

Building unequal capabilities: Schooling of Delhi's adolescents*

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Abstract

This paper explores the lives of adolescent girls and boys in the resettlement colonies and JJ colonies of Delhi. Those in resettlement colonies are seen to make more progress through the schooling cycle than those in JJ colonies. Whatever the group, boys receive greater support from their families to continue schooling, while girls face greater pressures to participate in household work, even to the extent of dropping out from school. Among the most deprived families, there are also pressures on boys to drop out from school and begin to earn. Boys and girls also have contrasting experiences in school, with boys' schools more likely to be dysfunctional, and boys expressing greater freedom to drop out. Girls value schooling because it offers some protection from household chores. The net result of all these competing factors are that only a small proportion of young people, whether boys or girls, are able to complete class 10, a prerequisite for finding any future employment in the organized sector.

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Adolescence is a critical time in a person's life. It is a time of transition from childhood to adulthood. In modern societies it is seen as a time for building capabilities through schooling, to "increase the range of options one can choose to live one's life".ⁱ This paper explores the lives of disadvantaged adolescents in the capital city of India, to understand the role that schooling plays in their lives. What were the kind of opportunities for schooling available, particularly beyond primary level? To what extent were they being accessed? What were the living conditions of these young people – what facilitated their being able to stay in school, what constrained them.

Adolescence corresponds roughly to the second decade of a person's life and our focus is those in the age-group 11-18 years. This is a fairly long time-span, and we find it useful to be conscious of considerable differences in the experiences of those younger (11-14 years) and those older (15-18 years). Policy-makers also treat the younger and older adolescent age group differently.ⁱⁱ

Gender and class can be expected to play a key role in determining the experience of young people. Literature on adolescents had indicated that young people in more deprived situations were likely to be under pressure to enter the adult world prematurely.ⁱⁱⁱ Boys in such situations would be pushed towards earning responsibilities, and with this, more contact with the outside world, while girls would be under pressure to take on more household responsibilities and with this, greater restrictions on their mobility.

Uncovering work done by women and children has always been a challenge since it is mostly unpaid, and relatively invisible.^{iv} Literature suggests that household work often goes unreported particularly because it is unpaid. An important contribution of this paper is a careful attempt to capture such work. A time-use survey was conducted on randomly-selected sub-samples of adolescents to get a clearer picture of the extent of participation of this group in housework and in earning work, and the time spent in these activities,

which will be discussed later. This method records a person's activities from the time they wake up till they sleep. In particular, we asked about the time spent in school and school-related activities, the time spent on all types of work, even work which they consider routine and not worth mentioning, and the time spent doing nothing much. This allowed us to gain insights into the relative priority given to schooling and work (earning work / household chores) in the lives of adolescents in our sub-sample.

The survey and the sample

The paper is based on fieldwork conducted in 2000-2001.^v It included a household survey and a school survey. The household survey was done in six sites in Delhi: three resettlement colonies^{vi} and three squatter colonies (also called Jhuggi-Jhopri or JJ colonies), chosen after dividing Delhi into three geographical zones, and then randomly selecting one resettlement colony and one JJ colony from each zone. From each of the six sites, 50 households with a young person in the 11-18 year age group were chosen through circular random sampling. 305 households were surveyed in Delhi. The school survey covered the 12 government schools (which offered post-primary schooling) in the six sites chosen for the household survey, as well as 28 schools chosen randomly from a list of government schools which also offered post-primary schooling.^{vii}

The paper begins by focusing on the adolescents themselves (section 1). What proportions are in school and out of school. How far are those in school able to continue? What differences do we see in the performance of young people with different socioeconomic backgrounds? What are the proportions doing earning work. This is followed by a look at the home environment of the adolescents (section 2), at some differences in living conditions and socioeconomic backgrounds in resettlement colonies and JJ colonies. There are great differences in the demands on boys and girls. In section 3, we look at the school environment – what are the kind of schools available to them? Particularly important are the considerable differences between the functioning of boys' schools and girls' schools. We conclude with noting that the majority of young people in

Delhi are not entering adulthood with the schooling which is needed for them to make any headway towards gainful employment.

1. The adolescents

The majority of adolescents, both boys and girls, in our sample were in school (see Table 1.1). However, enrolments were high only among boys and girls in the 11-14 year age group (81% for boys and 72% for girls). The situation was more dismal for the older adolescents. More than half of the boys (54%) and girls (59%) were out of school. The situation for girls is worse than it is for boys, but not drastically different as we would expect.

