

Children of the Islands

A Situational Analysis in Andaman & Nicobar Islands

**Rita Panicker
Jayaraj KP**



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Edition 2021

Published by

AlterNotes Press

D-11/110, First Floor, Azmat Manzil,
Zakir Nagar, Jamia Nagar, New Delhi-110025
Phone : +91 11 26982052, +91 9818063556



Protecting and empowering children since 1985

163/4, Pradhan Wali Gali, Jaunapur Village, New Delhi-110047

ISBN : 9788194993100

Laser Typesetting by:

N. Ramesh, New Delhi

₹ 500/-

Printed by :

Thomson Press (India) Ltd.

B-315, Okhla Industrial Area,
Phase-I, New Delhi - 110020

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Dedicated to the
Children of Andaman and Nicobar Islands

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Preface

This book is an outcome of our effort to understand the situation of children in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (ANI), India. As an archipelago of 572 islands and known for the presence of distinct tribal groups, ANI has been invited attention of ethnographic scholars around the world. Many studies have been carried out focusing on the rituals and practices of the tribal groups over the years. Though not large in numbers, academic studies have been done through the lens of history and sociology as well. Even then the situation of children has remained a hitherto dark area in the body of knowledge. It is against this background, Butterflies, an organization working with street connected and marginalised children located in New Delhi, has decided to conduct this study and publish it as a book.

Butterflies visited Andaman and Nicobar Islands for the first time in 1995 by facilitating the working Group for writing the first Alternative report on United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Attempts were made to meet with civil society groups in Andaman and Nicobar Islands (ANI) and were surprised of the lack of any such movement in the Islands and therefore could not get much data or rather perspective of the islanders on the situation of children in ANI.

The small and beautiful islands hit the headlines on 26th December, 2004 due to one of the most cataclysmic catastrophes on earth, the tsunami. The deadly waves in the Indian Ocean caused massive destruction and loss of lives in India and it caused extensive damage in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Soon thereafter, Butterflies begun its interventions in the islands in 2005. The work in ANI has been challenging, however, apart from the ANI administration data and that

of the central government, no other studies exist that would provide an understanding of the situation of children in ANI. Therefore, it was decided that a situational analysis of children in the islands would take place.

This study was born out of this background. CIAI-Centro Italiano Aiutiali'Infanzia, an organization located in Milan, Italy working for protecting children in various parts of the world offered their support through a project titled 'Building a Protective Environment for Children in Andaman and Nicobar Islands' to conduct this research.

This book unfolds the life experiences of children in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, thereby offering a comprehensive understanding about their situations to identify areas of intervention for the state as well as civil society organizations aimed at improving the lives of children. Following the framework of child rights in which children are seen as subjects of rights with their own perspectives, the book captures voices of children beyond the administrative data base to describe their situations. The chapters explore varying issues and inequalities experienced by children cutting across class and gender in the isles categorized into the dimensions of right to survival, development, protection and participation.

There are very few studies available about children living in the islands of India. We think this publication will add and perhaps generate an interest among the academia to undertake studies about lives, development, rights issues of communities, and children living in the various islands..... union territories of India. The creation of this book is rooted in hope that it will be of use to policy makers and development practitioners in redefining the development of the children of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Acknowledgements

The book, 'Children of the Islands: A Situational Analysis in Andaman & Nicobar Islands', is based on a maiden study conducted within a limited time frame by facing a number of difficulties. Covering children and stakeholders from different linguistic backgrounds residing in scattered islands was itself challenging. Support extended by many individuals and different administrative wings in the islands have not only equipped us to face the challenges in the journey but also helped to complete the study. We would like to take this opportunity to thank and acknowledge them for their contribution in the study process.

Our grateful thanks are due to our publisher, AlterNotes Press, Misereor, Germany and CIAI – Centro Italiano Aiutiali'Infanzia without whose assistance and the financial support of Cariplo Foundation, this book that covers an essential aspect of the everyday life of children would not have come out.

We would like to put on record Mr. Gerry Pinto, Advisor, Butterflies for his inputs in developing the Research Methodology and for going through the initial draft of the study. We also thank Mr. Santanu Banerjee, Programme Manager, Butterflies, ANI, and Mr. Davide Olchini, Project Manager, CIAI, for their valuable comments and inputs at various stages of the research.

We thank Mr. V.O. Koshy, Statistical Investigator, Directorate of Census Operations, Port Blair, for giving a hand to reach Census reports, Mr. K. Biju, Panchayat Secretary, Grampanchayat Campbell Bay for paving the way to connect a number of PRIs across the islands and Dhaneshwari, Librarian, State Library, Port Blair, for being generous to spend time for collection of existing literature

pertaining to the subject matter from the library, which guided us to look at the topic through a critical lens. We take this opportunity also to thank members of Panchayat in all the islands from field data and relevant information have been collected, for their enthusiastic support.

We acknowledge Directorate of Health Services, Directorate of Social Welfare and Directorate of Education in Andaman and Nicobar Islands for furnishing administrative data and government reports with reference to the study.

We are grateful to the Butterflies team in ANI for collecting data from the field without compromising the quality. Their passionate and committed involvement has captured the ground realities, which is the base of the study. We also express our sincere thanks to Mr. Sujay Joseph for his support in copy-editing and Mr. Thomas CV for his administrative support.

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to all children and other stakeholders for sharing their experiences and patiently participating in the study process.

As an attempt first of its kind, we hope this book would not only contribute to its own part to the existing literature but also pave the way for further studies as well. We hope this would enable the government to think and frame or re-frame policies on children and inflame debate on the varying issues of children in the isles among various sections of civil society, which can only provide an atmosphere where child rights are recognised and children are considered as active citizens with rights and responsibilities.

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List of Abbreviations

ANI	Andaman and Nicobar Islands
ASHA	Accredited Social Health Activist
AWC	Anganwadi Centre
AWW	Anganwadi worker
BaLA	Building as Learning Aid
CBO	Community Based Organization
CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education
CHC	Community Health Centre
COTPA	The Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products [Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and commerce Production Supply and Distribution]
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRS	Creditor Reporting System
DCC	Day Care Centre
DLHS	District Level Household Survey (DLHS)
DOTS	Directly Observed Treatment Short Course
GoI	Government of India
GTT	Graduate Trained Teachers
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
IDSP	Integrated Surveillance Project
IED	Integrated / Inclusive Education for Disabled
IEDC	Integrated / Inclusive Education for Disabled Children
IMR	Infant Mortality Ratio
JSY	Janani Suraksha Yojana
KGBV	Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidhyalayas
KSYP	Kishori Shakthi Yojana
MMR	Maternal Mortality Ratio

NCAER	National Council for Applied Economic Research
NCERT	National Council for Educational Research and Training
NEUPA	National University of Educational Planning and Administration
NFHS	National Family Health Survey
NIPCCP	National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development
NPAG	Nutritional Programme for Adolescent Girls
NPE	National Policy on Education
NRHM	National Rural Health Mission
SSO	National Sample Survey Organization
OBC	Other Backward Class
PD	The Person with Disabilities [Equal Opportunities, Protection of rights and Participation act]
PHC	Primary Health Centre
PRI	Panchayat Raj Institution
PROBE	Public Report on Basic Education
PSRT	Primary School Resource Teachers
RGSEAG	Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls
RKS	Rogi Kalyan Samiti
RNTCP	Revised National Tuberculosis Programme
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
RTE	Right to Education
SNP	Supplementary Nutritional Programme
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
SSHE	School Sanitation and Hygiene Education
TSC	Total Sanitation Campaign
UNESCO	United Nation Education, Scientific & Cultural Organization
UT	Union Territory
VEC	Village Education Committee
VHSC	Village Health Sanitation Committee
WCD	Women and Child Development

INTRODUCTION

ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS (hereafter ANI) is an archipelago of 572 islands, covering an area of 8249 Sq. km. The islands are spread over 780 km in the shape of an arc in the Bay of Bengal. It is not a continuous strip of land. There are two groups of islands, the Andaman and Nicobar. The Great Andaman group of islands has three islands which are separated by the strait, whereas the Nicobar group of islands are widely separated. The Great Nicobar Island is farthest off from ANI and the administrative headquarters Port Blair. The southernmost tip of the country is located in Great Nicobar and is called Indira Point. ANI is so far off from mainland India that until the tsunami tragedy, many citizens were not aware that these islands were part of the country. Some of the early writings on these islands have been by Ptolemy, the geographer of the Roman Empire in 2nd century. References to these islands are also found in the writings of Chinese traveller I'Tsing in 672 AD, by two Arab travellers in 870's. In AD 1260, Marco Polo passed by these islands during his travels and wrote about it.

However, reliable history of the islands may be dated 1789, when Lt. Archibald Blair came to the archipelago to execute a brief of the Governor General of India Lord Cornwallis to survey the islands, raise the British Flag and set up a harbour where ships could anchor for repair and maintenance work in times of war or distress. Before that the accounts of various travellers could be categorized as travelogues, some of them colourful imagination and interesting to read but of little value to a serious student of history. The occupation of the islands by Indians and Britishers and actual encounters with the natives of the islands proved otherwise, it was popular notion that the inhabitants were a set of fierce cannibals with dog faces and tails, who preferred human flesh to fish, birds or animals and who spared no shipwrecked sailor from a terrible fate (Dhingra, 2005).

According to Dhingra (2005) the earliest reference appears at about the start of Christian era. In the writings of astronomer, mathematician and geographer, Claudius Ptolemaeus, better known as Ptolemy, there is a mention of a group of islands occupied by cannibals that he called Agadaemon, Agedaman or Angdeman or Andaman. Some chroniclers would also have it that there is an ever earlier reference in the Ramayana, to the islands as the first choice of a site for a bridge to Lanka to rescue Sita. This led to association of the islands with Handuman and hence Andaman. In 17th century Chinese traveller I'Tsing called the islands "the land of the naked". The Arab travellers wrote travelogues with accounts of cannibals eating raw human flesh.

Between 1788 and 1796, the British along with groups of convicts who were serving their term in mainland were brought to Port Blair to establish a naval unit which did not happen as many of them died due to malaria and resistance from the tribals of the islands. The British also had the idea to create penal settlements in the islands, where convicts along with their families would be sent to settle down. However, this also did not materialise and whoever survived their stay in Andaman returned to mainland. A small contingent remained in Diglipur, North Andaman to have a semblance of control over the islands.

The 1857 revolt against British rule led the British government to re-start their plan of having a penal settlement in the islands. The first contingent of 200 prisoners landed in Chatham Island near Port Blair in 1858. Those who did not abide by the rules of the penal settlement were sent to the closed prison in Viper Island. With the number of prisoners increasing the British felt the need to construct a large prison and that is how the cellular prison was constructed. The construction of the cellular prison was completed in 10 years (1906) in Port Blair, Andaman to house freedom fighters and revolutionaries. The cellular jail had 698 cells for solitary confinement of political prisoners. On regular intervals, groups of political prisoners, convicts and labourers were shipped to the Islands. One significant group was the Moplahs. After the Malabar rebellion in 1921 a number of Moplahs (1133) were transported to Port Blair to the penal settlements. Bhatus from U.P. were another ethnic group who were brought to ANI. The British government also got quite a significant group of Karens from Burma (Mynamar) to work as labourers in clearing the forests in the Islands. Labourers from Bihar (locally known as Ranchis) were also brought to the Islands as labourers.

The population pre-1942 of the islands were the freedom fighters, convicts and labourers who were the first to be transported to ANI and the Moplahs, Bhandus and Karens between 1921 and 1925, and lastly the government servants, professionals, traders. These people are called the Pre-1942 settlers. The Pre-1942 settlers intermarried among themselves and their descendants are called “local born”. The Local Born grew up in an environment where there was no division based on caste or community, so they formed their own. However, the Moplahs, Ranchis, Bhandus and Karens kept their distinct identities. Post-1942 settlers are those who came to the islands under various schemes of settlement and rehabilitation of the central government. The largest group in terms of numbers was the displaced persons of East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, who from 1949 were brought by batches to the Islands and settled in various parts of the Islands. They were given agricultural and horticultural lands, livestock, farming implements as well as building materials to start their lives anew in these islands. There are also families from different states of India who took advantage of the rehabilitation package and moved to the islands. In 1968, the Government of India encouraged ex-service men all over the country to settle in the islands and they were provided with land, subsidy to construct houses, subsidies on purchase of livestock and free seeds. Ex-service men from Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra took advantage of this scheme. In fact, ANI is a miniature India, but an India that gives the false impression of lacking divisions of caste, community and religion. Unfortunately, changes occurred with the setting up of the Andaman and Nicobar Commission for Other Backward Classes. Their recommendation as to who should be considered under OBC has led to protest from a number of communities who have been excluded, since the recommendation is primarily for those who were brought here for historical reasons. The Ranchi community has demanded that they be included as scheduled caste and not as OBC. The OBC status would offer 33,000 government jobs for a population of 3.5 lakhs. A government job is the most coveted job in the Islands and there are no other alternative lucrative jobs available in the Islands; there is hardly any industry and only a fledgling tourism industry and therefore the battle for getting a government job. The lack of alternate livelihood options is a major concern in the Islands.

The original inhabitants of these islands are six tribes: the Great Andamanese, Jarawas, Onges, Sentineles, Shompens and Nicobarese.

The indigenous people of ANI are a part of dwindling, semi-nomadic, hunter-gatherer, Negrito and Mongoloid populations of South and South East Asia.

1.1 The indigenous people of ANI

Andamanese: They are known as the Great Andamanese and are the survivors of a former population of ten territorial and linguistic groups spread across North, Middle and South Andaman Islands. Their population have reduced considerably due to diseases and in breeding and are now found on a small island called Strait Island.

Jarawas: They live in the western borders of Middle and South Andaman Islands. The name Jarawa is derived from the Aka- bea-da, one of the linguistically distinct Andamanese groups whom the British first encountered in South Andaman Island. The Aka- bae- da employed the term to refer to any other group with whom they do not share territorial or kinship rights and obligations. The Jarawas are also not very friendly people like the Sentinelese. However, in recent past Jarawas are coming out of their forests and are seen in villages of Middle and South Andaman; moving around freely and even boarding buses that ply along Andaman trunk road. The Andaman Trunk Road that cuts across the deep forests of northern part of South Andaman Island where the Jarawas were living without contact with the outside world for probably 55,000 years has been disrupted with the construction of this road in 1998. Today, a road runs right through their homes. Mr. Stephen Cory, Director of Survival an International organization, was recently quoted in The Hindu newspaper that there is a risk of the Jarawas being affected by diseases unknown to them as they may not have immunity to common ailments prevalent in towns and cities. The same newspaper reported about four tour companies advertising off beat Andaman vacations with spotting Jarawas as an attraction in their tour packages. Although the tourists are warned that they should not take photographs or interact with them. The point still remains that they are being ogled at like animals in a game reserve. In the month of May in 2010, the Andaman Nicobar Islands Administration issued warnings to tour operators that such tourism is illegal. The warning mentioned that Jarawas are not to be promoted as a tourist attraction under any circumstances. However, such tourism and the instances of Jarawas coming out on to the roads and asking for tobacco and gutka is only possible because of this controversial road that runs right through the reserve where 350

Jarawas live. There is a ruling issued by the Supreme Court in 2002 asking the Administration to close the Andaman Trunk Road but till date the Administration has not taken any action to do so (Jebaraj, 2010).

Onges: They were primarily hunters and gatherers and fishing were their way of life. In the mid-1960s, the government tried to work with them and settled them in two settlements apart from each other in two ends of Little Andaman Island. They were given food subsidies, medicines and health care, and clothes, which they temporarily wear when leaving the settlement only to collect their rations and promptly remove it on their way back to their homes. The indirect influence of the welfare schemes have resulted in them getting assimilated into “Indian” life style. According to well-known anthropologist Venkateswar (2004) “the introduction of milk powder in the diet of Onges may have contributed to increased numbers of infant mortality and significant incidence of deaths of children due to diarrhea and dysentery”. However, this finding needs to be studied in detail.

Sentineles: Named after North Sentinel Island, the Island they inhabit are mostly isolated or the least known of the islanders and continue to present a militant front to the outside world. They do not encourage and thwart any attempt at approaching their islands. The name Sentineles is an arbitrary and artificial one given by the British as they happen to inhabit the island Sentinel. This name continues till today as we do not know how they refer to themselves or to their Island.

Shompens: They reside in Great Nicobar Islands and belong to the mongoloid race. They are very docile and shy and were primarily nomadic as the Andamanese, but are now settled in two settlements in Campbell Bay. There are two groups of them: one resides on the coastal area and the other in the deep interiors of the forest. The administration has established a Shompen Hut on the periphery of their settlements. This hut is supposed to serve as a welfare centre for the Shompens to provide them with food, clothes, seedlings and more, and to procure from them forest produce for marketing at reasonable rates. A doctor from Campbell Bay visits the Shompen Hut periodically and administers medical treatment to whoever needs it.

In September 2009, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, had uploaded in their website the final draft of the Shompen Policy¹. The policy, more formally known as Policy for the Shompen,

PTG of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, states that, to quote “Ensuring that the Shompen survive and grow in good health is the primary task before the Union Territory Administration... .. all experts who have been associated in the drafting of the policy paper unanimously agree that contact with the outsiders would be dangerous, harmful and destructive..... if interaction with outsiders is not banned the Shompen way of living would die out too”. Although the document does speak about specific interventions that could be sensitively designed to improve their reported, but not yet confirmed, high mortality rate or control other causes of IMR. The external intervention would depend purely on Shompens wanting to participate or be left alone. The policy document emphasizes the need to respect the privacy of Shompens, just like the Jarawas, and their right to live their lives undisturbed by the outside world. It is only when they seek outside assistance that matters should be rendered sensitively. The drafters of the policy do recognise that the question of keeping them away from the outside world or how much contact should be encouraged will continue to be debated. The policy is clear that the East-West Road running through the Shompen reserve should not be completed and the surrounding jungle should not be allowed to be encroached upon. It has also been suggested that the Shompen Hut complex on that road, 27 kms away from Campbell Bay, need not be re-established as the Shompens do go to Campbell Bay to barter their forest produce, such as wild honey and fruits and sometimes to collect rations from the government establishments. The policy document states that they should be gradually weaned away from free food, as in any case the food provide is alien to their normal dietary habits; on the other hand, easy barter should be introduced. Contacts with tourists is strictly forbidden and a punishable act. One is glad to know that this policy speaks about non-completion of the road as it would have resulted in the same situation as in South Andaman with the Jarawas, where tour operators arrange ‘sighting Jarawas’ tour packages. The tourists have been known to give biscuits, sweets and even chewing tobacco resulting in creating a desire among them to have these items. There are instances reported of Jarawa youth demanding bananas, biscuits and chewing tobacco from tourists.

Nicobarese: There are Nicobarese living in different islands, they speak different dialects as they have no social contacts with each other over the centuries. Many Nicobarese living in central and southern

islands can neither speak nor understand the Car Nicobar language which has emerged as the standard Nicobari language. Car Nicobar is considered the main headquarters of the Nicobar group of islands. The Nicobarese, being closer to Port Blair and also due to Christian missionaries' influence, are quite assimilated with the rest of society in the Islands. Bishop John Richardson, a Nicobari who studied in a seminary in Burma and returned to the Islands, is a legend in Car Nicobar as he brought in change and development to his Island. Education and development were two areas he concentrated on. However, it must be stated that Car Nicobar has its own governance. The Tribal Council decides the development plans for their Island and decides on important issues... It is a very hierarchal society. Every village has its own chief who decides on all issues related to his village. The Chiefs' are empowered to administer punishments according to their tribal custom. No non-Nicobari is allowed into Car Nicobar, even the Local Born cannot enter the island without permission from the Tribal Council or an endorsement by the Administration Commissioner of Car Nicobar. The Nicobarese have taken advantage of Indian mainstream education and entered government service.

It must be stated here that apart from the Administration, no one is allowed to visit these tribal settlements; special permission is required to visit the areas. The situation of the tribal population and the census data available are all that of the government. Soon after the tsunami, Car Nicobar was the one area that an outside agency was allowed to work, only with special permission of the Administration and Tribal council.

1.2 Background and rationale of the study

While working in the islands soon after the tsunami, it was difficult to gather any substantial data or literature on situations of children and adolescents in the Islands. The data available were the government census data on population, education, health and of the various central government schemes and the beneficiaries. When engaging with children, parents and the PRIs, the importance of a 'situational analysis of children in ANT' was made evident, in order to provide insight into not only the situations in which these children are living but also get an understanding of the perceptions of children, parents, teachers, PRI members and other stakeholders on what they perceive are child rights and their violations. One of the primary goals was to capture the aspirations of these children and adolescents with the hope that this study would in some limited way

help the policy makers to re-design their development initiatives taking the needs and aspirations of these children seriously. This was seen as important as there is no active civil society movement in the Islands as compared to mainland that could raise the voices and advocate for the children and adolescents of these Islands.

The study was carried out against this background. Given the limitations, it aims to explore the situations of children in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. To capture a comprehensive picture, the study keeps in mind different objectives related with the lives of children within the framework of child rights. The aim has been influenced by the following objectives.

1.3 Research methodology

1.3.1 Specific objectives

- To understand the socio-economic background of children
- To document the health status of children
- To examine initiatives of ICDS with reference to early childhood care and development
- To document the education scenario
- To understand the major issues of protection faced by children in their lives
- To understand the leisure time activities of children
- To understand the awareness regarding child rights
- To document the situations and implementation of JJA, 2006
- To understand the perspective of government officials, NGO representatives and parents towards children, childhood and child rights

1.3.2 Definition of major concepts

Child: In this study, child means every human being below the age of eighteen years defined under article one of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC), 1989 to which India is a signatory.

Education scenario: Keeping the view of CRC on education² (GOI, 1994) and Right to Education Act 2009³ (GOI, 2009) in mind, the study defines education to be of a standard and quality, joyful, accessible, free and compulsory. It is children's right to participate in decision making in school, access necessary facilities and services in school, and have an active parent teacher association and village education committee.

Issues of protection: The CRC definition on protection⁴ (GOI, 1994) is what we have taken. The study has looked into domestic violence, substance use, emotional, physical and sexual abuse, work that affects health, gender discrimination and its implications on the lives of children within the legislative, administrative, social context in India.

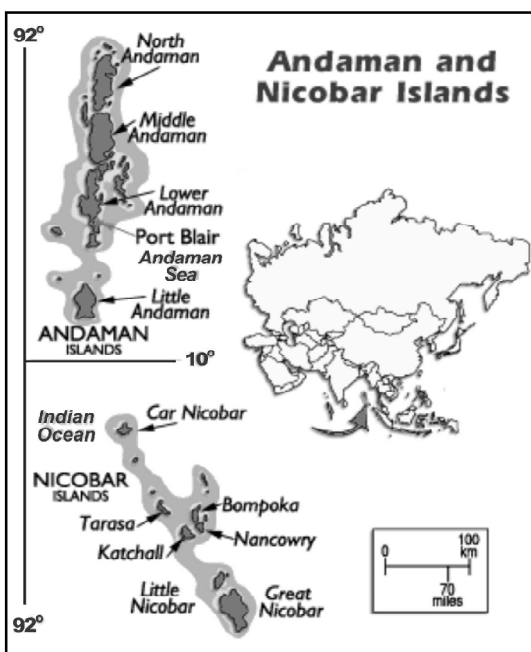
Health status: Considering the Article in CRC on health and medical care⁵ (GOI, 1994), the study defines health status as documentation of types of major diseases, disabilities, nature of treatment and type of hospital available and accessible to children for medical care.

1.3.3 Research design

The study is exploratory in nature, which intends to study an unfamiliar problem about which the researchers have little or no knowledge. A number of government reports and academic works have touched on the lives of children as part of their attempts to document the various programmes and schemes for children; it still leaves a lot to uncover in understanding and giving a comprehensive account on the situations of children in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. In this context, to obviate the absence of a research on the situations of children and to shed light on their lives, the study has worked out and taken exploratory design within the frame work of child rights.

1.3.4 Coverage of the study

The study has covered all administrative districts in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, i.e., Middle and North Andaman, South Andaman and Nicobar Islands. This coverage has ensured not only representation of children and other stakeholders from different Islands and administrative units but also from different socio-economic backgrounds in the data as well.



1.3.5 Sampling design, population and Sample size

By virtue of the scattered study population over Andaman and Nicobar Islands⁶ and lack of availability of a list for sampling⁷, multi-stage purposive sampling design has been adopted for collecting data from children 7-18 years for the study⁸. In addition, the government policy on 'protection' of aboriginal tribes⁹ has restricted the study to enter a few areas inhabited by indigenous people. Thus, the study has used multi-stage purposive sampling design in lieu of adopting any probability sampling method. The multi-stage purposive sampling method has been carried out in two stages in the study. In the first stage, the geographical area-Andaman and Nicobar Islands, has been divided in to three clusters of administrative units: Middle and North Andaman, South Andaman and Nicobar districts. Considering the population of children in Census report¹⁰, the study has proportionately selected children between the age group of 7 to below 18 years in accordance with the total study population in each district¹¹.

Purposive sampling design has been used for eliciting data from stakeholders, i.e., parents, teachers, PRI members, government officials and representatives of voluntary organizations working with children. Based on different socio-economic background, selected life histories of children have been documented.

The population contains all children between the age group of 0 to below 18 years in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. But the age group of 0-6 years has been excluded for deploying questionnaire due to the younger age. Thus, with reference to the sampling design, sample size has been fixed as 1819 from the geographical area for collecting data from primary respondents (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Population and sample targeted

Districts	Census 2001	Sample targeted
Middle and North Andaman	Data not available	549
South Andaman	80619	1063
Nicobar	10356	207
Total	90705	1819

The sample size has been fixed as 300 for acquiring data from secondary respondents, i.e., stakeholders including parents, pregnant and lactating mothers, teachers, PRI members, government officials and representatives of voluntary organizations working with children

in the geographical area (Table 1.2). Three selected life histories of children have been documented based on different socio-economic background, i.e., from community involved in traditional occupation, settlers in remote area and child from urban area.

Table 1.2 Districts and sample targeted

Districts	Sample targeted
Middle and North Andaman	100
South Andaman	130
Nicobar	70
Total	300

1.3.6 Methods of data collection

Considering the subject matter of the study, respondents, and the framework, different methods have been adopted for acquiring quantitative as well as qualitative data from the field.

A questionnaire has been used for documenting the general situation of children and capturing the macro scale picture in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Keeping in mind the objectives of the study, questions have been categorized into different sections. Closed and open-ended questions have been used in accordance with the objectives. With reference to answers for open-ended questions, they have been coded after completing the data collection. Considering the multi-lingual scenario of the Islands¹², questionnaire has been translated into Hindi, the common language for communication in the geographical area.

For acquiring qualitative data, focus group discussions have been used for the study. Number of the participants in the discussion varies from 8 to 12 in accordance with circumstances. Sharing of experiences and perspectives of children and duty bears, i.e., parents and PRI members on children, childhood and child rights has been encouraged in the discussions. In addition, special attention has been given to the socio-cultural context of the participants to check the possibility of diverse experience and perspective within the general outlook.

Interviews with key stakeholders like responsible government officials in different departments, teachers, librarians, representatives of youth clubs in rural areas and voluntary organizations working with children have been used for the study to examine not only interventions with reference to their roles and responsibilities but also their perspectives on children, childhood and child rights as well.

An un-structured interview has been used for documenting life histories of children from different socio-economic backgrounds. According to the convenience of children, life histories have been documented in sessions and from different spaces and environment, such as the household of the child, playground and street.

1.3.7 Data collection

A pre-test of the questionnaire was performed a few times with different groups of children, geographical areas and communities. Based on the feedback, a final pre-test was conducted among 30 children at AttamPahard, a village situated in a remote area in South Andaman district on 29th March 2010. The trial administration of the questionnaire helped to follow those key questions, eliminate errors, and make necessary modifications before finalizing it.

The data collection based on field work has taken place over a period of four months in different Islands from April to August 2010, which has paved the way for exploring the situations of children in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Primary data from government departments in general and children from 0 to 6 years in particular has been collected and incorporated with the quantitative and qualitative data elicited from the field.

For collecting data from primary respondents, a team of investigators from the local area has been set up. Working with children in the Islands has helped us to find appropriate human resources for the task. A workshop has been conducted for the investigators on the theme of the study, objectives and methodology, especially on methods of data collection within the framework of child rights. Doubts and major concepts have been discussed and clarified at the workshop. With understanding the limited time frame, external resources from local areas have been sought by the research team according to situation for identifying different category of respondents quickly from the field. Involvement of the researcher in data collection process has assured original empirical data from the field. The investigators discussed the objectives of the study with the respondents and obtained their consent to partake in the study. Due to the multi-lingual scenario and poor quality of education, especially in rural areas, the primary respondents took between twenty minutes to two and half hours to complete the questionnaire in accordance with their writing skills. While considering the age and writing skill, the questionnaire has been used in the format of interview schedule for collecting data from the age group of 7 to 9 years.

A total of 1819 questionnaires was canvassed from the field, while 191 were rejected due to inadequate responses. According to the situation and availability of stakeholders, focus group discussions and interviews have been conducted in different districts, thus minor variation has come in the completed data as against the targeted (Table 1.3).

Table 1.3 District-wise children and stakeholder targeted & completed

Districts	Children		Stakeholders	
	Targeted	Completed	Targeted	Completed
Middle and North Andaman	549	465	100	92
South Andaman	1063	975	130	130
Nicobar	207	188	70	67
Total	1819	1628	300	291

1.3.8 Analysis of data and report writing

The study has tried to analyse the situation of children by exploring connecting threads between the facts and information acquired quantitatively and experiences and perspectives elicited qualitatively within the framework of child rights. The study has adopted the analytical approach based on the assumption that changing situations are the by-product of an ongoing mutual interaction between changing material world and values and perspectives.

Data collected from the primary respondents, children, have been converted and presented in different tables and graphs in the analysis part. Qualitative dimensions elicited through focus group discussions, interviews and life histories have been incorporated with the quantified macro picture.

1.3.9 Limitations of the study

- By its exploratory nature, the study delimits the scope to find significant variables in the situation rather to discover causal relationships between the variables. Thus, the attempt is made to shed some light on the macroscale picture, but not to dig deep into different issues pertaining to the subject matter.
- Lack of existing literature, especially on location specific dealing with the theme of the study, restricts to corroborate or question different issues coming under the study based on the existing evidence.
- Due to The Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Amendment Regulation, 2010, except for the Nicobarese,

the remaining category of indigenous people have not fallen into the sample size.

- The multi-lingual scenario in the archipelago has time and again created hindrances for collecting data from the field. An overwhelming majority has faced difficulties due to their poor reading and writing skill in Hindi or English or even in mother tongue.
- Discrepancies on the definition of child has either limited or consumed time of the study for acquiring specific data compiled or maintained by different government departments for the study.
- The limited time frame to complete the study put pressures in limiting the scope of the study.

1.4 An overview of the book

The book is divided into eight chapters. The chapters discuss different issues and inequalities experienced by children cutting across class and gender in the isles categorized into the dimensions of right to survival, development, protection and participation.

The first chapter provides a general introduction to the topic studied and delineates the research methodology. The second chapter explains the socio-economic profile of children and other stakeholders interviewed. Chapter three explores the situation of children within the background of right to survival while the fourth chapter dealt with right to development and children. The fifth chapter addresses protection issues of children and chapter six unravels awareness of children regarding child rights and their right to participate in matters affecting them. Chapter seven, the conclusions, offers key findings, recommendations and conclusions. The final chapter, Appendices, narrates the documented selected life histories of children from different socio-economic backgrounds along with bibliography and questionnaire.

End notes

1. Draft Policy for Shompen PTG of AN Island No. 17014/5/08-C&LMII (Part) Government of India Ministry of Tribal Affairs Retrieved from <http://tribal.nic.insearchdetail.asp?lid=1154&skey=policy>
2. Article 28 and 29 of CRC emphasises the right to education.
3. The historical intervention assures not only free and compulsory

education to all children of the age of 6 to 14 years but also the quality of education in government, aided and unaided schools as well.

4. Article 2, 19, 20, 22, 23, 32, 33, 34, 36 and 37 of CRC ensures protection from different harmful contexts.
5. Article 24 of CRC assures right to health.
6. The total population in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands is scattered over 37 Islands among the total 572 Island/lets (GoI, 2007).
7. The study deployed questionnaire/interview schedule for child between the age groups of 7 to below 18 years, either in school or in family environment in other words excluded from educational institutions. This definition of the sample unit restricted to identify a list of sample units in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
8. For analysing situation of children 0-6 years the study depended on primary reports of different government departments such as ICDS, health, and interviews with anganwadi workers, pregnant and lactating mothers and, focus group discussions with parents and PRI members in different areas. In addition, visits to randomly selected anganwadis and day care centres helped the study for corroborating the findings.
9. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Amendment Regulation, 2010 promulgates regulation on entry to the reserve area, where the indigenous people are inhabited. To get a pass from the administration by the recommendation of department for entering to the 'reserved' area is a very difficult task and cumbersome procedure. Thus the limited time frame has confined the study to focus on 'unreserved' area.
10. Although Census report enumerates total population in age wise, categorizes the age in accordance with different headings like work, migration, education, fertility etc. Therefore age group varies according to the objective of the classification. However, generally children are included in two categories, i.e. 0-6 and 7-14 years. No doubt, as a signatory of CRC, the approach of the state on children is questionable.

11. By dint of the only available source of data with reference to sample Census 2001- the study compelled to stick on the division of two administrative districts instead of three (came in 2009 by splitting South Andaman district into South Andaman and Middle and North Andaman) for fixing sample size and presenting primary data published by government. Realizing this, data from the third administrative unit, Middle and North Andaman, was collected proportionately to the total population.
12. The census report 2001 shows that 21 scheduled and 28 non-scheduled languages are spoken in Andaman and Nicobar Islands due to its cosmopolitan nature. By dint of the same reason, six major languages, i.e. Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, English and Nicobarese are using as medium of instruction in schools.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF CHILDREN

THIS CHAPTER reveals socio-economic profile of the primary respondents, i.e. children, in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Relevant other data sources were also referred to compare and assess the situation of children.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands, a Union Territory of India, has population of 356,152 with 54.18% of males and 45.82% females (Table 2.1). The total comprises 38.04% of children from 0 to 18 years. The children aged 0-6 years (44,781) and 7-18 years (90,705) contributes 12.57% and 25.47% respectively to the total population in the islands¹.

Considering peculiarity of age group, 0-6 years has been omitted to deploy questionnaire for collecting data from the field. Therefore, the field survey has focused on children aged 7-18 years.

Table 2.1 Population in Andaman and Nicobar Islands

District/UT	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Andaman	170319	47.82	163180	45.82	314084	88.19
Nicobar	22653	6.36	19415	5.45	42068	11.81
ANI	192972	54.18	163180	45.82	356152	100.00

Source: Census 2001

Age, one of the vital variables in the study, explores varying experiences of children in accordance with different age groups.

