but not least the children and all «my» colleagues at ISST's community centre in Kalyanpuri. Especially Neeraj-ji, the teacher, deserves a big thank you for taking on a completely new and foreign student into her classes, ever-patient and ever-ready to answer my sometimes ignorant questions. All the names of informants and Saathi centre staff has been changed. The responsibility for any errors of reasoning or facts rest entirely with the author.

school, or is this irrelevant? This report will necessarily also have some closing observations and recommendations regarding the further implementation of the *Bachpan* programme and the running of the *balwadi*.

2. Slum children and primary education in India

This chapter will briefly elucidate on the state of primary education in India, and especially the reasons why many poor children are not attending school. It is also an attempt of putting this project report into a broader relevance by describing some of the main issues in achieving education for all in India. Also, it is important to keep in mind that my informants' reality is part of the bigger reality of education in Delhi and India, even though the results from this small project cannot be said to be representative for children all over this vast country.

2.1 The Right to Education Act

As of 2009, every child between six to fourteen years in India has the legal right to free and compulsory education. The 86th Constitution amendment, The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE), states that government schools shall provide free education to all children, and that private schools shall admit at least 25% of the children without any fee, to be subsidized by the State at the rate of average per learner costs in the government schools (icbse.com). The Central and State governments will share the financial responsibilities for implementing the RTE, however, there will be a funding gap which needs to be solved by partners from civil society, development agencies, corporate organizations and the citizens of India. This is in line with a broader collaboration between the Government and Civil Society Organizations in the overall development project in India.

The RTEA serves as a building block to ensure that every child has his or her right to get a quality elementary education provided by the State, with the help of families, communities and the civil society. All schools must comply with infrastructure and teacher requirements as set by the government, and the government will seek to support all initiatives to reach this goal. It is expected in the act that schools will put together School Management Committees (SMCs), which will monitor the use of government grants, form School Development Plans and to supervise the overall learning environment of the schools. According to the RTE, 50% women and parents from children from disadvantaged groups should be included in SMCs, to ensure a school beneficial for all children, and to ensure school quality as well as equity (Unicef India).

RTE is an attempt to reach the previously unreached, and includes specific provisions for disadvantaged groups, such as child laborers, migrant children, children with special needs, or those with other “disadvantage owing to social, cultural, economical, geographical, linguistic or such

other factor.” (Unicef, RTE: Frequently asked questions) To ensure success, however, the Act is dependent on, and actively pursues the collaboration of the civil society to actively go into communities to ensure children are enrolled and retained in schools. To reach out to the most educationally deprived children, this is a must, as ISSTs efforts in Kalyanpuri is also an example of. As an estimated eight million Indian children in the age group six-fourteen years does not attend school, this act should be of the highest priority (Biswas, 2010). Enhanced public awareness and substantial efforts will have to be made to make the RTE a reality, and many things are happening in India today, both on part of the Government and the NGO sector.

2.2 Education for All – where are we today?

Even though there has been a vast improvement in enrollment numbers of children in primary school in recent years, there are still around 8 million children not enrolled in formal schooling in India today, with 1.3 million of these living in Urban India. However, India is well on its way of achieving the Millennium Development Goal of achieving primary education for all by 2015, in part because of sustained interventions under the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) and the Mid Day Meal (MDM) Scheme. The gender parity in completing education has also improved greatly since 2001. (Unicef, 2011). The implementation of the Right to Education Act in 2009 is believed to further improve the situation of primary education in India, and many NGOs and civil society organizations are focusing on education. More and more parents, especially from disadvantaged sections, acknowledge the fact that education is an investment, and will do a lot to try to ensure good education for their children.

The main problem today lies not in getting children enrolled in formal school – it is in retaining them there. According to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2009, only 75% of the children enrolled in primary school would attend on a random day (Unicef, 2011). The drop-out rates are high, especially when shifting from primary to secondary education levels. According to Khasnabis and Chatterjee, the students from the disadvantaged sections of society more frequently drops out than other students, and they are also frequently the “over-age” students – children enrolled standards they are formally too old to attend, because they lack the academical requirements to advance further up the educational ladder. This is, amongst other aspects, because of the low quality of a lot of the primary education today, but also because the communities the children inhabit are not optimal to pursue studies in (Khasnabis and Chatterjee, 2007).

Research show that there is still a gap between social strata in India regarding who attends, and benefits, from education, and who does not. This is a many-faceted challenge. To really ensure education for all in India, it is not enough to ensure enrollment, one must also actively work with the quality of the education within schools, as well as to try to improve the

socio-economic situation of disadvantaged children. To make special arrangements for students from disadvantaged groups of society, in the form of for instance study groups and informal educational facilities, might also help.

2.3 Various Reasons for non-attendance

There are many reasons why children in India are not regularly attending school. As Barbara Harriss-White states, one of the main reasons for children not attending school is that their families need the income their children are able to contribute with doing casual labour, or they are needed to look after their younger siblings while the parents are working (Harriss-White, 2003). But contrary to what one perhaps initially expects, experience has shown that poverty is not the only aspect keeping these children out of school.

Other reasons involve a lack of teachers and schools to cope with the possible demand of 8 million new school children. In addition, rumors are spreading of governmental schools of so poor quality that parents do not see the value of sending their children to them. The bad reputation of some government schools is further often believed to be valid for all government schools, leading to a deep distrust for the governmental education system overall. The poor quality of education also makes it hard for many children to advance from the primary to the secondary level of education, as they fail entrance exams because of their low skills. They are thus either kept back a year, leading to many “over-age” children in age-specific relevant classes, or they drop out. (Khasnabis, Chatterjee, 2007). Especially children from disadvantaged families suffer from the poor quality of government schools, as they are the ones attending them. Most families, if they have the money, opt to send their children to private schools which are widely regarded as much better quality (Ramachandran, 2003).