Looking at how far boys and girls are able to proceed in terms of completing grades, the picture was also extremely discouraging. Looking at the 15-18 year age group, we found that less than half of those who were ever enrolled in school were able to complete class 8 (see Table 1.2). The proportions drop to about one-sixth of those ever-enrolled (16% of boys and 13% of girls) when one looks at those who had completed class 10.^{viii} Here too, the figures do not indicate the wide divergence that we might expect in the experience of boys and girls.

It is useful to break up the picture further to look at differing experiences of adolescent boys and girls in different locations. Chart 1 depicts proportions of 15-18 year old boys and girls in resettlement colonies and JJ colonies who have completed different grades.^{ix} It shows how enrolment remains high till class 5 after which there is a sharp decline in proportions enrolled. Gender and class differences are very visible. Children in resettlement colonies start off with an advantage which is retained. Girls in resettlement colonies fare worse than the boys in resettlement colonies. However, strangely, girls in JJ colonies are better off than boys in JJ colonies. The findings indicate the acute vulnerability of boys in very deprived families.

Were the adolescents weighed down by earning responsibilities for themselves/the family? There were some who were “in school and doing earning work”, but the majority

of those doing such work were out of school (see Table 1.1). Most adolescents who did earning work worked at home or with family members, in protected situations. Sometimes the work was physically demanding (e.g. working in a butcher's shop) and/or time-consuming (e.g. sitting in front of the house selling day-to-day necessities). Boys in the 15-18 year age group were the ones most likely to be doing earning work. They were also the ones who were most likely to be "out of school and working", in petty establishments (like garages) or self-employed on their own (doing boot-polish at the railway station). Such work was often hazardous, low-paid and involved long hours. Compared to boys, girls had less involvement in earning work, but greater involvement in household chores. We will discuss this in section 2.

2. The home environment

2.1 Socioeconomic background

In this section, we want to focus on a few characteristics of the young people's socioeconomic background. This is crucial because their lives, particularly that of the girls, are crucially dependent on their parents' perceptions of costs and benefits of schooling within their particular context.

There was considerable variation in living conditions between the six sites chosen for the survey, and the picture will become clearer if we make a distinction between the three resettlement colonies and the three squatter settlements. The resettlement colonies benefited from being authorized settlements, part of the city's master plan. All the resettlement colonies consist of neat rows of small back to back one-room dwellings, each row with a narrow lane in front. Over the years the pucca houses have often been built up into two and three storeys creating a tenement like atmosphere because of the narrow lanes. The JJ colonies were much more makeshift than the resettlement colonies. Only 47% of the households had a pakka roof compared to 92% of the households in the resettlement colonies (see Table 2.1). One JJ colony had come up next to a resettlement colony, a common pattern with a fresh squatter settlement emerging next to an older one

with more facilities. Another had come up in a doubly unhealthy location: the lee of a major thermal plant and adjacent to a big drain. The worst one had congested lanes and small huts with mud floors and piles of slushy refuse from its drains. Living conditions in the resettlement colonies were certainly more conducive to schooling. Access to electricity was available to 97% of the households there compared to 25% of households in the JJ colonies.

Resettlement colony residents generally had higher educational levels. Male and female literacy levels were much higher than in JJ colonies. Men in resettlement colonies could access better work opportunities. Only 8% were doing casual labour compared to 24% of the men in JJ colonies.

Attitudes to women doing economic work, particularly the freedom to go out of the house is particularly important in relation to motivation for girls' education.^x In resettlement colonies where there was less acute financial distress, as much as 68% of the women were doing only housework.^{xi} Pressures on women in the JJ colonies to earn were greater. Here just over half the women did only housework (54%). Although the majority of women's lives in all six sites were quite restricted to their homes, financial pressures and employment opportunities were bringing about change.

The majority of households (over 55%) were of Scheduled Caste (SC) background. Muslim households were clustered together in two of the six sites, where they formed about one-fourth of the population. OBC households were relatively few; about one-fifth of the families were "general" castes.