Table 2.2 Age of children

Age	Percentage
7-9 years	9.83
10-12 years	20.64
13-15 years	37.90
16-18 years	31.63
Total	100.00

The data (Table 2.2) shows that out of the total sample 37.90% children are from 13-15 age groups. The percentage follows 31.63%

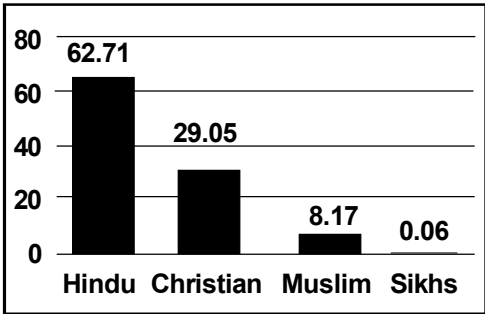
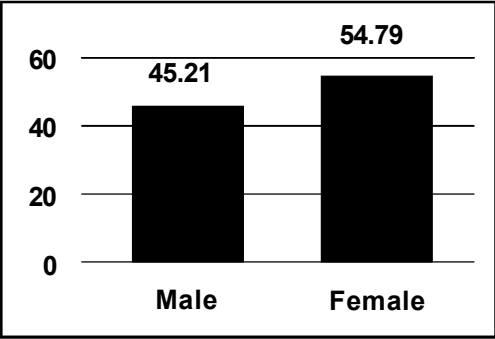
of children in age groups of 16-18, 20.64% in 10-12 and 9.83 percent in 7-9 years. Though the study intentionally did not select proportionately the sample of respective age group, except the age group of 7-9 years, the rest of the categories do not present a stark difference in comparison with percentage of the representative population in the Census data². Deployment of interview schedule for collecting data from children aged 7-9 years, within the limited time frame, confined the percentage of the respective group in the study.

Illustration 2.1 Gender of children

The illustration (2.1) shows the gender break-up of the study population, i.e. 45.21% of male and 54.79% female children.

Illustration 2.2 Religion of children

In comparison with the Census data the percentage of female children is high in the study sample³.



The availability of female children in household or vicinity during the time of data collection enhanced their representation in the study population.

The illustration (2.2) shows that out of the total study population 62.71% children were Hindus. The category followed 29.05% of Christians, 8.17 percent of Muslims and 0.06% of Sikhs in the total sample. However, the representation is nearly proportionate to the Census data⁴.

The illustration (2.3) shows that out of the total sample 50.55% of children were from category of non-OBC⁵ or generals. The general category followed 19.59% of Local Borns, 16.15% of Post-1942 Bengali settlers, 7.13 percent of Scheduled Tribes⁶, 4.85 percent of Moplas, 1.60 percent of Karens and 0.12 percent of Migrants out of the total sample. Due to the peculiarity of sampling design and very low share in the total population, Bhatus⁷, one of the communities under OBC, did not fall in the total sample.

Illustration 2.3 Community of Children

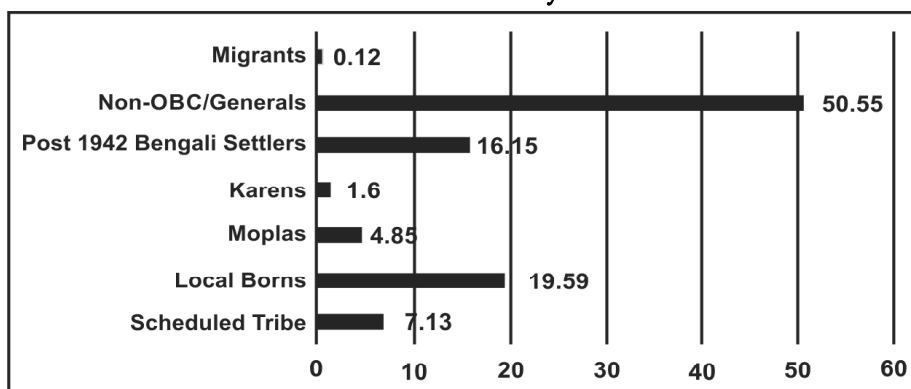


Table 2.3 Mother tongue of children

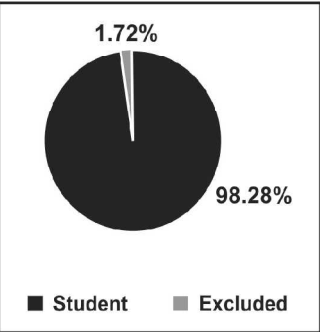
Mother tongue	Percentage
Hindi	16.89
Tamil	9.71
Telegu	16.03
Oraon	8.97
Malayalam	7.06
Kannada	0.06
Punjabi	0.12
Nicobarese	6.76
Bengali	24.45
Karens	1.54
Mizo	0.06
Sadri	5.59
Munda	1.41
Khadia	1.29
Santhali	0.06
Total	100.00

Considering the multi-lingual scenario⁸ in the islands, mother tongue is one of the vital variables in the study (Table 2.3). Out of the total sample, 24.45% of children mentioned Bengali as their mother tongue. Following to it, 16.89% of Hindi, 16.03% of Telugu, 9.71 percent of Tamil, 8.97 percent of Oraon, 7.06 percent of Malayalam and 6.76 percent of Nicobarese were found other lingual groups out of the study population. In comparison with Census data, the representation of mother tongue in the sample was not too disproportional⁹. It is important to note that though different languages exist, Hindi, the common language, was used for communicating with each other invariably across the isles. It was observed during the field work that instead of using mother tongue like Oraon, Sadri, Munda, Khadia and

Santhali, Ranchi communities communicate in Hindi, not only outside but also inside the household as well. Conversely, particularly people from Bengali and Telugu linguistic background were found inclined to use their mother tongue within the household and neighbourhood. As a result, women and children shared that they face various issues due to this linguistic constraint in their lives.

Illustration 2.4 Occupation of children

The illustration (2.4) shows that out of the total sample 98.28% of children were students. The rest, 1.72 percent of children were excluded¹⁰ from education institutions. The study did not use the term “drop out” by considering the nature of data collection from the field and complexities around the definition with reference to enrollment. Census data does not give an accurate distribution of children in accordance with work¹¹ or occupation.



Out of the total sample, 35.50% of children were studying in middle school. The category followed 29.30% of secondary, 17.81% of senior secondary and 17.14% of primary school going children out of the study population (Table 2.4). The table (2.5) explores a significant relation of age and education in the study area. In middle school (6th to 8th class) 20.15% and 2.95% of children came under the age group of 13-15 and 16-18 years respectively. Likewise, 12.47% of children in secondary classes (9th to 10th class) were noticed from the age group of 16-18 years. It is obvious that an overwhelming majority of children from these sections are over age while considering their studentship in middle and secondary classes. Lack of knowledge background of parents and their ‘limited aspirations’, which evinced the life history of Ramu¹², might be a reason for the situation. By and large this trend was found in rural areas.

Table 2.4 Education of children

Education	Percentage
Illiterate	0.06
Primary	17.14
Middle	35.50
Secondary	29.30
Senior secondary	17.81
College	0.18
Total	100.00

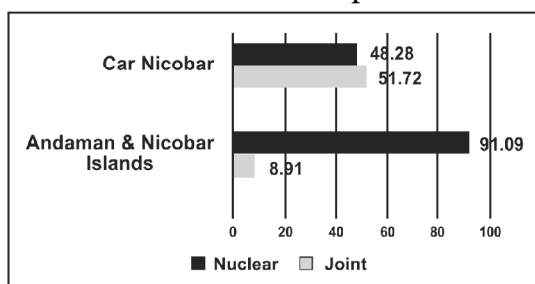
Table 2.5 Education and age of children

Education / Age	7-9	10-12	13-15	16-18	Total
Illiterate	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.06
Primary	9.64	7.00	0.43	0.06	17.14
Middle	0.12	12.29	20.15	2.95	35.50
Secondary	0.00	1.23	15.60	12.47	29.30
Senior Secondary	0.06	0.12	1.17	15.91	17.81
College	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.18	0.18
Total	9.83	20.64	37.90	31.63	100.00

Region, an important variable in the study explores how certain context influences the lives of children in a particular way and sheds lights on the state interventions focusing on the regions. Out of the total children interviewed, an overwhelming majority, 83.11% of children was living in rural area. The category followed 16.89% of urban children in the study population.

Illustration 2.5 Nature of family

From the illustration (2.5) it is apparent that joint families are common in Car Nicobar¹³ in comparison with the total geographical area.



Reflecting the belief in community life and joint family system, 51.72% of children of Nico-barese were living in joint families in Car Nicobar while 48.28% of children were living in nuclear families. At the same time the percentage of

nuclear families in the study questions the generalizations of earlier studies¹⁴ exclusively focused on Nicobarese. But in contrast to the situation in Car Nicobar, 91.09% of children were found living in nuclear families in the total geographical area, invariably inhibited by people from different class and community backgrounds.

It was noticed that the nature of family and pattern of land holding of the families is closely related among the Nicobarese. The below table on land holding (table 2.6) speaks for itself on the particular cultural context of Car Nicobar. The table shows that 97.70% of children's families have 0-50 cents. Due to the community proprietorship under 'tuhets'¹⁵ no one has private land among Nicobarese and they are living in households and working on the land allotted by tuhets. Therefore, besides a few cents for the households, 97.70% of children's families do not have other land as private property.

Table 2.6 Land holding of the family

Land Holding	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	Car Nicobar
No land	14.19	2.30
0-50 cents	50.37	97.70
50 cents-1 acre	9.52	0
1 acre or more	19.90	0
Encroachment	6.02	0
Total	100.00	100.00

The total geographical area presents a different picture on land holding (table 2.6). Out of the total sample, 50.37% of children's families had 0-50 cents land in hand, while 19.90% of families had 1 acre or more land in hand. The categories followed 14.19% of children's families with no land. However, 6.02 percent of children admitted that their families were living in encroachment land¹⁶.

End notes

1. Census 2001, Directorate of Census Operations, Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It is important to note here that although Census enumerates age wise data, categorizes age in accordance with different headings like education, work, migration etc. However generally children are included in two categories, i. e. zero-six and seven-14 years. As a signatory of CRC, the approach of the state on children is questionable.
2. Census 2001 constitutes 22.61% of children in the age groups of seven to nine, 26.23% in 10-12, 24.84% in 13-15 and 26.32% in 16-18 years.
3. Comparing the gender break-up of total population in Census 2001 (male 54.18% and female 45.82%) with children aged seven to 18 years (male 52.14% and female 47.86%) and zero to six years (male 51.10% and 48.90%), it is apparent that gender disparity is reducing, in other words the sex ratio of females is improving in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The sex ratio of females improved from 151 in 1901 to 846 in 2001 per 1000 males. But conversely Nicobar district presented a declining trend of sex ratio of females from 900 in 1951 to 781 in 1971 and then showed a swung and reached to 857 in 2001. In Car Nicobar, one of the tahsils in Nicobar district still has a declining trend of sex ratio of females. However with

reference to the national data, 933 females per 1000 males the sex ratio of the total isles is not promising (Census, 2001). It is important to note here that there was no focused academic work traced out the reasons behind the trends. However Dhaingra (2005) argues that “the adverse sex ratio in the islands is due to the factors of external to the health care system or attitude towards girls” (p. 172). But by considering the trend of sex ratio, absence of any reported cases of female infanticide and the historical background of ‘settlement’, the argument of Dhaingra is problematic. Therefore it is imperative to conduct in-depth studies to shed some light on the hitherto dark area, which was reiterated by the workshop conducted by Social Welfare Department on ‘Rights of Girl Child and Implications of imbalanced sex ratio’ on 20th July 2010 (The Daily Telegrams, 2010).

4. Census 2001 constitutes 69.23% of Hindus, 21.72% of Christians, 8.24 percent of Muslims and 0.45 percent of Sikhs out of the total population.
5. Inspired by Mandal Commission Report for Other Backward Classes in India, The Andaman and Nicobar Commission for Other Backward Classes was set up in 1994. The Commission listed the OBC of the islands, ‘*sons of soil*’ (emphasis added) from 32 sorted applications came from different castes/classes/communities, under two categories, i.e. pre-1942 settlers, comprising (a) Local Borns, (b) Moplas, (c) Karens and (d) Bhatus and post-1942 settlers comprising the displaced persons from East Pakistan now Bangladesh by proclaiming the ‘casteless and mostly classless society’(?) in the islands. Interestingly even though the report romanticized ‘descendants of local borns never grown up with any sense of caste or community’, gives special status to Moplas, Karens and Bhatus by admitting their separate identity. On the other hand the Commission didn’t consider Tribes from Bihar locally known as Ranchis for OBC status by indicating that the groups have not applied for the status, but bent up on getting Scheduled Tribe status which they get in the mainland. The migrants of post-independence period were also ignored from the list

by pointing out their migrant status. However the list was contested especially people from Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. However still reservation is a burning issue in the islands. The recent upsurge of Ranchis by taking up the subject matter underlined the unsettled issues within the social context (Report of The Andaman and Nicobar Commission for Other Backward Classes, p. 6).

6. As the only 'mainstreamed' tribal group, Nicobarese fell in the sample among different tribes in the isles. The limited time frame for the study restricted to get permission from the administration to enter and collect data from other tribal groups inhabited in particular 'reserved areas'. This eliminated the representation of other tribal groups in the study population. It is also worth mentioning here that among the other five tribes the Sentinelese are a hostile group of people and not in contact with the "civilized" world and repeated efforts from government of India to establish contact with them has failed. The Jarwas were also hostile but gradually they have shown some acceptance towards the "mainstream" way of life. The remaining three namely, Shompens, Onges and Great Andamanese are not hostile and are in contact with the rest of the inhabitants of these islands at various levels. However these contacts are all debatable on the context of interference in their way of life. Therefore, even if permission from the administration was acquired, what strategy and what indicators should have been fixed for the research were a matter of debate as there is no consensus on a "perfect tribal policy".
7. Andaman and Nicobar Commission for Other Backward Classes identified 1448 members in the community as part of their enquiry to determine the OBC status (Schedule, Report of Andaman and Nicobar for Other Backward Classes, p. 45).
8. The Census report 2001 shows that 21 scheduled and 28 non-scheduled languages are spoken in Andaman and Nicobar Islands due to its multi-lingual nature.

9. Census 2001 constitutes 30.38% of Bengali speaking people in the total population. The highest percentage of Bengali followed by 21.54% of Hindi, 20.89% of Tamil, 15.14% of Telugu and 9.57 percent of Malayalam speaking people.
10. The study defines excluded as children who are out of school and have no exposure to school during the school year in question (UNICEF and UNESCO, 2005).
11. Census 2001 defines work as an economic activity, “as participation in any economically productive activity with or without compensation, wages or profit...It even includes part time help or unpaid work on farm, family enterprise or in any other economic activity” (Census, 2001, p. 59). Therefore children were included in categories like main, marginal and non-workers. The category of non-workers comprised students and household duties.
12. See Appendices, life history of a child from traditional community.
13. Car Nicobar is counted a major hamlet of Nicobarese, the only ‘mainstreamed’ tribal community in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Moreover 70% of the population of Nicobarese live in different islands of Nicobar district and Car Nicobar is one of them.
14. Studies on Nicobarese over and again underlined the traditional practice of joint family system among the tribal community. The present study challenged the generalization of joint family system among Nicobarese with an exploration of a recognizable percentage of nuclear families within the community. However instead of romanticizing traditional life and practices and fictive writings, the factors motivated for the change and the present scenario should be studied in detail.
15. *Tuhets* is a kinship group exists among the Nicobarese with a common descendant. Number of such *tuhets* constitutes a tribal village in Car Nicobar. Each *tuhets* have a Captain, who takes important decisions on behalf of the members of the *tuhets*.

16. During the time of field work it was observed that not only children but also adults/parents also never hesitated to share about their 'encroachment' land. A section of the category purchased 'encroachment' land with low rate in comparison with actual market value from individuals who encroached land in the past, but without '*patta*' (record) or the rest encroached the reserved forest nearby their acquaintance or relatives. This trend was particularly visible in rural areas.

RIGHT TO SURVIVAL

HEALTH, defined as ‘a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity’ (World Health Organization, 1946), is a “fundamental human right and the attainment of the highest possible level of health is a most important worldwide social goal whose realization requires the action of many other social and economic sectors in addition to the health sector” (Declaration of Alma Ata 1978 in Bajpai, 2003, p. 374-375). The same concern has translated into the motto “Health for All” and which solidly embeds the idea of social justice across the world. Along with the international interventions in general, the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989¹, Constitution of India² and health policies³ also envisage health as a matter of human rights of children.

The chapter deals with the question of right to health and access to services, an adequate living standard of disabled children and early childhood care of children in the islands. It is divided into four sections. The first section explores children’s right to health and the status of accessibility to the services while the second section attempts to understand the status of disabled children and the state interventions for them. The third section documents the situation of early childhood care and the question of right to survival. As part of the efforts, the section maps the available facilities in Anganwadis and captures of voices of children for improving the situation. The final section – discussion – analyses and summarises the study findings of the chapter.

Part 3.1 Right to health and children

Children in India suffer varying health problems such as polio, diarrhoea, malnutrition, vitamin deficiency, infant mortality and so on. Besides the national statistics and data published by the administration in Andaman and Nicobar Islands as part of different reports, there is not much information available on the situation of children. The study

attempted to explore the situation of children in the context of health in the isles should be located within this background.

The study found that out of the total sample interviewed, 77.70% of children suffered any type of illness in last twelve months. The overwhelming majority's response needs to be examined in relation to the type of illness affected them.

Out of the total respondents, majority children reported common cold (78.10%). The category followed 3.95 percent cases of malaria 3.64 percent of gastritis, 3.00 percent of jaundice, 2.74 percent of chikungunya and 1.74 percent of skin disease out of the total study population. Malaria has been an endemic to the archipelago for over a century and therefore it would be good to examine the administrative data on the disease to understand the situation better. The table (3.1.1) shows an increasing trend of reported cases of malaria in the isles. It is important to note that the health department follows 14 year as the cut-off age for children to separate from adults and thus the administrative data only furnishes cases of children below 14 years. Considering this fact, the findings highlight the need of carrying out assessments focusing on children in the islands.

Table 3.1.1 Reported cases of malaria and diarrhoea in ANI

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Malaria	110	113	320	293	173	183	235
Diarrhoea	2630	2798	2461	1855	3301	2857	2029

Source: No. 10-32/DHS/HIC/2007/71, Directorate of Health Services, Health Information Cell, Information under Right to Information Act, October 2010

The study found a negligible percentage (0.32) of cases of diarrhoea, one of the most common childhood illnesses, but the administrative data indicated a steady occurrence of the disease in the region. From the table (3.1.1) it is clear that after an increase in cases between 2006 and 2007, the data showed a declining trend.

Table 3.1.2 Reported tuberculosis cases in ANI

Year	Cases registered				Patient cured			
	Male	Female	Child	Total	Male	Female	Child	Total
2005	82	46	2	130	64	38	0	102
2006	160	105	9	274	132	103	0	235
2007	158	95	3	256	96	74	0	170

Source: Directorate of Health Services, August 2010

The study noticed insignificant tuberculosis (TB) cases (0.08 percent) out of the total children interviewed. The officials of the

Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP) in ANI shared that all suspected TB cases of children were found and adequately addressed. The consultation with the RNTCP revealed that the cases of children were suspected ones and therefore were not entered in the data sheet under cured cases (Table 3.1.2). The comparison of registered cases and cured cases was found not very positive. During the field work Health Educators in rural area shared that a section of patients from lower economic background were not taking the Directly Observed Treatment Short course (DOTS) properly and sometimes they gave up DOTS during the course. This relapse might be the reason for the difference in the registered and cured cases under RNTCP.

The study found an inclination towards allopathic treatment in the isles. An overwhelming majority, 89.57% of children were taken to allopath treatment. The category followed 5.3 percent of homoeopathy, 2.06 percent of traditional health practice, 1.90 percent of unani, 1.11 percent of ayurveda and 0.08 percent of siddha out of the total sample. In contrast to the common notion on the prevalence of traditional health care system among tribal community-Nicobarese, the study found very negligible percentage of children out of the total who followed the traditional practice⁴. Rather a sizeable percentage of children (69.09%) were taken to allopathic treatment out of the total Nicobari children.

Reflecting the availability of public health care facilities in rural areas, majority of rural children approached to allopathic health care system (Table 3.1.3). Free and accessible public health care facilitates and lack of private clinics at the locality might be the reason for this trend. A significant percentage of children in urban area (14.34%) were taken to homoeopathy treatment. In comparison with urban context, children in the rural area gravitated towards unani (2.33 percent) and traditional (2.43% percent) treatment. In short the findings indicate the attachment of people towards allopathic treatment irrespective of their location.

Table 3.1.3 Nature of treatment and locality

Nature of treatment / Locality	Rural	Urban
Allopathy	91.34	81.86
Homeopathy	3.21	14.34
Unani	2.33	0.00
Ayurveda	0.58	3.38
Sidha	0.10	0.00
Traditional	2.34	0.42
Total	100.00	100.00

The majority's interest in allopath treatment is closely linked to the free and accessible health care facilities in the islands. The study found that majority children (84.26%) were treated under Primary Health Centres (PHC). Accessibility and the number of PHCs in position rather than the required might be the reasons for the higher percentage of children who were taken treatment under PHC (Refer table 4.1.4). This higher percentage of PHC underlines the indication of Declaration of Alma Ata that PHC is the key to attaining health for all as part of overall development (Bajpai, 2003). A section of children (8.31 percent) was also taken treatment from Community Health Centre (CHC). Generally, children approached CHC either as a referral centre or due to its proximity to household. The study apparently points out the lack of interest towards private clinics or hospitals in the islands and thus highlights the effective interventions of government in public health care.

3.1.1 Health infrastructure and manpower in ANI

Table 3.1.4 Health infrastructure in ANI

Particulars	Required	In position	Shortfall
Sub-centre	51	114	–
Primary Health Centre	8	19	–
Community Health Centre	2	4	–
Multipurpose worker (Female) / ANM at Sub-centres & PHCs	133	272	–
Health worker(Male) MPW (M) at Sub-centres	114	22	92
Health Assistant (Female) / LHV at PHCs	19	19	0
Health Assistant (Male) at PHCs	19	0	19
Doctor at PHCs	19	73	–
Obstetricians & Gynecologists at CHCs	4	4	–
Physicians at CHCs	4	4	–
Paediatricians at CHCs	4	0	4
Total specialists at CHCs	16	10	6
Radiographers	4	4	–
Pharmacist	23	31	–
Laboratory Technicians	23	27	–
Nurse / Midwife	47	118	–

Source: *RHS Bulletin*, March 2008, M/O health & F.W. GOI in State Report of NRHM available at http://mohfw.nic.in/NRH7M/Health_Profile.htm last visited on 3rd June 2010.

Although the number of sub-centres in position rather than the required is very clear in the islands (Refer table 3.1.4), the percentage of children who approached sub-centres is not encouraging (1.78 percent out of the study population). The proximity of PHC to

households a might be the reason for the poor percentage of sub-centres out of the total. The table (3.1.4) shows the available health infrastructure in ANI. Considering the infrastructure and manpower in accordance with the number in position and required, ANI gives a fair picture. However as noted by State Report of NRHM, short fall of paediatricians and specialists at CHC needs to be addressed exigently without delay.

Apart from the accessibility and availability of better infrastructure, issue of quality as a matter of concern was raised in a few focus group discussions with parents. Parents at Campbell Bay shared their concerns on the only available PHC at their locality. According to them, due to the isolated geographical peculiarity and lack of private medical practices, they had to reach the referral hospital, Port Blair, for further treatment, which would take at least two days of ship journey. However, besides the problems of quality and infrastructure, particularly in remote areas, the health care system in ANI is appreciative. Table (3.1.5) gives a comparative picture on health care system in ANI in general and with focus on South Andaman or the centre of ANI. This not only evidently depicts the advantages of South Andaman district as near to headquarters but also sheds light on the comparatively neglected picture of other districts, particularly in case of doctors, which echoed many times in the focus group discussions with parents in remote areas.

Table 3.1.5 Health care institutions, manpower and locality

Institutions / Particulars	A & N Islands	South Andaman
Hospitals	4	2
Community Health Centre	4	1
Primary Health Centre	20	5
Sub-centres	111	26
Dispensary – Homeopathy	8	2
Doctors* sanctioned	157	90
Nurses / Midwives / LHVs	561	269

** includes SAG, Specialist, GDMOs*

Source: Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Andaman & Nicobar Islands

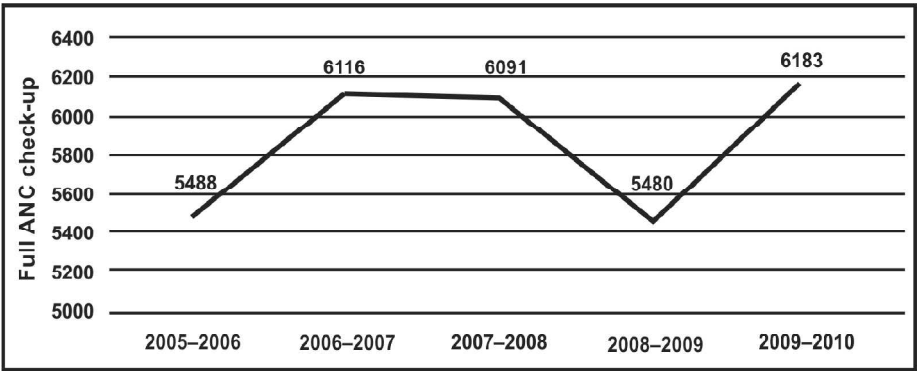
The accessibility of public health care facilities was one of the focuses of the study. It was found that distance of more than 50% of children's household to hospital was below 2 km. The distance of above 5km was revealed by a significant percentage (26.88%) of children out of the total. This section was invariably from the remote areas. Focus

group discussions with parents in remote areas were significant in this context. According to the parents in remote areas, due to transport problems and distance, they used to face difficulties reaching PHC in emergency situations. Thus, the finding highlights the importance of Mobile Medical Units focused on remote areas in the islands.

3.1.2 Maternal health, MMR, IMR and sex ratio: An overview

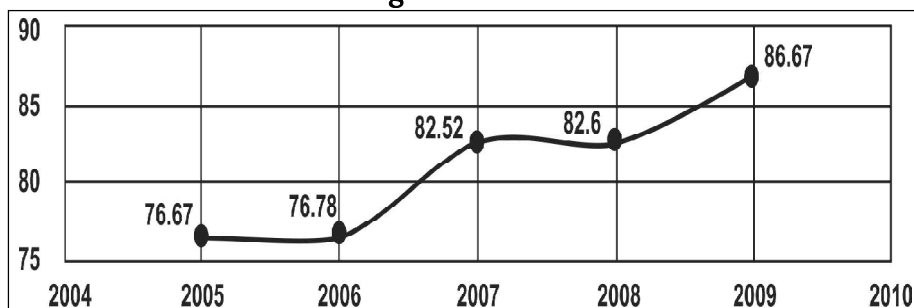
As children’s health is closely related with maternal health, antenatal care, base of maternal health, which contributes to prevent huge number of unnecessary deaths of mothers and babies, needs to be examined. As per the provisional results of the District Level Household and facility Survey-3, in 2002-04, 27.8% of mothers had received full antenatal care check-up in Andaman and Nicobar Islands as against the national picture of 16.5% (State Report of NRHM). The administrative data on antenatal care revealed an increasing trend (Refer illustration 3.1.1). Institutional delivery, one of the vital aspects of maternal health, shows a progressive trend in the islands (Illustration 3.1.2). The illustration evidently presents that from 76.67% in 2005 the cases of institutional delivery reached to 86.67% in 2009. In comparison to the national result, 47.0% in 2007-08 in the District Level Household Survey (DLHS)-3 the situation of ANI is really promising. In this context, Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY)⁵, an intervention under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) is needed to ensure a safe motherhood needs to be examined.

Illustration 3.1.1 Full antenatal care in ANI



Source: No. 10-32/DHS/HIC/2007/71, Directorate of Health Services, Health Information Cell, Information under Right to Information Act, October 2010

Illustration 3.1.2 Percentage of institutional deliveries in ANI



Source : No. 10-32/DHS/HIC/2007/71, Directorate of Health Services, Health Information Cell, Information under Right to Information Act, October 2010

According to the state report of NRHM (2008-09), beneficiaries of JSY had declined from 600 in 2006-07 to 354 in 2007-08. Considering the coverage of antenatal care (Refer illustration 3.1.1), higher percentage of institutional delivery (Refer illustration 3.1.2) and tribal population in the isles, the beneficiaries of JSY were seemed less. The declining trend of beneficiaries needs to be understood in relation to the role of Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) in the process. As a linkage between government and pregnant women, ASHAs are expected to identify and assist pregnant women. However, focus group discussions with parents in different areas revealed a desperate picture in relation with ASHAs and their interventions. An overwhelming majority of participants, including pregnant or lactating women, had not yet heard the term itself. An interview with a Health Educator at a remote tribal area (Nicobarese were found majority there) explored issues related with the appointment of ASHAs. According to the Health Educator, one of the ASHAs from the Tamil linguistic group, was assigned to work among Nicobarese. Due to the language problem, the ASHA communicated in Hindi, which majority Nicobarese could hardly understand. Although Hindi is being used as the language for communisation across the isles, certain linguistic groups such as Telugu, Nicobarese and Bengali were inclined and comfortable to use their mother tongue in everyday life. It was observed in the field work that this linguistic constraint was generally shared by females or homemakers. These findings hence pointed out the importance of considering the aspect of language in the appointment of ASHAs alongside strengthening their interventions, which was acknowledged as a crucial step in ensuring maternal health.

As against the national ratio, 254 (Sampling Registration System-SRS-2004-06), Andaman and Nicobar Islands presented a far better situation on Maternal Mortality Ratio (Table 3.1.6). But the unstable trend needs to be studied further. In case of Infant Mortality Rate, ANI revealed a declining trend and presented a low rate in comparison with the national trend (55 in SRS 2007).

Table 3.1.6 Rate of MMR, IMR and sex ratio at birth in ANI

Year	MMR	IMR	Sex ratio at birth
2003	64.08	21.95	1003
2004	47.48	19.15	935
2005	107.26	20.38	967
2006	131.08	16.39	933
2007	83.08	24.93	948
2008	131.71	16.63	961
2009	102.3	16.04	973

Source: No. 10-32/DHS/HIC/2007/71, Directorate of Health Services, Health Information Cell, Information under Right to Information Act, October 2010

The imbalanced sex ratio is also a matter of concern. The table (3.1.6) clearly indicates the declining trend of sex ratio at birth in ANI. The reasons need to be traced out, which has been reiterated in the workshop conducted by Social Welfare Department on 'Rights of Girl Child and Implications of imbalanced sex ratio' on 20th July 2010 ('Need to correct isles imbalanced sex ratio stressed', The Daily Telegrams, 21st July 2010). Immunization considers as the single most feasible and cost-effective way for ensuring the right to survival and good health to children. In comparison with the coverage in India (54.1%), ANI shows a better coverage (69.3%) of immunization in children 12-23 months.

The role of community participation is well acknowledged in development. Recognizing its scope for social change, the government of India has introduced a number of policies and schemes. The health sector is also not exempted from the initiatives. The introduction of ASHAs is considered as one of the attempts in this regard. With an objective to develop Village, Village Health and Sanitation Committees (VHSC)⁶ has been set up across the country under NRHM.

Table 3.1.7 Village Health Sanitation Committee (VHSC) in ANI

Districts	Number of VHSC
South Andaman	77
Middle and North Andaman	126
Car Nicobar	60
Total	263

Besides the formation of the Village Health Sanitation Committees across the islands on paper, functioning of the committee is a matter of concern (Table 3.1.7). Almost all Anganwadis workers interviewed in the study shared their lack of awareness regarding the programme, its objectives and implementation pattern. A few among the total recalled an initial meeting conducted in Panchayat or dispensary level. This exploration underlines the sharing of one Panchayat Presidents (*Pradhan*) at a remote area in the isles. The *Pradhan* admitted that he alone prepared the village health plan. This points out the pattern of implementation of the programme in general and raises questions on the 'community participation' in particular. The usage of fund, 10,000 rupees per VHSC also needs to be examined. One anganwadi worker shared that she received 5,000 rupees as first instalment from the total 10,000. Due to the lack of cooperation from the side of other members, she spent the amount for decorating the anganwadi, instead of doing any kind of works related to health and sanitation! It was further added that she will do something with the second instalment, like what she did with the first installment⁷. The sharing and episode apparently offer clues in the way the programme was being implemented at the ground level as against the objectives.

3.1.3 Rogi Kalyan Samiti (RKS) or Patient Welfare Committee⁸

The patient welfare committee, an initiative to include peoples' representatives in the management of hospital to upgrade the services remains as ideas on paper. It is a fact that the committees have been formed in 3 District hospitals, 4 Community Health Centres and 19 Primary Health Centres with an allotment of 5 lakh for each district hospitals and one lakh for each CHCs and PHCs as per the official records (Consultation with State wing NRHM, October, 2010). But the focus group discussions with PRI members revealed two type of responses on RKS. One category of participants yet hasn't heard about the term and the mechanism, while the rest has accepted the formation of RKS on paper and added that 'discussions' are going on or yet meetings haven't conducted properly as per the guidelines.

3.2 Differently abled children⁹

As a result of discrepancies in definition, methodology, source and scientific instruments in measuring the degree of disability, the estimation of the population with disabilities is argued as a difficult task. The National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) in 1991 reveals that about 1.9% of the total population of the country has physical and

sensory disabilities (Bajapi, 2003), whereas Census report 2001¹⁰ estimates 2.1 percent of differently abled children in the age group of 6-14 years out of the total population in the country. Emphasizing the responsibilities of Central and State governments with regard to the differentially abled individuals, GoI enacted, The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act in 1995 and which came in to force on 7th February 1996. The Act ensures full life to differentially abled individuals and encourages them for full participation in accordance with their abilities. The Disability Act covers Blindness [Section 2 (b)], Low visions [Section 2 (u)], Leprosycured [Section 2(n)], Hearing Impairment [Section 2 (l)], Locomotor disability [Section 2 (o)], Mental Illness [Section 2 (q)] and Mental retardation [section 2 (r)] under the definition disability conditions¹¹ (The Persons with Disabilities [Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation Act] 1995 or in short PD Act 1995).

Besides the concern of the state and laws, the situation of the differently abled children is not well documented in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. According to Census 2001, the total number of disabled people in ANI is 7057. But Chari and Padmanabhan (2005) criticized the number estimated by Census and argued that which was an underestimate. They worked out an approximate number 20,000 of differently abled people in the region by taking 5 percent of the total population as an acceptable estimate. Although the authenticity of the estimation is questionable, it highlights absence of surveys and studies in the isles, which is considered as mandatory in the Disability Act 2005¹² (The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995).

The study found that there are 0.25 percent of orthopedically handicapped children out of the total sample¹³. Due to the peculiarity of the sampling design and framework of the study, only the category of orthopedically handicapped among the disability conditions-defined by the Disability Act 1995- fell in the study. It was further noticed that the forms of deformities of children comprise webbed fingers (25%), deformed legs (50%) come under the category of congenital defects and broken organs of body due to injuries (25%) included in acquired defects out of the total orthopedically handicapped population in the study.

As school-going children, the orthopedically handicapped respondents in the study invite attention on the facilities available in schools with reference to the PD Act 1995¹⁴. The only available data on schools having ramp facility (Table 3.2.1) clearly shows the lethargic approach of the departments in ensuring adequate facilities for differently abled children in the islands.