Further, some families might be reluctant to send their children to school if they have to travel a big distance from their homes. This is especially true for girls, and thus it is important to have a sufficient number of educational facilities in the vicinity of all settlements. Adaptive preferences, where preferences are adjusted after the expectations one has being socialized into a certain community, might also play a role. According to Nussbaum, this might lead to girls thinking education is not important for them, or that it is “natural” that boys should be more educated than girls (Nussbaum, 2004). Further, according to social norms girls are supposed to help their mothers in the household, perhaps taking care of their younger siblings, after a certain age, and their education typically takes a backseat to their duties. This was found to a certain extent in this study, however, it was most apparent where the mother where also working outside the home.

Migration is another reason for not attending school, and especially plays a part in children dropping out. Many of my informants had attended school in their villages before migrating to

Delhi, and could not be enrolled in school in Delhi because of failing to meet the requirements. Further, and more important perhaps, is the fact that others were enrolled in Delhi, and then spent some time in their villages. Coming back to Delhi, they had lost their spot in the school – and they often could not keep up. Seasonal migration, thus, which many families engage in because of the uncertain job market in the informal economy, are one of the main challenges in the sustained retainment of children in schools (Ramachandran, 2003). This is perhaps especially true for younger children if they do not have any relatives to stay with or older siblings to take care of them while their parents migrate. The parents might have no choice but to take them out of school for long periods of time, and as parents often have very low or no education, they also have quite low expectations of their children going far in the educational system.

3. The case study

3.1 Characteristics of the area

Kalyanpuri is a residential suburb in East Delhi, located across the Yamuna river from the “main city” of Delhi. The community in which the field work was conducted is a *jhuggi-jhopri* colony in Indira Camp. *Jhuggi-jhopris* are small, roughly built houses, often consisting of only one small room with few sources of electricity. There are curtains in the doorways instead of proper doors, and most often there are no windows. The *jhuggis* are in very close proximity to each other, divided by very narrow *galis*, with an open drain running down the middle. During the monsoon, the houses frequently get flooded. The youngest children simply use the drain for relieving themselves, whereas the rest of the community has communal hygiene facilities. However, these are reported as too few, and



*The gali in which the balwadi is located.
(Photo: Shalini Rani)*

often not functioning. There are very limited possibilities for privacy in the community. The settlement is notified, though not regulated, which means that the government has to notify the inhabitants before an eventual eviction can take place – but evictions are a possibility.

Most of the families have ration cards and electricity bills, and some even own their *jhuggis*, which makes Kalyanpuri a somewhat fixed settlement. Slum clearance, which the Government of Delhi indulge in from time to time, is unlikely to happen in a large scale here. During the fieldwork, however, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) actually came and tore down a make-shift shop structure one of the families had constructed outside their small house, in which they also run a kiosk. This was done without any notice or warning. Examining the RTI (Right to Information) Help Desk archives, it was found that individual demolishing of *jhuggis* are known to happen. Further, parts of this slum cluster are resettlement colonies, where people have been moved from other slum colonies in Delhi after they had been demolished. Thus, the fear of this happening again is present amongst the inhabitants – especially the ones who have lived there for a while.

There are mostly families with young children living in the area, which is known for its very high crime rate, also among children and adolescents. In fact, this was one of the reasons why ISST was asked to open the centre in the first place, and it also makes it that much more important to keep children in school. The area also has a very high prevalence of alcoholism, drug abuse and gambling – which the out-of-school children also indulge in to pass the time.

Though Kalyanpuri is mostly regarded as a slum community, the socio-economic status of the inhabitants vary quite a lot, and the various blocks and *galis* are quite segregated between different classes, castes and also religious communities. This is interesting in our study of the out-of-school children attending the *Bachpan* centre in the community. Are they from the same background or socio-economic status, or will they vary with the reasons the children give for not attending school? Are the children successfully enrolled in school of a higher socio-economic status, and can this be some of the reason behind their success?



Inside the *balwadi* (Photo: Shalini Rani)

3.2 ISSTs' interventions in Kalyanpuri

ISST has run a community outreach programme since the year 2000, focusing their work in three slum communities in the Trans Yamuna Region. Their Youth Resources Centre, *Saathi*, opened at the Kalyanpuri police station (*thana*) in 2006, and has now become the main centre in which most of their activities are carried out. The *Saathi* centre has several functions that seek to benefit the community as a whole. Perhaps most relevant to this report is that they offer non-formal and remedial education for both school going and non-

school going children, as well as vocational training workshops and very popular 6 month courses in computer use and english for youth. They have recently started a project of building a library at the centre, through which they will try to install the joy of reading in the children and youth by making all kinds of books much more readily available than they have been until now. They will also conduct short teaching sessions in how to best sit and read, and hold a book “correctly” – that this is needed shows how little previous exposure many of these children have had to books.

Their children programme, *Bachpan*, was begun as a response to the needs of young children in the community, as there was no real interventions in the area where the children could spend time doing “wholesome” activities. If left alone at home, and not attending school, a lot of the children would just hang around the community, gambling and indulging in other destructive behavior. The prime objective of the programme is to provide a nurturing environment for the children and to shape their attitudes, behaviors, values, practices, standards, and language abilities using a holistic approach to child development.

Within the *Bachpan* programme ISST also runs a nutritional programme funded by the Australian High Commission, in which all the children attending the centre will get nutritional meals on two random days in one week. In addition to providing vital nutrients to the children and their families, they also teach their families what kind of ingredients are cheap and more nutritious for when they make food at home as well. Lastly, this nutritional programme also functions as an incentive for first, enrolling the children into the *Bachpan* programme, and second, as the nutrition days are kept on random days, as an attempt to ensure more sustained attendance at the centre, so that children will not only show up on the days when they know they will get a meal.

In March 2011, a small centre, a *balwadi* (literally: childrens area), was opened within the community itself, in block 18. The *balwadi* is not supposed to be a full-worthy teaching facility, but rather an additional service meant to teach the children social skills and life skills, as well as to prepare them for or function as an addition to formal education. It is an attempt to achieve the primary goals of the *Bachpan* programme where the *Saathi*-team felt it was needed the most, as the 18 block has been infamous for its low enrollment in formal schools, as well as very high rates of alcoholism, domestic violence and youth crime. It is a quite new outreach to the children of Kalyanpuri, but already very popular, and according to the *Saathi*-team, it has also proved very effective for the overall *mahaul* (atmosphere) of the block.