Summing up, we note that we have a situation which has quite a range in terms of levels of deprivation among households. Those most on the edge were more likely to be scheduled-caste / Muslim / with little schooling / with insecure housing / with poorly-paid work. Families in resettlement colonies were more likely to have relatives with employment in the government sector; more likely to be able to find pathways to access the better-quality government schools; more determined to push their children through

school, and finally, more likely to land that all important permanent job. The few children who dropped out during primary school were from very poor families, with illiterate parents, for whom schooling was not a norm. Being able to make the transition from MCD primary schools to the Delhi-administration run Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools was sometimes more than some parents in JJ colonies were able to accomplish, particularly for their daughters.

2.2. Lower Priority to Girls' Education

Parents were keen not just that their sons would get educated, but also their daughters. However, across the board, parents gave girls' education less importance. We see this when we look at the few young people who had never been enrolled in school. They were nearly all girls - close to one-tenth of the nearly 280 adolescent girls in the sample (see Table 1.1). As many as 18 of these girls were clustered in one particular site, impacted both by the poverty and norms of their own household and that of their neighbours. Said one mother of a young 7-year old girl in this JJ colony, "What's the point of sending her to school? No woman in our village is allowed to leave the house, Matric pass or not." In some very poor households, families were sending their sons to school while keeping their daughters at home.

Striking differences in the experience of girls and boys are apparent when we look at the differing reasons why boys and girls had dropped out of school, and in the context of a time-use survey focusing on the time spent on housework and earning work by adolescents.

2.2.1 Time-use patterns

School-going adolescents were asked about how they spent the previous school-day – on the time spent in school related activities, housework and earning work (work which brought in income). Girls carried a much heavier burden (see Table 2.2). When comparing the average time given by boys and girls to work (household work and earning

work), we find that the 11-14 year old girls do 1.3 hours on average (0.6 hours more than the boys in their age group) and the 15-18 year old girls work for 2.7 hours (1.5 hours more than the boys in their age group). Older girls are doing the most whether we compare them with younger girls, or with boys in their own age group.

Looking at proportions doing household chores, even in the younger age group, it was a higher proportion of girls compared to boys. For the older age-group, the proportion of boys doing household chores remained about the same, but for girls, the proportion increased to close to 90%.^{xii} Housework was clearly seen primarily as women's work, and by extension, girls' work.

A small proportion of enrolled girls (in the 11-14 year age group) were involved in home-based work (which is done at home but brings in income). Again, as girls get older, more of them were giving some time to such work. Some were doing both this and other household chores.

School going adolescents were working mainly in family shops (small corner shops set up in their residential area) or in family enterprises. Working conditions for these young people were quite different from those in other types of work. The time spent varied a great deal, depending on if the young person was sharing the work with other siblings / adult family members.

As the curriculum gets heavier in the senior classes, both boys and girls need regular time for self-study, and for tuition if the teaching in school is inadequate. But clearly, in most households older girls were doing housework, a responsibility which could be physically exhausting and time-consuming. Some of the girls themselves reported that household work was a burden *per se*, and this also made them keen to continue with their schooling whatever the odds. In general, enrolled girls had less time and energy for study than boys did.^{xiii}

Looking at the time-use of adolescents who are out of school (dropouts and never-enrolleds) (see Table 2.3), we found that the involvement of out of school girls (in both age groups) in housework was close to universal (98%). In addition, close to 30% were also combining these chores with earning work.^{xiv} Below are glimpses of the lives of 3 young women who lead lives similar to adult women.^{xv}

- 13 year old Madhu after 5 years of schooling was spending her entire day in household chores, cooking, cleaning and looking after her siblings.
- 15 year old Anuradha was doing 6 hours of household chores but also 5 hours making elaborate *bindis* (sticking decorations on a dots of fabric).
- 17 year old Sonia was doing 2 hours of housework and 11 hours making *palais*.^{xvi}

Girls reported that housework was the reason they could no longer continue with school. One mother mentioned that even while her daughter was in school, she could only send her late because the girl had so many household chores to do before she could leave (the mother was herself ill at the time). Pressures on boys were also high. Once out of school, parents tried to get them into apprenticeships, or any training opportunities they were able to access.

2.2.2 Pressures on girls to drop out

As discussed in the previous section, girls may be enrolled, but the demands of the home serve to push them out of school. Schooling requires regular attendance in school; the chance to study at home; even the chance to take private tuition. An 18 year old girl from a poor SC family who had dropped out in class 9 said regretfully, “to study you need your parents’ support; you need a little support to take tuition”.