Table 3.2.1 Schools having Ramp facility¹⁵

		2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Ramp in ANI	All schools	6.29	8.64	7.22
	Primary schools	Data not available	6.03	4.50
All states	All schools	26.61	34.43	40.39
	Primary schools	Data not available	34.19	39.69

Source: NUEPA, Elementary Education in India, Progress towards UEE: New Delhi. 2010: p10

The table (3.2.1) apparently indicates the poor facilities in the isles comparing with the national situation. It also presents a downward trend of the ramp facility in both the sections from 2007-08 to 2008-09. Consultation with the state Inclusive Education for the Disabled (IED) wing in Port Blair acceded to the failure of removing architectural barriers in the schools¹⁶. It is relevant to note here that the IED wing, Port Blair works in a building, which has no ramp or lift facility! The difficulties of not having a ramp facility were shared by a differently abled child¹⁷ in one of the focused discussions at a remote area in South Andaman district. The anecdote underlined the quantitative finding and raised questions of the provisions under the PD Act 1995¹⁸.

Apart from the physical facilities envisages in schools under the PD Act 1995, the government of India has introduced certain policies and legislations for disabled individuals. In this context, the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 and Programme of Action 1992 are significant. The NPE was implemented to achieve the goal of providing education to all, including disabled. On the other end, Programme of Action 1992 emphasis on the implementation of the project 'Integrated Education for Disabled' (IED), which provides educational opportunities for the disabled in regular schools. The attempt believes in 'integration' rather than 'treating disabled in isolation'. Trained resource teachers have been appointed for giving education to the disabled children in respective schools. The concept of 'integrated education' has been changed into 'inclusive education'¹⁹

in 2005 and it envisages education of differentially abled children in regular classes with general students. The blueprint shares responsibility of teaching among the teachers and at least one teacher in each school is trained on education of children with disability. The trained teacher would be considered as a resource person in the respective schools. But still the 'plan' is on paper and now the IED cell Port Blair is going to conduct a foundation course on 'Education of Children with Disabilities' for 400 teachers from different areas in the isles in collaboration with IGNOU, New Delhi on October 2010²⁰.

Table 3.2.2 Coverage under IEDC

Year	No. of schools covered	IED cell	Total children covered
2002-03	95	27	1035
2003-04	98	26	1035
2004-05	100	26	986
2005-06	120	25	870
2006-07	125	24	815
2007-08	130	23	644
2008-09	135	23	618
2009-10	140	22	692

Source: IEDC wing, Shiksha Sadan, Port Blair, 2010

As per the data shared by IEDC wing in Port Blair, 22 IEDC centres covering 140 schools were functional in Andaman and Nicobar Islands with an enrolment of 692 differently abled children in 2009-10 (Table. 3.2.2). The table shows an upward trend in the number of schools covering IEDC from 95 in 2002-03 to 140 in 2009-10. This evidently depicts the increasing coverage of the programme across the islands. But interestingly the number of children declined from 1035 children in 2002-03 to 692 children in 2009-10. Similarly, the resource room or IED cell shows a downward trend in ANI. In place of 27 IED cells in 2002-03, 22 IED cells were functional in 2009-10 due to five vacant posts of Primary School Resource Teachers (PSRT).

Although the programme of IEDC divided into elementary and secondary in the academic year of 2009-10, implemented with the available PSRTs, who were basically trained for teaching in primary classes. As per the records, now only one Graduate Trained Teacher was available for 146 secondary students! (IEDC, ShikshaSadan, Port Blair, 2010).

The lack of resource teachers invites attention on the teacher-pupil ratio under the scheme of IEDC²¹. In lieu of the provision of 1:8, now

the IED cells function with 1:31 teacher-pupil ratio. The ratio may result in providing poor quality of services to the students due to the workload. This issue was later underlined by the interview with one of the resource teachers in the islands. Currently, the resource teacher provides services to 39 differently abled children, including students in secondary stage, in two zones covering nine schools in the particular island²². The argument of Chari and Padmanabhan (2005) elaborates it further. According to them due to the minimum number of centres a section of differentially abled children is out of the coverage of IED centres and thus breaks the mandatory provision of PD Act with regard to accessibility²³.

In case of support from government, all the differentially abled children interviewed in the study were benefited by one or other schemes. The study found that out of the total differentially abled children, 50% of them benefited under the scheme of scholarship²⁴. The category followed 25% of disabled children under the scheme of financial allowance provided by Directorate of Social Welfare²⁵ and 25% of disabled children, who benefited from equipment as a supportive mechanism under the scheme of Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/ fitting of Aids and Appliances²⁶. Besides the assistances through the scheme²⁷, recreation facilities provided to the differently abled children need to be understood. According to the resource teacher, study and playing materials were provided long back and thus found not useful now. On the basis of work experience, the resource teacher pointed out the importance of introducing special recreational facilities like musical instruments for mentally challenged children alongside the conventional materials. Though the supervisor of IED wing in Port Blair agreed on the need of providing recreational materials, it was mentioned that schools should take the responsibility to provide such facilities to differentially abled children along with children from the general category rather than looking it from the state IED wing. This sharing challenges the article 31²⁸ of CRC and indicates the perspective of the IED wing on recreation and play of differently abled children.

Within the context of the UNCRC and PD Act 1995, the study attempted to encompass questions on problems or any kind of humiliations experienced by differently abled children in their lives. The study found that 50% of the differently abled children in the total respective population in the study faced humiliation from peer group

and the rest of the 50% came from the community. It was further noticed that 75% of differently abled children faced teasing from either peers or the community. The group followed 25% of differently abled children, who were ignored in their lives due to their disability. The findings indicate the negative perspective of a section of society towards disability and emphasize the importance of sensitisation on the issue.

3.3 Early childhood care and children

Along with the primary and secondary systems of care, i.e. family and neighbourhood, the response of the state or tertiary system is counted as crucial to meet the survival and developmental needs of children (Konantambigi in Datta and Konantambigi, 2007). Recognizing this fact, the concern over early childhood care and nutrition are acceded to the CRC as part of right to survival. It obligates the state to respect and ensure that children get a fair and equitable deal in society (GoI, 2006). However, India had pinned childcare under the directive principles²⁹ of the Constitution and eventually the embodiment had flagged the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS³⁰) Scheme on 2nd October 1975. Today the scheme represents one of the world's largest and unique programmes for early childhood care and development. On the one hand, the programme provides pre-school education and on the other breaks the vicious cycle of malnutrition, morbidity, reduced learning capacity and mortality (Ministry of women and child development [MWCD], 2010).

Recently, National Charter for Children, 2004 and National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC) 2005 reiterate the obligation of the state on early childhood care and development. Under Article 6, Right to Early Childhood Care, the National Charter for Children, 2004 enshrines the “state shall in partnership with the community, provide early childhood care for all children and encourage programmes which will stimulate and develop their physical and cognitive capacities and aim at providing a childcare centre in every village where infants and children of working mothers can be adequately cared for” (MWCD, 2004). Considering the year ending 31st December 2009, 1044269 Anganwadi³¹ centres AWCs are operating in India under 6120 projects covering 873.43 lakh children as Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) beneficiaries (MWCD, 2010).

The first anganwadi centre (AWC) was established in Diglipur in 1978, one of the rural areas of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, after

three years of the national launch of the scheme. At present under five projects, i.e. Port Blair, Ferrargunj, Rangat, Diglipur and Car Nicobar, 677 AWCs are functioning in ANI covering 18022 children and 3949 pregnant and lactating women (Directorate of Social Welfare, 2010). However, keeping the same concern over early childhood care, the experience of children as beneficiaries of AWC was encompassed the as a germane of the study.

3.3.1 Experience of children as beneficiaries of AWC

The study found that an overwhelming majority of children, 82.13% received services from AWC as part of early childhood care provided by the state. While looking to the beneficiaries of ICDS in ANI, the percentage was almost proportionate³². However, a declining trend of the beneficiaries of ICDS was noticed in ANI. The finding almost goes with the trend in last four years, i.e. in 2006-07, 84.72% of children, 0-3 years have received services the ICDS and at present the percentage has declined to 80.74% (Refer Table 3.3.1). Within the background of increasing budgetary allocation this declining trend needs to be examined in detail.

Table 3.3.1 Coverage of SNP beneficiaries in ANI

Year	Children 6 months to 3 years			Children 3 years to 6 years		
	Sur-veyed	Benefi-ciaries	Cove-rage	Sur-veyed	Benefi-ciaries	Cove-rage
2006-07	13188	11173	84.72	14785	9933	67.18
2007-08	12503	10698	87.82	13748	9249	67.28
2008-09	12978	11103	85.55	14004	8868	63.32
2009-10*	12885	10403	80.74	13679	7619	55.70

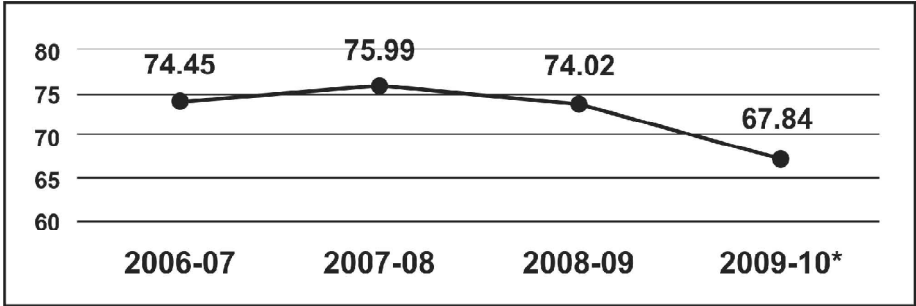
* 2009-10 only up to January. Monthly report January 2010, Directorate of Social welfare, Port Blair, February 2010.

Source: F.No. PA/RTI/6721/DSW/2010/2079 Andaman and Nicobar Administration, Directorate of Social Welfare, Port Blair, 6th October 2010.

It is significant here to analyse the coverage of children, 0-6 years in comparison with the total child population in the geographical area. As per Census 2001, the number of children from 0-6years in ANI is 44781 (Census, 2001). The number of surveyed beneficiaries of ICDS was 26564 in 2009-10 as against the actual beneficiaries of 18022 in ANI (Directorate of Social Welfare, 2010). As per the anganwadi survey, the coverage was 67.84% in 2009-10 as against the national coverage of 40.48% (MWCD, 2010). Although the coverage of children below six years in ANI was far better than the national average, the declining trend needs to be studied further (Refer illustration 3.3.1). While examining the coverage within the backdrop of the Census population,

the percentage, 40.24%, seemed to be not prosperous. This violated the provision under Early Childhood Care and Education ‘in National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC), 2005, which “ensures collection of disaggregated data on the 0-6 years, its analysis and use for targeted planning and monitoring” (National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC) 2005, p. 24).

Illustration 3.3.1 Coverage of SNP beneficiaries [Children 0-6 years] in ANI



* 2009-10 only up to January. Monthly report January 2010, Directorate of Social welfare, Port Blair, February 2010. Source: F.No.PA/RTI/6721/DSW/2010/2079 Andaman and

Nicobar Administration, Directorate of Social Welfare, Port Blair, 6th October 2010.

Apart from the noticeable gap between the Census report and AW survey, the declining trend of the beneficiaries needs to be addressed in relation to two categories of children in AWCs, i.e. children 6 months to 3 years and 3 to 6 years.

Table 3.3.1 shows a clear disparity in coverage of beneficiaries in two age categories of children. The coverage of children, six months to three years declined from 84.72% in 2006-07 to 80.74% in 2009-10. Meanwhile, the coverage of children three to six years declined from 67.18% in 2006-07 to 55.70% in 2009-10. The coverage of SNP was itself questions the field work. It was noted during the field work that more or less all AWCs functioned with a smaller number of children in comparison with the ‘actual’ registered number³³. When asked about the situation, AWWs explained that due to the distance to AWC, numbers of children were not coming to the centre. According to them, the cooked supplementary nutrition was sent to their home through hands of neighbours, mothers of children, who came to the AWC. It was added that sometimes the AWW visited the households for providing the cooked supplementary nutrition. This explanation cannot be taken valid³⁴. However, in lieu of focusing on the alleged in distributing SNP; the study intended to highlight the poor monitoring system that primarily led to this situation.

A visible declining trend of children from the category of six months to three years to the category of three to six years brings out the separate needs of two age groups, in other words the importance of Pre-School Education (PSE) for the latter category of children. Enrolment of children in primary schools or private nurseries, balwadis were generally counted as the reasons for the lower percentage of children in the age group of three to six years in AWCs. However, it should be acknowledged that nurseries or playschools were not functioning in every nook and corner of the islands. Therefore, it is not true to conclude that because of the enrolment of children in private playschools, the coverage was less in AWCs. Hence, it would be good to understand the reasons behind a section of parents preferred to send their children into nurseries or kindergarten instead of selecting AWCs.

The workload and low qualifications of childcare workers were already noted by Prasad (2007) in one of her articles and such issues invariably affect the quality of PSE in AWCs. Therefore, it is vital to address the 'inside issues' for resolving the problems.

Table 3.3.2 PSE beneficiaries in ANI [2009-10]

Projects	Surveyed	Beneficiaries	Coverage
Port Blair	4747	2401	50.58
Ferrargunj	3240	1702	52.53
Rangat	2121	1187	55.96
Diglipur	1978	1309	66.18
Car Nicobar	1593	1020	64.03
ANI	13679	7619	55.70

Table 3.3.2 evidently presents the current project wise coverage of PSE in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Although the rate is comparatively far better than the national coverage of 22.97% (MWCD, 2010), it is important to take the issue seriously while considering the influence of PEC in childcare and development. The project wise data shows poor performance of the urban, Port Blair ICDS (50.58%), in comparison with other projects located in rural and tribal areas. As an urban area, the larger establishments of private kindergartens and nurseries might be one of the reasons for the comparatively poor enrolment for PSE in AWCs. The proximity to the urban area and its exposure on private centres might be the reason for the low percentage of Ferrargunj project (52.53%). However, it is necessary for the other factors influencing in the trend to be explored. As against the low percentage in Port Blair project, the

Diglipur (66.18%) and Nicobar (64.03%) projects presented a comparatively fair picture in term of enrolment of PSE beneficiaries. This difference in the percentage is more or less interconnected with the peculiarity of the region where the projects functioned.

The study noticed rural and urban difference with reference to the beneficiaries of SNP. It was found that in comparison with urban area, majority children (83.60%) from the rural area received services as beneficiaries of AWC as against 74.91% of children in the urban area. The exposure of urban region due to the accessibility of private childcare centres might be one of the reasons for the lower percentage of the coverage of children under ICDS in urban areas.

The comparison of the data collected from the field and present administrative data also underscored the declining trend of the coverage of beneficiaries in AWCs. Even within the limitations, the significant coverage of children in rural area highlighted the importance of ICDS as a system for childcare. In the meantime, the findings call for new strategies to strengthen the existing system as well.

3.3.2 Nutritional status of children in ANI

According to National Family Health Survey in 2005-06, 16% of children in India were severally underweight (National Family Health Survey [NFHS]-3 2005-06, 2007). The National council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) in 2005-06 revealed that 50.11% of moderately mal-nourished children and 2.39 percent severely mal-nourished children out of the total (Rapid Facility Survey on Infrastructure facilities, 2004). In contrast to the study finding, ANI presents low rate of mal-nutrition among children. However, beyond the general trend, data in 2009-10 explored a sudden increase in the rate of severely mal-nourished children. The percentage of severely mal-nourished children increased from 0.49 percent in 2008-09 to 2.75 percent in 2009-10 (Table 3.3.3). It would be important to find out the reasons behind this trend.

Table 3.3.3 Nutritional status of children in ANI

Year	Normal	Moderately malnourished	Severely malnourished
2006-07	72.94	26.43	0.63
2007-08	67.88	31.51	0.61
2008-09	73.61	25.92	0.49
2009-10*	82.48	14.77	2.75

* 2009-10 only up to January. Monthly report January 2010,
Directorate of Social welfare, Port Blair, February 2010.

Source: F.No. PA/RTI/6721/DSW/2010/2079 Andaman and Nicobar
Administration, Directorate of Social Welfare, Port Blair, 6th October 2010.

However, a region wise break up of children can explore a few dimensions in relation to malnutrition in ANI. The region wise break-up of the nutritional status of children evinced the studies in India that it is particularly acute in rural areas in comparison with urban contexts (Bajpai, 2003). This finding too brings out the vital role of AWCs in rural areas (Table 3.3.4).

Table 3.3.4 Region-wise nutritional status of children in ANI

Region	Normal	Moderately underweight	Severely underweight	Total
Urban	5300 (83.22%)	900 (14.13%)	169 (2.65 percent)	6369 (100%)
Rural	9104 (79.85%)	1932 (16.94%)	366 (3.21 percent)	11402 (100%)
Tribal	1927 (94.97%)	92 (4.53 percent)	10 (0.49 percent)	2029 (100%)
ANI	16331 (82.48%)	2924 (14.77%)	545 (2.75 percent)	19800 (100%)

Source: Monthly report January 2010, Directorate of Social welfare, Port Blair, February 2010.

Considering the role of mothers in the nutritional status of children, the study attempted to understand the coverage of pregnant and lactating women through ICDS.

Table 3.3.5 Coverage of pregnant and lactating women in ANI

Projects	Pregnant women	Lactating women
Urban	80.11	81.20
Rural	85.71	86.89
Tribal	77.58	81.30
ANI	82.75	84.25

Monthly report January 2010, Directorate of Social welfare, Port Blair, February 2010.

As against the national rate, 49.88%, (MWCD, 2010) the ANI presents a far better picture with reference to the coverage of pregnant and lactating women (83.56%) (Table 3.3.5). Likewise, the coverage of children, majority pregnant and lactating mothers in rural area received supplementary nutrition from ICDS. In comparison, the coverage in urban area was found low. Even though there was no stark difference in the coverage, the reasons behind the slight variation need to be identified. In the case of pregnant women (77.75%), the tribal project presented a low rate in comparison with rural and urban areas. In the meantime, the coverage of lactating women in the same area was comparatively high (81.30%). The tribal project in Nicobar was the only ICDS, which presented a noticeable variation in the coverage between pregnant and lactating women. Indeed, the factors which influence the disparity need to be studied.

3.3.3 Facilities in AWCs and suggestions of children for improvement

From the table (3.3.6) it is clear that ICDS in ANI is sleepy on the fundamental aspect of infrastructure. In comparison with the national picture 46.11% of pucca and 14.58% of katcha (MWCD, 2004) building, 22.62% of AWCs were functioning in pucca and 77.38% in katcha building in ANI.

Table 3.3.6 Infrastructure facilities in AWCs (2008³⁵)

Nature	Government	Rented					Total
	Own	AWs/AWHs Home	Others	Pan-chayat	Others	Open space	
Katcha	17.86	39.88	17.86	0	0.74	1.04	77.38
Pucca	19.64	0	0	2.98	0	0	22.62
Total	37.50	39.88	17.86	2.98	0.74	1.04	100.00

Source: Directorate of Social Welfare, 2010

Among the katcha building 54.74% of AWCs were running under rented buildings of Anganwadi workers, or helpers or others, while 2.98 percent of AWCs were working under panchayat buildings and 1.04 percent were in open space (table 3.3.6). It is important to note here that one of the Anganwadi workers in urban area shared that she got 500 rupees as rent as against the 750 rupees in the guidelines. This indicates the corruption within the sector even simple provisions under the scheme. However, the rented katcha buildings were invariably identified during the fieldwork, particularly in rural areas. Majority rented houses were facing issues of space in urban areas and thus restricted the smooth functioning of AWCs.

Table 3.3.7 Drinking water and sanitation facilities

Projects	No. AWCs	Drinking water		Sanitation	
		Yes%	No%	Yes%	No%
Port Blair	207	82.61	17.39	52.17	47.83
Ferrargunj	175	15.43	84.57	18.86	81.14
Rangat	107	06.54	93.46	04.67	95.33
Diglipur	113	19.47	80.53	17.70	82.30
Car Nicobar	75*	100.00	00.00	100.00	00.00
Total	677	44.61	55.39	35.60	64.40

* Currently 41 AWCs have drinking water and sanitation facilities in Nicobar ICDS, while the rest is under construction with the same facilities.

Source: Directorate of Social Welfare, 2010

Shadowing the positive outcomes, data on drinking water and sanitation facilities underlined the apathetic approach of administration in ANI. It is noteworthy that only in October 2010, the administration

collected data on AWCs did not have drinking water and sanitation facilities as part of submitting a report to Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC³⁶). As against the national rate, 26.99% of AWCs did not have drinking water facilities, ANI presented a desperate picture of more than 50% (Table 3.3.7). Further, the project wise data explored a discouraging trend. Besides the complete coverage of Nicobar project and a prosperous rate of Port Blair urban project, the situation of rural projects was noticed pathetic in relation to the facilities³⁷.

The situation of sanitation facilities was much worse than the drinking water facilities in AWCs. In comparison with the rate in India (45.99% in Bajpai, 2004), ANI presented a high percentage of AWCs which did not have toilet facilities (64.40%) (Table 3.3.7). Similar to the trend of drinking water facilities, the issue of sanitation was found acute in rural areas than in urban areas. In short, the finding invited imperative interventions on the basic aspects in the islands.

In addition to exploring the situation in terms of infrastructure facilities, the study also attempted to understand the experience of children with anganwadi workers and suggestions to improve the system. It was found that an overwhelming majority of children (92.15%) recalled warm treatment by the anganwadi worker while a very negligible percentage of children opined that the treatment of anganwadi worker should be improved (7.85 percent). This finding overtly speaks the role played by the grass root level worker, who is paid a pittance and has a host of responsibilities including managing the centre and children to community work and surveys.

Table 3.3.8 Suggestions of children on AWWs

Suggestions of children	Percentage
Not answered	33.49
Play materials	
Park	17.54
Quality education	9.57
Referral service	1.06
Regular health check up	1.59
Safe drinking water	2.05
Health education	0.76
Good infrastructure	1.67
Hygienic food	1.82
Play Ground	2.35
Sanitation facilities	2.58
Total	100.00

This sizeable percentage of ‘not answered’ needs to be located within the dominant perspective of the state and community on children and their suggestions or opinions (Table 3.3.8). During the field work, almost all respondents shared that this was the first time they had an opportunity to express their views. The status of children as receivers without any autonomy and agency might be the reason for not addressing the open-ended question of suggestion on AWCs. Nevertheless, the remaining suggestions proved the potential of children to understand and analyse the situations they were in. A significant percentage of children’s suggestion to provide play materials (25.21%), park (17.54%), playground (2.35 percent) and to improve the quality of education (9.57 percent) needs to be examined within the broader definition on early childhood care and development, which ensures a “natural, joyful and stimulating environment, with emphasis on necessary inputs for optimal growth and development”. (MWCD, 2010). Interactions with AWWs further evinced the suggestion of children on play and recreational materials in the centres. Invariably this point was shared by children in remote areas. Meanwhile, a few AWWs pointed out that they were spending amount from their pockets to purchase study materials for children³⁸.

Suggestions for parks and playgrounds are also a matter of concern. A statement from Pradhan is relevant with reference to the subject. According to him, the environment should be pleasant and attractive, which can stimulate children to learn. In addition, the fieldwork invariably noted the poor implementation of PSE in AWCs one of the key services of ICDS programme. Children’s suggestions for sanitation facilities (2.58 percent), safe drinking water (2.05 percent) and good infrastructure (1.67 percent) were significant in terms of a sound basement for schemes like ICDS. The lethargic approach of ICDS towards infrastructure facilities was evident from the absence of updated data on buildings, such as its nature and electricity and separate kitchen facilities etc.

3.4 Discussion

It is seen that the interventions within the framework of welfare approach through a pattern of top-to-bottom couldn’t give much space for people or community in the development process. Other than a few disturbing trends particularly in case of sex ratio at birth and IMR, generally the health indicators of ANI are far better than in any parts of India. The health infrastructure and manpower are observed for the

progressive health indicators in the isles. However, the concern on the quality in remote areas needs to be addressed. The study finding underlined the significance of initiating Mobile Medical Units in remote areas. The issue of documentation was found as another issue in ANI. The Right to Information Act was used by study for collecting data from the administration considering the dearth of available documented data on status of various health issues. The situation further raises questions on the effectiveness of the Integrated Disease Surveillance Project (IDSP³⁹) in the UT. Moreover, the cut-off age of 14 years for child should be revised, otherwise, a huge section of children would be left out of the data. The study emphasized proper implantation of the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC⁴⁰) in improving the status of health children as the programme was noticed in a nascent stage in the islands. The study finding, i.e. 29.62% of children's household has no toilet facility also highlights the relevance of the programme.

Community and children's participation in decisions on health and related issues is still a distant reality in the islands. The study found that 87.78% of children aspired to discuss with the health department on new projects and programmes before implementing it at the ground level. The implementation of VHSC and RKY can also be strengthened by following this approach. A rights-based framework encompassing the voices of children can strengthen the positive health outcomes of the islands and achieve the slogan 'Health for All'.

The cursory glance provides a disturbing picture of children with disabilities in the isles. The lethargic approach starts from the Census not offering a clear definition and the lack of scientific instruments to determine the degree of disability in the enumeration process. The Directorate of Social Welfare, the key player to provide support to the children with disabilities in ANI, considers the 'target population' as 'receivers' rather than subjects with rights. As a result, other than the list of beneficiaries, there is no authentic data or details available on the changing situations of people with disabilities in the isles.

The IEDC was found as the only source for information on children with disabilities in ANI. Though the wing has been working in the islands for years, it has not conducted a study yet to understand the situation of children with disabilities. Despite the verbal chicanery of 'inclusive education'⁴¹, initiated in 2005, the reality remains the same as lesser number of trained teachers were appointed in the schools.

Inappropriate teacher-pupil ratio and lack of adequately trained teachers for educating secondary students further worsened the situation. Issues and concerns of children with multiple disabilities is another area of concern. As per the enrolment list in 2009-10, 31 children were enrolled in the category (Progress Report for the Year 2009- 10, IED Cell, 2010). The declining trend of students with disabilities from 1035 in 2002-03 to 692 in 2009-10 needs to be critically studied. The findings clearly invite our attention to explore the needs and difficulties of the social category by conducting scientific studies.

Children with disabilities who are out of school or educational institutions have to be traced out. In this context, it is important to have a look into the interventions of PRIs with regard to differently abled children. Almost all the PRI members interviewed shared in the focus group discussions that there was no specific budgetary allocation for differently abled children. According to them, because of the same reason, they were not able to take any initiative to address the issues of differently abled children. It was also noticed that even they were unaware about the total number of differently children within the respective Panchayat. Interestingly, pointing out the scope of interventions at the local level, one Panchayat shared the number of children with disabilities during the field visit as they conducted a survey to map the situation. The interviews with local youth club authorities confirmed the exclusion of differently children in their programmes. The situation demands a right based approach by ensuring the voices of children and a synergy between various government departments, scheme by the centre and state and civil society movements. The findings also highlighted the role of the local self-governance and proper implementation of existing policies and laws to improve the situation of differently abled children in the islands.

In relation to early childhood care as well as the survival and development issues of children, the exploration offered various dimensions yet uncharted. It is true that in comparison with the situation in India, ICDS of Andaman and Nicobar Islands presents a bright picture. Nonetheless, the declining trend of beneficiaries of SNP and particularly PSE need to be addressed exigently. High rate of PSE beneficiaries in rural area highlighted the vital role of ICDS not only in providing supplementary nutrition but also offering pre-school

education to children in the neglected areas. The lower coverage of PSE beneficiaries irrespective of projects calls for new plans and strategies for strengthening pre-school education in AWCs. Otherwise, instead of providing an overall development to children, AWCs would shrink into nutrition providing centres.

The study also indicates the workload of single childcare worker in the centre, who assigns to provide childcare and pre-school education for children who have separate needs. The demand of two staffs in AWCs, with particular assigned roles underscored the study. In the meantime, the coverage of pregnant and lactating women in ANI was found quite encouraging in comparison with other parts of the country.

The visible gap in the anganwadi survey and Census report is also a matter of concern. It is important to identify all children in AWC areas to achieve the goal to provide a happy and healthy growth and development for all children in the country. The same lack of enthusiasm was evident in ICDS, ANI with reference to updating the data including infrastructure and different aspects related to AWCs and the scheme. The ICDS was not yet collected data on electricity and cooking space, nature of building etc. It was recently due to the query of TSC⁴², the department collected the data on sanitation and drinking water facilities in AWCs. It is interesting to note here that the first ICDS project was set up in 1978 and TSC was launched in 1999 and just now a base line survey was completed in ANI! This further underscores the importance of converging different programmes to achieve maximum results in the isles.

The discouraging situation of infrastructure, drinking water and sanitation facilities demand imperative interventions in the concerned areas. The suggestions of children viz. park, playground and recreation materials, in other words a pleasant and attractive environment should be considered. In lieu of the conservative plans of buildings, the project ideas of BaLA⁴³ (Building as Learning Aid) should be useful in creating infrastructure for AWCs.

As a grey area, Day Care Centers⁴⁴ (DCC) should be studied in detail to explore varying dimensions in relation to the subject matter. However, an enquiry into the interventions of PRI representatives on ICDS and community participation in functioning of AWCs revealed a lethargic approach of PRI representatives and community in early childhood care and development. Monitoring of Mothers Committee

and exceptional visits of representatives of administration and PRI members acceded to the interactions with PRI members and parents, but yet nobody among them heard about Coordination Committees for reviewing the scheme⁴⁵. Besides the subject of ‘maintenance of community assets⁴⁶’ under 73rd Amendment Act, there is no other provision for PRI members to intervene in AWCs in their locality. Unfortunately, the provision did not make a difference in the area. The interaction with AWWs and focus group discussions with PRI members revealed an ongoing debate on the ‘responsibility’ of the maintenance of AWCs in the geographical area. According to AWWs, apart from the minimal interventions, generally PRI representatives did not support AWCs particularly on the issue of infrastructure⁴⁷. In the meantime, PRI members accused ICDS for not performing their role and responsibilities and emphasized the dearth of funds to spend on construction of AWCs. As a result, the area of infrastructure still has not made much progress in ANI. The potential for the Village Education Committee⁴⁸ (VEC) to ensure the quality of early childhood care and development in village level was widely acknowledged. However, the field work was hardly found any interventions of VEC on AWCs, in other words early childhood care and development. Involvement of community was also found limited in the area of SNP in ANI.

End notes

1. Article 24 and 27 of CRC promulgates the right to health (UNICEF, 1994, pp. 9-10).
2. Article 39(e) and (f) directs the state for securing the health of children. Further the Article 47 directs to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties and in particular State shall endeavour to bring about prohibition of the consumption except for medical purposes of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health. It is noteworthy that in India health is not a fundamental right; rather the Articles are come under directive principles of the constitution (Bajpai, 2003, pp. 379-80).
3. National Health Policy 1983, National Health Policy 2002 and The National Population Policy 2000 are significant in relation to right to health in India.

4. Out of the total Nicobari children surveyed, only 2.73 percent were treated under traditional health care system.
5. Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) is a safe motherhood intervention under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) and implements with the objective of reducing maternal and neonatal mortality by promoting institutional delivery among the poor pregnant women. The programme provides cash incentives to promote institutional deliveries for all pregnant women, Below Poverty Line Pregnant women and all SC and ST women (Retrieved from http://mohfw.nic.in/dofw%20 website/JSY_features_FAQ_Nov_2006.htm).
6. As the fifth committee (Development Committee) of the Gram Panchayat, the VHSC will be the key agency for developing Village Health Plan & the entire planning of village Panchayat for NRHM. This committee comprises of Panchayat representatives, ANM, MTW, Aganwadi workers, Teachers, Community health volunteers, ASHA (Retrieved from <http://nrhmrajasthan.nic.in/vhsc.htm>).
7. Anganwadi worker, interview, April 2010.
8. As registered society Rogi Kalyan Samiti, constituted in the hospitals as an innovative mechanism to involve peoples representatives in the management of the hospital with a view to improve its functioning through levying user charges (Retrieved from <http://www.mp.gov.in/ health/rogi.HTM>).
9. This term was coined by the US Democratic National Committee as a more acceptable term then handicapped. As a genuine attempt to view the people in a more positive light and also as need to be seen as politically correct, Retrieved from www.bhojvirtualuniversity.com/ss/ online_cou/b_ed/.../cp2b5u3.rtf last visited on 22nd March 2010.
10. Census 2001 defines five types of disability, i.e. in seeing, in speech, in hearing, in movement and mental. It is noteworthy here that judgment of mental “should be left to the respondent to report whether the member of the household is mentally disabled and no tests are required to be applied by the enumerator to judge the member’s disability” (Instruction Manual for Filling up the Household schedule, Census 2001, p. 59). This approach ends up in dropping a section of mentally challenged people from the

total data. Therefore the data of Census with reference to disabled people may be underestimated in comparison with any other data in the report.

11. Recently a Parliamentary Standing Committee has suggested to include dyslexia in the definition of 'child with disability' while amending the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 by realizing the exclusion of the children with learning difficulties in the definition of persons with disability in PD Act 1995, which is one of the references in RTE (Include dyslexia as a disability while amending RTE Act, (2010, July 31), The Hindu).
12. The PD Act chapter IV deals with prevention and early detection of disabilities through surveys, investigations and research concerning with the cause, occurrence and prevention of disabilities (Section 25, The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995, p. 14).
13. As against the 1.98 percent of differentially abled population (including adults) in ANI, the study presents 0.25 percent of orthopaedically handicapped children out of the total sample.
14. The PD Act Chapter V Education envisages appropriate governments to prepare a comprehensive education scheme providing for transport facilities, supply of books etc. (The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995, p. 16).
15. Although discrepancies in the data on same scheme/service/facility from various departments/agencies of Central government and the respective departments was found, the study followed the administrative data available in the UT. But wherever the administrative data from the UT lacked, the study used data from various departments/agencies of Central government.
16. Supervisor, IED, ShikshaSadan, Port Blair, Interview, September 2010.
17. Focus group discussion with children, New Maglutan, 19th August 2010.
18. Provision (b) assures the removal of architectural barrier from schools, colleges or other institutions imparting vocational and

professional training (Section 30, Chapter V, The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995, p. 16)

19. The term includes all those children, who are involuntarily excluded from the mainstream education.
20. IED Cell, Port Blair. 2010.
21. The scheme of Integrated Education for Disabled Children assures 'appointment of a resource teacher for every 8 -10 disabled children enrolled in the school' (Bajpai, 2003, p. 425).
22. Resource Teacher, ANI, Interview July 2010.
23. Chapter V Section 26 (a) 'ensures that every child with disability has access to free education in an appropriate environment till s/ he attains the age of eighteen years' (The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995, p. 15).
24. The scheme provides Rs 2500 per annum as scholarship for orthopedically handicapped children. As a centrally sponsored programme, Education Department implements it in the isles, available at http://welfareofdisabled.kar.nic.in/goi_schemes.html last visited on 25th April 2010.
25. The scheme of Financial Allowance to Permanently Disabled Persons provides Rs 350 per month assistance to permanently disabled persons. As a Central Government sponsored programme, Directorate of Social Welfare implements the scheme in the isles, Retrieved from <http://india.gov.in/govt/viewscheme.php?schemeid=224>.
26. The centrally aided programme implements through Directorate of social welfare, Retrieved from http://welfareofdisabled.kar.nic.in/goi_schemes.html.
27. Allowance includes stationary (Rs 400 per annum), uniform (Rs 50 per annum), Transport (Rs 50 per month), Reader (Rs 50 per month) only for children with visual impaired, Escort (Rs 75 per month) only for severely handicapped with lower extreme disabilities and actual cost of equipment subject to a maximum of Rs 2000 per student for a period of five years (in Bajpai, 2003, p. 425). It is noteworthy here that the programme was launched in 1974 and fixed the allowances in accordance with situation and

value of money. Indeed this should be modified with reference to the contemporary situation.