It functions from 11 a.m 'till around 16.30 p.m, and during that time there are two groups of children being taught by Sunita. Morning classes, from 11 a.m 'till 1 p.m, are for the youngest children, up to 6 years old. They are not yet enrolled in formal schooling because they are too young, and the teacher uses many forms of games, songs and play while teaching them. In the afternoon, from 2 p.m 'till around 4.30 p.m, older kids come to the *balwadi*. They do homework and

spend time with each other, as well as doing different projects and activities together with Sunita.

Almost all of the children who come to the centre regularly attend formal school, but there are some who do not, or who attends only sporadically. The children can be roughly divided into four groups; 1) enrolled in school by parents, 2) never enrolled in school, 3) drop-outs, and 4) newly enrolled, often after a lot of intervention on the part of ISST. In addition, a lot of the children are very frequently absent over periods of time, both from the formal schools and from the *balwadi*.

As of November 2011, 84 children are attending the centre (31 in the younger group, 53 in the older group). The first month of running, 17 small children and 22 older children came to the centre, totaling 39. During the time the *balwadi* have been running, around 25 children have been enrolled in government schools nearby (ISST, 2011, Half year report).

ISST also run a successful RTI help desk, enabling the inhabitants to communicate better with the authorities. This has led to a lot of the inhabitants acquiring their rights, such as ration cards, and birth certificates for their children, as well as being able to report corrupted behavior from government employees and others. The RTI help desk really makes a difference for the inhabitants' empowerment, and is widely utilized. There are also counseling services at the centre, which offer advice and help on anything from career choices for the youth or domestic problems for couples.

Since October 2009, ISST are also managing a Gender Resource Centre (GRC) in block 14, in collaboration with the Delhi government, where they offer vocational classes for women, child care, counseling, awareness building and help in accessing various welfare schemes and rights. The GRCs' main function the last months, however, has been the issuing of UID (Unique Identification) Cards, a government initiative that aims to, in short, make the various welfare schemes and policies more accessible and effective for the targeted groups.

ISST has recently started a programme funded by Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT) especially targeted to the many women domestic workers that live in the area, and are conducting monthly meetings to mobilize the women and spread awareness of their rights, as well as expanding their child care and youth activities so that the women will not have to leave their children unsupervised when they go for work. It is further encouraged that older siblings take their younger siblings with them to attend the *balwadi*, to keep them from having to stay at home alone to care for them.

ISSTs community outreach programme, thus, seek to engage with individuals and communities through a holistic approach, consisting of, amongst other things education, awareness-raising and skill-building activities. They hope to achieve equity and equality by trying to create a space that is inclusive, approachable and accessible, promoting lives of autonomy and dignity in the area. The overarching goal is that ISSTs efforts will contribute to a stronger sense of community and solidarity in the area, making it a safer, more nurturing and better place to live for all.

3.3 Methodology and Fieldwork

A mixture of qualitative methods were utilized to conduct the fieldwork. To begin with, the preferred method was participant observation in order to establish a relationship with the children and the community overall. It was especially important to establish a good relationship with the teacher, with whom I would be working closely with. Some time were spent as a sort of “assistant teacher” in the *Bachpan* centre, where we all chatted informally and got to know each other better. The attendance registry the teacher keeps was also examined. This time made it possible to get an overview of the children and their social interactions as well as with the teacher, as well as first hand information on who are “regulars” at the centre, and who only attend sporadically. The preliminary observations showed that most of the children at the centre actually attend school on a quite regular basis. and a lot of the children in the community in general also attend «tuition», tutoring services provided by other NGOs and groups in the vicinity. A decision was made to focus on the children from the older group that are enrolled at the *balwadi*, but not currently at all in formal schooling – a small group consisting of one boy and six girls. Towards the end of the fieldwork, I was made aware of two more girls that were not attending the *balwadi* regularly, and was also out of school. Their stories were included in the sample.

After the out-of-school children had been identified and I was no longer considered as only a stranger, I started conducting more structured, but still informal interviews with individual children, some of the Saathi centre workers and, when possible, with the mothers of the children. Informal group interviews were also conducted at the *balwadi*, with a mixture of school-going and out-of-school children.

During the fieldwork I also attended a parents' meeting which the teacher tries to hold once a month. Almost without exception, only women will attend these meetings, and many of the children will also be present. This is in part due to the fact that the meeting is held during the day, when most of the fathers are working. This also excludes the working women of the community, who might send older siblings in their place. However, it was also felt that the education of their children are mostly the womens' domain, perhaps because it is regarded as part of child-rearing.

This particular parents' meeting had a very scarce attendance because the women were very busy with preparations for the upcoming Hindu-Festival Diwali, but grievances on both part of the mothers and the teachers were uttered, and the discussion flowed quite freely. Sunita explained the importance of education, and also talked openly about bad habits like gambling and what this might lead to. The parents' meeting was a possibility for me to talk with some of the mothers of the out-of-school children who had been especially difficult to get hold of, as well as explaining my research and present myself to the women properly. Attending this meeting also brought more clarity in what the main challenges of running a *balwadi* like this are – and also what the mothers feel are difficult.

This were particularly interesting as the centre has only been running consistently since March this year, and some of these difficulties, thus, can be regarded as start-up difficulties.

3.4 Findings

The individual children exemplify very different challenges to enroll children from poor, urban areas into formal schooling, also found on a larger scale. The children could be divided into two groups based on their family background and socioeconomic status. The children from the most disadvantaged groups all had parents that sold *jadi booti*, herbal remedies. According to the children, this was a very old tradition in their families, and this, amongst other things, led me to believe that these girls might belong to the Gond tribe, a scheduled tribe. Sunita, however, had the opinion that selling *jadi booti* was not always honest work, and that the people who stood on the side of the road and sold *jadi booti* could be “cheaters”, as they would make pills out of any plant and call them “medicinal” and Ayurvedic. These children also lived in areas of the community I was strongly and repeatedly advised not to enter. Combined, these aspects might lead to the conclusion that the children were from an even more disadvantaged socio-economic group of society. Further, based on the findings of this project, one may say that they have even more difficulty in accessing education – both formal and informal. However, there are also children from the Gond tribe currently enrolled, and thriving both in formal school and in the *balwadi*, so one can not draw the conclusion that all Gond-children struggle. One can, however, say that the children not enrolled in school that were also the ones furthest away from being enrolled in school were from the Gond tribe, and also seemed to be of the most disadvantaged of the children.