Upto primary level, there is automatic promotion; fees are negligible; additionally textbooks and sometimes uniforms are provided in the school, and girls have not yet reached puberty. But as they moved to the next stage, both direct and indirect costs of keeping them in school was more than some families were willing to bear. In particular, a family crisis of any kind often meant their schooling days were over.^{xvii}

Pressures on girls to drop out is often in contrast to pressures on boys to continue (see Table 2.4). As much as half the girls (in the 11-18 age group) who had dropped out of school reported that they dropped out because their parents wished it, compared to about one third of the boys.^{xviii} Interestingly, close to half the boys left of their own volition compared to just over one-fourth of the girls. This reflects the lower level of parental demand for schooling for girls vis-à-vis boys, as well as insight into the difference in agency of boys and girls in deciding their future.

A number of girls expressed great regret about leaving school. There were hints of conflict between the wishes of girls and their parents, but rarely expressed openly. 13 year old Usha from a poor SC family, who had dropped out in class 7, is one of those who is quite open about her sadness about leaving school to take on complete responsibility for the household. She liked school because she “enjoyed study; enjoyed meeting [her] friends; and also escaped from having to do all the work in the house”). She repeatedly said that she did not enjoy doing housework and would have liked to continue with school.

Boys tended to drop out of their own accord; many enjoyed the chance to roam around with friends; they looked for opportunities to earn some money. Our visits to the schools (discussed in section 3.2) suggests that the dominant school experience of boys was negligence in school; associated with this was non-comprehension in class and failure at the end of the year. Additionally there was the frequent use of violence at school (and at home); teachers (and parents) felt boys would study if beaten. Parents were generally very disappointed and frustrated when boys dropped out. Conflict between boys and parents was often out in the open.

3 The School Environment

3.1 Infrastructure and facilities

Most of the adolescents had completed primary schooling, though there were some still in classes 4 and 5. Government primary schools were local-body schools (run by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi). Parents complained bitterly about the poor quality of these schools. They were also uniformly indicted by teachers in the secondary and senior secondary schools, who complained that on account of the system of automatic promotion in MCD schools, children who were admitted in class 6, did not even know the Hindi alphabet.

Twelve-year old Sunil, in class 5 in the government primary school for boys, gives us an idea of the poor level of functioning in his school. He doesn't ask the teacher anything because he has been told that they should only ask the monitor. The children are quite unsupervised. There is lots of fighting and children get hurt. The young boy is free to leave school at half-time.

Infrastructure and facilities in classes 6 and above were far superior. Some of the schools were in impressive buildings, double storied with wide corridors and large airy classrooms. They generally had playgrounds, and at first glance, seemed equipped with basic facilities like fans, drinking water and toilets. All the schools usually catered to a large catchment area and had high average enrolment.

The pity was that most of the buildings were poorly maintained: cobwebbed stairwells, piles of paper, broken desks and chairs were common occurrences. Toilets were often used as storerooms for broken desks. Broken glass panes were common and fans dysfunctional. Boys allegedly stole the motors from fans, bent their blades and so on. Also a cause for concern were the blackboards on which chalk marks were barely visible. Teaching aids like big geometry sets and globes were often missing. There was also some misuse of the space which had been reserved for playgrounds (e.g. as thoroughfares, and in one case for drying carpets from a tent house).

Schools rarely had enough functional toilets or even an adequate supply of drinking water in a city which is hot and dry for the major part of the year. In fact, water supply was a

major problem and accounted for the non-functional toilets. Electricity supply was also fitful and erratic.

The school principals were given a large contingency grant, which could be used for small maintenance. But the required paperwork usually slowed down the process. The few principals who were able to sort out the process had kept their schools well maintained.

Both girls and boys shared the same infrastructure - girls in the morning shift and boys in the afternoon. With two separate schools sharing the same premises, there was a reduced sense of belonging among the children and the teachers, as also reduced accountability for maintenance of the premises. This was a major problem. Teachers reported that they could not keep any material on the school premises with a second shift coming in, not even a chalk or a duster. Each shift blamed the other.