28. Article 31 of CRC assures the right to play and relax by doing things like sports, music and drama and section (2) “encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity” (UNICEF, 1994, p. 12)
29. Under the directive principles, the Constitution of India, Article 45 assures, “the state shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years” (National Charter for Children, 2004).
30. The programme was launched with following objectives; (i) to improve the nutritional and health status of children in the age-group 0-6 years; (ii) to lay the foundation for proper psychological, physical and social development of the child; (iii) to reduce the incidence of mortality, morbidity, malnutrition and school dropout; (iv) to achieve effective co-ordination of policy and implementation amongst the various departments to promote child development; and (v) to enhance the capacity of the mother to look after the normal health and nutritional needs of the child through proper nutrition and health education. The objectives are sought to be achieved through a package of services comprising; (i) supplementary nutrition, (ii) immunization, (iii) health check-up, (iv) referral services (v) pre-school non-formal education and nutrition and health education (available at <http://wcd.nic.in/icds.htm> last visited on 21st July 2010).
31. Literary means courtyard, an open area enclosed by walls or buildings. Anganwadi is a courtyard pre-school, grass root level unit of the ICDS Scheme of GoI.
32. In 2009-10, 80.74% of children, from 0-3 years have received services from ICDS.
33. This fact has been evinced through two or three visits at same AWCs in morning hours.
34. There is grapevine news in ANI that the surplus amount of SNP, which comes from difference in actual attending and registered children in AWCs, always fall into the ocean of corruption in ICDS.

35. There is no updated data on infrastructure facilities in ICDS. Therefore the study has compelled to cling with the available data in 2008. Interestingly authorities itself have expressed a jaundiced view on the available 'data' !
36. Total Sanitation Campaign is a comprehensive programme to ensure sanitation facilities in rural areas with broader goal to eradicate the practice of open defecation. Initiated in 1999, TSC gives strong emphasis on Information, Education and Communication (IEC), Capacity Building and Hygiene Education for effective behaviour change with involvement of PRIs, CBOs, and NGOs etc. The key intervention areas are Individual household latrines (IHHL), School Sanitation and Hygiene Education (SSHE), Community Sanitary Complex, Anganwadi toilets supported by Rural Sanitary Marts (RSMs) and Production Centers (PCs). The main goal of the GOI is to eradicate the practice of open defecation by 2010 (Retrieved from http://www.ddws.nic.in/tsc_index.htm).
37. As part of the tsunami reconstruction programme, the Nicobar ICDS project has a complete coverage of drinking water and sanitation facilities.
38. The appraisal by National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD) reveal that 44% of AWCs in India lacking PSE kits (Retrieved from <http://wcd.nic.in/icds.htm>).
39. Launched in 2004, IDSP is intended to detect early warning signals of impending outbreaks and help initiate an effective response in a timely manner. One of the main components of the project is the use of Information Technology for collection, collation, compilation, analysis and dissemination of data (Retrieved from <http://idsp.nic.in/>).
40. Total Sanitation Campaign is a comprehensive programme to ensure sanitation facilities in rural areas with broader goal to eradicate the practice of open defecation. Initiated in 1999, TSC gives strong emphasis on Information, Education and Communication (IEC), Capacity Building and Hygiene Education for effective behaviour change with involvement of PRIs, CBOs, and NGOs etc. The key intervention areas are Individual household latrines (IHHL), School Sanitation and Hygiene Education (SSHE), Community Sanitary Complex, Anganwadi

toilets supported by Rural Sanitary Marts (RSMs) and Production Centers (PCs). The main goal of the GOI is to eradicate the practice of open defecation by 2010 (Retrieved from http://www.ddws.nic.in/tsc_index.htm).

41. The concept on Education of Children with Disabilities has shifted from 'integration' to 'inclusion' in 2005 (IED Cell, Port Blair, 2010).
42. Among the key areas of TSC, Anganwadi toilets are a cardinal subject of intervention.
43. The project under SSA, creates a learning environment by using the building components as an active facilitator in the whole process of teaching and learning. Although now the project works in schools, the potential use of the ideas is relevant in creating infrastructure for AWCs (Building as Learning Aid, 2010).
44. At present 17 DCC are functioning in ANI.
45. In contrast to the study finding, information under RTI Act reveals the 'existence' of village level Coordination Committees in ANI.
46. The subject 29 directs panchayat "the maintenances of community assets like community hall, youth club, anganwadis, playgrounds, children's park, community toilets etc."
47. As against the general trend, the study finds a few cases of panchayats, those have built anganwadis under the provision
48. VEC considered as the ideal body to mobilize and involve people in the educational efforts, including early childhood care and development (Village Education Committee, 2010).

RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

THE CHAPTER deals with right to development and children in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Within this typology of development the chapter unfolds the situation and status of children in the context of right to education including schooling, facilities in schools, issues in accessing quality education, exclusion from education institutions, reasons for dropout and right to play, leisure, cultural activities. On the basis of the questions, the chapter is divided into four sections. First section addresses the question of right to education, while the second the section trying to understand the situation and issues of out of school children in the islands. Third section explores the right of children to play, leisure and cultural activities by revealing leisure time activities, facilities and issues through a gender lens. Discussion, the final section analyses and summarises the study findings of the chapter.

4.1 Right to Education and children

Right to education is clearly recognized as a human right with immense power to transform not only individuals but also societies as a whole. It has a great instrumental value in the process of economic growth and development. Furthermore education contributes for better health outcomes, lowering fertility and mortality. In political and social dimensions, education creates constructive citizenry (Bajpai, 2003). Recognising the value, a series of international conventions markedly the Convention on the Rights of the Child has encompassed the right to education of children as a pivotal part of it. Besides the commitment of CRC¹, the Constitution of India², Educational policies³ and government programmes in the field of elementary education⁴ have also stressed on children's right to education. But the goal of universalization of elementary education still a distant dream in India. However realizing this, the government of India has introduced the

Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009⁵ (GoI 2009) with an intention to fulfil the aim.

Other than the administrative data and reports, there are no studies available on children’s education in the isles encompassing the experience of children and dimensions of quality. This section attempts to address this gap and document the education scenario within the background of the state interventions, children’s and community participation.

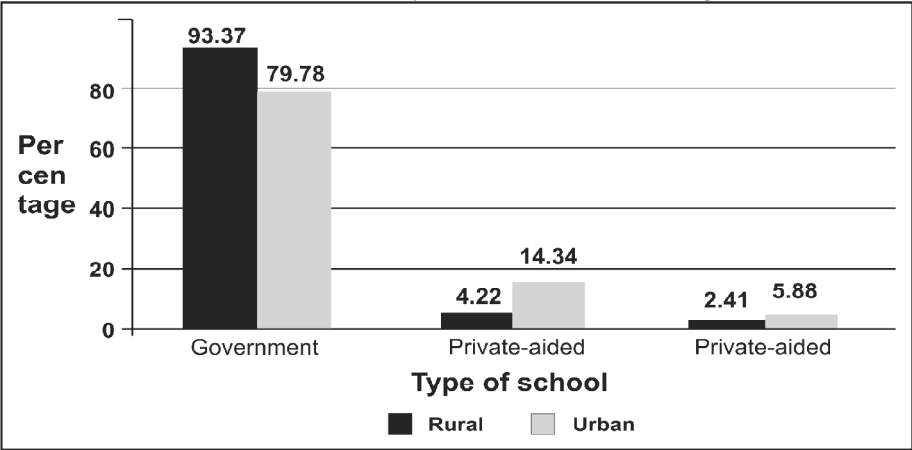
4.1.1 Type of school and accessibility

Table 4.1.1 Type of school

Type of school	Percentage
Government	91.06
Private aided	5.94
Private unaided	3.00
Total	100.00

The table (4.1.1) shows that 91.06% of children were studying in government schools out of the total sample. The trend should be examined within the context of the share of government and private schools to the total schools in the isles. The data of Directorate of Education revealed 81.57% of government share against the 18.43% of private share to the total schools in 2008-09. Within this background, there is nothing surprising in this finding. This highlights the vital role of government schools in providing education in the islands. A break-up of schools in accordance with region could explore the situation better.

Illustration 4.1.1 Type of school and region



It is evident from the illustration (4.1.1) that children in the rural area invariably depended on government schools (93.37%), while a very negligible percentage of children (2.41 percent) went to private schools in rural area. There was no stark difference noticed in the urban areas as well. Nevertheless a significant percentage of children were enrolled in private aided (14.34%) and private unaided (5.88 percent) schools out of the total children in urban areas. The accessibility of private unaided schools in the urban areas might be a reason for the slight higher percentage of private unaided schools in urban areas.

Type of school

There was no uniform timing for schools observed in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Due to shift system in a few schools and issues of traffic and transportation problem, schools in different areas adopted convenient school hours. The study found that out of the total, 44.19% of schools started from 7.30 a.m. and completed instructional hours at 1.30 p.m. The majority followed by 28.63% and 21.63% of schools with a timing of 8.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. and 8.45 a.m. to 3 p.m. respectively. The timing 7.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. was introduced by the Education Department by considering the traffic issues or transportation problems in the urban area. But the change brought in severe criticism in rural areas⁶. The response of children on timing can further elaborate this point.

Out of the total, 9.69 percent of children revealed their varying difficulties due to the school timing. Among them, 21.94% were late to reach school due to the timing. Focus group discussions with parents and PRI representatives explained it further. In general, majority parents in focus group discussions pointed out rainy seasons as difficult time for children to reach school on time, while the rest indicated transportation problem (45.81%). In comparison with urban areas, generally transportation facilities were inadequate in rural areas, particularly in interior parts of the islands. This eventually created difficulties for children. Children and parents underlined this during the focus group discussions and accused PRI representatives for not taking appropriate actions to resolve it. According to them, although they invited the attention of PRI representatives to the issue in Village Education Committee (VEC), the sluggish attitude remained. It is noteworthy that besides these attempts, yet the community has also not taken any steps address the issue.

Accessibility to school is another point to be mapped. Considering interest of a significant section of children (27.74%) to spend more time in school, distance between children's home and school and mode of transportation to school are vital in understanding accessibility to school. It was identified that 32.88% of respondents' schools were located within a 1 kilometre area. The category followed 24.63% and 22.75% of children's schools located within 1 to 2 km and 1 to 4 km area respectively. By shadowing the objective of National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC) 2005 and Directorate of Education in ANI⁷, the study found that out of the total children in primary classes (17.14%), 37.99% of children were studying in primary schools located more than 1 km away from their household. Among them, 6.60 percent of children opted to enrol in the school because it was nearest to their home and 5.66% were enrolled in the school because it was the only school providing education in their mother tongue near their household. It is important to note that the above two categories of children were from rural areas. The findings indicate how the multilingual scenario, resulted in different mediums of instruction in schools and peculiarity of isolated inhabitation in rural areas create difficulties for children in accessing schools in the islands and thus poses questions to the provisions under the Right to education Act, 2009⁸.

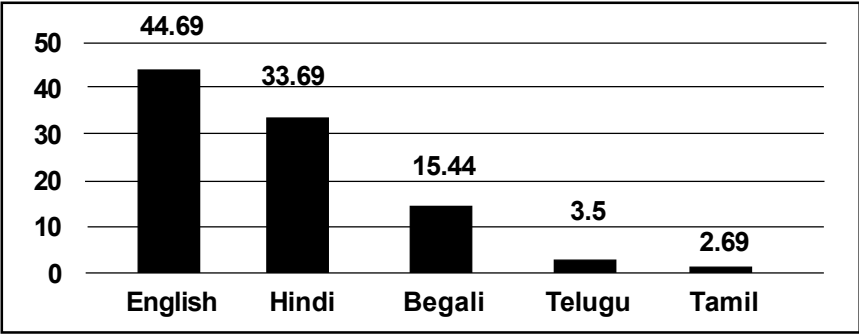
Addressing the question of children's mode of transportation to school, the study identified that 46.69% of children were walking to school. Nothing unfazed in this by considering the earlier finding that 60% of children's distance to school was below 3 km. The category followed 37% of children depended on the state or private buses to reach school. Substantiating the difficulties of transportation, children in the focus group discussions shared that they were compelled to walk because of the problem. Out of the total children in primary classes, 44.09% of children were walking to school.

4.1.2 Medium of instruction and related issues

Recognizing the multilingual scenario and the effectiveness of mother tongue to educate children⁹, five mediums, viz, English, Hindi, Tamil, Bengali and Telugu are being followed in the isles. In contrast to the objective to encourage education in mother tongue, the finding gives a different picture. From the illustration (4.1.2) it is very clear that 44.69% of children were in English medium schools. The majority followed 33.69% of Hindi, 15.44% of Bengali, 3.5 percent of Telugu and 2.69 percent of Tamil medium students out of the total. The inclination towards English medium was evident in the illustration. The changing material world with a demand of English in the job market might be

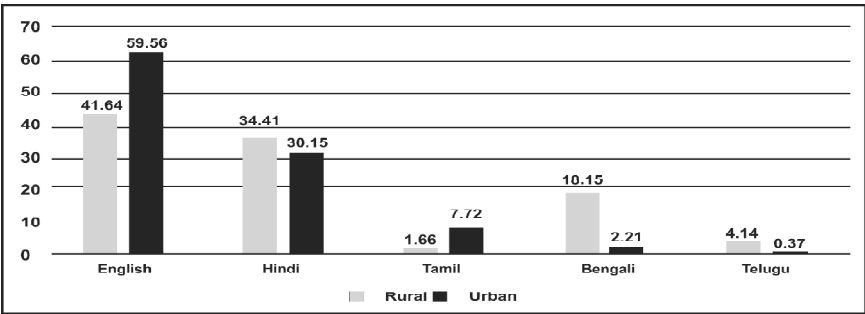
the reason for the high percentage of children in English medium. The life history of Arun¹⁰, a boy from urban context underscores this. Besides the argument that a necessity to sustain in the emerging social order, an examination of rural and urban divide would be useful to understand the context with reference to medium of instruction.

Illustration 4.1.2 Medium of instruction



Although children from both rural and urban areas expressed their interest to be in English medium schools, in comparison with rural areas (41.64%), urban areas revealed a slightly higher percentage (59.56%) (Illustration 4.1.3). In the meantime urban areas showed least interest in using the mother tongue as medium of instruction. The life history of Arun apparently explains this fact. It was seen in the life history that Arun dropped his mother tongue, Bengali, and selected English as a medium of instruction and Hindi as communication language by recognizing the changing scenario. On the other hand, children from rural areas showed a slightly higher interest in selecting Hindi (34.41%) and mother tongues as a medium of instruction. The significant percentage of children enrolled in Bengali (18.15%), Tamil (7.72%) and Telugu (4.14%) medium schools presents the inclination for mother tongue in rural areas. The finding

Illustration 4.1.3 Medium of instruction and region



invites attention on children from different medium of instruction and their linguistic backgrounds.

Among the linguistic groups in the study, 62.05 per cent of children from Bengali community preferred to study in their mother tongue. The category followed 49.06% of Hindi, 22.93% of Tamil and 21.15% of Telugu children out of the total respective linguistic groups in the study. It is vital to note that a significant section of children from these categories were inclined to use their mother tongue in their everyday life and as a result other than the communication skill in Hindi, most of them don't know how to write either in Hindi or English. Even poor communication skill in Hindi was noted. The life history of Ramu¹¹ overtly indicated this point. As a boy, living within the boundaries of the Telugu community, he doesn't know either to speak or write Hindi. The life history describes the difficulties of Ramu in life due to the very poor command over Hindi – the common communication language in the isles. The curriculum further aggravates the situation by ignoring Hindi. As the third language in the curriculum, Hindi starts from sixth class and ends in eighth class. Meanwhile children are not getting adequate exposure in English. Therefore it is very difficult for children who completed their secondary education in mother tongue to integrate effectively into senior secondary classes where education is exclusively provided in English. This anxiety was shared by Ramu in his life history. Hence it is clear that the approach of the state itself excludes a section of children from higher education and ultimately limits their social mobility.

Alongside curriculum and poor teaching, particularly languages, the multilingual scenario plays a vital role in the poor quality of education, markedly in rural areas in the isles. It was observed during the field work that majority of children faced difficulties in filling the questionnaire due to their poor writing skill both in Hindi or English. Sharing of a boy during the time of field work is relevant here. He speaks in his mother tongue -Telugu- with family members and communicates in Hindi with friends or school mates, while his medium of instruction is English. In spite of exposure to three languages, he doesn't know to read and write in any language properly! Though variations were found, the situation remained almost the same across the rural area among Bengali, Telugu, Tamil and Ranchi communities. One of the indicators of the quality of education, exam results can explain the situation further.

The study noticed a declining trend not only of children who secured 60% and above from grade IV/V to VII/VIII but also from

2007-08 to 2008-09 as well (Table 4.1.2). The declining trend from more than 50% of children in grade IV/V to around 30% of children in VII/VIII clearly highlights declining quality of education from primary to middle level. The declining trend in both levels from 2007-08 to 2008-09 is a matter of concern. In general, this finding underlines the poor quality of education in the isles, which has been already mentioned in the study.

Table 4.1.2 Examination Results: Students secured 60% and above

Year	Grade IV / V		Grade VII / VIII	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
2007-08	52.82	57.14	29.01	32.25
2008-09	50.32	53.91	23.12	27.82

Source: NUEPA, Elementary Education in India, Progress towards UEE: New Delhi. 2010, p 29-30.

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) result of X also substantiates the same declining trend of results from 2007-08 to 2009-10 (Table 4.1.3). The result declined from 56.45% in 2007-08 to 53.04% in 2008-09. From the table it is evident that in each and every year around 50% of children fail to achieve minimum grade for higher studies. The dropout rate in the secondary level also indicates the out of school children in the islands¹².

Table 4.1.3 Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) result of X

Year	Appeared			Passed			Percentage
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	
2006-07	2734	2709	5443	1378	1460	2838	52.14
2007-08	2763	2700	5463	1502	1582	3084	56.45
2008-09	2992	2822	5814	1536	1548	3084	53.04

T/EDN/2009-10/5394 Andaman & Nicobar Administration, Directorate of Education, Port Blair, 16th August 2010.

Table 4.1.4 Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) result of XII

Year	Appeared			Passed			Percentage
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	
2006-07	1561	1710	3271	1096	1227	2323	71.01
2007-08	1598	1615	3213	1295	1408	2703	84.12
2008-09	1883	1927	3810	1586	1685	3271	85.85

Source: F. No. 9-29/STAT/EDN/2009-10/5394 Andaman & Nicobar Administration, Directorate of Education, Port Blair, 16 August 2010.

Contrary to the declining trend in grade VI/V, VII/VIII and secondary level, the CBSE result of class XII shows an increasing trend (Table 4.1.4). But the district wise presence of the educational

institutions underlines the neglected situation of the rural areas and thus the poor quality of education in such locations (Table 4.1.5). Considering the scattered islands¹³, this concentration of educational establishments plays an important role for the situation.

Table 4.1.6 Education institutes in ANI

S.No	Institutions	A&N Islands	South Andaman	Percentage
1.	Pre-primary schools	25	24	96.00
2.	Primary schools	205	77	37.56
3.	Middle	69	36	52.17
4.	Secondary	44	17	38.64
5.	Sr. Secondary	53	32	60.38
6.	Industrial training institutes	1	1	100.00
7.	Teachers training institutes	1	1	100.00
8.	Polytechnics	2	2	100.00
9.	Govt. Colleges	2	1	50.00
10.	Govt. Bed colleges	1	1	100.00

Source: Directorate of Education and Economics and Statistics, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, 2010.

It can be ascertained that the urban area or South Andaman district benefits educational institutions in comparison with other two districts (Table 4.1.6). An overwhelming majority of institutions for the two fundamental aspects of education, i.e. pre-primary (96%) and senior secondary (60.38%) located in South Andaman district. The study points out the strong dependency of rural sector on ICDS for pre-school education and lack of opportunities of children particularly girls in remote areas¹⁴ after Xth or XIIth class and its influence on child marriages. The concentration of higher educational institutions in South Andaman is also a matter of concern. Due to the same reasons only a minimum number of students continue their studies after schooling in remote locations. This trend was invariably observed in the rural areas.

The study observed that children were getting very less opportunity in decision making with reference to the selection of school. Children revealed varying answers for the question. Almost all shared the involvement of parents in the decision. Parent's interest as a reason was revealed by 26.25% of children out of the total. This finding underlines the dominant notion that children are the private property of parents in the social context. The majority, 33.63% of children indicated quality education while 23.69% of children mentioned proximity to the household might be the reason influenced parents

to select schools. However it is important to consider ‘own interest’ as a reason presented by 2.38 percent of children. Considering the multilingual scenario, 1.69 percent of children opined that mother tongue might be the reason for the selection of schools. Thus this finding highlights the importance of participation of children in decision making, an integral part of CRC and NPAC 2005¹⁵.

4.1.3 Facilities in schools and perspective of children

Table 4.1.7 Facilities in school and ranking

Facilities	Yes	No	Very good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Building	100	0.00	30.13	63.31	5.19	1.38
Drinking water	98.63	1.38	14.01	52.34	24.90	8.75
Sanitation	95.69	4.31	9.01	44.61	27.82	18.55
Play ground	92.25	7.75	23.98	64.63	9.01	2.37
Library	83.63	16.38	26.38	64.35	8.22	1.05
Garden	32.75	67.25	22.52	59.35	13.17	4.96
Mid-day meal	90.13	9.86*	20.99	57.87	11.84	9.30
NCC/Scouts/Guides	60.81	39.19	24.05	70.30	4.21	1.44
Social science/ science/eco club	31.06	68.94	20.72	66.80	8.45	4.12

** Mid-day meal is not provided in private schools.
Here the percentage of ‘No’ comes from private schools*

The facilities in schools are prosperous at a cursory glance (Table 4.1.7). The same presence of facilities has given a high rank for the UT in the developmental index of NEUPA¹⁶. However it is silent about the quality of such facilities. Children shared that an overwhelming majority of schools have adequate buildings. While analysing the barrier-free access, the situation in the schools is pathetic (Refer table 4.1.8). The percentage of schools having ramp facilities not only shows a declining trend from 2007-08 to 2008-09 but also the lethargic approach of administration towards differentially abled children. This evidently violates the provisions under The Persons with Disabilities [Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation Act] 1995 or in short PD Act 1995¹⁷ and RTE¹⁸ Act 2009.

It can be seen that sanitation (95.69%) and drinking water facilities (98.63%) existed in an overwhelming majority of schools, though the quality was a matter of concern. The ranking of these facilities under poor and very poor categories revealed the issues into focus. In addition to this, focus group discussions with children also underlined the gravity of the problem. According to the children in focus group

discussions, water tanks for drinking water and toilets were not cleaned and maintained properly. As result, majority children took water from home instead of school and tried their level best not to use the toilet. Focus group discussions with parents and PRI representatives further corroborated it and even PRI representatives admitted that due to dearth of funds apart from the maintenance they were helpless to resolve the rest of the problems. However in relation to the facilities, the study finding almost goes with the administrative data (Refer table 4.1.8).

Playground and library, mandatory under RTE¹⁹ Act, 2009 norms and standards, were found in almost all the schools in the isles. Focus group discussions with children revealed complaints about the accessibility to play materials and books and a significant percentage of schools did not have playground (7.75%) and library (16.38%) as well. Higher percentage of schools did not have social science, science and eco clubs (68.94%). The sizeable percentage of schools did not have a garden (67.25%) which may lead to a pleasant and stimulating environment in school which in turn can contribute to the development of children. A Pradhan observed in one of the focus group discussions that the gloomy atmosphere of government schools needs to be changed. According to him a pleasant environment with gardens, attractive paintings and cleanliness would be helpful for the development of children. In comparison with other facilities, majority children (57.87%) were found satisfied with mid-day meal in schools, while a significant percentage of children opined 'very good' (20.99%). It was noticed that in 2009-10 the midday meal²⁰ scheme covered 67.46% of primary and 69.23% of upper primary school children in the isles. However the coverage needs to be improved.

One of the mandatory aspects of school building under RTE Act 2009 is kitchen and this factor should be analysed further. The table (4.1.8) shows that only 25.08% of schools in the islands had kitchen sheds. The situation of primary schools was more pathetic than the total. In general, apart from checking of midday meal by mother's committee and PRI representatives and a few interventions in the area of infrastructure by VEC, no other attempts of community were noted. It was found that with the limited budget, VECs were struggling to solve the issues of infrastructure and as a result quality was compromised in the process. Parents in focus group discussions accused PRI representatives for their verbal jugglery. On the other hand PRI representatives shared their helplessness to bring remarkable

changes by indicating the dearth of funds and ineffective implementation of 73rd Amendment Act and devolution of powers to PRIs. It is true that the study noted some initiatives or attempts of PRI members within their 'limitations', particularly on the maintenance of schools.

Table 4.1.8 Facilities in schools in ANI

Facilities \ Year		2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Drinking water	All school	84.29	98.05	98.61
	Primary school	00.00	98.49	99.00
Common toilet	All school	42.00	84.40	95.56
	Primary school	00.00	91.96	98.00
Girls toilet	All school	63.43	73.82	81.67
	Primary school	00.00	65.85	76.00
Ramp	All school	06.29	08.64	07.22
	Primary school	00.00	06.03	04.50
Kitchen shed	All school	20.89	24.45	25.08
	Primary school	00.00	20.34	20.45
Computer	All school	34.00	41.23	47.50
	Primary school	00.00	34.17	37.50
Electricity	All school	00.00	00.00	87.50
	Primary school	00.00	00.00	83.00

Source: NUEPA, *Elementary Education in India, Progress towards UEE: New Delhi. 2010.*

The study found views of children on facilities missing in school (4.1.9) and its interconnection with the issues and lack of facilities existing in schools.

Table 4.1.9 Views of children on facilities missing in schools

Facilities missing in schools	Percentage
Not answered	15.25
Music & dance club	15.69
Science, social science & eco club	08.06
Garden	21.56
Infrastructure facilities	06.63
Toilet	00.94
Playground	03.00
Teachers	02.56
School bus	03.50
Safe drinking water	04.63
Library	01.69
NCC / scouts & guides	07.63
Canteen	02.19
Lab facility	00.44
Sports materials	02.63
Total	100.0

Other than garden (21.56%), music and dance club (15.69%), and science, social science and eco club (08.06 percent), teachers (2.6 percent), canteen (2.19 percent) and school bus (3.5 percent) came out as responses of children on facilities or services missing in school. Though the percentage of children who indicated ‘teachers’ as one of the points missing in their school was negligible, clearly underlined the grapevine news in the isles on the absenteeism of teachers. The sizeable percentage of ‘not answered’ (table 4.1.9 and table 4.1.10) needs to be located within the dominant perspective of the state and community on children and their suggestions or opinions. During the field work almost all children shared that this was the first time they were given an opportunity to express themselves on such issues. Status of children as receivers without any autonomy and agency might be the reason for not attempting to address the open ended question.

Table 4.1.10 Suggestions of children while designing a school

Suggestions of children	Percentage
Not answered	28.69
Play ground	10.19
Hall	01.75
Infrastructure facilities	26.63
Good library	02.75
Clean toilet & safe drinking water	07.56
Park	00.75
Garden	15.86
Health club	00.13
School wall painting	01.44
Rooms for music & dance classes	04.25
Total	100.00

The table (4.1.10) presents the potential of children to understand the situation critically and offer suggestions to address it. Emphasizing the importance of pleasant environment, children suggested park, garden and school wall painting while designing schools. Understanding the basic issues, children proposed changes in the design by building separate clean facilities for toilet and drinking water facilities. The common hall for cultural programmes or any functions was included by a section of the children. Infrastructure facilities encompassed big class rooms with windows and doors, cupboards in class rooms and so on. Physical education facilities and rooms for extracurricular activities also came out as suggestions.

4.1.4 Extra-curricular activities and life skill and vocational education

In this context, it is important to analyse the extra-curricular activities conducted by the school authority. As vital part of development, the potential of extracurricular activities was widely acknowledged. However all respondents revealed that school conducted extra-curricular activities along with study. Generally sports competition was organized once a year, while arts competitions like, drawing, elocution, painting, etc. were conducted in school on special days in a year. According to the convenience and interest of school authorities, programmes were finalized. It is noteworthy that synopsis and photos of arts or sports competitions of children were one of the main news covered by The Daily Telegram²¹, with reference to children in the isles. The study noticed that an overwhelming majority of children (84.66%) participated in extracurricular activities. It was further found that 48.85% of children participated in sports competitions. The category followed a combination of arts and sports competition (27.17%) and sports (23.98%) out of the total sample. The study could not find any difference in gender with reference to the different competitions. It is important to note here that 4.44% of children pointed out the absence of physical education teacher in their schools, a mandatory provision under RTE Act 2009.

Table 4.1.11 Life skill and vocational education in schools

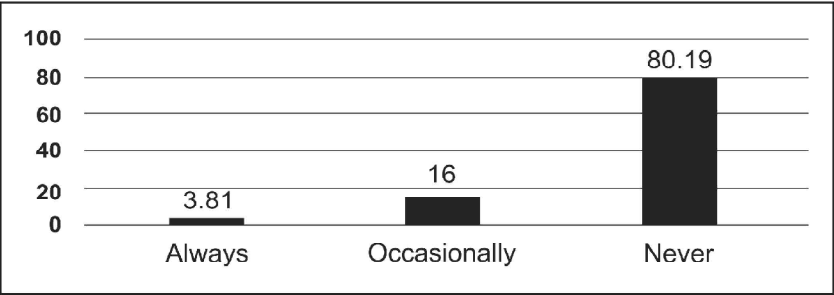
Life skill and vocational education in schools	Percentage
Yes	11.25
No	88.75
Total	100.00

Besides the computer education as part of the curriculum and exceptional classes on life skills by NGO's and Health Education Programme in schools, there was no other initiatives on vocational and life skill education in schools (Table 4.1.11). Out of the total sample surveyed, 85.69% of children acceded to the importance of vocational and life skill education in everyday life. Corroborating the quantitative data, focus group discussions with children explicitly revealed their inclination to learn any vocational skill along with schooling. Almost all expressed a sceptic view on the ongoing computer education in schools as it only focused on drawing or painting and basics of computer education. In the meantime, children opined the poor and irregular classes of work education in schools. Rather 19.56% of children mentioned the absence of craft teacher in their schools and thus pointed out violation of the RTE Act 2009²².

4.1.5 Discrimination and children

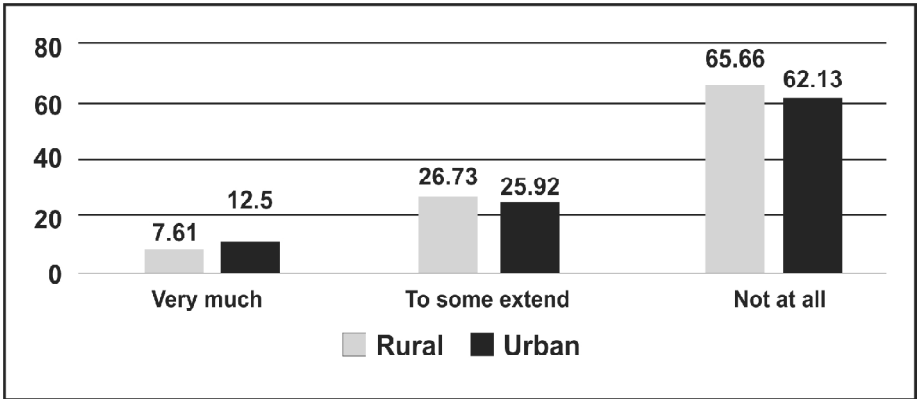
The study noticed the apathetic approach of teachers and schools towards children who were academically weak in studies. The sizeable percentage, 80.19% of children mentioned that till date their school did not conduct extra classes for academically weak students (Illustration 4.1.4) This raises questions on the commitment of administration in the implementation of new child centred approach and the broader definition of inclusive education.

Illustration 4.1.4 Extra classes for academically weak students



Though not very severe, issues of gender restriction and related issues were observed on the isles. More than 30% of children expressed that schools put restriction to interact and mingle with other gender (table 4.1.12). The life history of Ramu clearly unravelled such restrictions in the school and resulted physical punishments from a teacher. On the one hand this approach of school and teachers sheds some light on the dominant perspective of gender within the socio-cultural context, while on the other the finding indicates the gender insensitive frame work of institutions as well.

Illustration 4.1.5 Gender restriction in schools and region



Contrary to the general notion that gender restrictions were rooted in rural society, the study noticed comparatively a high rate of restrictions in urban areas (Illustration 4.1.5). The over concern of teachers by recognizing the probabilities to reach children in ‘dangers’ in urban due to varying peculiarities of the urban context might be the reason for this result. Indeed the finding invites a detail enquiry into the subject matter and construction of gender within the urban realm.

Table 4.1.12 Gender restriction and type of school

Gender restriction Type of school	Very much	To some extend	Not at all
Government	08.24	26.84	64.43
Private aided	05.26	25.26	69.43
Private unaided	20.83	18.75	60.42

The table (4.1.12) shows a more stringent approach of private schools in case of interacting and mingling with the other gender. The significant rate of ‘very much’, 20.83%, evidently underlined approach of private schools. By recognizing the probable correlation between interaction and mingling without much supervision and expecting dangers might be the reason for this approach in private schools. The anxiety over the chances of defaming the name of school due to such issues might be the reason for taking such a strict supervision in private schools. The life history of Arun, brings out a few indications with regard to this approach. He resonated the advices of teachers to limit the interaction with other gender strictly within the school compound. However the reasons behind this trend and how gender constructing and re-enforcing in certain spaces in relation to schools needs to be analysed further.

By refuting the romantic descriptions and generalizing writing on ANI, i.e. “...the culture of Andaman has completely eliminated caste system from its social system,”²³ “...the people of these islands have developed a cosmopolitan outlook....” and “the social set up is completely free from any prejudice..” (Murthy, 2005, p. 81), the study noticed humiliations faced by 6.88 percent of children in schools. Although the percentage was not too high, it brought out the matter into focus. Children from Ranchi community, Nicobarese and particular sections of children from Telugu linguistic background, who were traditionally indulged in fishing, recalled cases in points of humiliations in schools in relation to their identity. The life history of Ramu also underlined the experience of humiliations from school.

Table 4.1.13 Persons humiliated children

Persons humiliated children	Percentage
Teachers	51.82
School authority	00.91
Non-teaching staff	00.91
School mates	43.64
Teachers and school mates	01.82
Others	00.91
Total	100.00

A break-up of persons who humiliated children is significant here. The table (4.1.13) shows that out of the total respondents who faced humiliation in school, 51.82% of them indicated teachers as perpetrators. The category followed 43.64% of school mates out of the total. The finding showed the clear violation of RTE Act 2009²⁴ and CRC²⁵ in the islands. Interest of parents' is considered as one of the vital influencing aspects in schooling of children.