Four of the children, the ones attending the *balwadi* very regularly, also attends morning classes at the *Saathi*-centre every day. This is an attempt to eventually “mainstream” them back into the formal schooling system by making sure they get as much time to study as possible in order to catch up. Further, Sunita had individual strategies on how to successfully enroll these children in formal schools.

Unconscious biases might also have an effect on the way the children relate to each other, as well as how the staff relate to the different children. Sunita does an utterly amazing job in trying to reach out to all the children attending the *balwadi*, but some of them might come of as “not making enough of an effort”, instead choosing to spend their time hanging around in the community, and perhaps indulge in gambling. This might lead to a certain sense of resignation on her part, which I noticed during some of our talks, and how she would explain the childrens non-enrollment to me. During the interviews and the participant observation, I could also feel that it was easier to interact with the children I felt *wanted* to learn and to be there. This exemplifies one of the main challenges in running an intervention like this, it is hard to reach out to all the children, and especially, perhaps,

those who would need it the most.

Table 1 is an overview of the out-of-school children. They were found to hail from mainly two states, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, and four of them were also from the Gond tribe. One of them, Roshni, travels a lot with her family and thus it was difficult to pinpoint where she is from. They all live in the 18 block, except Saraswati, who has recently moved to a rented flat with her family in another, more affluent block in the vicinity, and Jyoti, who has not lived in Delhi for very long. Jyoti attends the classes at the *Saathi-centre*, but does not frequently come to the *balwadi* as she has household chores. Except for two, they had all previously attended formal school.

	Age (est.)	Previous schooling	Parents' occupation	Siblings	Regular attendance	Originally from	Block
Rajiv	10	yes	Both: Construction workers Sister: Housewife Sisters husband: Kingfisher (office)	Yes, youngest brother	Yes	Uttar Pradesh	18
Radha	13	yes	Father: sells <i>cholley</i> (snack) Mother: Housewife	Yes, oldest sister in house	Yes	Uttar Pradesh	18
Saraswati	14	yes	Father: Driver Mother: Housewife	Yes, oldest sister	Yes	Uttar Pradesh	Previously 18,15
Anjani	13	no	Father: Sells <i>jadi booti</i> Mother: Sells <i>jadi booti</i>	Yes, oldest sister in house	No	Maharashtra Gond tribe	18
Thanvi	6	no	Father: passed away Mother: Unemployed	Yes, oldest sister	No	Maharashtra Gond tribe	18
Asha	10	yes	Father: Sells <i>jadi booti</i> Mother: Sells <i>jadi booti</i>	Yes, youngest sister	No	Maharashtra Gond tribe	18
Roshni	10	yes	Father: Sells <i>jadi booti</i> Mother: Housewife	Yes	No	Not found Gond tribe	18
Jyoti	14	yes	Father: Sells tomatoes Mother: Seamstress	Yes, eldest sister	Yes, to the <i>Saathi-centre</i>	Bihar	12
Kareena	10	yes	Father: Sells <i>jadi booti</i> Mother: Sells <i>jadi booti</i>	Yes	No	Maharashtra Gond	18

Table 1: Overview of children

3.4.1 Stories of the children and their families

Rajiv: The only boy coming to the older group at the *balwadi*, Rajiv, is 10 years old and does not live with his parents. They are construction workers, and lives in Delhi, about 1 hour away from Kalyanpuri. Rajiv lives with his 21 year old sister Simran, her husband Gaurav and their two children: 2 year old Vivek, and 3 months old Kushi. They live close to Gaurav's family, and Simran and Rajiv meet their parents and two other siblings every Sunday as it's not a very long way to travel.

Answering why he didn't go to school, Rajiv replied: “*Kyonki school mein naam nahin likha hain.*” (Because my name is not written in the school). He is thus not registered, and states that as his main reason for not attending school. He has previously attended school in his village, before coming to Delhi. He is quite bright and eager to learn, and he is also very affectionate. It's interesting to see how he behaves with all his other classmates, who are mostly girls. He is well-liked, confident, and has a good nature about him. He has an impressive attendance at the centre, showing up almost every day.

When I came back in November, Rajiv had been registered in the class with the school-going boys taking extra classes at the *thana*, and was very eager. All his classmates at the centre were practicing singing and dancing for a big cultural programme coming up at the *Saathi*-centre, whereas he sat on the floor diligently practicing writing names of fruit in both English and Hindi.

He is the youngest of four siblings, and lives with Simran and her family to study (“*parhane ke lie*”). Thus, his parents have made a conscious choice to make sure he obtains an education, and his older sister had also completed her education until the 5th standard. Despite of his parents choice, Rajiv is not yet enrolled in a formal school. This might be confusing, and I probed both Simran and Sunita about this. It became clear that what Rajiv needs, is for someone that's related to him to come with him to a school, and enroll him. This, as of yet, has not been done. When I asked Simran why, she told me that there had simply not been any time. She has a new baby, Kushi, only three months old, and a toddler of two years, so this is to some extent understandable. Sunita is planning to enroll him in school during the next intake – and if possible, in the freeship quota at a private school. Thus, he is most likely to start attending formal school early next year, and Rajiv and his eagerness will hopefully meet its full potential.