However, there were many variations within the larger picture. Senior secondary schools appeared to have better infrastructure than the secondary schools (the few upper primary schools were worst off). The schools being accessed by children from resettlement colonies appeared to be of better quality than the schools being accessed by the JJ colony children. To what extent this was due to the former group of schools having more funds (Sarvodaya schools, for example) or due to parents from resettlement colonies being able to affect the functioning of their wards' schools^{xix} or due to parents from resettlement colonies being able to get their children admitted into the better schools or due to other factors is a subject for research. What we can say is that the school system strengthened existing inequalities.

Within the schools the lower classes had to cope with poorer facilities. The young class 6 students found very large class sizes – usually 60-70 and in many cases this could be worse.^{xx} Classroom conditions were also inevitably the worst in the school i.e. if the secondary level – class 9 and 10 had desks, the young sixths were often on dusty, torn

durries or even on the dusty floor. If class 9 and 10 had *pakka* classrooms, class 6 often ran from tin sheds. Even multi-section teaching was much commoner for class 6.

More important was the severe shortage of teachers in many schools. Teachers themselves complained of the shortage, and teacher absenteeism added to the problem. To deal with this, the remaining teachers simply combined classes, or left them unattended.

3.2 Contrast in the teaching-learning environment in girls' schools and boys' schools

Schooling was gender segregated on the whole: the morning shift (7.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.) was usually for girls, and mostly had female teachers and a female head-teacher. The second shift (1 p.m. to 6 p.m.) was usually for boys with mostly male teachers and a male head-teacher. Our survey found a contrast in functioning of the girls' schools and the boys' schools.

More active teaching appeared to be going on in the girls' schools with students in their classes and head-teachers in control of the school. Security in girls' schools was far better with well guarded gates in complete contrast to the visible bunking and open gates in many of the boys' schools. Girls also reported that there was no bunking in their schools. School activities appeared to be greater in girls' school with evidence of craftwork produced by girls as also trophy cupboards with school trophies.

Girls were on the whole more positive about their school experience. They were particularly positive about some teachers - with those who taught properly, those who didn't hit them, those who talked to them kindly, those who told them about new and interesting things, those who taught them new types of art and craft.

- "...like a particular teacher who teaches a lot, she writes on the board, gives us work to do and doesn't hit us."
- "She teaches us well, explains everything thoroughly."

- “I like school because there is teaching. Also our teacher reads stories to us during the library period.”
- “She speaks kindly, she also doesn’t beat us.”
- “She tells us about interesting things.”
- “She gives us a glimpse into different worlds.”
- “She gets us to make interesting things [in art and craft].”
-

Apart from these direct inputs from the teachers, girls enjoyed coming to school to meet their friends, and the chance to play *kho-kho* and other games.

Nevertheless, school quality in girls’ schools was not as it should be. Teachers were described as being negligent; enjoying socializing and gossiping rather than being involved in their teaching activity; giving insufficient teaching input.

- Teachers enter, write on the board, and leave the class.
- Teachers do not explain but mark out portions of the *kunji* (guide) to be learnt.
- “When the Principal is not there we don’t have class.”
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Teachers frequently resort to physical punishment and to punishment such as cleaning the school / clearing garbage (particularly demeaning for girls from poor communities, and insensitive to their hopes for a different life through schooling).^{xxi} Shaming the girls is meant to act as a deterrent against misbehaviour, whether it is coming late or not completing their homework or not knowing their work.

- “The teacher makes us sweep the floor or slaps us; we are beaten with sticks on our hands.”
- “The teacher makes us clean the school as a punishment.”
- “We are made to clear the rubbish.”
- “*mooch banakar ground mein ghumate hain* (draws a mustache on our face [to signify we are dunces] and make us take a round in front of everyone).”

- “*murga banakar ground mein ghumate hain* (makes us take a round of the school while acting like a chicken).”
- “*dhoop mein kamar jhukakar basta rakh dete hain* (makes us stand in the sun with their backs bent with their school bags on their backs).”

While the schooling experience of girls was not what it should be, it was still better than that experienced by most boys. Boys and their parents were full of complaints. Said a dejected parent, “*Sarkari mein bheja. Do saal mein hi bigad gaya.*” (Sent him to the government school. Within two years he was ruined.)

In several boys’ schools, we observed blatant negligence -- not only were boys leaving early en masse, teachers were also leaving early. Below are some examples of little teaching input and general negligence and violence.

- “I bunk after recess if my work is incomplete because I’m scared of the teacher,”
- “The teacher comes only in the first period,”
- “All but one of the teachers come for a short time and then leave the class,”
- “All but one of the teachers ask us to get private tuition and to use guides to find answers for the homework given to us,”
- “The school atmosphere was not good. Teachers were very irregular.”