4.1.6 Parents, teachers and absenteeism

The study attempted to understand the involvement of parents in the studies of children. Out of the total children interviewed, 73.88% of them revealed that parents were taking a keen interest in their studies. The category followed 23.37% of children who pointed out a 'hardly' involvement of their parents. Focus group discussions with parents underscored the finding. Almost all parents shared their aspiration to give maximum possible education to children. Generally this inspiration was observed related to their intention for social mobility which they couldn't achieve in their lives. This aspiration should be located within the educational backgrounds of parents. The study found that 19.59% of mothers and 13.64% of fathers of children were illiterate and their desire for social mobility with the help of education was noticed during the field work. Majority of mothers (68.42%) and fathers (60.14%) came under the education level of below middle classes. This poor knowledge background influenced their aspirations. However besides the interest, majority of parents were not able to support children's education at home. This led to seek education support from outside, in other words they sent children for tuition.

An overwhelming majority of children (84.69%) out of the total were attending tuition classes as a support to study. Irrespective of region this trend was explicitly noticed in the whole geographical area. It was observed during the field work that tuition centres were found in each and every corner of the islands. Life history of Arun apparently

described the influence of tuition in his life. It seemed that he was psychologically dependant on tuition classes. The involvement of regular teaching staff in tuition was a very common trend in the isles and thus violated the section 28, RTE Act 2009²⁶.

In addition to these, parents involved in the education of their children by visiting schools and enquiring progress of their studies. It was found that 59.44% of children's parents occasionally visited the school and enquired about study and progress of children with teachers and school authorities, while 9.5 percent of children's parents regularly visited school to enquire about their children. A significant section of children's parents never made such efforts. The question dealt with parents' visits to school excluding the yearly attendance in Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meetings. Although an important aspect for maintaining the quality of education, majority parents attended the meetings just for the ride. Focus group discussions with parents revealed that majority never shared their views in the meetings as they were scared of their limited knowledge.

The multi-lingual scenario needs to be examined further here. Focus group discussions with parents from linguistic groups like Telugu, Bengali explored varying dimensions related to PTA meetings. According to them, by dint of their poor command over Hindi, they did not participate in the meetings. As a result, those who had a strong command over Hindi were vocal and dominated discussions in the meetings. Conversely very negligible percentage of parents mentioned that they were keeping in touch with teachers. In short, besides the keen interest for social mobility through education and support of tuition, because of the knowledge background, a majority section of parents participated in the PTA meetings only for the sake of participation. Furthermore this raises questions on the democratic nature of PTA meetings.

Interview with VEC members corroborated the fact. One of the VEC members shared that for last three years as a VEC member she had not yet participated in any separate meeting in school. In addition to the PTA meetings, she was invited to school only for opening the tenders as part of the interventions of VEC. According to the member, generally teachers fix the priority of the works as part of VEC. At the same time, VECs were not formed as yet in a few Panchayats! Except a few positive responses from PRI representatives, generally the functioning of PTA and VEC was observed not very promising.

Alongside parents, the role of teachers is also important in ensuring quality education for children. In relation to the quality, absenteeism of teachers is a serious matter of concern. The study of All India Teachers Federation revealed that around 25% of teachers abstain from their work²⁷ all over India.

Table 4.1.14 Absenteeism of teachers

Absenteeism of teachers	Percentage
Yes	79.69
No	20.31
Total	100.00

Going with the same trend, out of the total sample surveyed, 20.31% of children indicated that absenteeism of teachers was common in schools (Table 4.1.14). Locating this experience of children within the involvement of teachers in private tuition, it is clear that these factors also played its own part in the poor quality of education in isles, particularly in rural areas. Focus group discussions with parents and PRI representatives too evinced the fact. According to them majority teachers posted in other smaller and remote islands were actually based in Port Blair, the headquarters. Therefore instead of working regularly in their work areas, they often (sometimes without taking leave) spent time at home and as a result shortage of teachers was a common phenomenon in rural areas.

4.2. Children out of school or Excluded from education institutions

Education, the vital aspect of development brings wide ranging benefits to both individuals and societies. It creates a more constructive population and citizenry. By recognizing the personal, political and social values international conventions recognize right to education as a human right. The right has been established by a succession of UN Conventions, from Universal declaration of Human Rights (1948) to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), which acquired the status of international law in 1990 (UNICEF, 1994). It is true that apart from the emphasis of CRC²⁸, Constitution of India²⁹ and Educational Policies³⁰, universalization of elementary education still exists as a dream. However realizing this recently the GoI has introduced Right to Education Act 2009³¹ (GOI, 2009) to hasten the initiatives and achieve the goal.

In this context the report of Public Report on Basic Education (PROBE) on basic education is relevant. The PROBE team pointed

out that 73% of children who joined school dropped out before completing even the five years of primary schooling (The PROBE team 1999 in Bajpai, 2003). The statistics evidently highlighted the alarming rate of children who were excluded from educational institutions. By recognizing the fact, the study attempted to capture a bird's eye view on the situation of excluded³² children in the isles.

It was found that 1.72 percent of children were excluded from educational institutions. The term drop out was not used by considering the nature of data collection and complexities embedded with the definition in relation to enrolment. Rather the term excluded can encompass children below the age of 18 years as defined by CRC and the Commission for the Protection of Child rights Act, 2005. Although the percentage is not high, the effort expects to give a cursory glance on the situations of excluded children in the socio-cultural context.

4.2.1 Excluded children and reasons for exclusion

Table 4.2.1 Participation of children in formal education system

Participation of children in formal education system	Percentage
Yes	96.43
No	03.57
Total	100.00

The table (4.2.1) shows that 96.43% of children got exposure of schooling, while 3.57 percent children never got such kind of an experience. This clearly indicates that the majority children dropped out from educational institutions. A gender break-up of children is relevant to shed a few dimensions on gender disparity on access to education within the context. Table 4.2.2 clearly presents that out of the total excluded children, 57.14% were females. The majority followed 42.82% of males out of the total. Apart from the majority female children out of the total, it is noteworthy that females were the only category who never participated in formal education system. The finding corroborated the indication of the probe team that 'girls are denied equal opportunities' in relation to education (Bajpai, 2003). No wonder, the same underlying perspective on female children regarding education was noted by the study as part of gender discrimination³³.

Table 4.2.2 Gender break-up of excluded children

Gender Participation in formal education system	Male	Female	Total
Yes	42.86	53.57	96.43
No	00.00	03.57	03.57
Total	42.86	57.14	100.00

Illustration 4.2.1 Stage-wise drop out

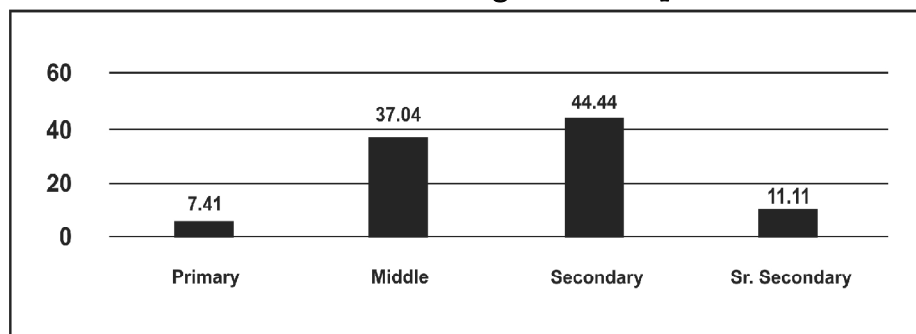
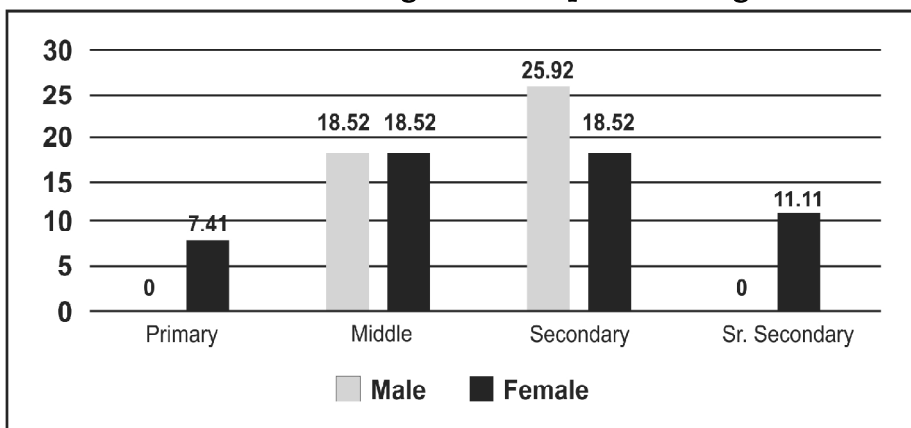


Illustration 4.2.1 shows that 44.44% of children dropped out from the secondary stage out of the total children who participated in formal education system. The majority followed 37.04% of children from middle classes, 11.11% from senior secondary classes and 7.41 percent from primary classes out of the total. Even though the study hasn't focused the hitherto dark area³⁴ in detail, explored the same trend in connection with dropout rate in secondary stage in isles (Refer table 4.2.3). The same limitation restricted the study to furnish reasons for the higher percentage of exclusion in secondary and higher secondary stages.

Illustration 4.2.2 Stage-wise drop out and gender



It is apparent that 7.41 percent of females were dropped out from the primary stage, meanwhile there was no representation of males in primary stage (Illustration 4.2.2) Likewise 11.11% of female children dropped out from senior secondary level. Male children were not fallen in senior secondary stage. From the middle stage 18.52% of males as well as females have been dropped out. From the secondary stage 25.92% of males dropped out as against 18.52% of females out of the total children. In this context it is very important to examine the administrative data on dropouts in the isles.

Table 4.2.3 Stage-wise dropout rate in ANI

Stage	2006-07			2007-08			2008-09		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Primary	5.80	6.97	6.37	9.73	11.20	10.45	13.61	10.05	11.89
Middle	13.0	9.86	11.54	10.88	6.70	8.93	12.63	10.84	11.80
Secondary	17.09	13.74	15.52	23.45	17.09	20.45	19.04	14.39	16.87
Sr. Secondary	–	–	–	–	–	–	12.03	8.66	10.36

*Source: F No. 9-29/STAT/EDN/2009-10/5394 Andaman and Nicobar Administration
Directorate of Education, August 2010.*

The table (4.2.3) offers data on stage-wise dropout rate in the isles. From the data it is evident that except the stage of middle in 2007-08, generally dropout rate was seen increasing in the isles irrespective of the stages and gender. The exceptional, rather interesting data on middle and secondary stages in 2007-08 is itself a matter of concern. It is clear from the table that in 2006-07 from the middle stage rate of dropout (11.54%) declined to 8.93 percent in 2008-09. In contrast to the data, in 2006-07 from the secondary stage, rate of dropout (15.52%) increased to 20.45% in 2007-08. Reasons for the differences need to be studied in detail. Moreover it is imperative to address the steady increasing trend of dropout rate in general and particularly in the primary stage in the isles. The data raises questions on the interventions of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and highlights the necessity of the effective implementation of Right to Education Act, 2009 in the geographical area.

Reasons identified by the study for dropout would expect to shed some light on the administrative data. It was observed that 25% of children were excluded from the formal education system due to various diseases. The category followed 21.43% of children who discontinued their schooling because of financial problems. 21.43% of children indicated failure as reason to stop their studies and 21.43% mentioned that they were not interested to continue their studies. A

section of children (7.14 percent) pointed out restriction by parents as a reason to stop their schooling. Generally the finding corroborated the three major reasons, i.e. poverty, quality of schooling and school infrastructure, and problems of motivation both among parents and children which were already observed by number of scholars in different social contexts (Bajpai, 2003).

However the reason of financial problems, in other words the costs of education raises questions on the government interventions in education. The two reasons, i.e. 'not interested to study' and 'failed' on the one hand brings out the lack of child friendly schools and education system and on the other indicates the poor knowledge background of parents and their resulted lethargic attitude towards their children's education. The life history of Sandhya³⁵ also added a few dimensions in relation to the reasons. The life history clearly points out the apathetic and insincere approach of teachers and school authority when she stopped the study.

In relation to the view of children on their future, a majority of children (53.57%) revealed that till date they hadn't thought about it, while 21.43% of respondents expressed their interest to learn tailoring. The category followed 14.29% of children who were interested in typing. Though they did not share a blue print, 10.71% of children mentioned that they wished to do any typing work for living. In this context it is vital to address the majority's response that yet they were not thought about their future. A gender break-up of aspiration of excluded children can add a different dimension here. It was found that accepting dominant notions of 'femininity', female respondents expressed their inclination to learn tailoring and typing. In the life history, Sandhya also shared the same interest. On the other hand a few male children revealed their aspiration to do any type of work. In short the finding invites attention to the significance of formal education and vocational training for children who were excluded from the formal education system. In the meantime this emphasizes the necessity to adopt novel strategies to minimize the exclusion of children from the education system.

4.2.2 Kishori Shakti Yojana: State interventions

In this juncture the initiative of the government of India, 'Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY)'³⁶ for adolescent girls, particularly focusing on dropouts needs to be examined. Illustration 4.2.3 evidently presents the stark difference between policy initiatives and actual

implementation of the scheme at the ground level. Out of the total adolescent girls interviewed, 56.25% of them received supplementary nutrition, while 37.25% of adolescent girls participated in awareness classes on health issues out of the total. Besides the minimal coverage on Supplementary Nutritional Programme (SNP) and awareness classes, 6.25 percent of adolescents attended non-formal education programme and no one yet participated in any vocational skill or training programme as part of the scheme.

Illustration 4.2.3 Services under KSY

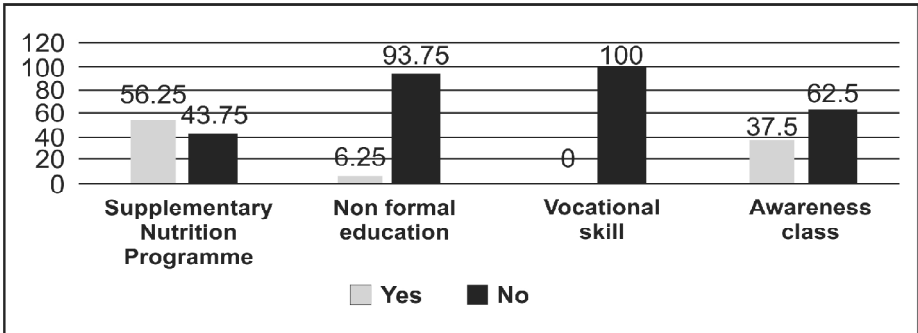


Table 4.2.4 Beneficiaries under KSY

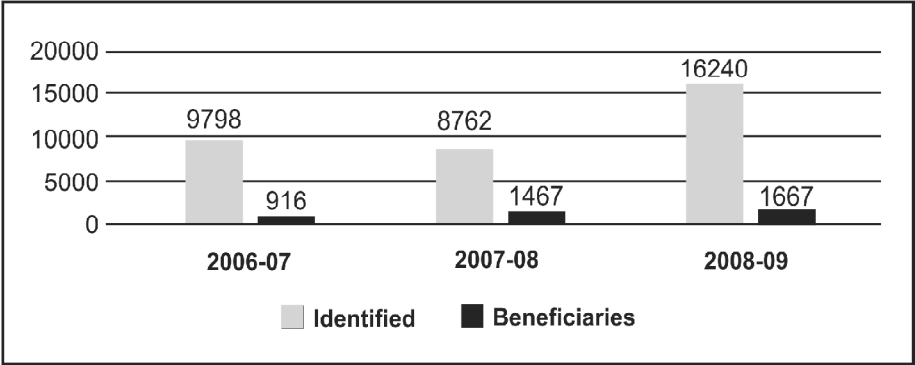
Year	Number of adolescent girls [11-18 years]		
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Trained	180	0	0
Nutrition Health Education	0	120	220
Supplementary Nutrition Programme	916	1467	1667
IFA tablets	180	447	775
Total	1276	2034	2662

Source: <http://wcd.nic.in/projsanc/ksy06-09.htm> last visited on 24th April 2010.

The administrative data also accedes the pathetic implementation of the programme particularly with reference to vocational and skill training (Refer table 4.2.4). The same lethargic approach was invariably observed from the field. It is noteworthy that apart from the basic information on the scheme, anganwadi workers were not very clear about the scheme and its objectives. Almost all were confused with the scheme of KSY with another programme, Nutritional Programme for Adolescent Girls (NPAG)³⁷. According to the anganwadi workers, they were suggested to select three adolescent girls below poverty line for the programme³⁸. But a section of anganwadi workers shared that they selected beneficiaries by considering the attitude of adolescents to help them in activities in the anganwadi centres. Meanwhile, a few

anganwadi workers revealed that for utilizing the benefit they selected adolescents beyond the criteria and interestingly an anganwadi worker mentioned that otherwise the amount would fall into ‘ocean of corruption’ in the office. On the other hand all respondents revealed their unawareness of the scheme. The Andaman and Nicobar administrative data on the surveyed and beneficiaries of adolescent girls under KSY corroborated the finding (Illustration 4.2.4).

Illustration 4.2.4 Identified and beneficiaries of adolescent girls under KSY



Although the number of beneficiaries (only in case of SNP, Refer Table 4.2.4 data furnished by Ministry of Women and Child Development-MWCD) increased with reference to year, the coverage was seemed not promising. It is crucial to note that the scheme was invariably connected with poverty and nutritional programme in ANI. Eventually this emphasis undermined the objectives of vocational skills and non-formal education in the scheme. Furthermore the funding pattern of the scheme was also inadequate in accordance with the objectives. Although this dearth of funds as an issue has been shared by the administration, the ineffective utilization of the available fund was noted (Refer table 4.2.5).

Table 4.2.5 Released and utilised fund under KSY

Year	Fund received [in lakhs]	Fund utilised [in lakhs]
2005-06	5.5	5.5
2006-07	5.5	4.54
2007-08	2.75	1.7
2008-09	2.75	2.11

Source: <http://wcd.nic.in/icdsimg/ksy06-10.htm> last visited on 24th April 2010.

4.3 Leisure time and recreation, cultural activities and play

Recreation, cultural activities and play, a vital aspect of development is considered as a cornerstone of children's health and well-being and researches have drawn a nexus between recreation and play and its positive influence in general. Playing together provides opportunities for social, moral as well as emotional development and hence counts as a vehicle for personality development (Bajpai, 2003). Recognising creative writing as a part of recreational activity Monika Holm (1999) argues that "creative activity brings imagination into reality" and contributes its own part to the development of children (p. 12). However the perception on leisure time activities, in other words play and recreational activities varies in accordance with community, gender and particular social context. Moreover there is no consensus on definition of play and recreational activities.

In spite of the significance given by researches from a range of disciplines including psychology, education, philosophy and anthropology and interventions of government, national and international organizations based on CRC, millions of children are denied opportunities for recreation, cultural activities and play due to number of reasons in their lives. Causes vary from war, diseases, poverty and lack of recognition of the importance or misconceptions on play and recreational activities (Bajpai, 2003). Realizing the fact, Convention on the rights of the child guarantees the right to recreational activities and play to all children³⁹. The CRC not only recognizes but also directs the State Parties to respect and promote the right. Drawing the frame work of child rights, the study encompasses the objective as germane with an intention to understand or document the leisure time activities in the social context.

4.3.1 Leisure time and place

Table 4.3.1 Leisure time of children

Leisure time of children	Percentage
Below one hour	17.01
One to Two hours	32.56
Two to Three hours	30.01
Three to Four hours	12.16
Above hours	08.17
Total	100.00

The table (4.3.1) shows that 32.56% of children were getting one to two hours as leisure time. The category followed 30.10% of two to three hours, 17.01% of below one hour, 12.16% of three to four hours and 8.17 percent of above four hours. Except among 'mainstreamed' tribal community, Nicobarese⁴⁰, the study could not identify any divergent trend in general with regard to leisure time. Children from almost all linguistic groups, rural and urban area, age groups and gender fell in each and every category of leisure time. The higher percentage of the two categories, i.e. one to two hours and two to three hours were linked with the available time of children after schooling and education support⁴¹. Although no uniform school timing was found in the isles, an overwhelming majority of children returned from school in-between 1.30pm to 3.00 pm⁴². In this context after schooling and education support, generally children did not get leisure time more than the representation of the two categories.

Majority of children among the Nicobarese were getting two to three hours as leisure time and this needs to be understood within the socio-cultural background of the community. The school timing (7.30 a.m. – 1.30 p.m.) and comparatively low percentage of education support⁴³ in Car Nicobar gives more free time to majority of children. However this might be a reason for the higher percentage of children who had two to three hours of leisure time among Nicobarese. In addition to these, traditionally Nicobari children were allowed to play as they wish. However this perspective was observed changing in the socio-cultural milieu in relation to discipline, social mobility and success in lives. Focus group discussions with parents revealed that children neither obeyed parents nor gave emphasis to their study; rather spent time for recreation and play. According to the parents of Nicobarese children, this changing situation demands to be disciplined and focus on study, but not recreation and play.

A similar perspective on recreation and play as frivolous, especially in the world of 'material/career achievements' was shared by parents in focus group discussions. More or less all participants agreed on limiting the leisure time into half an hour to one hour for play and recreation. However along with the school timing and education support, compulsion of a section of parents might be the reason for the percentage of below one hour leisure time in the total sample.

The exploration of the place for leisure time activities sheds some light not only on spaces where children spend their time but also the

socio-cultural context which normalise violations of child rights in subtle ways. The study found that a majority, 57.68% of children spent their leisure time at home. The category followed 18.30% of home and NGOs Children's Development Centre, 16.40% of playground, 2.70 percent of playground and home and 1.05 percent of street. Rest of the places for leisure time activities were observed as negligible in percentage (Table 4.3.2). The cursory glance on the majority places evidently indicates the importance of 'home' as a space for leisure time activities. The higher percentage of home in the total needs to be analysed with gender break-up, leisure time activities, available and expected facilities for leisure time activities and outcomes of focus group discussions with parents, PRIs and children.

Table 4.3.2 Place for leisure time activities and gender

Place for leisure time activities / Gender	Male	Female	Total
Home	19.23	38.45	57.68
Playground	13.21	03.19	16.40
Park	00.61	00.37	00.98
Street	00.68	00.37	01.05
Arts & sports club	00.68	00.18	00.86
Library	00.31	00.25	00.56
Seashore	00.55	00.00	00.55
Hostel	00.18	00.06	00.24
Playground and home	02.09	00.61	02.70
Neighbours' home	00.31	00.37	00.68
Home & NGOs children's development centre	07.37	10.93	18.30
Total	45.21	54.79	100.00

From the table (4.3.2) it is clear that an overwhelming majority of female children were spending their leisure time at home and and NGOs Children's Development Centre. Almost all parents and PRI representatives in focus group discussions emphasized that home was more safe and appropriate place for female children to spend their leisure time. Indicating the issue of 'protection', the participants never mentioned a positive view on spending leisure time outside the household or vicinity by female children. The sharing highlights the social construction of 'femininity' in the socio-cultural milieu. The space -home- was observed vital in the socialisation process and as a result female children imbibe the dominant notions of 'femininity' through interactions within the space. The study finding evidently corroborated observation of Niranjana (2001) on space and construction of gender, but in a different dimension. Though a few

female children indicated their desire to break the 'space' in focus group discussions, they were compelled to follow the existing practices. Not only the focus group discussions but also the life history of Sandhya⁴⁴ describes places for leisure time for a female child in-between home and NGOs Children's Development Centre in the socio-cultural milieu. The poor percentage of female children at playground⁴⁵ also underlined the fact.

Majority of male children spent their leisure time at home, playground and the group of home and NGOs Children's Development Centre. The higher percentage of male children at playgrounds⁴⁶ corroborated the construction of gender within the context. The significant percentage of male children at home and group of home and NGOs Children's Development Centre needs to be examined within the background of available and expected facilities for recreation and play. The higher percentage of 'no facility'⁴⁷ at respective localities and poor percentage of available facilities⁴⁸ such as playground or outside the home restricted male children as well as a section of female children in home or home and NGOs Children's Development Centre. Expected facilities⁴⁹, i.e. playground and sports tools also pinpointed the desire of children to come out from the home. However at present the available facilities in home especially TV influenced children to stay at home⁵⁰.

4.3.3 Leisure time activities and expectations

The table (4.3.3) shows that out of the total study population, 28.38% of children were watching television as their leisure time activity. The group followed 27.88% of playing children out of the total sample. Apart from these, 14.37% of children used their leisure time for studying and playing, while 5.47 percent of them mentioned watching TV and helping mother as their leisure time activity out of the total children interviewed. A very negligible percentage of children mentioned taking rest, chatting and stitching as leisure time activities.

The group of children watching TV highlighted the availability of the facility for leisure time activity (Table 4.3.3). The age and gender break-up, focus group discussions with parents or children and life histories of selected children shed some light on certain dimensions with regarding watching TV as a leisure time activity.

Table 4.3.3 Leisure time activities and gender

Leisure time activities and gender	Male	Female	Total
Playing	20.70	7.18	27.88
Reading	0.80	1.23	02.03
Helping mother	0.98	5.65	6.63
Watching Television	9.46	18.92	28.38
Watching TV & helping mother	1.41	4.05	5.47
Playing & watching TV	2.40	2.09	4.49
Playing, reading & watching TV	2.70	4.30	7.00
Stitching	0.06	0.06	0.12
Rest	0.18	0.80	0.98
Chatting with friends	0.43	0.61	1.04
Studying & playing	5.71	8.66	14.37
Watching TV, studying, playing & drawing	0.37	1.23	1.60
Total	45.21	54.79	100.00

The study observed an increasing trend of interest in watching TV from 7-9 years (23.13%) to 16-18 years (33.40%). Focus group discussions with parents and children and sharing of children on favourite television programmes pointed out to the interests associated with transition of children from one developmental stage to another. It was found that children from the age categories of 7-9 and 10-12 years loved watching cartoon programmes especially on Pogo⁵¹ channel. Children from the same categories also shared their inclination towards music shows. Meanwhile children from the age groups of 13-15 and 16-18 years shared a shift of interest from cartoon programmes to sports matches like cricket, football, etc. reality shows, wrestling, serials and films. Considering the percentage of female children at home, their higher representation in watching TV was not surprising.

A majority of parents in focus group discussions criticised their children for wasting their time of study by watching TV, while a marginal section of parents, particularly from low educational background shared a different view on this. According to them nowadays children are more intelligent and often teach parents on varying subjects on lives of God/dess, health, current issues and so on which children learnt from television programmes. Life histories of Ramu and Arun indicated the role of TV in their lives by linking with their mother tongue and urban context. As a child from Telugu linguistic background, Ramu liked to watch programmes in Telugu channels like Teja, Gemini etc⁵². During the field work it was observed

that particularly Telugu and Tamil linguistic groups were inclined to watch programmes in their mother tongue along with Hindi. But the urban context offered a different picture. In his life history, Arun shared that he was clueless about his mother tongue, Bengali and the family too liked to watch programmes in Hindi⁵³. However the significant percentage of children watching varying television programmes invited attention to the impact or influence of television in their everyday life. Hence it would be worthwhile to explore the influences of television on children in the social context. The study of Buckingham (1996) on the impact of visual media or images on children pointed out the reproduction of gender stereotypical images, impact of violence on children as receivers of media conducted elsewhere apparently highlights the relevance of carrying out studies in this area.

The significant percentage of playing (27.88%) as a leisure time activity linked with the place for leisure time activities. The dominant socio-cultural perspective on gender and available facilities for leisure time activities allowed majority male children to spend their leisure time activities outside the household by playing. Generally games included cricket, football, volleyball, badminton, kabaddi etc. Female children played badminton, volleyball, kabaddi, kho-kho, hide and seek etc. by using the 'available spaces'. It is important here that the game kho-kho was considered to be 'feminine' and hide and seek appropriate for kids. Therefore male children, especially from the age groups of 13-15 and 16-18 years, did not prefer to play kho-kho and hide and seek.

Helping mothers in household chores as a leisure time activity revealed an increasing trend with regard to age. The study found that children from the age group of 7-9 years did not participate in household chores with their mother, while the percentage of children indulging in household chores increased as they grew. The study noticed that 11.46 percent of children from the age group of 16-18 years supported their mothers in household works. Meanwhile the gender break-up of the children brought out the presence of an overwhelming majority of female children in the total⁵⁴. The findings on childrens' involvement in household chores not only underlined the construction of 'femininity' within the socio-cultural milieu but also shed some light on the transition of 'womanhood' through the developmental stages. Focus group discussions with parents more or less acceded to the role of female children in households by citing the 'duties and responsibilities' of females in other words 'femininity'.

The dichotomous view of femininity/masculinity restricted the participants to invite male children for getting involved in household chores. As a result a poor percentage of male children was found in the total children supporting in household chores. Grocery or vegetable shopping, fetching water and collecting wood were shared by male children as duties in households. On the contrary by considering ‘preparing food or work in kitchen’ as ‘feminine’ majority male children kept a distance from such ‘female duties’. Life histories of Sandhya and Arun underscored the dominant perspective on gender in detail in their explanations⁵⁵. In a nut shell the study finding corroborated the observation of Bhasin (2003) that “children are exposed to traditional masculine and feminine activities from their very childhood” (p. 14).

Table 4.3.4 Available and Expected facilities for leisure time activities

Available	Percentage	Expected	Percentage
No facility	15.91	Not answered	23.46
Playground	11.24	Playground	18.67
Sports materials	08.54	Playground & sports materials	19.10
Books	05.77	TV	05.16
Sports materials & books	13.82	Books	04.18
Infrastructure	00.74	Park	05.65
TV	31.08	Computer	05.77
Books & TV	12.90	Sports materials	14.62
		Music system	00.98
		Infrastructure	01.66
		Electricity	00.74
Total	100.00	Total	100.00

The available facilities at the place for leisure time activities bring out the perspective of the social context as well as the state and its apparatus on recreation and play (Table 4.3.4). The table shows that out of the total sample, 31.08% of children enjoyed the facility of TV at the place for spending leisure time. The category followed 13.82% a group of sports materials and books, 12.9% a group of books and TV, 11.24% of playground, 8.54 percent of sports materials, 5.77 percent of books and 0.74 percent of infrastructure as the available facilities for leisure time activities. It is a matter of concern that 15.91% of children’s place lacked any kind of facility for recreation and play. The higher percentage of TV out of the total sample as an available facility

connected with facilities in the households. Hence along with other family members in the households children enjoyed the facility, but invariably under the supervision of adults. The category of sports materials and books as a facility introduced by NGOs Development Centre needs to be explained in detail. Even though the facility was provided by the NGOs working with children in the isles, accepted the agency of children in play and recreation and thus children were found as the decision makers in terms of play or recreational activities. Focus group discussions with children under the coverage of NGOs Children's Development Centre underlined the fact. According to them after the initiative of Children's Development Centre at the locality they were getting more exposure than before. The poor percentage of playgrounds⁵⁶, sports materials⁵⁷ and infrastructure not only highlighted the inadequate interventions of the state apparatus, youth clubs and community initiatives at respective localities but also indicated the perspectives of the state and community mechanism on recreation and play with special reference to children.

Expected facilities for leisure time activities by and large connected with the available facilities at respective places. It was noticed that 23.46% of children did not answer to the question on expected facilities for recreation and play (Table 4.3.4). This high and significant percentage of the category, 'not answered' needs to be understood within the dominant perspective on children and leisure time activities in the social context. From the study findings it is clear that children, their leisure time and recreational activities were not addressed by the community and the state apparatus seriously within the framework of child rights. Therefore children utilised the available facilities primarily meant for adults. This status of children as receivers without any autonomy and agency might be the reason for not attending the open ended question of 'expectation' on facilities for leisure time activities.

The overwhelming majority of children's' expectation of playground, sports materials and a combination of playground and sports materials and parks bring out the desire of children on the facilities for leisure time activities. This desire problematizes the traditional approach of the state and its apparatus on children and their right to recreation and play. The finding also indicates the enthusiasm of children to come out from the space 'home' in an evident manner.

4.4 Discussion

The study unravelled varying aspects of the quality education and which in turn challenged the general notion about the performance of Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the area of education based on the government statistics. It is true that ANI presents a far better status on the component of infrastructure in education sector while comparing with national average. However the data collection process raised number of questions on the purported quality of education in the isles. Majority children failed to fill the questionnaire without many mistakes. Interplay of three areas viz. socio-cultural and historical background, poor implementation of government policies and initiatives and finally the marginal participation of communities were found determinant for the contemporary situation.

The rural-urban divide was evident on the issue of quality education in the isles. Due to the proximity to the headquarters and higher number of establishments offered an advantage to the urban area and South Andaman District. The rural areas were very much neglected from pre-primary to higher secondary education. The deep seated inclination towards mother tongue in rural areas was also found responsible for the poor quality of education. The failure of the state interventions to address the issues through the schemes and programmes believing trickledown effect resulted in the status of children as receivers. This imbibed notion as receivers and its influence in everyday life restricted the community to address issues in their lives following a right based framework. Poor and ineffective participation of parents and PRI representatives in PTA meetings and VEC were a few indicators of such deep rooted notions in the context. Eventually this resulted in an approach wherein citizens sought benefits by doing nothing⁵⁸ and accepted things without any question. However the changing scenario was noted in the study. An overwhelming majority of children (90.29%) expressed their interest to participate in decision making process in relation to matters of education which affected them.

In this context it is important to analyse the state policies and interventions with reference to education and children. The absenteeism of teachers, declining trend of results and subsequent backwardness need to be addressed exigently. The lethargic approach of the state still remained as it was in the past. Number of provisions were not implemented in ANI⁵⁹ as yet. Consultation with the

administration revealed that all such provisions were under the process of implementation. Without the formation and effective implementation of necessary provisions the objectives would remain without much differences. The photograph of drinking water facility in a 'recognized' private school⁶⁰ speaks of the violation of RTE Act, 2009 in an evident manner. In a nut shell it is imperative to fruitfully implement the policy initiatives with maximum involvement of community.

The exploration of children excluded from the educational institutions raised number of questions not only on the interventions of the state but also the underlying perspective of parents, teachers and the children as well. The data on the one hand evidently indicated the importance of inclusive education, the term nowadays has been expanded to include all those children who were involuntarily excluded from the mainstream education for reasons that have to do with their economic, social or cultural status or life style (Armstrong, Spandagou and Ilektra, 2009). On the other hand the finding highlighted the need of interventions of the state following in-depth studies to handle the issues of excluded children.

The increasing trend of dropout rates irrespective of the stages needs to be addressed. The significant percentage of dropout rate in the primary stage raised questions on the interventions of SSA and the state in general. An increasing trend of dropouts should be examined by comparing with the quality of education assured under the Right to Education Act, 2009.

The ineffective implementation of KSY needs to be examined in detail. It is true that in comparison with national situation, the prevalence of poverty is minimal in ANI⁶¹. But the emphasis of the scheme into beneficiaries from poverty stricken families and resulted focus on SNP relegated the other objectives and vision of the scheme. It was found that poverty was not only the reason for dropouts and by unravelling the aspirations of excluded children, the study brought out the importance of schemes for vocational skills and training for them to change their life situations.

However, very recently the scheme KSY and NPAG were merged into SABLA or Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG). The new programme also takes anganwadi centres as focal point to implement the scheme. As against two to three adolescents, the new scheme plans to cover 15 to 20 children through

anganwadi centres. To accommodate the adolescents, the scheme plans to make sound infrastructure facilities in anganwadi centres and fund allocation has been increased by recognizing this. But besides this, the scheme follows the same objectives of KSY and gives very less importance on the quality dimensions of the programme. Rather the programme over emphasizes on 'home skills', 'family welfare', 'child care practices' and 'home management' and this thrust needs to be challenged as it goes with the gender stereotypes and hence may limit the lives of female children into exploitative patriarchal family structure⁶².