Radha: Radha is 13 years old, and has three brothers and two sisters. Her father, Pawan, makes *cholley* (a type of snack), and her mother, Bhavani, stays at home. Radha has 5 siblings, most of them older, married and moved away, and one younger brother, Rohit, a 10 year old boy currently enrolled in 3rd standard at a *sarkari*-school nearby. Radha's initial reason for not being enrolled in school, was that she does not possess a birth certificate, and she and her family believes

this is a requirement for enrollment in formal school. Radha has previously attended formal school until 3rd standard in her village, but then she dropped out. There is reason to believe that this is partly because of being unable to handle the curriculum, as Sunita told me Radha is a “slow learner”. Even though she is 13, she is at the same educational level as children that are perhaps eight or nine. However, other research has shown that this is not very rare in primary schools in India today, and is due, at least in part, to the low quality of education in some schools, as well the possibilities for focused studying being far from optimal for children in urban slums (Khasnabis, Chatterjee, 2003).

Her mother, Bhavani, also highlighted the fact that they were poor when asked for giving reasons for Radhas non-enrollment. She further told me that Radha often helped her with the household chores in the *jhuggi*, and her little brother repeatedly, and a bit jokingly, stated that his sister was too fond of watching serials on the television to get any studying done. Although this clearly is not a reason for not attending formal school, it might be an indication on Radhas interest in studying. If she is indeed a slow learner, the feeling that she “is not good at it” might further make her loose interest, and as she is a 1st generation learner this might be a rut it is difficult to escape.

According to Sunita, Radha is a bit ashamed of attending classes at the *Saathi* centre with much younger children, especially because most of her friends are indeed attending formal school. Radha is in the process of “mainstreaming”, but she is not deemed ready to enroll in a formal school as of yet. In fact, Sunita saw no enrollment for Radha in the near future – at best it would be another six months before they will try for admission.

Saraswati: Saraswati is a very, very regular attendee, with almost a 100% attendance every month. She is 13 years old, her family is originally from Illahabad but both her siblings, her brother Rajesh (9), and her sister Naina (10), were born in Delhi. Her father, Pradeep, is a driver, and her mother, Monica, stays at home. Both her younger siblings attend *sarkari*-school, but Saraswati does not. When asked why, she replied, like most of the others, “*kyonki school mein nahin likha hain.*” She has previously been enrolled in school and, reached 4th standard, when she dropped out because it was too expensive for the whole family to stay in Delhi. Her mother brought Saraswati and her siblings back to Illahabad while their father kept working in Delhi, and Saraswatis education was interrupted. They managed to go back to Delhi after 1 year. When they eventually returned to Delhi, the schools in the vicinity did not want to re-enroll Saraswati as she was unable to meet the academic requirements – she could not read or write properly. Thus, Saraswati is spending as much time as possible with remedial education trying to “catch up” until she is eligible to apply for 10th standard in The National Institute of Open Schooling. (NIOS – www.nos.org), which, according to

Sunita will happen in their next intake, early next year.

At first, I was convinced that Saraswati had now reached the age where the parents didn't see any point in enrolling her in school again, because she were now soon old enough to work and eventually get married– it seems, though, that I was mistaken. Saraswati's mother, Monica, could tell me that as well as helping with the household chores, even making dinner, Saraswati will spend most of her time – even early morning and late evening, with a book in her hands. She has told her parents that she will go to college, and they are very supportive, even willing to postpone her age of marriage until it is completed.

Monica was very clear about the importance of education for her children. Her husband has studied until 9th standard, but Monica herself has never attended school. When asked about why she felt school was important, she answered “*kyonki hamare bacche aa gai niklein*”, which can be roughly translated to “because our children will go further”. Thus, she saw education as a route to upward social mobility. As Monica and her family recently has shifted house to a better locality within Kalyanpuri, it is likely that she has experienced social mobility herself. Interestingly, she felt that studying and completing college would enable Saraswati to “marry well”, and highlighted this above Saraswati herself finding a job. This idea is an example of a rising trend in India, with more and more girls achieving higher education mainly to use it as an asset in the marital market.

Saraswati is now able to read and write, and if she can pass the entrance exams it is very likely that she will be enrolled in formal school shortly, even though she is over the age covered in the RTE and her family might have to pay tuition fees. Her parents are very supportive, and it seems Saraswati enjoys a nurturing and positive environment at home that enables her to study.

It is interesting that her situation could be compared to Anjana, who is of the same age. Hers however, is a different story.

Anjana: Anjana is 13 years old, and she is one out of five children. She has three brothers, Rakesh (16), Pawan (12) and Budhrao (10), and one younger sister, Annu(6). Gita is the only one attending formal school, and their brothers are working. Budhrao is also attending “tuition”, informal school. Her parents are Sita and Mahesh, and they are both working as *jadi booti* vendors, selling herbal remedies, at the side of the road. The family is from the Gond tribe, and migrated from Maharashtra. When asked why she did not attend formal school, she replied that the family did not have money for the tuition for more than one child. While talking to her, her attention kept sliding away and sometimes it was necessary to nudge her lightly in the shoulder to make her refocus. This might indicate that she has special needs regarding schooling, and that this could also be part of the reason why she has never been enrolled in formal school. This however, needs further examination from a person better equipped to make such a decision.

Anjana rarely comes to the *balwadi*, and the other children told me that she was very busy during the day: She did household chores, made rotis and washed clothes, as well as taking care of her younger sister. During the time of interviewing, the rest of their family had gone to their village, and Anjana and Annu stayed for some time alone in Delhi, looked after by neighbors, until their father would come and get them. I asked if the children could take me to Anjanas house, but they refused to do so, and Sunita, the teacher, told me that it would not be a good idea. It would be better if one of the children went and got Anjana for me, so that I could talk to her in the *balwadi*. However, the child returned saying that Anjana had accompanied her aunt to work (domestic work), so she had brought Anjanas younger sister Annu instead. Annu, together with some of the other children, shed some light on her family. It appears that her father is a heavy drinker, and there are many incidents of domestic violence in her house – so bad in fact, that the children often spend their nights with neighbors and other family members. Annu and the children were very open about this, and further informed me that many people would drink in the community. A couple of days after I finally got to speak to Anjana again, and she confirmed that she did a lot of work in the house. When asked about the schooling, she again highlighted that they were poor: “I don't have proper clothes for school, I don't have books, or rubber pencils.... How can I go to school?”