Boys gave graphic accounts of how they were punished (for not memorizing what they were told, for not doing their written work, for not bringing their exercise books, for coming late to school, for bunking at half-time): they were beaten with sticks, *murga banate hain* (act like a chicken), *kursi bana dete hain aur uske oopar bag rakh dete hain* (bend over to be a stool so a bag can be placed on the student’s back). Less extreme punishments included doing rounds of the school. The stick was much more widely used than in the girls’ schools.

In some schools, boys spoke of attempts to reduce the bunking – one teacher tried to motivate them by talking about it in class; in another school the principal took attendance

at the beginning of the day and the end of the day; in another school, the PT teacher stood guard (PT teachers were feared because they often handed out physical punishment). If caught bunking, the boys were generally beaten.

Still boys were keen to go to school. Many boys said they liked going to school because of a particular teacher – for example, Anil, 17, in class 9 likes his Science teacher because he explains very carefully. An 18 year old in class 10 praised his teacher for teaching properly.^{xxii} School was also attractive because of a particular activity -- 11 year old Yuvraj from a poor SC family who was enrolled in class 6 likes the chance to play cricket.

It is not clear why girls' schools functioned better but there were several possibilities suggested by teachers themselves mainly relating to gender differences and societal expectations. Women teachers were said to be happier with their jobs, and female students were said to be more docile and compliant, and wept even when scolded. Male teachers reported that they would have preferred not to teach – it did not give them enough social status. But they took it up because it was a permanent government job which was available. Male students were said to be much more difficult to teach and to control, and violence was accepted as a mode of discipline. Boys had also spoken of the fearfulness of the teachers, particularly of disciplining older boys who threatened to retaliate. Rajinder, aged 15, in class 9, said of his class, “If the teachers try to punish the students, some threaten them with a knife. Hardly 5-6 children remain in class, teachers hardly teach.”

Discussion

There are several important issues which need to be highlighted. Firstly, the present context represents an enormous waste of resources. Money is being poured into education by the government and by parents, and dropping out even without completing class 8 is still common. The hopes and aspirations for schooling and a better life among many households are being crushed. For boys this was a particular cause for concern among

parents in resettlement colonies who could see their boys who were out of school drawn into a life of idleness and bad company since there was little productive activity they could be absorbed into.

Within this context of low productivity, schooling was seen to have an indirect benefit not just for girls, but also for boys. A look at the average time spent in earning work and/or housework by the young people who were out of school compared to those enrolled gives us some idea of how going to school gave both boys and girls a respite from earning^{xxiii} and household responsibilities – between 6 to 8 hours on average among the out of school compared to 0.6 to 2.7 hours on average among the enrolled (see Tables 2.2 and 2.3).

While more than 97% of girls who were out of school were spending the whole day doing housework, the proportion of out of school boys who were doing earning work was two fifths in the younger age group and three fifths in the older age group. The work done by these young men was very demanding – on average it was 8.1 hours for the younger age group and 8.6 hours for the older age group. The figures for the group as a whole are lower because it includes many boys who were whiling away their time.

More importantly, we need to take note of the very different situations in which boys and girls find themselves. Boys are unable to capitalize on their parents' keenness to educate them. They suffer the constraints of class – their school and home environments remain deficient in enabling them to access a good basic education. The outside world is more attractive than the school – they drop out and face the horrors of premature entry into the world of work. To improve the situation for boys, efforts to improve the quality of boys' schools have to be redoubled, perhaps with taking on suggestions from Principals and teachers employed in boys' schools. It is important to note that at least in theory, for boys, the schooling system and the demands of the traditional family system are geared to work somewhat in the same direction – to empower boys to function in the outside world. In actual fact their school experience is quite disempowering and the parents are also unable to provide the support needed.

For the girls the situation is different. Schooling may bring with it some elements of conflict – it may attempt to open up the world for them while the family needs them to revolve around the domestic needs of the household. It is interesting how merely attending school could contribute to a girl’s well-being, even while she may be being overly disciplined into docility and compliance. Policies to improve girls’ school participation need to be tied to improving the possibilities of benefits which might accrue through schooling – for example, increased employment opportunities for girls in what are perceived to be safe environments. Many states in India, including Delhi, already have schemes in place, like scholarships for girls, to make schooling more attractive.