The argument of Krishna Kumar⁶³ (2010) is relevant here. Pointing out to the lack of collaborative initiatives of different departments on same target groups, he argues that it will be fruitless to implement the scheme with basic ideas. Rather the context demands schemes with clear-cut blue prints to change the lives of the beneficiaries. He further criticizes the Ministry of Women and Child Development to implement the programme⁶⁴ parallel to Kasturba Gandhi BalikaVidhyalayas (KGBV)⁶⁵ and without making any attempt for collaboration. It is important to note that because of inadequate enrolment, KGBV was not yet established in ANI. This clearly indicates the significance of context specific plans to change the situations rather than following the same strategies everywhere. At the same time, considering the poor coverage of adolescents and failure of KSY and the failure of the establishment of KGBV in ANI demands a new context oriented programme to address the issues of excluded children from education institutions. Above all, the findings bring out the relevance of addressing the social context and historical background of parents in the process of exclusion of children from formal education system. Hence this highlights the importance of interventions among parents to tackle the hurdles and to reach the goal of universalization of education assured in the Constitution of India and the CRC.

The documentation of leisure time, place and activities, available and expected facilities explores not only on the situations children in relation to recreation, cultural activities and play but also space, its correlation with construction of gender, perspectives of primary duty bears and interventions of the state and its apparatus within the social context. The perspective of parents on leisure time and activities as frivolous, especially considering the challenging material world and

career of children needs to be examined. The life history of Arun calls for attention to the influence of the imbibed perceptive among children. Sharing the same notions, Arun kept his leisure time for study and expected that it would be compensated after settled with a job⁶⁶.

The exploration of space and leisure time activities of children highlighted construction of gender in the socio-cultural milieu. Hence 'typical household activities' or leisure time activities like playing games at 'playgrounds' and watching television programmes in household are "choreographed by certain implicit cultural rules governing the use of space" (Niranjana, 2001, p. 48). As a result, the interaction of space and leisure time activities implicitly produces gender stereotypes and ends in violation of the rights of female children in a subtle way⁶⁷. In this context the interplay of different factors in the socio-cultural milieu, especially the influence or impact of television⁶⁸ needs to be studied as it reproduces and legitimizes the gender practices in relation to space and leisure time activities at the locale.

Besides these, it is important to understand the interventions of the state and its apparatus on the subject matter. The study evidently presented the lethargic interventions of the state in creating adequate accessible spaces (irrespective for male and female children) and facilities⁶⁹ for children for leisure time and activities. Although officially Andaman and Nicobar Administration transferred 25 subjects and devaluation of power with funds and functionaries to PRIs by an order dated 24th October 2006⁷⁰, devolution of powers of specific subjects like libraries⁷¹ and cultural activities⁷² were still under process. The devolved subject, maintenance of community assets⁷³ has been dealt with available funds and traditional outlook of welfare approach and 'development' and thus offers very little space to children and their rights. The initiatives of NGOs working with children, youth clubs and other community organizations need to be examined within this background. In addition to the limited efforts of NGOs in certain areas and annual programmes of youth clubs, there was no other initiatives in the study area for childrens' recreation or play. In short the situation demands the recognition as well as appropriate interventions of the state and community on the grey area of children's right to recreation and play. Otherwise children wouldn't get opportunities to take initiatives for recreational activities and play themselves, which is considered as the soul of article 31 of CRC.

End notes

1. Article 28 and 29 of CRC assures right to education (UNICEF, 1994, pp. 10-11).
2. Apart from the Article 45 under the directive principles, through 86th Constitutional Amendment Act in 2002 a new Article 21(A) has been inserted and which directs; 'The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the state may, by law determine' (GoI, 2007).
3. Among the policies National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 is significant.
4. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Operation Blackboard and the District Primary Education Projects (DPEP) are important in this regard.
5. This Act has been made to provide free and compulsory education to all children between 6-14 years as an obligation of the state.
6. Due to the severe criticism, this academic year onwards the timing 7.30am – 1.30p.m. has been changed to 8.30a.m.-2.30p.m. in rural areas.
7. Under the broad heading of Child development, the objective of NPAC states that "All children in the age group to have access to primary schools or their alternatives within a distance of 1km". The objective of Directorate of Education is to provide primary school within 1km of every habitation with a population of 150 and above (School Education in our Islands, 2010).
8. Under Chapter 3, section 8, RTE Act, 2009 directs appropriate government shall "ensure availability of a neighbourhood school".
9. Chapter 5, RTE Act, section 2 (f) the academic authority shall take into consideration, "the medium of instructions shall, as far as practicable, be in mother tongue" (RTE Act, 2009) and under section 7d National Charter for Children 2004, also emphasizes on mother tongue to educate a child (National charter for Children, 2004).
10. Arun considers English as a global language and necessity to

sustain the job market. See Appendices for life history of Arun.

11. See Appendices for life history of Ramu.
12. The data of Directorate of Education (2010) reveals that in 2007-08 20.45% of children dropped out, while the rate reached to 16.87% in 2008-09.
13. Currently 37 islands are inhabited out of the total 572 islets.
14. Generally children, especially girls in remote areas or islands consider Port Blair or South Andaman as another country, which is far away from their place.
15. Under the part of child participation, NPAC promotes “family, community, school and institutions to facilitate the participation of children in all matters affecting them in accordance with their age and maturity” (UNICEF and UNESCO, 2005).
16. NUEPA, Elementary Education in India, Progress towards UEE, New Delhi: 2010.
17. Provision (b) assures the removal of architectural barrier from schools, colleges or other institutions imparting vocational and professional training (Section 30, Chapter V, PD Act, 1995, p.16)
18. Under the schedule, Norms and Standards, 2 Building consisting of (ii) “barrier-free access” (RTE Act, 2009).
19. Norms and Standards under RTE, Item (6), Library “providing newspaper, magazines and books on all subjects, including story books”(7) Play material, games and sports equipments, “shall be provided to each class as required”.
20. With a view to enhancing enrollment, retention and attendance and simultaneously improving nutritional levels among children, the National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NPNSPE) was launched in 15th August 1995 (‘Mid-Day Meal Scheme Background’ available at http://india.india.gov.in/sectors/education/ mid_day_meal.php last visited on July 10th 2010).
21. As a government organ, the only newspaper started in the isles in 1920’s in response to keep people posted of the notices issued by the government.
22. Under the schedule, Norms and Standards, the Act directs where

admission of children is above one hundreds, to appoint part time instructors for work education (RTE Act, 2009).

23. Here background of children means, socio-religious and cultural background and practices of children.
24. The study has been already noted the subtle presence of caste in the islands in relation to arranged marriages, notions of people on certain communities like tribes from Ranchi area, lower caste from Andhra Pradesh, who indulge in fishing in the islands and so on.
25. Section 8(c) ensure the child belonging to weaker section and the child belonging to disadvantaged group are not discriminated against and prevented from pursuing and completing elementary education on any grounds (RTE Act, 2009).
26. Article 2 CRC assures right to protection against discrimination.
27. The section deals the prohibition of private tuition by teacher. 60 The Hindu, Thursday, 4th May 2010.
28. Article 28 and 29 of CRC assures right to education (UNICEF, 1994, pp. 10-11).
29. Article 21(A) states, 'The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the state may, by law determine'. In addition, Article 45 directive principles also direct the state to provide free and compulsory education to all children until they complete the age of 14 years.
30. Among the Policies, National Policy on Education, 1986 is significant.
31. The historical intervention assures not only free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 6 to 14 years but also the quality of education in government, aided and unaided schools as well.
32. The study defines excluded as children who are out of school and have no exposure to school during the school year in question (UNICEF and UNESCO, 2005).
33. In the part of gender discrimination, 15.45% of female children

reveal that their brothers are getting higher importance in case of education.

34. Besides the 'lifeless' data on drop-outs in general and particular Scheduled Tribe in Directorate of Education there is no other descriptive information regarding children who are out of school in the islands. It is important to note that yet the department hasn't maintained data on dropout rate in tribal areas.
35. See *Appendices* for life history of Sandhya.
36. Considering the findings of base line surveys on adolescent girls that the health, nutrition, education and social status of adolescent girls are at sub-optimal level, the scheme, KSY was introduced by GoI with following objectives; (1) to improve the nutritional and health status of girls in the age group of 11-18 years; (2) to provide the required literacy and numeric skills through the non-formal stream of education, to stimulate a desire for more social exposure and knowledge and to help them improve their decision making capabilities; (3) to train and equip the adolescent girls to improve/ upgrade homebased and vocational skills; (4) to promote awareness of health, hygiene, nutrition and family welfare, home management and child care, and to take all measure as to facilitate their marrying only after attaining the age of 18 years and if possible, even later; (5) to gain a better understanding of their environment related social issues and the impact on their lives; and (6) to encourage adolescent girls to initiate various activities to be productive and useful members of the society (Guidelines for implementation of Adolescent Girls Scheme as a component under centrally sponsored ICDS (General) Scheme. available at <http://wcd.nic.in/KSY/ksyguidelines.htm> last visited on 24th April 2010).
37. Recently GoI has merged KSY and NPAG into SABLA or Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG).
38. By indicating that there no extreme poverty in ANI, the Andaman and Nicobar Administration has fixed three adolescent girls as beneficiaries from each anganwadi centers.
39. Article 31 of CRC ensures the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age

of the child (UNICEF, 1994).¹⁹⁷ As a divergent trend the study finds that among Nicobarese 65.51% of children are getting two to three hours as leisure time as against 30.10% in the total with respect to the category.

40. Indifferently across the islands, tuition teachers/centers provide education support to children. The study finds that 84.69% of children are receiving education support either from tuition teachers/centers or parent.
41. Among the total 44.13% of children's school starts at 7.30 am and ends at 1.30p.m. The category follows 28.63% of school, which starts at 8.30a.m. and ends at 2.30p.m. While 21.63% of school's timing is 8.45a.m. to 3.00p.m.
42. As against the 84.69% of the general picture, in Car Nicobar 56.32% of children are supported either by tuition teachers/centers or by parents.
43. See *Appendices* for life history of Sandhya.
44. It is important to note here that generally female children are not spending leisure time at 'playgrounds' constructed by the state and its apparatus. Rather invariably female children count open spaces nearby home as 'playgrounds', which is suitable for playing.
45. On the contrary to the sharing of female children at playground, male children spend available 'playgrounds' constructed by state and open spaces suitable for playing in respective villages. It has been
46. observed in the fieldwork that as a space 'playgrounds' at respective localities invariably dominates by male children and becomes a venue for constructing gender in a subtle way.
47. The study finds 15.91% of children's place lacks any kind of facilities for leisure time activities.
48. With reference to playground/outside the home, available facilities include 11.24% of playground, 8.54% of sports tools and 0.74% of infrastructure for leisure time activities.
49. The expected facilities include 19.10% of a group of playground and sports tools, 18.67% of playground and 14.62% of sports tools among the total sample.

50. Out of the total, 31.08% of children indicate that TV is the only available facility for spending leisure time for them. The higher percentage of watching TV (28.38%) as a leisure time activity and its representation in other groups as leisure time activity (table 5.3.4) substantiates the influence of TV in the context.
51. A channel is completely dedicated to different types of cartoon programmes.
52. See *Appendices* for life history of Ramu.
53. See *Appendices* for life history of Arun.
54. Among the total 6.63% of children, 5.56% are females. Among the total 6.63% of children, 5.56% are females.
55. See *Appendices* for life histories of Sandhya and Arun.
56. It is noteworthy here that playgrounds are more or less dominated by male children at respective localities. This exclusion of female children from deserving spaces violates the rights of female children in a subtle way.
57. The assistance of Panchayats for sports tools is very minimal in the social context. Hence generally children arrange sports tools themselves.
58. The flow of fund by the GoI and existence as a subsidized economy contributes its own part to maintain the social fabric in ANI.
59. State Commission for the Protection of Child Rights, under the Commissions for the Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005 and State Advisory Council under RTE Act 2009 are a few cases points with regard to subject.
60. Anand Marg, Private English medium school was set up as a response to the 'valueless western education' (?) and books are designed by the organization based on the 'value oriented eastern education system'. Even though the school accepts the NCERT syllabus it follows separate texts framed by the organization. Here it is important to consider the studies of Nandini Sunder on RSS schools and pedagogical agenda (Sunder. 2004), which reproduces the Hindutva ideology. The emphasis of RSS's interventions re-writes the history on the basis of Hindutva ideology. Likewise, texts of Anandmarg, particularly history tries to do the same with

‘Hindu myths’ and historical persons. In short, besides the ‘progressive attempts’ for giving ‘quality education’ for backward sections, the subtle impact should be studied in detail.

61. As per the Census 2001, the poverty rate of Andaman and Nicobar Islands is 20.99% as against the national rate of 26.10%.
62. Implementation plan of Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG) or SABLA, 2010.
63. Krishna Kumar, ‘Empowerment by verbal chicanery’, *The Hindu*, 1st September 2010.
64. Here Krishna Kumar refers to the new scheme SABLA or RGSEAG.
65. KGBV are meant to serve rural girls belonging to families whose economy is below the poverty line and others who come from Dalit and minority communities. KGBVs run under SSA and which provide a full time residential facility and regular education from classes VI to VIII. Girls who never enrolled in a primary school or who dropped out before completing class V are eligible from enrollment in a KGBV.
66. See *Appendices* for life history of *Arun*.
67. Article 2 of CRC assures the protection against discrimination and Article 31 gives right to play and relax.
68. The study finds that watching television is the most common leisure time activity among children.
69. It is noteworthy here that except the initiatives in schools the administration doesn’t take a keen interest to improve the poor reading habit among the children, particularly in rural areas. While in case of reading habit, urban area gives a prosperous picture in number. In the year of 2009-10 the State Library, Port Blair total 6652 children have been registered with gender break-up of 3278 male and 3374 female children (According to the librarian majority members in the children’s section are from well to do families with comparatively good knowledge background (Librarian, Children’s wing, State Library at Port Blair, Interview, September 2010). The interview clearly indicates the exclusion of children from disadvantaged sections or poor knowledge backgrounds in the library. However the study finds that only

0.86% of children out of the total study population prefer to spend their leisure time at library. The interview with the librarian of zonal library at Campbell bay also underlines the grim situation exists there in accordance with 'reading habit' (Librarian, Zonal Library, Campbell Bay, Interview, April 2010).

70. No. 3-10/DP/Genl/2005/ Andaman and Nicobar Administration, Directorate of Rural Development and Local Self Governance.
71. Subject 20, at Updated information on devolution of powers to PRIs under 73rd Amendment Act (Andaman & Nicobar Islands) as on 05.10.2006.
72. Subject 21, at Updated information on devolution of powers to PRIs under 73rd Amendment Act (Andaman & Nicobar Islands) as on 05.10.2006.
73. Subject 29, at Updated information on devolution of powers to PRIs under 73rd Amendment Act (Andaman & Nicobar Islands) as on 05.10.2006, which directs maintenance of community assets like community hall, youth club, anganwadis, playgrounds, children's park, community toilets etc.

RIGHT TO PROTECTION

DESPITE INTERNATIONAL conventions on children, government interventions, and interventions from national and international organizations, children in all societies face exploitation, different forms of abuse and violence in their lives (GoI, 2006). Issues occur in varied settings such as the home, schools, institutions, work-spaces and streets, in innumerable forms and in different degrees of severity. It is acknowledged that the issues of protection not only create “immediate damage on children’s physical and psychological growth but also leave an everlasting negative impact on their personal enhancement as active citizens” (Bhandari, Jabeen & Karki 2007, p. 59). Therefore, important studies have been conducted on child labour (Burra, 1998), child marriages (Bhat, Sen, & Pradhan, 2005), child rights (Bajpai, 2003), domestic violence (Pandey, 2008) and child abuse (GoI, 2006) within legislative as well as social contexts in India.

This chapter is an attempt to address the knowledge gap in protection issues of children in the isles. It is divided into four sections, which address the question of children’s right to protection. The first section explores varying protection issues such as usage of intoxicants by the parents, domestic violence, abuse and involvement in work; the second section documents the habit of substance use of children in the isles. The third section of the chapter reveals the juvenile justice system in the context of children in conflict with law in the UT. The final section – discussion - analyses and summarises the study findings of the chapter.

5.1 Issues of protection¹

Besides the indications on children as part of the descriptions under the umbrella of general topics², there is no specific writing available dealing with protection of issues of children in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The same lacunae directed the study to explore the topic within the framework of right to protection of CRC.

5.1.1 Usage of intoxicants and children

Considering that the household is one of the spaces wherein children invariably spend their time, the usage of intoxicants needs to be examined in detail to capture the situations of children within their families. The study found that out of the total sample 76.97% of children's family members were using any kind of intoxicants in their lives. The alarming percentage of intoxicant users in the geographical area evidently corroborates the earlier observations of the reports in *The Light of Andamans*, a weekly magazine in Port Blair on addiction in the isles. In case of location, 79.16% of rural users stood against the 66.18% of urban users in the study.

This finding of low percentage of intoxicant users in the urban area questions the general correlation between 'higher percentage of the usage and easy availability in urban contexts' (Tsering, Pal and Dasgupta, 2010). It is noteworthy that there is no substantial difference in the trend of consumption of alcohol in rural and urban area³. However, the total percentage of the usage of intoxicants in rural area is high. This indicates the usage of different kinds of intoxicants other than alcohol in the locality. Unfortunately, the study could not delve deeply into the topic which restricts exploring reasons behind the trend. However, the changing the attitude towards the kinds of intoxicants like tobacco and paan might be a reason for the low percentage on the usage in urban area.

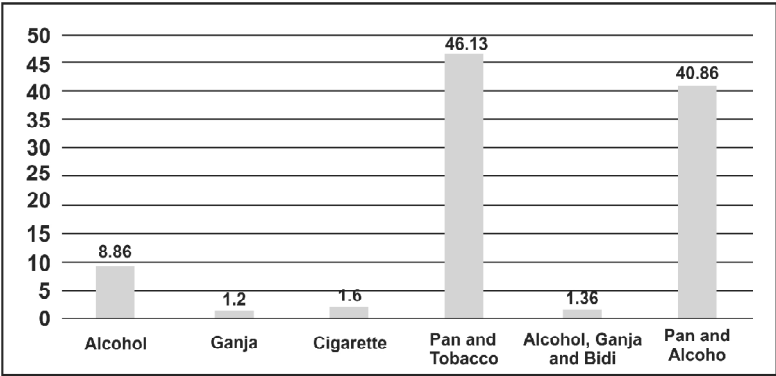
The break-up of intoxicant users offers a salient dimension to the study. The table (5.1.1) shows that 81.17% of children's parents were using any kind of intoxicants out of the total users. The overwhelming majority followed a combination of parents and siblings (7.2%), a group of parents and grandparents (4.55%) and siblings (3.19%) out of the total users. Apart from the very negligible percentage of children's grandmothers, mothers and sisters⁴ or female members out of the total users, generally grandfathers, fathers and brothers or male members were consuming different kinds of intoxicants.

Table 5.1.1 Intoxicant users

Intoxicant users	Percentage
Parents	81.17
Grand Parents	1.92
Siblings	3.19
Parents and Grand Parents	4.55
Parents and Siblings	7.02
Uncle	2.15
Total	100.00

An analysis of the kind of intoxicants used by the family members of children is relevant here. The illustration (Illustration 5.1.1) presents that a majority intoxicant users came under the categories of a combination of paan and alcohol (40.86%), alcohol (8.86%) and a group of alcohol, ganja and bidi⁵ (1.36%). It is clear that more than half of the children's male family members were dependent upon alcohol. The study findings hence shed light on the linkage between 'masculinity'⁶ and alcoholism, which already has been found by scholars in different sociocultural contexts (Bhasin, 2004 and Gilmore in Venkateswar, 2005). Meanwhile the presence of Nicobari female family members in the data questions the construction of masculinity in general and invites further studies focusing on the tribal community.

Illustration 5.1.1 Kind of intoxicants



The usage of paan and tobacco (46.13%) among the family members should be located within the socio-cultural context (Illustration 6.1.1). The focus group discussions with parents and PRI members indicated the prevalence of the substances in the geographical area. A significant section of parents and even PRI members chewed paan or tobacco during focus group discussions. A few male participants admitted the consumption of alcohol by justifying it as a practice which helped to ventilate their everyday pressures.

5.1.2 Conflict in home and its implications

Although the study did not explore domestic violence⁷ in detail, conflicts in the home were studied. It was found that out of the total sample, 98.77% of childrens' homes were a venue of conflict between parents, grandparents and children. The frequencies; very often (48.16%) or sometimes (50.61%) indicate the probabilities of impact of conflicts on children who witnessed the inflicting abuses in home.

By underlining family violence and its diverse effect on children's emotional and social development (Pandey, 2008), the study found that 35.28% of children's study and everyday life were affected by alcoholism of family members or conflicts in home. As observed by Stanley & Vinitha (2010) the experience might have also resulted in poor self-esteem and developmental problems, such as the ability to adjust, among the children of alcoholics. However further studies should be conducted to explore the implications of domestic violence.

To some extent, the quantitative data substantiated the life history of Sandhya⁸ and sharing of parents and PRI members. As primary duty bearers, the response of parents and PRI members is relevant. A sizeable number of parents shared that although they tried to avoid arguments and outbursts of anger in front of children, due to difficulties in everyday life and pressure, they sometimes could not do it. Meanwhile, many parents were aware of the impact of alcoholism and conflicts on children, yet failed to address it. The same lack of recognition led PRI members to exclude children in the issues and 'settlements' of domestic violence at Panchayat level. Despite the 'routine awareness campaigns' on special days, the issue of alcoholism and its implications were not discussed by PRI members in their agendas.

5.1.3 Gender discrimination

Patriarchal values are influential in shaping gender⁹ relations in respective socio-cultural contexts. The values are shared from one generation to another and boys and girls are expected to behave or interact accordingly through different socialization process (Amtzis, 2006). The hegemonic 'masculine' and 'feminine' concepts further draw the boundaries between the conforming and non-conforming practices in a social context. This not only effects females but different sections of males also experience forms of discrimination in their lives. Against this background, the study attempted to capture the aspect of gender discrimination¹⁰ within the context of female children.

The study found that out of the total females who had siblings (65.22%), 21.95% of them revealed that their brother(s) were prioritised in terms of food, clothing and love from their parents in comparison with them, while 15.45% of them felt that their brother(s) received greater support in continuing education. The findings upheld the general understanding and existing literature on the deprived position of females. But lack of in-depth inquiries restricted an explanation of the difference in the percentage of the forms of discrimination and

subject matter in detail. However, the exploration of place for leisure time¹¹, recreational activities¹², sharing of parents in focus group discussions¹³ and life histories of Sandhya and Arun¹⁴ offers subtle dimensions of discriminations faced by female children in their lives.

Aside from the discrimination faced by female children within the dominant gender relations, life history of Ramu¹⁵ provides a salient feature to the study. The life history unravels subtle influences of dominant notions of masculinity and its implications in everyday life. The decision of Ramu to learn traditional occupation, i.e. fishing, his father's response on it; "as a male child it is better to be trained as a fisherman in childhood instead of trying to learn it in adulthood" and disturbances due to sexual innuendos of adults at work place are a few cases in point which invite attention on hegemonic and powerless masculinities in the context. The decision of Ramu and his father's response is closely linked with the internalized and expected behaviour of male children related to work within the community. This indicates the necessity of studies to explore the relations between work and masculinity¹⁶ (Neve in Chopra, Osella and Osella, 2003). Tensions experienced by Ramu due to sexual innuendos lay on his difficulty to accommodate at male spaces with expected masculine behaviour and interaction pattern within the context of sexuality in the socio-cultural milieu. The finding calls for in-depth studies on the hitherto dark area of sexuality in general as well as related to masculinity. The indulgence of Ramu in work and his emotional difficulties due to the double meaning comments at work place underline the subtle discriminations because of the dominant notions of masculinity and powerlessness of certain masculinities in the socio-cultural context. Hence the finding evinces that "there is no monolithic masculinity that benefits all men equally" (Amtzis, 2006, p. 10).

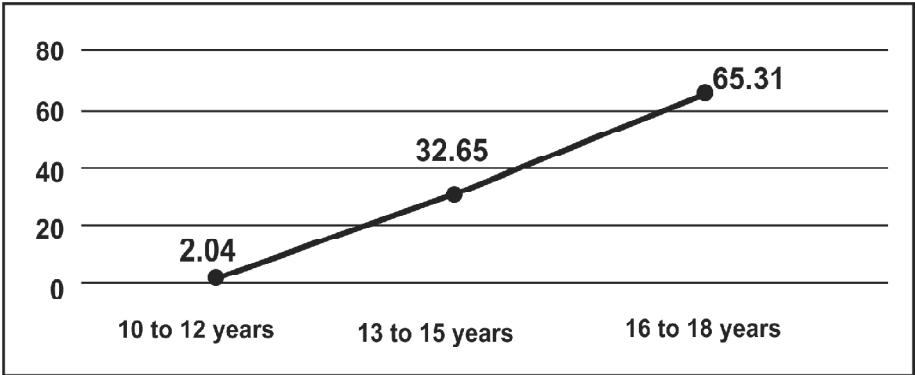
5.1.4 Children and work

In accordance with the definition of work¹⁷ and age of children¹⁸, it is difficult to obtain an accurate data on working children in India. Generally, children who work as part of family labour in all contexts of agriculture, industry, home-based work, etc. are known as working children. Rather now migrant children at construction sites, sugar factories, brick-kilns, mines and plantations are also considered as working children (Burra, 1995). However, considering the discrepancies, the study defines working child as a child who is under the age of eighteen years and who is in remunerative work may be

paid or unpaid within or outside the family either along with schooling or not.

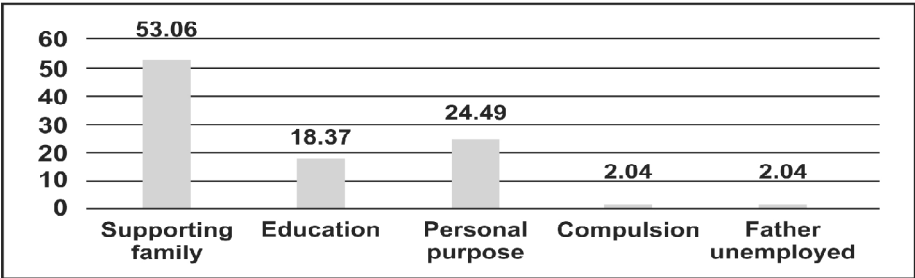
Following the operational definition, the study found 3.01 percent working children out of the total sample. Though the percentage is not very high, the study offers clues to understand the prevalence of working children in the geographical area.

Illustration 5.1.2 Age and working children



An increasing trend of working children based on their age was further noticed (Illustration 5.1.2). From the age group of 10 to 12 years 2.04 percent of children indulged any kind of work, while in the age category of 13 to 15 years the percentage increased to 32.65% and reached to 65.31% in the age group of 16 to 18 years. Reason for this trend might be the economic value of children related to age, which has already been discussed by scholars in different contexts (Burra, 1995). Reason for indulging in work is a matter of concern. From the below illustration (5.1.3) it is apparent that majority of children indulged in work for supporting their family. The category followed 24.49% and 18.37% of children, who worked to meet their personal expenses and education respectively.

Illustration 5.1.3 Reasons for indulging in work



The gender break-up of working children brings dimensions on relation of work and masculinity within the socio-cultural context. The study found that 81.63% of male working children against 18.73% of female children out of the total workers. The overwhelming majority of males in the working population and the majority's reason for indulging in work highlight the notions of masculinity, role of males as the breadwinner/supporting family or need to 'stand on his own two feet' within the context. Out of the total children who spend their earning to support the family (53.06%), 48.98% are male children. The life history of Ramu¹⁹ underlines the fact. His decision to learn fishing and parent's response was influenced by the dominant notion of masculinity in the community.

The study found that 40.82% of working children indulged in fishing. The majority followed 28.57% of household industry worker, 26.53% of unskilled labourer and 4.08 percent of domestic workers out of the total working children. The category of children who indulged in household chores during their leisure time should be explained. As noted earlier, the 'economic value' of household duties is not accounted for and recognized in definitions. The study observed that out of the total children who helped their mother in household chores (12.1%), 9.7 percent were female children. This significant percentage should also be counted as work as argued by numbers of studies in different contexts (Burra, 1995).

It is noteworthy that an overwhelming majority of working children were from a rural area (95.92%). The nature of the work of children therefore needs to be examined within the rural economy and socio-cultural context. For a better clarity, an analysis of linguistic groups is significant as a few of them traditionally indulged in particular occupations. It was observed that children from Telugu community invariably indulged in fishing. Taking cues from the life history of Ramu, a child from fishing community and his justifications for indulging in work²⁰, significant percentage of children's unpaid work in the finding (30.61%), working hours and days of work²¹ (Refer table 5.1.2), it can be argued that poverty is not only the root cause of children indulging in fishing. Rather the subtle play of the notion on masculinity within the community might be the reason for the decision of children from the community to indulge in work.

The significant percentage of working children from the Nicobari community (28.57%) also brings out significant dimensions of the

socio-cultural context in relation to work. It was noted that all children from the tribal community indulged in household industries as part of the labour of the family. The tribal economy is based on household industries such as coconut plantations, copra processing and manufacturing and raising poultry or other domesticated birds for production of eggs, meat etc. under the Tuhets. Therefore, as part of family labour, children traditionally work with the family and work is viewed as part of childhood within the tribal economy. The exploration of financial condition of the families of working children can corroborate the argument that poverty is not only the root cause for children indulging in work within the tribal community. The study found that only 7.12 percent of children faced financial difficulty out of the total working children from the Nicobari community. Though the exploration cannot be generalized, it highlights a few dimensions of working children within the rural and tribal economy with reference to working children.

Table 5.1.2 Working hours and days

Hours \ Days	1-2 days	3-4 days	1 week	2 weeks	30 days	Total
Below 1 hour	02.04	12.24	00.00	00.00	00.00	14.28
1 to 2 hours	02.04	38.78	00.00	02.04	02.04	44.90
3 to 4 hours	02.04	02.04	06.12	00.00	00.00	10.20
More than 4 hours	00.00	14.29	00.00	16.33	00.00	30.62
Total	06.12	67.35	06.12	18.37	02.04	100.00

The table (5.1.2) shows that an overwhelming majority of children, i.e. 67.35%, worked 3 to 4 days per month. Out of the total children who worked three to four days per month, 38.78% of children worked one to two hours per working day. In case of working hours, 44.90% of children worked one to two hours per working day. It is evident that even though children were working, it did not consume the majority of their time. The study also found that the majority children, 69.39%, earned money as remuneration, while 30.61% of children were not paid for their work, but in other words, they were supporting their family. Considering the minimum working days and hours, generally children were paid 50 rupees to 1,500 rupees per month in accordance with working days. Children worked with their parent or as part of family labour, and received pocket money as remuneration.

The spending of working children further clarifies the aforementioned point. It was found that out of the total working children, 53.06% were supporting their family either with as part of

family labour or indulging in any kind of occupation. The category followed 40.82% of children, who spent their money for educational purposes. The negligible percentage, 6.12 percent of children used their amount to meet their personal purposes. It was further noticed that female children spent their earnings on educational purposes (14.29%) including purchasing notebooks, pens and pencils etc. Conversely, majority male children (48.98%) supported their family. This finding indicates the notion of male role as the breadwinner of family.

Although the work did not consume a significant share of children's time, they revealed the implications of work in their lives. Out of the total working children who attended school²², more than 70% revealed that work affected their study. Likewise, it was observed that more than 70% of working children's relationships with family and friends affected due to work.

5.1.5 Incidents of bad touch and children

As a worldwide phenomenon, child sexual abuse and exploitation is not new. Historically, sexual interactions involving children have occurred, and some communities have believed it to be positive for children²³. Only relatively recently, child sexual abuse has been recognized as a social problem, but it is apparent that the definition of child sexual abuse depends on the historical period in question, the cultural context and the values and orientation of specific groups (Cindy & Robin, 2007). As a result, there is no consensus on the definition on child sexual abuse. In addition, due to the hidden and an extent invisible nature of child sexual abuse restrict to map the magnitude of the problem into focus. A review of epidemiological surveys from 21 high and middle income countries revealed that at least 7 percent of females (ranging up to 36%) and 3 percent of males (ranging up to 29%) reported sexual victimization during childhood (GoI, 2007).

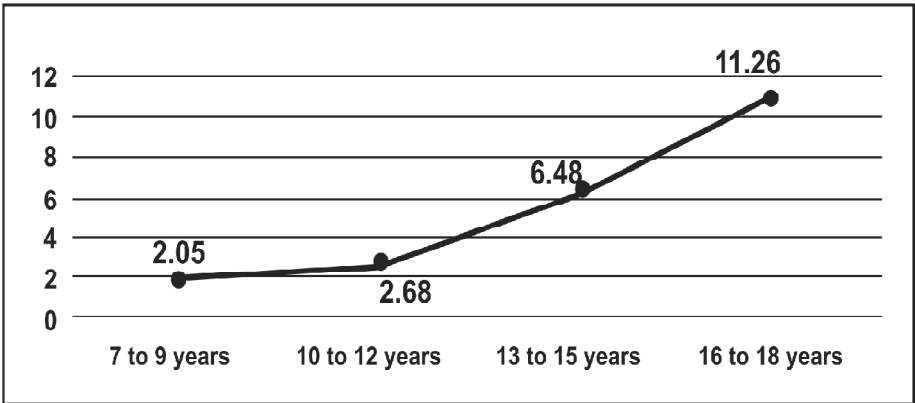
Sexuality especially child sexuality is a taboo subject in India and the community and family hardly discuss it. Consequently, children fail to recognize acts of sexual abuse, and this gives spaces to perpetrators to escape from punishments. Even when the children and family identify the abuse, the episodes are buried without seeking medical and legal help due to shame. Moreover, studies on child sexual abuse covering the cross section of areas in India are few and far between. The study conducted by GoI (2007) is important among the available literature. It noticed that 42% of children faced at least one form of sexual abuse or other in their lives. Taking into account

the sensational nature of the theme and broader framework of study, the subject of sexual abuse²⁴ was studied in detail. By ignoring varying and multiple forms of sexual abuse, the study attempted to ask questions on 'bad touch' and maltreatment with children.

The study noticed that 9.15 percent of children have experienced 'bad touch' by adults out of the total sample. It is noteworthy that during the field work almost all respondents shared that this was their first opportunity to complete a questionnaire as part of a study, which dealt with different dimensions of their lives. It was observed during the field work that due to the sensational nature of the question within a context of a taboo subject, an overwhelming majority expressed reluctance to answer the question. This might be a reason for the low percentage the incidence of 'bad touch' in life.

The gender break-up of children who faced incidences of 'bad touch' brings out the importance of addressing male children along with female children in the discussion of sexual abuse. The study found that 12.56% of female children experienced 'bad touch' as against to 5.03 percent of male children out of the total. The significant percentage of male children out of the total underlines the study of GoI²⁵ and Bhaskaran (2005) on subjection of male children to sexual abuse, which is against the common notion that female children are at risk. The focus group discussions with female children revealed the incidents of 'bad touch' in public places. But all of them kept silence after the incident due to fear of defame own name and the honour of family in general. This sharing highlights the correlation of sexuality and gender in the context.