On discussing Anjana and her prospects for enrollment with Sunita, she simply said: “The situation of her family is a big problem”. And it indeed appears to be so. They are clearly more disadvantaged compared with a lot of other families in the community, and they struggle because of it. Further, Anjana is fast approaching the age where she can start working and contributing to the family instead of going to school, and it appears that this process might have already started judging by the fact that she sometimes accompanies her aunts to work. Thus, the prospects of Anjana ever being enrolled in formal school unfortunately seems very dire.

Roshni: Roshni is 9 years old, and has two brothers, Prakash and Yogesh, aged 12 and 5, and two sisters, Pinki and Keshri, aged 7 and 2. Her mother, Hemlata, stays at home and takes care of the children and the household chores, while her father Mohit, sells “*jadi booti*”. Unfortunately I never got to meet Roshni, a fact due to one of the difficulties of these children attending school, namely migration. Roshnis family are seasonal migrants, and belonging to the Gond tribe. Examining the attendance registry, it was found that Roshni had a very sporadic attendance, being absent for a week or two, even more, at a time. At other times her attendance would be much more frequent.

Discussing Roshni with Sunita, Sunita highlighted the problem of her family's migration. The family will travel “all over”, not just to their village – in fact Sunita was not certain exactly which state the family came from, and nor was the other children. When in Delhi, they stay in the areas of

Kalyanpuri where the other Gond children are staying, which also happens to be the areas I was advised not to go into. This might be a sign of the disadvantaged status of Roshnis family, and further, as almost half of the children not enrolled in school in the *balwadi* are Gond, it might also be a sign that the Gonds in Kalyanpuri in general are of the most disadvantaged.

On asking about the prospects of Roshnis enrollment into formal school, Sunita told me that it would happen. It appears however, to be some time into the future, and a more frequent dialogue with Roshnis parents would probably be needed.

Thanvi: Thanvi is 6 years old, and she is the eldest of four siblings. She has two brothers, Pawan, 5, and Deepak, 2, and one sister, Poonam, who is 3 years old. She has an attendance of about 50-50 at the *balwadi*. Her mother is Sheetal, a 25 year old widow with quite the sad story to tell. She had lost her husband in an accident only two months ago, and she is still staying close to her *sasural* (husbands family house). She shared her story with me during the parents meeting, and she had brought all her children. This gave me an opportunity to speak with them as well, and even though the death of their father obviously played in, especially Thanvi got tears in her eyes when talking about how badly she wanted to go to school. Sheetal was quite clear in her reason for not sending her children to school – there simply was not any money. She was assertive, and asked me frankly:

«I ask you, from where should I get the money? I have no husband, I have no work. My children are small, I cannot leave them for work. We cannot afford schooling. How can I send my children to school, with no money?»

Sheetal, 25 year old single mother

I tried to not ask leading questions, but I found my role blurred between that of a researcher and a community centre worker – I started telling her about RTEA, that education is supposed to be absolutely free (school supplies and uniforms etc are to be given to them free of charge, there is to be no hidden costs – according to the act) and her options of ISST helping her with the enrollment through their help desks at the *Saathi* centre at Kalyanpuri police station. To get there though, she has to cross quite a large main road, and also most likely spend some time and effort working on the admissions at the centre. She seemed reluctant to do so, although - with loosing her husband just two months back, that is completely understandable. It takes energy and effort to maneuver «the system» in India, even with the help of organizations like ISST. Indeed, dealing with NGOs like ISST might also seem like a hurdle.

Sheetal perhaps illustrates a key issue in the challenges of implementation of the RTEA, and

further, just enrolling poor children in school, RTEA or not – even more effort has to be made by way of building awareness and giving out information *where the people are*. One cannot wait until they come to the centres themselves. On the other side, there are not nearly enough resources for NGOs to “run after” each and every mother to enroll their children in schools, if they do not “want it” themselves. ISST has been quite successful in their community based approach, and there is every reason for them to keep on using that technique, even intensifying it to have more help desk related things happening as workshops and camps in the community itself, at timings convenient for the inhabitants. As Thanvi is only one year above formal enrollment-age and over-age is quite common in India, there is much reason to believe that she eventually will be enrolled in formal school. However, further interventions in the family on part of Sunita and ISST might be required.

Asha: Asha rarely attends the *balwadi*, and in the beginning I had to rely on second hand information about her from Sunita and the other children. This was interesting, as when I finally got to talk to Asha herself some of the information was conflicting. This could mean two things – She was not being entirely truthful, or the information I got from the other children were based on their opinions and what they perceived to be true. According to the other children and Sunita, Asha is about six years old, but according to Asha herself she is around ten. I would estimate that she is somewhere in between, perhaps nine.

She is the youngest of 4 siblings (two boys and two girls), with both her parents working. No one, not even Asha, were certain of her siblings' age. Her father, Santosh, sells *jadi booti*, and her mother, Srimati, is a domestic worker who also sells *jadi booti*. Asha, however, lied and told me her father has passed away – something Sunita later denied.

Asha has previously attended sarkari-school in the 1st standard, but dropped out. Sunita herself enrolled her, and she has only been working at the Saathi centre since March this year. The reasons Asha gave for dropping out of school were mainly financial – Her family do not have clothes or uniforms fit for school, and no money for writing material or books. However, she also told me that her mother frequently hit her, because she did not want her to go to school. This, I suspect, is not entirely true. During the interview, both with the other children and with Asha herself, the topic of gambling came up repeatedly. On asking what Asha spent her days doing, the other children would tell me “*voh bahut jua khelte hai*” (She gambles a lot.) This seemed to be the case also with Asha's older siblings. When asked, Asha smilingly denied that she would gamble saying that she was simply playing (*khelte hai*), but she did admit to her elder siblings, especially her brothers, doing it. Asha's attendance to the *balwadi* is very sporadic, and she mostly attends on the days she hear food is being served.