Conclusion

We conclude by observing that the schooling system largely fails to build capabilities as it should. The system functions at a very basic level. Teaching input does not compensate sufficiently for deficiencies in the home environment. From the perspective of the schools, teachers find that parents are not able to provide the kind of support that they feel is required. Parents on their part are limited by the disadvantages of their situation. There is economic pressure on them. There are socio-cultural attitudes which limit the space given to women. Girls make some headway in the schooling system partly because it is their only escape from the home and housework. They are also favored by a more secure and functional school environment. In a situation, where gender does provide a constraint on the potential of education to build capabilities, incentives to encourage female education play a crucial role. The interplay of factors relating to the laxity of the school environment and the freedom given to boys works against parental aspirations for their sons. Improvements in school quality are likely to have a considerable impact on the situation for boys. Overall school quality has to be improved to enable boys and girls to develop to their full potential.

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Table 1.1 Enrolment among the adolescents

	11-14 yrs		15-18 yrs	
	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
Currently enrolled (%)	81	72	46	41
Never enrolled (%)	2	10	3	8
Doing earning work (%)	14	13	47	22
In school and working (%)	4	5	10	2
Out of school and working (%)	10	8	37	20
No. of adolescents	171	151	158	126

Source: CORD adolescent survey, 2001.

Table 1.2 Grade completion rates among the ever-enrolled (15-18 years)

Proportion (%) of ever-enrolled who	Boys	Girls
Completed class 5	88	90
Completed class 8	54	53
Completed class 10	16	13

Note: Ever-enrolled includes currently-enrolled and dropouts.

Source: CORD adolescent survey, 2001.

Table 2.1 Resettlement and JJ colonies

Proportion (%) of:	Resettlement colonies	JJ colonies

households with pucca house	92	47
households with permanent electricity connection	97	25
adult males who have completed class 10	29	25
adult males who are illiterate	24	36
adult females who are illiterate	58	74
adult males doing casual labour	8	24

Source: CORD adolescent survey, 2001.

Table 2.2 Time-use of adolescents enrolled in school

	11-14		15-18	
	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>
Time spent in earning work and/or housework by enrolled adolescents (hours/day)	0.62	1.31	1.20	2.74
Proportion (%) of enrolled adolescents doing housework	39.7	67.1	38.5	88.9
Proportion (%) of enrolled adolescents doing earning work	9	8.6	23.1	14.8

Notes: 1. Those doing housework may or may not be doing earning work, and vice versa.

2. Based on a sub-sample of randomly-selected school-going adolescents, at most one from each household.

Source: CORD adolescent survey, 2001.

Table 2.3 Time-use of adolescents who are out of school

	11-14		15-18	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Time spent in earning work and / or housework (hours/day) by out-of-school adolescents	6.58	8.45	6.23	7.02
Proportions of out of school adolescents doing housework (%)	23.8	97	35.1	98
Proportions of out of school adolescents doing earning work (%)	40.6	28.6	60.5	29.3

Notes: 1. Those doing housework may or may not be doing earning work, and vice versa.
 2. Based on a sub-sample of randomly-selected out-of-school adolescents, at most one from each household.

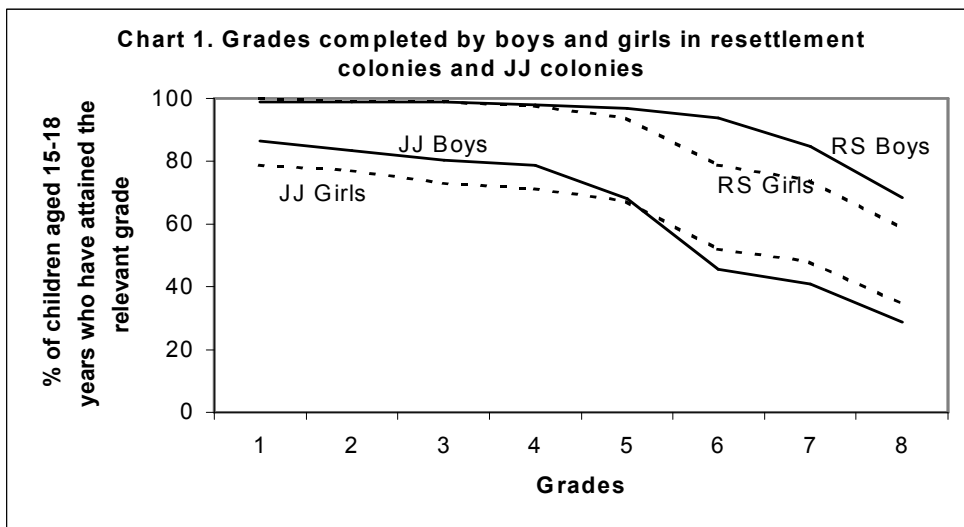
Source: CORD adolescent survey, 2001.