Illustration 5.1.4 Incidence of bad touch and age



The illustration (5.1.4) shows that in the age group of seven to nine years 2.50 percent of children experienced 'bad touch'. The category followed 10 to 12 years with 2.68 percent, 13 to 15 years with 6.48 percent and reached 16 to 18 years with 11.26% out of the total. The illustration evidently depicts a steady increasing trend in the incidents of 'bad touch' align with age.

Closely related to the question on 'bad touch', incidence of maltreatment too invites attention on child sexual abuse in the context. The study result indicated that out of the total sample, 4.85 percent of children were treated in a manner in which children should not be treated. The questionnaire kept an open-ended question on maltreatment, but children seemed reluctant to write about it in detail. During the field work, it was observed that significant number of children dropped the question or did not address the question due to the reluctance to write descriptively. Nevertheless, a section of children mentioned maltreatment by teachers, neighbours, acquaintances and strangers, yet the majority of children did not disclose the issue to anyone. Those who shared the matter with their mothers were told to ignore it to keep the honour of the family. The response of children should be located with the dominant perspective of sexuality in the social context. In short, the study finding seeks in-depth enquiries not only on child sexual abuse and its implications but sexuality in general as well.

5.1.6 Physical and emotional abuse

In most societies, children were considered as inadequate versions of their parents and dependent. Influenced by the dominant perspective, the primary duty bearers, especially parents, believe that they have a right to do what they see fit. Imbibing the same point of view, parents, teachers, care givers, employers and even the state mechanisms, use punishment to discipline children, though there is little scientific evidence available to support this perspective. Recognizing this, studies inquired into this subject matter and found results of forms of abuses used by parents, teachers, policemen and employers and its physical and psychological implications on children (Tulir, 2006; GoI, 2007).

The study included questions on physical and emotional abuse by drawing insights from the available literature. The study explored the incidence of physical and emotional abuse, abusers, its frequency and implications in the lives of children. The study found that 71.81% of children experienced one or other forms of physical or emotional²⁶

abuse out of the total sample and thus explored the prevalence of the physical and emotional abuse in the isles. The result on the other hand, indicates the traditional point of view of duty bearers on disciplining children. The age break-up of children further revealed a declining trend from early childhood to late adolescent period in accordance with emotional and physical abuse. The study noticed that at the age group of seven to nine years, 86.88% of children faced forms of physical and emotional abuse out of the total children in the age group. The trend declined 78.57% at the age group of 10 to 12 years, 72.45% at the age group of 13 to 15 years and reached to 62.14% at the age group of 16 to 18 years out of the total.

The changing perspective of parents while increasing the age of children might be the reason for this declining trend. Focus group discussions with parents explored a few indications which could explain this. A section of parents revealed that by considering the age of children and their understanding capability, they were giving lesser punishments to elder children. On the contrary, according to the parents, it was important to guide younger children to direct them to a 'right' path. They added that once children learnt 'good behaviour and interaction pattern', then the methods could be changed. In the meantime, a few parents mentioned that they consider elder children as adults or in a transition to adulthood; therefore, they believed that advice would be enough for them.

Table 5.1.3 Forms of physical and emotional abuse

Physical abuse			Emotional abuse		
Forms	Yes	No	Forms	Yes	No
Beating	80.07	19.93	Scolding / Shouting	66.12	33.88
Caning / Pinching	22.75	77.25	Ignoring	9.50	90.50
Twisting ears	36.36	63.64	Comparing	42.94	57.06
Kicking / Shaking	7.19	92.81	Blackmailing	30.97	96.03

An analysis of different forms of abuse, its frequency, and the break-up of persons abusing children could offer a better understanding about the physical and emotional abuse experienced by children in the isles. The table (5.1.3) presents that 80.07% of children were beaten by adults out of the total sample. Other forms of physical abuse were noticed as 36.36% of twisting ears and 22.75% of caning or pinching. Children were also emotionally abused by adults. Out of the total, 66.12% of children were scolded or adults shouted at them. In the meantime, 42.94% of children reported that adults compared them

with other students or siblings. The category followed 30.97% of children who were blackmailed²⁷ by either parents or teachers. Not only the quantitative result but focus group discussions with parents, PRI members and children also acceded to the physical and emotional abuse in the context.

Almost all parents and PRI members in the focus group discussions referred the importance of punishments for disciplining and directing children to a 'right path'. According to them recognising the age of children, it was essential to guide or sensitize them about what is 'right' or 'wrong'. Majority parents and PRI members suggested that severe forms²⁸ of physical punishments were not appropriate for disciplining children, but accepted minor forms. A few parents recommended emotional forms for disciplining children. One mother in the focus group discussion shared that she denied food as a punishment when her daughter did not listen to her. A few PRI members and parents emphasized the need of punishments in school. By deliberating about childhood experiences, the group pointed out that teachers and students were behaving like friends in schools now, while this was not a situation at that point in time. The group further added that this fearlessness of children towards teachers was the root cause of the poor quality of education in the isles.

Focus group discussions with parents from the Nicobari tribal community also emphasized the importance of punishments by indicating the tendency of indiscipline among children²⁹. Invariably the participants linked the importance of punishments to discipline children, with an aspiration for social mobility. Interestingly focus group discussions with children also explored the same perspective on punishments. Almost all the participants acceded to the right of parents and teachers- in other words 'adults'- to give punishments. They agreed on verbal forms of punishments rather than physical modes. The focus group discussions indicated the dominant perspective on discipline and punishments and its reproduction through children in the context. The study further found that 69.38% of children occasionally experienced physical and emotional abuse out of the total. The category followed 27.63% of children, who faced very rarely abuses. This finding clearly underlines the prevalence of physical and emotional abuse in the context.

Table 5.1.4 Frequency of abuse and conflicts in home

Conflict in home	Frequency of abuse	Always	Occasionally	Very rarely	Total
Very often		2.48	40.88	13.51	56.87
Sometimes		0.51	28.40	14.03	42.94
Never		0.00	0.09	0.09	0.18
Total		2.99	69.38	27.63	100.00

Scholars acknowledge a correlation between conflict in the home and frequency of abuse in different contexts (Bhandari, Jabeen & Karki 2007). The table (5.1.4) clearly depicts that more than 50% of children who faced different forms of physical and emotional abuse were from homes where conflict regularly occurs. The category followed above reveals 40% of children were from homes where conflict occasionally occurs. The finding thus support the correlation between conflict in home- in other words domestic violence – and high prevalence of physical and emotional abuse in the social context.

Addressing the question of physical abuse, 9.67 percent of children acknowledged that caning or beating with wooden stick resulted in injury and 34.51% of children among the victims were taken for treatment after the incident. The finding corroborates the perspective on punishments and discipline in the context, but it is important to note here that this finding refutes the sharing of parents that severe mode of punishments. Though the percentage is not very high, it underlines how punishments are seen as normal methods in disciplining children in the social context. The break-up of children injured because of beating or caning revealed the correlation between intoxicant uses in the home and incidence of injury due to physical abuse. It was noticed that 88.50% of children injured due to beating or caning were from homes where family members used any kind of intoxicants. The overwhelming majority of children in the total underlines the relationship between intoxicant usage in homes and its implications. The also observed that an overwhelming majority of injured children (83.19%) were from homes where conflicts occur very often. The category followed 15.93% of children from homes where conflicts happened sometimes and thus substantiated the earlier finding that conflicts in home negatively impacts children and put them at risk of abuse (GoI 2007).

A break-up of the persons abusing children can help to cross-check the perspective of parents and PRI members on corporal punishments in forms of physical and emotional abuse. The perspective of parents,

PRI members and children on the ‘right’ of adults to give punishments to children underscored the break-up of persons abusing children (Table 5.1.5). More than 70% of parents of children and the category of above 60% of teachers out of the total clearly indicate the involvement of relevant duty bearers in the total. The significant percentage of parents out of the total substantiates the notion of the ‘right’ of parents which was often shared in the focus group discussions. The higher percentage of teachers in the break-up, on the one hand refutes the notion of parents, that now teachers are not punishing children, and yet explores the prevalence of corporal punishments³⁰ in the context. Focus group discussions with children corroborated the quantitative picture. The majority of children revealed instances of verbal³¹ and physical modes of punishments in school. The presence of teachers in the total persons and their punishments which resulted in injuries (71.68% of children reported it) require interventions of the state, as well as society, to address corporal punishments in school. A Significant percentage of elder siblings out of the total highlights the relationship between age and unequal power relationships within the lives of children. It is apparent from the table that all the persons in the total were in a position of power which invariably kept children in a lower status and dependent.

Table 5.1.5 Persons abusing children

Persons abusing children	Percentage
Parents	30.80
Teachers	24.04
Parents and Teachers	36.78
Employers	0.86
Elder siblings	3.34
Parents and Elder siblings	4.19
Total	100.00

5.1.7 Disclosure of abuse and implications

The survey found that 51.58% of children did not share the incidents of punishments with anyone. The rest, 48.42% of children, shared the incidents of punishments with their trusted ones. Even though the study could not trace the reasons behind it, the exploration of the break-up of persons with children showed the incidents of punishments could provide some useful insights. The study noticed that the majority of children, 57.24%, shared the incidence of punishments with friends,

while 16.78% of children communicated such episodes with their mothers. These findings shed light not only as to the interaction pattern of children, but also their relationship with members in the family and community as well. In this context, outcomes of focus group discussions with children and parents are significant.

An overwhelming majority of children in focus group discussions supported the quantitative results. According to them, they were scared to share such incidences which occurred in school with their parents. However, the close relationships with friends gave impetus to children to share whatever happened in their lives. This sharing highlights the study findings of Dasgupta (2003) on intimate circles of friendship and the nature of egalitarianism, which encourages children to share everything each other. The exploration, to some extent, supported the focus group discussions with parents. Parents revealed that they communicate with children basically on two topics, i.e. food and study. According to the section of participants, in case of study children very rarely disclose punishments or negative incidents which happened to them in school.

Addressing implications of forms of abuse, the study revealed that 69.29% of children felt hurt after the incidence of punishments. The response of the children revealed the psychological implications of punishments on children. It is noteworthy here that the majority of children did not share the punishments with anyone. At the same time, parents in the focus group discussions denied any possibilities of emotional issues among children due to the punishments. They shielded the question by indicating 'positive influence' of punishments in the character-building of children. The study further noted that feelings of hurt increase with age. In the age category of seven to nine years, 64.03% of children revealed that they felt hurt due to the incidence of punishments. The feeling of hurt increased steadily in accordance with age groups and reaches to 72.73% for the age category of 16 to 18 years. It is important to note here that the incidence of punishments decline from seven to nine years age group to 16 to 18 year category³². Passing from one developmental stage to another with enhancing consciousness might be a reason for this increasing trend.

Alongside feelings of hurt, the study explored the impact of punishments on study, relationships with family members, teachers, peers and the everyday life of children. Around half of the children revealed that either very much (5.56 percent) or to some extent

(43.97%) the incidents of punishments negatively impacted their lives, while 50.47% of children said that everyday life was not impacted due to the episodes. These quantitative results need to be located within the sharing of focus group discussions with children. Majority children in the focus discussions agreed that punishments were essential for moulding their character and adults should be allowed to do so. The imbibed perspective on punishments from the social context might be a reason for the response on punishments, which has no impact in their everyday life. It is important to note here that besides the sharing of an overwhelming majority of children on punishments as a way to mould their character in focus group discussions, the exploration of a section of children's feeling of hurt and negative impact of incidence of punishments indicates psychological implications of physical and emotional abuse on children.

5.2 Habit of substance use³³

Substance use, consumption of any kinds of stimulating substance is considered not only harmful to the physical and psychological growth of the user, but also creates social implications as well. As an issue of public health, substance use in younger generations has increased across the world. The common substances among children and adolescents in India are tobacco and alcohol. It was estimated that by the time most boys reach the ninth grade, about 50% of them have tried at least one of those substances in India (Ramachandran, 1991). However, most studies have indicated that alcohol is the common form of substance used in India. The study of Tsering & Dasupta (2010) has revealed 12.5% prevalence of substance use among high school students in India. Besides the statistics and studies in different parts of the country, there is no research addressing the issue in Andaman and Nicobar Islands³⁴. Considering the socio-cultural context³⁵ and the available literature on adolescents and substance use, it is important to explore the situation with reference to children in the isles.

Out of the total children interviewed, 6.82 percent of children were found dependent on substances. The gender break-up further explored 76.58% of male child substance users as against the 23.42% of female children. Opportunities as male children to stay outside the household with friends³⁶ and so-called notions about masculinity³⁷ could be the reasons of the higher percentage of male children in the percentage. On the other hand, due to the so-called notion of 'femininity' within the socio-cultural context, minimized the percentage of female

children in the total users. During the field work, most female children have defended themselves by exclaiming “*main ladki haina !*” (I am girl !) against the question of consumption of alcohol and cigarette or *bidi*³⁸. Meanwhile female children admitted the use of pan and tobacco³⁹. In contrast, Nicobari female children gave a salient feature to the study. The female representation of consuming alcohol only came from Nicobarese among the total. Different ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ notions related to substance use in the tribal community may be the reason for this.

The study found that 57.66% of occasional substance-using children followed by 28.83% of ‘always’ and 13.51% of ‘very rarely’ users in the total. Kinds of substance used by the children were alcohol, pan, tobacco, cigarette and a group of alcohol, pan and cigarette (Refer table 5.2.1). The higher percentage of occasional users’ should be considered seriously. Probabilities of being dependant on substances and falling into the group of ‘always’ is very high for occasionally users. The significant percentage of children ‘always’ using substances requires targeted interventions, especially in terms of prevention and treatment⁴⁰.

Table 5.2.1 Kinds of substance

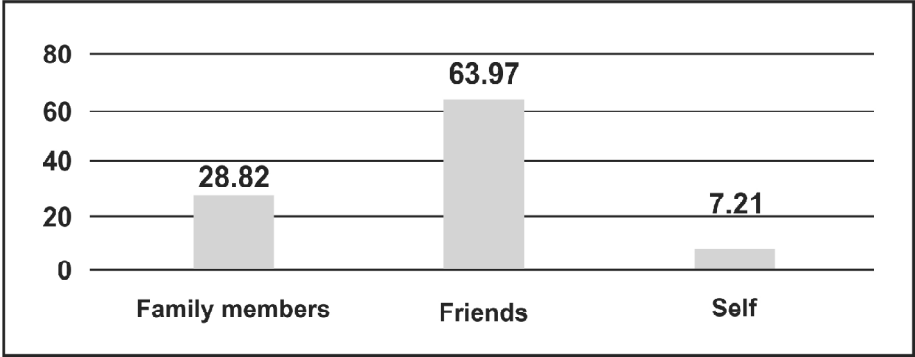
Kinds of substance	Percentage
Alcohol	3.6
Paan	71.17
Tobacco	14.41
Cigarette	2.7
Alcohol, pan & cigarette	8.11
Total	100.00

The table (5.2.1) offers a picture on the kinds of substance used by children. Out of the total users, 71.17% of children were using pan. The majority followed 14.41% of tobacco, 8.11 percent of a category of alcohol, pan and cigarette and 3.60 percent of alcohol users. An overwhelming majority of female children were using pan and tobacco as stimulants. However, the finding corroborates earlier study results in cases of the kinds of substance, but with a few altered dimensions. The study projects an alarming rate of pan and tobacco users out of total users. As a practice rooted in the socio-cultural milieu indifferent of rural and urban or class and community, it creates a situation of ‘acceptance’ for the use of pan and tobacco in the isles. On numerous occasions during the field work, the investigators were invited by the adults in the households to consume pan or tobacco as

part of ‘hospitality’. Pan and tobacco were chewed by an overwhelming majority of parents and even PRI members in the focus group discussions. Above all the study finding on the substance use of family members also underlines this common practice in the isles⁴¹.

The study revealed that majority (52.25%) of substance users were from the age group of 16-18 years. The category followed 36.04% from 13-15 years. Although the percentage was low, the group of seven to nine years needs special attention considering their age. It is evident that the habit of substance use was increasingly aligned with transition of children from one developmental stage to another.

Illustration 5.2.1 Influence for initiation



From the illustration (5.2.1) it is clear that 63.97% of children were persuaded by friends to start using substances. The category followed 28.82% of family members and within the category of family members, grandparents constituted 20.72% of the percentage. At the same time, 7.21 percent of children were not prompted by anyone and thus curiosity or experimenting mentality swayed them. The finding substantiated the observation of Tsering and Dasgupta (2010) among adolescents in West Bengal⁴². And this highlights the role played by friends to initiate the practice. The cultural ‘acceptance’ of certain substances within the households prompts children to initiate the practice within family without any question. However, a few parents and PRI members admitted their helplessness to give up the habit in the focus group discussions. Interestingly one of the Panchayat presidents, who was an addict of pan, shared that whenever he visited school for monitoring, he avoided the habit for a while and in the household, he never asked his children to bring ‘*panavatti*’ [small box/ container for storing pan].

5.3 Implementation Status of Juvenile Justice Act in Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Implementation status of Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2006 in Andaman and Nicobar islands remained behind in the provisions suggested in the Act. According to the instructions given by the Supreme Court of India in 2010, a draft Notification was issued by the Lieutenant Governor which included instructions and guidelines to implement all the provisions of JJ Act⁴³. The notification encompassed implementation procedure of every aspect of the act in detail, with reference to the situation in ANI. However actual field implementation remained far from the objectives mentioned in the document.

ANI has one Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) and one Child Welfare Committee (CWC) established in 2007 situated in Port Blair and serving South Andaman district only and that too only the areas surrounding Port Blair city. A Home for Juveniles (Boys, Girls) has been established under Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2000. Inmates of these homes are being provided with all basic amenities, care, protection and vocational training for their suitable rehabilitation. Special Observation Home for children in conflict with the law with 10 juveniles at Nayagaon and a Children Home with 21 boys functioning at Ferrargunj⁴⁴ for the children in need of care and protection under Juvenile Justice Act 2000 were functional under the act in ANI. There were a few juveniles charged with murder⁴⁵ and shifted to the observation home since May 2008. Along with other cases ANI administration handled several cases where the majority of children were of foreign nationality. Myanmarese poachers apprehended by Coast Guard or Navy⁴⁶. They were transferred to an observation home until they were sent back through the proper channel. Special Juvenile Police Units (SJPU) were officially formed in all the police stations in all three districts and one officer of SI rank was deployed to look after the cases.

Formation of JJB and CWC in the other two districts, namely North and Middle Andaman and Nicobar was not formed until the date of data collection. It was revealed through discussions with CWC members from NGOs that although there were regular cases coming up and forwarded to the CWC, meetings were extremely irregular and very few of those meetings were actually attended in full strength. One reason for the above situation may be that ANI as of today, does

not have an alarming rate of crimes committed by children in comparison to many places in India. The crime rate is much lower than the rest of India, as per the Administration data (Directorate of Economics and Statistics, ANI, 2009). Only one murder case was reported involving juveniles prior to data collection. This might have led the functionaries to be complacent regarding their duties. Another possible reason could be that there is an absence of proper monitoring or reporting system in place for the functioning of SJPU and therefore the designated job remains mainly on paper. During the field work it was observed that in some cases the police station was not able to clearly state if SJPU was formed and if yes, who was the designated officer.

As well as the aforementioned issues, another major drawback in the whole implementation system was lack of awareness on JJ Act among the community in general. This is one area where ANI administration and civil societies have much to do⁴⁷. Collaborated community-based awareness generation programmes can be conducted to make people aware of this act and its provisions. Initiatives can be taken up by the Social Welfare Department and Police Department to reach out to the people and inform them about the roles, responsibility, and authorities of JJB and CWC on issues of children in conflict with law and children in need of care and protection respectively. SJPU must be given due importance and its presence should be publicized within the area served by each police station. It is important that these activities should be done with special focus on the rural areas where the majority population resides.

5.4 Discussion

The exploration revealed various protection issues of children in the isles thus bringing attention to the importance of interventions to address these issues. The usage of intoxicants by family members of children needs to be addressed exigently. It is noteworthy that among the total children who faced financial difficulties, 6.65% of respondents pointed out the habit of alcohol consumption by family members as the reason for their situation. Rather, the study proved the vulnerable condition of children and its relation to the usage of intoxicant users in home. Besides the 'rallies in special days⁴⁸', the context demands the involvement of the PRIs and civil society movements with novel strategies to curb the menace of alcoholism. Issue of conflicts in the home is also a matter of concern. The study established a correlation between the children at risk and conflicts in home. Hence findings

suggest the conduction of further in-depth studies on psychological implications due to domestic violence on children.⁴⁹

In accordance with the dominant cultural notions on 'masculinity' and 'femininity' the study finds aspects of gender discrimination not only among females but also male children as well. The linkage of 'work and masculinity' and 'gender and sexuality' has been observed. The finding highlights the significance of conducting anthropological enquiries into the socialization process of female as well as males in the socio-cultural milieu (Dube, 2001) to understand gender relations and its influence in the lives of children. Furthermore, this draws attention to the significance of addressing male children along with females to achieve gender justice. The study noticed incidences of child marriages in the geographical area⁵⁰ and thus underlined the need of implementing The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006 in its true spirit. At present no proper mechanism is in place in the UT in which registration of marriages and making government officials accountable and monitoring the recording of child marriages⁵¹. Although the Child Marriage Prevention Officer⁵² has been appointed at the UT level in 2007 as mandatory under The Child Marriage Prohibition Act, 2006, yet has not intervened in a case of child marriage⁵³.

Identification of working children, especially in rural areas and their indulgence in work problematizes the definition of 'work' in Census of India in accordance with children. The study identifies the influence of socio-cultural factors and masculinity in relation to work. Impact of work on children however needs to be addressed within the ambit of the socio-cultural milieu. On the one hand, the study reveals aspects of child sexual abuse in particular, and sexuality in general. On the other hand, the reluctance of children to attend the question regarding child sexual abuse highlights the dominant perspective on sexuality in the geographical area.

The prevalence of physical and emotional abuse in the context needs to be addressed. The traditional perspective; the 'right' of parents, teachers or adults to give punishments should be questioned. The failure of laws and conventions underlines the incidence of corporal punishments in the study area. However, the aspect of psychological implications of physical and emotional abuse requires multifaceted interventions. In sum, it is clear that the right to protection is a matter of concern in the isles. Lack of research and poor implementation of existing schemes and Acts⁵⁴ contribute significant to this situation.

Therefore, unless there are collaborated efforts of PRIs, civil society movements, communities and actual implementation of laws, international and national charters⁵⁵, along with the active involvement of media, the protection issues will remain unaddressed in the isles.

Even though the percentage of substance users is low in the total, it is imperative to address the issue seriously within the framework of child rights⁵⁶ while considering the familial⁵⁷ and social context. The results challenge the argument of Tsering and Dasgupta, i.e. 'easy availability' in urban areas and 'relief from tension' in rural areas, as reasons for continuation of substance use among school children. In lieu of examining the reasons within the context, the study jumped to conclusions of easy availability and relief from tension by acknowledging the division of urban and rural with simplistic generalizations of urbanization that produces an open situation of easy availability and changing rural societies creates tension and stress. The study has also not dissected the possibilities of tension and relief in the urban context. The present study finds prevalence of substance abuse in rural and urban contexts rooted in the socio-cultural context.

Other than IPC 82, 83, The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act deals with illegal production, possession, transportation, purchase and sale of any drug enumerated under in the schedule to the Act, The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act⁵⁸ (COTPA) 2003 and provisions in JJ Act 2006, there is no other specific laws and sections for dealing with the production, sale and usage of substances relating to children in India. In addition to this, the failure of administration to curb the menace and inadequate implementation of existing rules and laws, particularly with reference to children worsens the situation.

However, a couple of initiatives attempted to address the issue within the limitations, and have made visible changes in the locality. United initiatives of a civil society movement and a gram Panchayat against '*Jungli Sharab*' (illegal liquor) was one such successful effort observed in the isles. They used methods like dharna, awareness campaigns, etc. to sensitize the general community. This incident was shared by the *Pradhan* (Panchayat President) during the focus group discussion with PRIs. But when asked about the same strategies for controlling the usage of paan, the *Pradhan*⁵⁹ admitted that those strategies failed to prevent the use of the substance. Furthermore, he justified the usage

by saying that it wouldn't produce social ills, unlike alcohol. This finding corroborated the study of Tsering&Dasgupta, i.e. knowledge and understanding on the consequences of substances do not make a change in the pattern of consumption, and thus suggests that native strategies for controlling the consumption of substances in the isles should be sought.

It can be ascertained from the section on implementation of JJ Act in the islands that UT administration is yet to implement the provisions of the Act with the required strictness and very few actions have gone beyond the main island of South Andaman district⁶⁰ where the administrative head-quarter is situated. This becomes exceedingly apparent, if the actual implementation is compared with the draft notification issued by ANI administration. A vigilant system can monitor the milestones, and an additional directive can be issued from the administration, giving due importance to the Act and to ensure proper implementation of the provision in all the districts of this archipelago.

End notes

1. Following the Right to protection of CRC based on Article 2, 19, 20, 22, 23, 23, 32, 33, 34, 36 and 37 which ensure protection from different harmful contexts, the study explores usage of intoxicants, domestic violence, gender discrimination, work that affects lives, sexual, emotional and physical abuse and its implications on the lives of children.
2. *The Light of Andamans*, a weekly news magazine in Port Blair through an exceptional attempt, published an issue on Alcoholism and its implications by drawing a link between the consumption of liquor and increasing suicides in the isles.
3. The study found 38.95% of children's family members in rural area consume alcohol as against the 41.09% in urban area.
4. Except in stray cases of Nicobari mothers who consume alcohol, generally female members in the socio-cultural context use pan and tobacco as intoxicants. As part of hospitality and personal use, the households, particularly in rural areas, keep a plate with pan and tobacco.
5. A cigarette or cigar of unprocessed tobacco rolled in leaves, generally very common in Indian sub-continent.
6. Anthropologists have studied the construction of masculinity and consumption of alcohol in cultural definition on male identity and

confirm heavy drinking is closely linked to notions of male machismo in many parts of the world.

7. The National Research Council defines “domestic violence is the intentional infliction of harm or injury by one intimate partner on another” (The National Research Council in Pandey, 2003, p. 27).
8. The life history of Sandhya clearly depicts the incidents of conflicts in home, her emotional disturbances and helplessness. See *Appendices* for life history of Sandhya.
9. Gender refers to “the socio-cultural definition of man and woman, the way societies distinguish men and women and assign them social roles” (Pandey, 2003, p. 1).
10. The study defines discrimination as of higher importance given to male siblings in basic needs such as food and clothing, and in education, in comparison with female children in family.
11. The study found 38.45% of girls among the total 57.68% of children, who spent their leisure time at home.
12. The study identified 9.7 percent of girls among the total 12.1% of children who helped their mothers in household chores.
13. Although parents explicitly shared that there was no difference in girl children, they implicitly pointed out the subtle ways of discrimination in cases of child marriage, age of marriage for girls, perspective on leisure time, place and involvement of children in household chores and so on.
14. Life histories of Sandhya and Arun explicitly revealed the gender stereotypes especially regarding involvement in household chores. See *Appendices* for life histories of Sandhya and Arun.
15. See *Appendices* for life histories of Ramu.
16. The study found 81.63% of male children among the total working population. Among the total male children 48.98% involved in work with an intention to support the family.
17. Census 2001 defines work as “participation in any economically productive activity with or without compensation, wages or profit...It even includes part time help or unpaid work on farm, family enterprise or in any other economic activity” (Census of India, 2001, Instruction Manual for filling up the household schedule, p. 59). Therefore, children are included in categories of main, marginal and non-workers. The category of non-workers comprises students, persons who are indulged in household duties,

dependents, pensioners, beggars and 'prostitutes'. Emphasizing the 'economic value of work' these sections are omitted from the work force in Census report. Indeed, it is an old debate that persons who are indulged in household duties needs to be accounted for and recognized as workers. Recently, as part of a judgement, Justice A K Ganguly along with G S Singhvi have frowned on housewives being included into non-workers by saying this as "totally insensitive" and "callous" approach of statutory authorities (Housewives no good? SC livid, 2010). Considering the substantial rural economy, a bulk of children are indulged in household duties. The omission of the category from work force and definition of work drops a large section of working children in the data. In a nutshell, this highlights the importance of redefining 'work' in Census report and categorization not only for adults but children as well.

18. It is important to note that although Census enumerates age-wise data, it categorizes age in accordance with different headings like education, work, migration etc. The Census of India generally considers 14 years as the cut-off age for dividing children from adults. The Indian Constitution and different labour laws like the Factories Act, 1948 and the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 uses the same criterion of age. While considering the definition of CRC on age as 18 years, it is obvious that the existing definition excludes a section of working children from 'data'. But by indicating difficulties to 'create suitable enforcement machinery and measures as would warrant the children not being compelled by circumstances to seek employment' ([http:// labour.nic.in/ilas/indiaandilo.htm](http://labour.nic.in/ilas/indiaandilo.htm) last visited on 29th October 2010), India yet to be ratified Minimum Age Convention (No.138). However, the vulnerable situation of children in different social contexts in India, particularly related to the difficulties for completing primary education before 14 years raises questions on the definition of the age of children in India.
19. See *Appendices* for life history of Ramu.
20. Ramu's decision to learn the work revealed the influence of the notion of masculinity within the community, rather than poverty.
21. A majority of children 38.78% out of 44.90% were working one to two hours in three to four days (67.35%) per month.

22. Among the working children, 95.92% were attending school.
23. In the review of the history of child abuse, De Manus points that “children especially boys in ancient Greece were often sexually exploited. Aristotle for example, believed that masturbation of boys by adult males hastened their manhood”. Furthermore, he observes that “although it is not clear that how it is common, depiction in the literature and art of that time suggests that they were not widely condemned” (De Manus in Cindy & Robin, 2007, p. 17).
24. Child sexual abuse includes an adult exposing his or her genitals or making the child touch the adult’s genitalia; an adult involving a child in pornography; an adult having oral, vaginal or anal intercourse with a child; any verbal or other sexual suggestions made to a child by an adult (Saakshi in Pandey, 2003).
25. The study found that among the total respondents 48% of boys and 39% of girls faced sexual abuse.
26. The study defines physical abuse as beating, caning or pinching, twisting ears and kicking or shaking, while emotional abuse as scolding or shouting, ignoring and comparing with siblings and other students.
27. In the study, blackmailing means threatening of either parents or teachers with an intention to correct the child by saying that if child won’t obey or do what they said, they will complain to the person who is head of the family or institution. In addition, while children are not performing in accordance with their expectations, teachers often warn children by indicating that they would give transfer certificate to the child.
28. According to the participants, severe forms mean any physical punishment that results in injury.
29. In contrast to the general trend (71.81%), only 26.36% of Nicobari children faced one or other forms of physical or emotional abuse. The sharing of parents indicated the changing perspective of parents with reference to punishments and children in general.
30. Corporal punishment is defined as the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child pain not for the purpose of injury but for correction (GoI, 2006, p 57).
31. Children shared that often teachers call them by names like *suwar*, *motti*, *nata*, *lambi*, *khamba*, *maharaja*, *maharani*, *jungli* and so on. Almost all expressed their disagreement on it, but ignored it by considering the authority status and position of teachers.

32. Incidence of punishments presented a declining trend from 86.88% in the age group of seven to nine years to 62.14% in the age group of 16 to 18 years.
33. Misuse of any substances for stimulation instead of its actual use is defined as substance abuse. Considering the substances which are generally using for stimulation, the study follows the term substance use in place of substance abuse.
34. By indicating the absence of studies, *The Light of Andamans*, a weekly news magazine in port Blair, published one issue titled 'The scourge of addiction' on substance (ab)use in 2007. The reports emphasized relationship between substance abuse and suicides among adults, but mentioned the practice of children as part the narratives. The issue covered the extensive use of substances and called up on people's participation to resolve the problem instead of approaching government for taking actions (The scourge of addiction, 2007).
35. During the field work it was observed that paan and liquor shops exist every nook and corner of the isles.
36. According to Dasgupta "Adolescent friendship is founded in egalitarianism and deliberately counters adult male authority" (Dasgupta, 2003, p. 17). This eventually builds an intimacy which further encourages the members to share and exchange everything including cigarettes and drinks.
37. Notions of masculinity are linked with risk taking behaviour, alcoholism and risk activities in different socio-cultural contexts (Bhasin, 2004). The present study substantiated the same notion on masculinity within socio-cultural context.
38. A cigarette or cigar of unprocessed tobacco rolled in leaves generally very common in Indian sub-continent.
39. It doesn't mean that everyone lives accordingly. The possibilities of negotiating the masculine and female practices in 'veiled' contexts should not be ignored, while accepting the practices in 'visible' contexts.
40. Apart from the only de-addiction centre, *Saathi*, in GB Pant Hospital's OPD ward, there are no other units in Andaman and Nicobar Islands to treat and rehabilitate alcoholics or drug addicts. *Saathi* has claimed 500 cured cases out of the total 5,000 within four years, but mentioned that lack of follow ups and dearth of funds create difficulties for its effective functioning (The Light of Andamans 2007 Vol-32, Issue 42: p. 4).

41. The study identified that family members of children were using 46.13% and 40.86% of paan and tobacco and pan alcohol respectively as substances.
42. The study revealed 26.9% of rural users and 11.5% of urban users were influenced by friends.
43. www.and.nic.in/Announcements/Juvenila%20Justice.pdf
44. Areas in South Andaman Island. Nayagaon is a place close to Port Blair and Ferrargunj is a Tehsil headquarter. This shows that the implementation of JJ Act has not gone beyond the headquarter areas.
45. Referred to as Diglipur Murder Case, 3 Juveniles were apprehended along with an adult.
46. Illegal Bangladeshi Immigrants are also apprehended often.
47. Not many civil societies or NGOs are left in the islands now. ANI had seen a major influx of agencies, both national and international in the aftermath of Tsunami. However, a vast majority of them left at the end of the relief and rehabilitation phase. A few organizations still continue their work in the isles, but none of them focus on protection or child rights agenda.
48. One of the Panchayat presidents admitted the futile attempts through rallies to curb the menace of alcoholism and other intoxicants.
49. The focus group discussion with PRI members revealed that in the 'settlements' of domestic violence cases at *Panchayats* yet they were not able to recognize children as part of the issues.
50. Census of India points out 32.7% of females and 7.6 percent of males were married below the legal age in Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Retrieved from <http://www.un.org.in/UNDP/Joint%20Advocacy/2010/IssueBriefs/2007/Age%20at%20Marriage%20-2007.pdf>).
51. Focus group discussions with parents at fishermen colony explicitly underlined the incidence of child marriage as part of tradition within the community. One *Pradhan* shared that as a *Pradhan*, he failed to prevent the child marriages in the *Panchayat*, but he did not attend a couple of the marriages as an expression of resistance. The incident invites attention on the response of a duty bearer in relation to the issue.
52. The *Prohibition of child Marriage Act, 2006* directs states to appoint child Marriage Prevention Officer, whose duties include prevention of solemnization of child marriages, collection of evidence for effective prosecution, creating awareness and sensitization of community etc.