Interviewing Asha was a challenge, in particular because it was in the *balwadi*, and two of

her friends, Kareena and Anjana, were also present. Especially Asha seemed to be pulling my leg a bit. She had a mischievous grin throughout, and one other girl, especially called her out on lying several times. A small quarrel broke out because of it, and it perhaps showed some of the tensions between groups in the community. First, I interpreted their bickering as playful banter between friends, but when I asked “So, are you friends?” I got a clear “No!” from the girl trying to correct Asha’s fibs, with a following “These are my friends:” and a list of names accompanied with finger pointing. Asha and the other girls were mercilessly left out. I then asked if they were neighbors, since she knew so much about them, but she looked at me in shock and said “No!” as if it was apparent that they lived in different areas. In hindsight, it perhaps was.

When asked if she knew the reasons for Asha dropping out, Sunita replied that she had herself enrolled her into formal school, but Asha was “simply not interested in going”. Sunita was clearly disappointed, and I could sense a feeling of faint resignation as well. It must be stated clearly that Sunita is a wonderful teacher who tries to take equally good care of all the children in the *balwadi*, but there are some children and families that are not as easily “mainstreamed” as for instance Saraswatis or Rajiv’s families. Asha is perhaps one of these families, and further interventions, perhaps stricter follow-up visits, would be required to retain her in school.

Jyoti: I met Jyoti right at the end of my fieldwork. She is mostly attending classes with the school-going boys at the *Saathi*-centre in the mornings, together with Rajiv, Saraswati and Radha. Her father sells tomatoes, and her mother is a seamstress working from home.

Jyoti is 13 years old, and has lived in Kalyanpuri for about two years. She comes from Bihar, and has studied until 7th standard in her village. She could not get admissions in a school in Delhi because she could not read or write Hindi, which she is now working on. Jyoti has three younger siblings who all attend school. She told me that she has travelled quite a bit back and forth to her village in Bihar, where she stayed with her maternal grandmother for some years because aunt died. She came back to Delhi to study, and she is also helping her mother in doing the household chores and taking care of her younger siblings, which explains why she has not been coming to the *balwadi*. She is good friends with Saraswati, and they seem to encourage each other to do well in school. When asked, Sunita told me that she would try to enroll Jyoti into the open school with Saraswati, but that Jyoti was a “typical Indian girl of a certain age” - where her household duties were getting in the way of her studies.

Kareena: Kareena is around 10 years old, and rarely attends the *balwadi*. In fact, on discussing the children not enrolled in school but coming to the *balwadi*, Sunita did not mention her at all. She appears to be good friends with Asha, and I met her when she accompanied her for the

interview, and told me that she did not attend school either. Her father sells *jadi booti*, and her mother stays at home. As Asha, she was enrolled, but dropped out of school already in the 1st standard. When asked why she did not attend school, she replied “*kyonki mummy ne dalti nahin school pe*”, meaning that her mother had not “dropped her” in school, not enrolled her.

She also belongs to the Gond tribe, and lives in the area with the more disadvantaged families in Kalyanpuri. She was confronted with never attending the *balwadi* by Sunita, and replied that she has been sick for some time. Because of in part the lacking hygiene facilities in the slum, this might be true, but it could also be a convenient excuse for wanting to spend her time elsewhere.

3.5 Challenges in the fieldwork

I encountered several challenges and set-backs in the fieldwork, which can be said to be corresponding to the challenges of successfully running the *Bachpan* programme. Many of the children I wanted to speak to were frequently absent from the *balwadi*, which made it difficult both to establish a relationship with them and to conduct interviews. The difficulty in getting to meet their mothers were even larger, as they were often working or otherwise busy with their lives. While interviewing the women I sometimes felt my Hindi was not sufficient, a problem that was tried solved with asking the questions repeatedly, or trying to formulate them differently. I was also upfront with the fact that my Hindi is “*toti-photi*”(broken), which also served as an ice-breaker. Further, I was never completely alone with the women. Their children, and sometimes also children from the *jhuggis* nearby was always present. As the children knew me and my limited Hindi quite well, they tried their best to explain their mothers sentiments to me as accurately as possible, with some success.

It must be mentioned that the reasons, especially the initial answers, given by the informants might not be the true reasons for non-enrollment. They might be the answers easiest to give, or the answers they think I'm looking for. Some answers might function as “convenient excuses”, maybe as a coping mechanism, or because it's easier to handle life without the added “hassle” of having children in school. This might be further aggravated by the fact that many of the parents have attended none or very little formal education themselves, rendering their offspring as de facto 1st generation learners. Especially meeting with «the officials» in the educational system might be too much of a daunting task to handle, because of a perceived hierarchical distance in class and caste, amongst other aspects.

There were also some areas of the community both the children and the teacher told me I should not go into, not even with anyone accompanying me, and they were quite persistent about this. Their reasons were that these areas were very, very dirty and poor, and there might be people there that would treat me unpleasantly. I felt that insisting would also be intruding upon their

privacy, and to solve this I asked the children to please ask the children and their mothers to come to the centre when it would be convenient for them, or to go and get the children if it was quite clear that they were at home and just neglecting to attend the *balwadi*. This was not always successful, and I regrettably did not manage to speak to all the mothers. Further, some of the families are seasonal migrants – or even if they stay in Delhi they will go back to their villages for some weeks or months during a year. One of my informants and her family did just that, so I had to rely on second-hand information from Sunita and the other children.

3.6 Summary and main findings

My studies showed that the children, despite often stating the same reason (*naam nahin likha hain*), in reality had different reasons for not attending formal school. Sunita also had individual «strategies» for them to eventually attend formal school.

The children not attending school, can be “divided” into two groups – The children that comes to the *balwadi* regularly, namely Rajiv, Saraswati, Radha (and Jyoti), and the children that only attended sporadically, or not at all, namely Anjana, Asha, Roshni and Thanvi. Kareena, a school-drop out I met just upon completing the fieldwork, could also fit in to the latter group. I found that Anjana, Asha, Roshni, and Kareenas parents all had the same job as *jadi booti* sellers. Their children (except Roshni, whom I unfortunately did not meet), seemed to spend a lot of time together, and it also appeared that they were all from a scheduled tribe called the Gond tribe.