Table 2.4 Who was most responsible for the boy/girl leaving school?

	Boys	Girls
Parents made the boy/girl leave school	32%	50%
Boy/girl decided to leave	48%	27%

Note: Based on a randomly-selected sub-sample of 73 boys and 66 girls who had dropped out of school.

Source: CORD adolescent survey, 2001.



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* The co-authors are part of CORD (Collaborative Research and Dissemination), New Delhi.

ⁱ See Sen (1980, 1985a, 1985b) cited in Sen (1995).

ⁱⁱ Only the 11-14 year olds have a Constitutional right to be in school, and this continues to be the situation in the Right To Education Bill of 2008. For instance, Children upto the age of 18 have been included for protection of their rights under the CRC (Convention on the Rights of a Child), and India is a signatory to this convention.

ⁱⁱⁱ See Mensch et al. (1998).

^{iv} See Nieuwenhuys (1994), Hakim (1996), and Hirway (2002).

^v It was part of a larger study of adolescents in Delhi, Rajasthan and West Bengal.

^{vi} They belonged to the 1975 resettlement drive when a state of Emergency had been imposed on the country and democratic freedoms suspended. Families from unauthorized slum settlements in the heart of the city were forcibly shifted to the outskirts of the city. These areas were then developed by the government.

^{vii} The majority of schools in the sample were senior secondary schools (classes 6-12), but there were middle schools (6-8), secondary schools (6-10) and integrated schools (1-12).

^{viii} Some of those currently enrolled are likely to complete class 10, so the final proportion will be larger than currently appears.

^{ix} It includes the young people who have never been enrolled as well.

^x Jha and Jhingran (2005) cite Chanana (1988) to point out how socialization of women is in favour of tradition, and social institutions of family, kinship and marriage.

^{xi} While in their twenties, as new *bahus* (daughters-in-law), they had little freedom from household tasks, in their thirties and forties, a few had begun to take up work.

^{xii} This was similar to that found for schoolgirls in Bangladesh. See Sajeda Amin (1996).

^{xiii} They also got the message that their schooling was not a priority for the household, particularly compared to the schooling of the boys.

^{xiv} These would necessarily have been at home -- either self-employed (e.g. running a small shop in the house) or home-based job work (e.g. cutting the rubber off to make straps for footwear).

^{xv} See Jayaraj and Subramaniam (2002) who write that allocation of domestic duties and household chores to girls at an early age produces invisible girl workers in their earlier years, and transforms them into invisible women workers later.

^{xvi} A product made by sticking rags on a rubber base.

^{xvii} Disadvantaged households are very vulnerable to family crises. Accidents, illness of the parents, illness of a younger child, father losing his job, family relocating for any reason are all instances when it was too difficult for parents to continue with their daughter's education.

^{xviii} These belonged to the very poorest families, who found it difficult to sustain schooling even for their sons and needed them to earn, especially when they felt the boy was getting into bad company rather than getting much benefit from their valiant efforts to keep him in school.

^{xix} Parents in resettlement colonies were found to have a "voice" as described in the Hirschman framework. See Hirschman (1970, 1978) cited in Fennell (2007).

^{xx} Many teachers reported that owing to the number of teachers absent on a day added to the staff shortage, 2 sections were combined. Thus numbers could go up to 120 per teacher.

^{xxi} Karlekar (2000) speaks of how middle-class female teachers display prejudices towards girls from underprivileged homes and would benefit from training on the importance of treating all children equally irrespective of caste, class and gender.

^{xxii} Certainly teaching in classes 9 to 12 was quite superior to the attention paid to the younger boys in classes 6-8.

^{xxiii} Parents were keenly looking for opportunities for boys to get employment / get training / be apprenticed. Often young men were pushed into highly exploitative situations.