Thanvi, the youngest on the out-of-school children, is just one year over the ordinary enrollment age, and her family just suffered a horrible tragedy losing her father. This appears to be her reason for not yet being enrolled, as well as general lack of awareness around primary education from her mother. There are reasons to believe that Thanvi will eventually be enrolled, especially with the further interventions and help of ISST.

Conclusion

The reasons for children not attending school found in this study, are to a large extent those found in other studies on primary education in India. More girls than boys were found not enrolled in school, and some of them also had household chores and younger siblings to attend to. All the children, except two, had previously attended school, before dropping out either because of not being able to fulfill the educational requirements, or because of, mainly seasonal, migration. Further, coming from disadvantaged backgrounds also seem to be an important reason for non-attendance, as several of the children with the least attendance also at the *balwadi* were found even more disadvantaged than many of the other families in Kalyanpuri. These children were also from the Gond tribe, a scheduled tribe, though this sample is too small to be able to tell whether this has a

lot of influence on their disadvantage. Other Gond-children in Kalyanpuri, attending and thriving in school, might prove otherwise. More likely is it that it is their socio-economic positions that lead to these childrens non-enrollment, and further, also perhaps the difficulties that were found in particularly one girls family.

Working with the children over quite an extensive period, I learned a lot about their wishes and priorities, as well as difficulties, regarding their attendance in formal schools. Even though my informants were few, the children still interestingly exemplify a broad range of the priorities and difficulties we find regarding primary schooling for urban poor children.

It is assuring that Sunita and the *Saathi*-team has individual strategies for these children to eventually get enrolled, however, it is likely that a lot of following-up will be required to make sure the children stay in school once they have been enrolled. Further, as the children and their families have very individual reasons for not attending school, there is no “fix all” solution and particular, individual strategies needs to be implemented to ensure success. However, this demands a lot of resources and work.

Further, there are many children in the area who does neither attend formal school nor the community centre. To reach these children, ISST will perhaps have to start several smaller “subcenters”, an immensely large, but important task that would require more funding and more staff. The head of the *Saathi*-centre is looking at the possibilities of opening such small centres run mainly by volunteers from the community, which would be an alternative.

Even more awareness building and community mobilization seems to be necessary, especially when it comes to the RTE act and the rights of children to go to school. Also, facilitating in the enrollment of children into school, as the *Saathi*-staff and Sunita in particular has been doing, has been proven successful and should also continue to be so in the future.

For some of the children, it appears that the centre is just an addition to the activities they usually do, and for some – it is regrettably not considered a valuable use of their time. There are also many, many children in Kalyanpuri that does not attend neither the *balwadi*, formal school or any other alternatives. It can easily be argued that it is even more important to focus on these children – but luckily this is not a project that ends with this report. The *Saathi*-team has a vast knowledge of the community and its members, and are able to cast their nets wider and more effective.

Overall, this study has tried to shed some light on why as many as 1.3 million children in urban India are not enrolled in school today, by sharing the stories of nine such children and their families. There is reason to believe that, if one were to ask the rest of these 1.3 million children, one would get to hear much of the same stories.

References

- Battacharia, R. Sudarshan, R.M. 2004. "Chronic Poverty and Gendered Patterns of Intra-household resource allocation. A preliminary enquiry". Working paper, ISST
- Bhatty, K. 1998. *Educational Deprivation in India: A survey of Field Investigations*, in Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 33, No. 28 (Jul. 11-17, 1998), pp. 1858-1869.
Accessed from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4406990>
- Biswas, S. 2010. "India's Rights Revolution": Retrieved from:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/soutikbiswas/2010/04/indias_rights_revolution.html
- De, A. Khera, R. Samson, M. Kumar, A.K. 2011. *PROBE revisited – A report on Elementary Education in India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- Government of India. 2009. *The Gazette of India Extraordinary*, The right of children to free and compulsory education. Retrieved from The India Development Gateway:
<http://www.indg.in/primary-education/policiesandschemes/free%20and%20compulsory.pdf>
- Govinda, R. 2011. "Putting schooling to the test", published at indianexpress.com, 26. April 2011. <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/putting-schooling-to-the-test/781341/>
- Harriss-White, B. 2003. *India working: Essays on society and economy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, England
- Helland, G. C. E. 2011. Interviews conducted with the *Saathi*-centre staff, children and their "care takers" during fieldwork in Kalyanpuri, Sept.-Nov. 2011.
- Khasnabis, R. & Chatterjee, T. 2007. *Enrolling and Retaining Slum Children in Formal Schools: A Field Survey in Eastern Slums of Kolkata* in Economic and Political Weekly (EPW), Vol. 42, No. 22 (Jun. 2-8, 2007), pp. 2091-2098. Accessed from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4419666>
- Nussbaum, M. C. 2004. "Women's education: A global challenge" pp. 325 – 355 in *Signs*, Vol. 29, No. 2, *Development Cultures: New environments, New realities, New strategies* (Winter 2004)
- ICBSE.com, an information site about education and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in India: <http://www.icbse.com/2010/education-rte-act-2009/>
- Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST), 2011. "Half Yearly Project Report", Apr. - Sept. 2011, circulated in the ISST office.
- , *Annual Report 2011*, New Delhi, 2011.
- , 2011. Bachpan-centre Attendance Registers kept by the teacher at the *balwadi*.
- Ramachandran, V. 2003. *Backward and Forward Linkages That Strengthen Primary Education* in Economic and Political Weekly (EPW), vol. 38, No. 10 (Mar. 8-14, 2003), pp. 959-968.
Accessed from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4413309>

Unicef, 2011. The Right To Education: Frequently asked questions.
Accessed from: http://www.unicef.org/india/education_6144.htm

Unicef, 2011. The Situation of Children in India: A Profile. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), New Delhi.

Ethics and method in field

Gustavsson, A.(ed.) 2005. *Kulturvitenskap i felt: Metodiske og pedagogiske erfaringer*; Høyskoleforlaget AS (Norwegian Academic Press), Kristiansand, Norway

De nasjonale Forskningsetiske komiteer. 2006. *Guidelines for research ethics in the social sciences, law and the humanities*. Retrieved from <http://www.etikkom.no/English/NESH/guidelines>