53. Child Marriage Prevention Officer, DSW, Port Blair, Interview, October 2010.
54. The failure of *The Prohibition of child Marriage Act, 2006* was already noted the study. The State Commission for Protection of Child rights has not been formed at the UT level under the *Commissions for the Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005*.
55. National Charter for Children, 2004 intends to secure children from all forms of abuse by strengthening the duty bears and state policies and laws.
56. Article 33 of CRC ensures the right to be protected from dangerous drugs (UNICEF, 1994, p.12)
57. The study explored that 76.97% of children's family members were using different kinds of substance, including alcohol, ganja, paan, etc.
58. Section 6 of COTPA, directs that "no person shall sell, offer for sale, or permit sale of cigarette or any other tobacco products (i) to any person who is under 18 years of age and (ii) in an area within a radius of 100 yards of any educational institution (The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and distribution) Act 2003, Ministry of Law and Justice, New Delhi 19th May 2003). It has been evidently noted in the field work that the violation of the Act and guidelines, including display of board to formation of 'Tobacco Control Committee' for Tobacco free schools/ educational institutions (Office of the Deputy Director (HQ ESTATE) Directorate of Education, New Delhi (No. F. DDE (HQ)/2010/2671 Order dated 01/07/2010) in each and every nook of the isles.
59. It is important to note here that throughout the focus group discussion the Pradhan was chewing paan.
60. South Andaman district consists of two main islands, South Andaman and Little Andaman. There are a few smaller islands too. Two of these smaller islands are popular tourist destinations and are regularly visited by national and international tourists. In many ways children here are exposed to various types of rights violations and there the instruments of JJ Act will have to play a very important role.

RIGHT TO PARTICIPATION

ALTHOUGH CHILDREN are a large and important segment of the population, in the majority of societies, they have traditionally been seen as ‘human becomings’, rather than as human subjects and social actors. Consequently, the dominant paradigm has ignored the perspective and ability of children as decision-makers, by regarding them as immature and irrational; a model of childhood rooted in 19th century Western thinking¹ (Beers, Henk & Milne, 2006). However, by recognizing ‘lack of participation, a form of social exclusion’ (Johnson, Smith, Pat & Scott, 1998, p. 7), the Convention on the Rights of the Child is landmark in its efforts on behalf of children, and the right to participation is enshrined as a vital part of the convention². Although there is a consensus on the rights of the child to protection and participation, which allows children to participate in decision-making and in challenging adult power and control, it remains a contentious subject. Within the development oriented typology of ‘survival, development, protection and participation’ used by UNICEF, the right to participation has not been dealt with very seriously (Beers, Henk & Milne, 2006). The same perspective has resulted in a shortage of documented experiences of children’s participation across the world (Singh & Trivedy, 1996).

This chapter addresses children’s right to participation, one of the grey areas in the body of knowledge on children and childhood across the world. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section unravels the experiences of children in decision-making processes within the family, school and local self-governance. It also explores the aspirations of children to be consulted before taking decisions affecting their lives. The second section explores the knowledge of children on child rights and the sources which contribute to their understanding. Discussion, the third section analyses and summarises the study findings of the chapter.

6.1 Participation in decision-making

Along with CRC, National Charter for Children 2004 and National Plan of Action for Children 2005 reiterate the obligation of the State of India in ensuring the right to participation of children. Under article 14, the National Charter for Children 2004 states: “All children shall be given every opportunity for all round development of their personality, including expression of creativity” and article 15a assures that: “Every child shall have the freedom to seek and receive information and ideas. The State and community shall provide opportunities for the child to access information that will contribute to the child’s development” (Article, 6, Right to Early Childhood Care, National Charter for Children, 2004). However, by recognising the importance of right to participation as a major leap forward in empowering children, the study attempts to create a picture of the participation of children in family, school and governance as part of documenting the situation of children in the isles.

It was found that 69.16% of children interviewed participated in decision-making in family on matters affect their lives. At a cursory glance, the quantitative picture is prosperous, yet focussed group discussions with children, parents, teachers and PRI members revealed different dimensions of the subject, requiring detailed explanation. Indeed, it is not possible to capture the extent and nature of participation of children in the family from a single question. Additionally, the question is inadequate to address how children perceive and conceive the concept of participation. Therefore, the sharing of focussed group discussions and attendant quantitative results are important. Children shared in the focussed group discussions that they generally have freedom to make choices and decisions regarding clothes, play, friends and to some extent, vocations, while parents are considered as the responsible persons to take ‘important decisions’ in their lives. The study showed that the reason for selecting a school evinced the sharing in an evident manner. The study found that except for a very negligible percentage of children³, most were influenced by their parents in selecting a school. Out of the total, 26.25% of children explicitly indicated the involvement of parents in the decision-making process. The life history of Arun also underscored this finding. Arun’s decision to change his category from OBC to General was actually taken by the father⁴. Thus, it is clear that decision-making is contingent on what the decision is about, and the

finding is in line with the study result of Virginia Morrow on children's participation in the English neighbourhood (Virginia Morrow in Beers, Invernizzi & Milne, 2006). By corroborating the finding, almost all parents and PRI members shared the same perspective in focus group discussions. At the same time while sharing the same perspective, a few parents revealed their helplessness due to poor educational backgrounds for playing a vital role in taking the 'important decisions'. This sharing highlights the study finding that "child rights are accepted as adult responsibilities" in majority societies (Singh & Trivedy, 1996, p. 7).

Table 6.1.1 Participation in decision-making in school

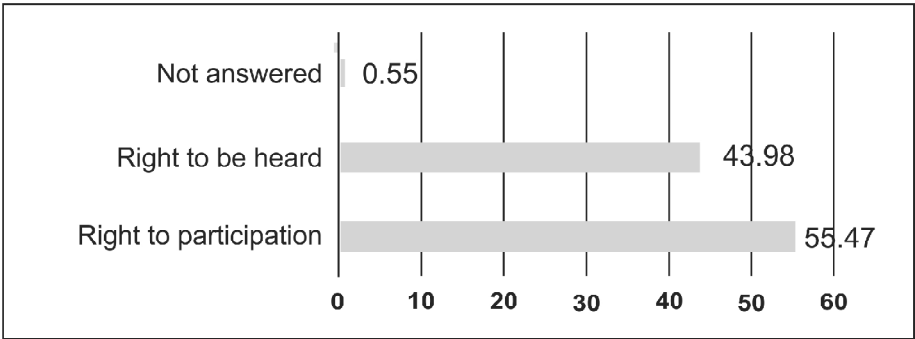
Response	Percentage
Yes	47.81
No	52.19
Total	100.00

The same notion about 'importance' invariably influences the participation of children in decision-making process in schools as well. The table (6.1.1) clearly reveals that the majority of children (52.19%) did not participate in the decision-making process, while 47.81% of children indicated their involvement in decisions in schools. The finding underlines the focus group discussions with children. Children shared in the focus group discussions that their 'participation' in decisions was generally limited to preparing strategies to conduct cultural programmes and sports meets in schools. Apart from this, children were generally not allowed to participate in serious decisions in schools. For example, children, particularly from rural areas, indicated their difficulties of school timing in the last academic session, which was exclusively fixed by Education Department and head teachers. The study finding substantiates the argument of Sourin (1998) that the tremendous power that lies in the hands of teachers can deny the participation of children in decisions.

In addition to the general trend with reference to participation in decision-making process in schools, the study highlighted the vulnerable situation of children from *Telugu* and *Ranchi* communities in comparison with the other linguistic groups. The study found that out of the total, 69.23% of children from Sadri, 60.15% of Telugu and 58.90% of *Oraon* linguistic backgrounds⁵ were exclusively denied even the 'limited opportunities for participating in the decision-making process in schools⁶.

In this context, it is essential to understand children’s right to be heard, particularly in the family, which is recognized as crucial in promoting children’s participation (Singh & Trivedy, 1996). It was noticed that 89% of children’s parents listened to them when they have something to say about themselves or others. The statistics is indeed encouraging. However, focus group discussions with parents, children, and a few quantified findings from the study, revealed aspects of interaction pattern of children within the family and outside. Parents shared that they generally enquire about food and study in other words than matters regarding health and education with children. Furthermore, the majority of mothers indicated that their hectic household chores were a barrier to listening to children. Children in the focus group discussions indicated that they do not like to share incidents like experiences of corporal punishments in schools, friends etc. with parents. The study found that below 35% of children shared such incidents with their parents. It can be ascertained that there is a need to improve the abilities of adults particularly parents to listen to children, which is placed in the discussions of children’s participation (Johnson, Smith, Pat & Scott, 1998).

Illustration 6.1.1 Preference of rights

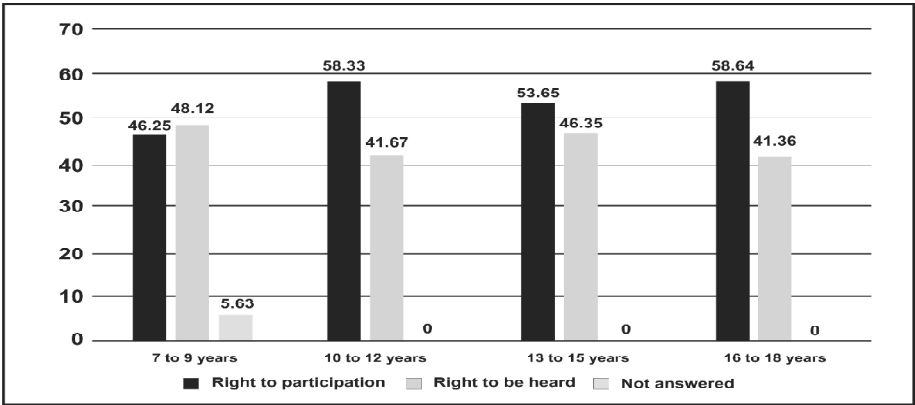


The study further explored the inclination of children to participate in decision-making processes not only in the family, but also in schools and other institutions as well. Out of the total sample, 55.47% of children gave preference to the right to participation, while 43.98% of children inclined to be heard by parents (Illustration 6.1.1). The finding thus highlighted the aspirations of children to participate in decision-making process in other words challenge the power and control of adults over them and their lives.

6.1.1 Preference of children on rights, Balsabhas and NGOs

Besides the situation, the illustration (6.1.2) presents varying preferences of children on rights with reference to their age. Children from the age group seven to nine years expressed preference to be heard by their parents (48.12%) rather than participating in decision-making processes (46.25%) on matters affecting their lives, while children from the age group of 16 to 18 years indicated their preference to right to participation (58.64%) rather than right to be heard (41.36%). It is true that both rights are closely related to each other, but the finding seeks attention in preparing particular strategies for different age groups for promoting the level of participation of children.

Illustration 6.1.2 Preference of rights and age



In the aftermath of the Tsunami, non-governmental organizations working with child rights agenda has introduced Balsabhas in their intervening areas. Balsabha or Children's Council is a platform of children to participate in governance and community development introduced in respective villages. Balsabha meetings discuss the issues of children varying from protection, to education and health, as well as matters relevant to community development. The platform offers opportunities for children to consult such issues with representatives of local self-governance and administrative wings, who are invited for the meetings. The research team explained this concept to children during the data collection process and it was observed that an overwhelming majority of children interviewed (89.68%) would like to have such Balsabhas in their villages.

The study documented a couple of successful interventions of Balsabhas facilitated by Butterflies in the isles. Children associated with

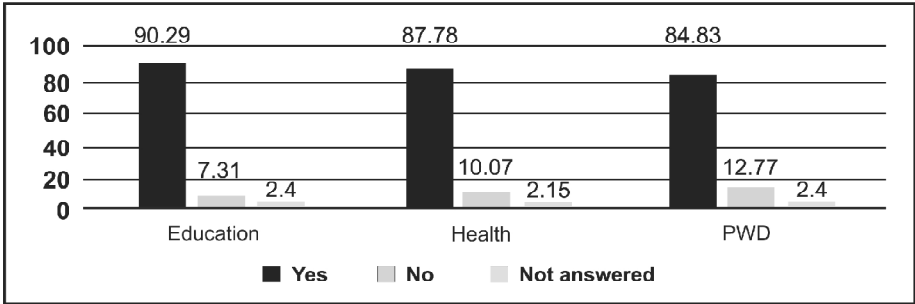
Butterflies from Stewartgunj area raised the problem of an unhygienic environment due to garbage being spread everywhere in the Balsabha meeting. The Pradhan (Panchayat President) was asked to provide dustbins and Pradhan agreed and provided immediately. In Little Anadaman a student was abused by her teacher. The issue was discussed in the Balsabha and children took the matter to the Headmaster. Soon after, the Headmaster communicated this incident to the district administration, and the DDO issued a memo to the teacher based on an enquiry (Butterflies, 2010). This substantiates the fact that collaborative efforts could give a venue for children to learn individual and social responsibilities. These are a few examples which clearly underline the ability of children to transform unfavourable situations through participation and collective actions.

The involvement of non-governmental organizations needs to be examined to elaborate it further. Following CRC, organizations working on the basis of child rights-based agenda are the pioneers who initiated and facilitated the concept of Balsabha in the isles. The study finds that all respondents, who were in touch with nongovernment organizations working with child rights agenda highlighted the importance of Balsabha in villages, while those children who did not have such experiences shared a sceptical view on Balsabha. This demonstrates the role played by non-governmental organizations in promoting participation in decision-making.

Decentralisation and people's participation are recognised as important strategies for development. Therefore, to utilize the opportunities of the decentralized and participatory approach by maximum involvement of children is recognized as a step forward to build a basis for democracy and responsible and capable citizens for the future (Singh & Trivedy, 1996). The study already noticed the aspiration of children to participate in governance. Out of the total children interviewed, more than 90% of them shared that Panchayat should consult them before proposing any scheme or project which may affect their lives. The same keen interest was shown by the children with reference to response about consultation with different government departments. Out of the total sample, 90.29% of children expressed that the Education Department should consult them before proposing a new scheme or project or taking decisions which may affect their lives (Illustration 6.1.3). It is noteworthy that apart from the limited opportunities on the platform of Balsabha facilitated by

non-governmental organizations working with child rights agenda, generally children do not get opportunities to participate in governance. Issues have come out related to school timing in the last academic session in the isles⁷ is one of the examples of the problems or deficiency of lack of participation by the students. However, the example clearly indicates the importance of including children in governance. Children also shared that the Health Department (87.78%) and Public Works Department (PWD) (84.83%) should also be consulted them before arriving to new decisions which may affect their lives.

Illustration 6.1.3 Response of children about consultation with different departments



Recognizing the role played by politicians and government officials in governance, children expressed their desire to consult with them. The study found that out of the total sample, more than 80% of children revealed their interest to be consulted by politicians and government officials before arriving to a new decision which may affect their lives. In short, along with highlighting the ability of children to participate in decision-making by utilizing the platform of Balsabhas in certain areas, the study pinpoints the keen interest of children to participate in governance, which is usually denied them.

6.2 Awareness on Child Rights

As against the earlier notions about children, in which they were “regarded as small or inadequate versions of parents” (Empey, Stafford & Hay in Cindy & Robin, 2007, p. 12), child rights emerged with a focus from ‘welfare’ to ‘rights’- based approach in twentieth century. In previous times, especially in the colonial period, influenced by the Victorian principles on dominant family, the legal system considered children as recipients of welfare measures. The perception of patriarchal, even matrilineal social structure was not too different, and

allowed parents to treat children as private property as they saw fit. In due course, social reactions⁸ led to the creation of international laws⁹ which are a platform for children's rights. The turning point in the international movement on behalf of child rights, was the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child 1989¹⁰ which provides a set of universal legal standards or norms for the protection and well-being of children. The entitlements are concerned with the issues of social justice, equity, non-discrimination and empowerment, and the range of CRC can be summarized into three Ps: provision, protection and participation (Bajpai, 2003).

Although this counts as a revolutionary step in human rights, awareness on CRC among the children as well as the general public is questionable. Even law enforcers, implementing authorities and deprived children do not know about the rights, which results in the violation of child rights across the world. Realizing this, the CRC recognizes the importance of dissemination of awareness and directs the State Parties to ensure the effective implementation of the Article¹¹ pertaining to the subject matter. Apart from the law enforcement authorities and 'so called deprived' children, it is essential to find out the level of 'awareness' on child rights among parents, teachers and PRI members for exploring and addressing the issues of children within the socio-cultural milieu. Taking this as a cue, the study encompasses an objective of awareness on child rights under its rubric.

The study explored that 31.39% of children were 'aware' of child rights out of the total study population, while the rest expressed 'unawareness' of child rights. The study finding underscored the observation of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child under para 24: that 'low level of the awareness among general publics including children and professionals working with children' ((Bajpai, 2003, p. 450). Meanwhile, focus group discussions with children raise questions on the relation between 'awareness' and resulted action. Although children in focus group discussions expressed 'awareness' on important articles of CRC and steps need to be taken against the violations of rights, they could not share any incidents of any action taken by them. Issues of safe drinking water, sanitation etc. in school, and punishments¹² from school or home were ignored or accepted by the children. Though children expressed their inclination for participation in governance, with reference to education¹³, children dropped such issues in school for the actions of adults¹⁴. Punishments

were accepted by the children as meaningful ways to mould their character, but at the same time strongly opposed to severe physical modes¹⁵. On views on gender, except very few divergent opinions¹⁶, generally children acceded to the ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ practices thereby reinforcing existing stereotypes. Life histories of Ramu, and Sandhya¹⁷ evidently corroborate the norms and values in the sociocultural milieu which shield children to approach life based on their ‘awareness’. Child rights thus remain just as information, rather than leading to any actions.

The ideal response of children against violation of child rights needs to be dissected in this context. It was noticed that out of the total respondents who were ‘aware’ of child rights, 78.08% of children preferred advice to stop the violation of child rights. The group followed 8.02 percent of children who desired to call to 1098-childline number, 7.05 percent of children who wished to complain to the police and 6.85 percent of children who preferred to inform adults or PRI members and NGOs as an ideal response against the violation of child rights (Table 6.2.1). It is noteworthy here that the context of the response was ideal and yet anybody among the respondents faced any such incident in their real life which sought immediate response.

Table 6.2.1 Ideal response of children on violation of child rights

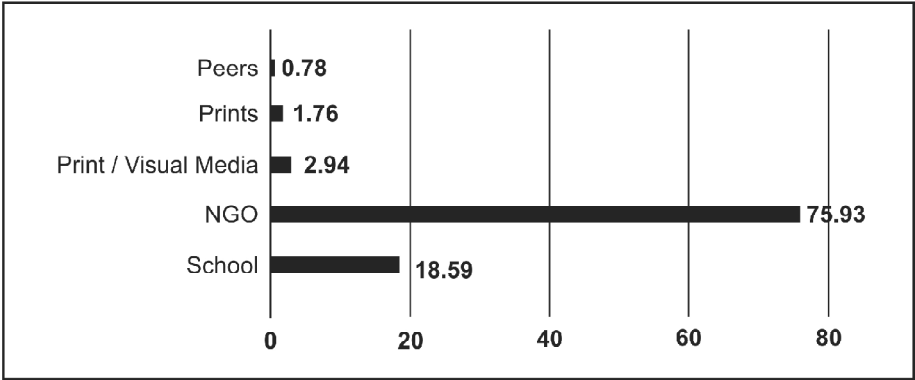
Response	Percentage
Advice	78.08
Complaint to police	7.05
Call to 1098	8.02
Inform to PRI/ Adult/ NGO	6.85
Total	100.00

It is interesting to note that an overwhelming majority of children desired to advice to address right violations. This answer sheds some lights on the perspective of the children influenced by the dominant practices in the context in which ‘settlements¹⁸’ instead of law and order¹⁹ are generally required to resolve issues or violations of rights. This may have influenced the response of children. Furthermore, similar to the general attitude of adults, children may also perceive legal framework and its enforcement agencies as something to fear, rather than a tool to fight injustice or violation of rights. It may also possible that children do not have a clear idea about the legal provisions available to them in case of rights violation. However, further studies should be conducted to explore the factors which influence the perspective of children.

Considering the interventions of the state and its apparatus, its developmental policies, and the involvement of civil society movements in the isles, (particularly after tsunami), it is relevant to consider sources of information on child rights. The study explored that an overwhelming majority, 75.93% of children received information on child rights from NGOs. The category followed 18.59% of children from schools, 2.94 percent from print or visual media, 1.76 percent from parents and 0.78 percent from peers.

6.2.1 Child rights and source of information

Illustration 6.2.1 Source of information

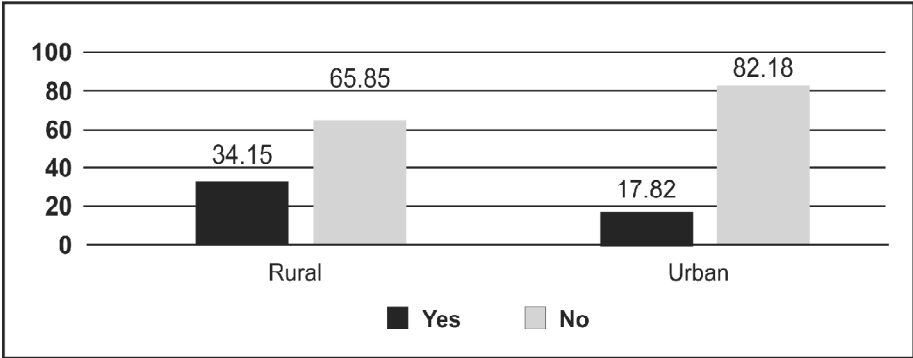


The findings evidently highlight the vital role played by NGOs in disseminating child rights in the isles. The negligible percentage of schools and print/visual media as a source points out the limited engagements of the state mechanism and the fourth estate²⁰ or media in the isles to disseminate knowledge on child rights. The poor percentage of schools in the total seeks critical concern. While theoretically following a ‘child-centred approach’ in teaching methodology, child rights are not seriously dealt with within the curriculum. Teachers were also not found proactive in sensitising children. At the same time, it is essential to note the approach of children or their family towards the limited information disseminate through print/visual media. The study noted a very low percentage of subscription of newspapers or magazines in the households of children²¹. Children also preferred to watch entertainment programmes rather than news or any programmes dealing with serious issues. This might be reasons for low percentage of print/visual media in the total as a source of information. Poor percentage of parents and peers also needs to be located within the knowledge level of community on the

subject and invites attention on the importance of educating the general public on child rights.

Recognizing the role played by NGOs in disseminating knowledge on child rights, the study compared ‘awareness’ on child rights among children by taking controlled and uncontrolled population from the geographical area. The controlled population included children from two islands, i.e. Little Andaman and Car Nicobar, where the NGO was working, while the uncontrolled population encompassed children from Middle and North Andaman, an area yet not covered by the NGO. The result showed that from the controlled group 53.55% of children were ‘aware’ about child rights, whereas from an uncontrolled population it was only 4.73% out of the total sample. This finding clearly underlines the role of NGOs in generating awareness among children about their rights.

Illustration 6.2.1 Source of information and region



The study observed another interesting point contrary to the common notion. It is clear from the illustration (6.2.2) that the ‘believed exposure’ in the urban area is not making a difference in the level of knowledge of children on child rights. Neither good tuition centers²² nor other institutions disseminate information on child rights. Rather such centres as well as institutions were giving training to materialize ‘career dreams’ of children. This evidently evinces the life history of Arun, a boy from urban context²³. Despite included in the category of 28 students, who got A+ for all subjects in Xth CBSE exam in 2009-10 in ANI and with all the so called exposures of urban area, he was found clueless about child rights. Absence of targeted interventions by NGOs in urban area might be the reason for the poor percentage of ‘awareness’ on child rights in the respective context.

6.3 Discussion

Exploration of the children's participation in the family and school, and their response regarding the aspiration to participate in governance, reveals varying dimensions of the concept and its practical implications in the lives of children in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The finding of children's participation in the family requires special attention, not only theoretically, but also in practice. While assessing the quantitative results and sharing of the focus group discussions with children and parents, it is clear that children do participate in the process of decision-making in family, which they perceive as not very 'important'. Therefore their decision-making is contingent upon what the decision is about. The finding offers clues about how children negotiate their autonomy in decision-making. The study corroborated the observation of Punch (2006), that the negotiation pattern of children, including compromising or balancing their interests in accordance with the preference of family (cited in Beers, Henk & Milne, 2006) and thus highlights the role of family in the decision-making of children. It is important to note that in South Asian societies children are considered as an integral part of their families. Therefore, the vital role played by the family in the decision-making process and the imbibed perceptions of children on participation is not surprising.

Contrary to the general view, children from the Nicobari Community revealed a different practice in relation to participation²⁴. Although parents of children from the Nicobari community accepted the autonomy of children in decisions, they invariably complained about the undisciplined nature of children, and indicated that the pattern should be changed. This finding thus underscored the argument that "participation needs to be understood as context specific" (Beers, Henk & Milne, Ibid 2006, p. 52). In sum, besides the promotion of children's participation in family based on CRC, the difference in perspectives of children, their contexts and age should be considered. Intervening strategies should recognise the wider contexts and adults around the children.

Closely related to the right to participation, the findings of the right to be heard in the family, and right to participation in schools, draw attention to the importance of working with children within the wider context of their families, schools and communities. Further promoting of children's participation involves efforts to change adult attitudes as well.

The exploration of the keen interest of children to participate in governance and to have a Balsabha in their respective villages, demands imperative initiatives the State. The finding gives impetus to the ongoing demand for legal reforms, which can introduce formal mechanisms for political dialogue between national and local government and children (Beers, Henk & Milne, 2006). The successful stories of children's participation in governance through Balsabhas reveals the effective interventions of non-governmental organizations working with a child rights agenda in the isles, and presents a replicable model of the empowerment of children and community development by enabling children's participation in different stages of decision-making process. Along with addressing the particular contexts and heterogeneity, the potential of children to act by taking on responsibilities within families, schools, other institutions and the State, should be promoted, as this was strongly recommended by UN Committee on the Rights of the Child²⁵ 2000.

The interplay of different factors influence the low level of awareness among children in the islands. It is clear that as a novel concept, child rights haven't reached the whole population. Almost all parents, and a majority of PRI members, shared their unawareness on child rights in focus group discussions. The negligible percentage, who knew certain important child rights generally pointed out the right to education, protection and health. However, an overwhelming majority of participants shared contradictory perspectives and practices on punishments²⁶, leisure time activities²⁷, child marriage²⁸ and protection²⁹ with reference to child rights.

In the dominant socio-cultural context in which children are considered as the private property of their parents, it is imperative to disseminate knowledge on child rights among all sections of society. The study findings regarding the perspectives of parents and PRI members requires effective interventions to address this issue. The potential of education for reproducing ideologies has not yet been recognized in the case of child rights. The current curriculum in the school and teachers training institutes should recognise this. In sum, apart from the theoretical propositions, interventions on the theme of child rights are necessary to transform the dominant norms and values in which violence against children is considered as an acceptable practice.

End notes

1. Based on this perspective, parents feel that it is their responsibility to teach children social skills to help them conform to social norms. It is important to note here that contrary to the Western ideal, studies on the traditional Indian perspective on childhood and participation of children in decision-making reveal that children will naturally develop social skills on their own (Kakar in Fadyen, 2005) while, social anthropologist Elwin mentions the participation of Muria boys and girls in Central India in decision-making (Elwin in Singh & Trivedy, 1996).
2. Article 12 of the CRC draws attention to the right of children to participate in decisions that affect them. It states: "State parties shall assure to the child who is capable of informing his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child" (UNICEF, 1994, p. 5).
3. Out of the total only 2.38% of children surveyed selected their school by own interest.
4. See *Appendices* for life history of Arun.
5. It is important to note here that *Sadri* and *Oraon* linguistic groups and the majority of people from Telugu linguistic background are considered as the marginalized sections and excluded from the benefits of 'development' in the isles. Their historical background in relation with their lower caste status and present situation needs to be studied in detail.
6. Although the study omitted presentation of a few tables in the analysis part, tried to include important findings in accordance with the objectives.
7. Focus group discussions with children, particularly in rural areas invariably highlighted the difficulties of school timing in the isles fixed by the authority without consulting the children. As result, the majority of children faced difficulties like being late to reach school (21.94%), transportation problem (45.81%) and so on.
8. According to Loseke (2007), in socio-constructionist perspective, reaction from society comes from many sources

like individual citizens, social movements, political groups and media with an understanding about a particular social condition as unacceptable.

9. The international laws in forms of conventions on children comprise, The Declaration of the Rights of the Child 1924, Declaration of the Rights of the Child 1959, Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women 1979 and finally the landmark in human rights legislations, Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989.
10. India ratified the CRC in December 1992.
11. Article 42 of CRC directs: “State Parties undertake to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike” (UNICEF, 1994, p. 15)
12. The study explored that 71.81% of children experienced different kinds of punishments including beating, caning, comparing and blackmailing in last 12 months from home as well as school.
13. The study found 90.29% of children out of the total sample desired for participation in governance on matters related to education.
14. It doesn't mean that children are not raising their issues in school or Panchayat. Wherever NGOs worked with children based on child rights, children were able to express their needs by using the platform provided by the organization. Meanwhile, an absence of the initiatives of children, even in the working area of NGOs, questions the ‘awareness’ of children. Moreover, interventions from the side of parents, officials/ PRI members and media yet have not recognized the participation of children and share the view of adults, rather than children.
15. Almost all focus group discussions agreed on the right of parents and teachers to give punishments to guide children in a ‘right way’.
16. All such divergent opinions come from female children and which include desire for higher studies, to do a reputed job and get into a position in society, to spend leisure time outside the

household with friends and sharing the household chores with males etc. But it is important to note here that the divergent opinions shared by female children with an objective of supporting family, which underpins the realization of the challenges to lead a family in the current scenario by one breadwinner, but not with a gender consciousness. However, despite the 'disturbing opinions' (in almost all focus group discussions, the subject matter inflamed strong opposition of male children and paved the way for initiating a discussion on the topic), female children were compelled to follow the gender stereotypes and shared a jaundiced view on their 'dreams'.

17. See *Appendices* for life histories of Ramu and Sandhya.
18. Focus group discussions with PRI members corroborated the settlements of cases in the Panchayats rather than transferring to the police.
19. Andaman and Nicobar Islands is known as one of the places in India which has low crime rate and reported police cases.
20. *The Daily Telegrams*, the only daily in the isles is known as the administrative tongue and it is dedicated pages largely to publish photos of government officials, government programmes or schemes and tenders. The daily publishes reports and photos of children as receivers of any administrative schemes or competitions. By keeping different patterns, magazines in the islands handles issues of children as stray cases in the world of adults.
21. The study found that 89.94% of children's families were not subscribing newspapers or magazines.
22. It was observed in the field work that tuition centers are an inevitable part of education across the islands. The focus group discussions with parents and PRIs in rural areas shared that the 'quality tuition centers' was the only reason for good academic result in the urban area.
23. See *Appendices* for the life history of Arun.
24. Out of the total children from the Nicobari community, 93.10% of children shared that they participate in decisions which may

affect their lives. The focus group discussions with children and parents also underlined the quantified data.

25. The Committee recommends that the State party develop skill-training programmes in community settings for teachers, social workers and local officials in assisting children to make and express their informed decisions and to have their views taken into consideration.
26. Majority participants including PRI members shared the necessity of giving punishments to discipline children.
27. Indicating the matter of protection, majority participants shared that the household was the better place for female children for spending their leisure time activities. The study found 38.45% of female children out of the total 57.68% of children were spending their leisure time within the household.
28. Although participants including PRI members, particularly in rural areas, acknowledged the fact of child marriages in the respective localities, they did not take any legal measures to prevent it. Acquaintance with families restricted them to file complaints. By admitting the same reason, one *Pradhan* shared that even though as a *Pradhan* he failed to prevent such practices in the Panchayat, he did not attend the marriage. Focus group discussion with parents, at Machli Basti (Fishermen colony) invites imperative attention on the issue. Without any hesitation parents admitted that child marriage was very common within the community. They justified the practice as their tradition. According to them the tradition allows marriages within the community. If somebody marries from/to outside the community as against the 'tradition', the family must pay an amount as punishment (recently one family paid Rs 20,000 as punishment, now this is the highest amount). If not, the family would be excluded from the community. Decisions regarding issues within the community, including marriages have been taken by *President*, who is elected by adult members of the community. Yet PRIs or any civil society movements have not addressed the issue in the island. These incidents bring out the ineffective implementation of *Child Marriage prohibition Act 2006* in the isles.

29. Focus group discussions with PRI members revealed that cases of domestic violence were settled in the Panchayat through discussions and advice. According to them, the members recognized or addressed children as part of the cases. However, the study found that domestic violence affected 35.28% of children's study and daily lives.

CONCLUSIONS

BEING THE FIRST OF ITS KIND, this study has brought to light varying and important issues about children, buried for many years. The study has incorporated primary data acquired from various government departments; secondary literature; qualitative dimensions elicited through focus group discussions; the life histories of unique groups or communities; and quantitative data collected from the field, to analyze the situations of children of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Through this analytical approach, the study has revealed multiple facets of the lives of children in relation to the familial, social and state interventions in the isles. The findings are presented under five chapters, viz. socio-economic profile of children, right to survival, development, protection and participation.

7.1 Key findings

The chapter right to survival explored aspects of childrens' rights to health and access to services, status of disabled children, and issues related to early childhood care and survival as well as development in the islands. The study found that the sound infrastructure and strong presence of public health systems, except in the remote areas, assured generally good health for children in ANI. Out of the total children interviewed, 77.70% of children suffered from any type of illness in last twelve months and 78.10% of children reported cases of the common cold. The category followed malaria (3.95 percent), gastritis (3.64 percent) and jaundice (3.00 percent). Irrespective of regions, the study observed a strong preference for allopath treatment (89.57%) in the UT. Contrary to popular beliefs, the study noted a least preference for traditional treatment (2.06 percent). Substantiating the accessible public health system, 84.26% of children were treated under PHC. Analysis of official data revealed an increasing trend of malaria cases from 110 in 2003 to 235 in 2009. By shadowing the positive

outcomes, imbalanced sex ratio¹ was also observed in the study. Community participation was still observed as marginal in the isles. Attempts such as the Village Health Sanitation Committee and Rogi Kalyan Samiti were not found to be effective in meeting their objectives.

Contrary to rhetoric, the study found that inclusive education still exists as a dream in ANI in relation to children of varying ability. Out of the total sample, the study found 0.25 percent of orthopedically handicapped children. Their deformities were identified as webbed figures (25%), defects and broken organs of the body due to injuries (25%) and deformed legs (50%). Highlighting the negative perspective of a section of community towards differently abled children, the study revealed that 75% of them were ignored and 25% of them were teased by peers or community. The state interventions were not found adequate to address the situation. Besides the Census and IEDC data, there was no other source in ANI on differently abled children, and the available information was numerical. In lieu of the provision of 1:8, at present, IED cells are running with a 1:31 teacher-pupil ratio. Ramp facility was available only in 7.22 percent of schools. However apart from the IEDCs, differently abled children were not acquiring a venue for growth and development.

Even though a declining trend on the coverage was noted, ICDS functions as the sole agent in providing early childhood care and development, particularly in rural and tribal areas in the islands. Out of the total respondents, 82.13% of children shared their early childhood experience with Anganwadis. Based on the official data, as against the 63.26% of coverage in urban area, the study noted 71.42% of coverage in rural and 65.33% in tribal areas. A declining trend in the coverage of SNP beneficiaries (children 0-6 years) from 75.45% in 2006-07 to 67.84% in 2009-10 was identified, while the slightly higher coverage of rural projects (52.53% of Ferrargunj, 55.96% of Rangat and 66.18% of Diglipur) and tribal projects (64.03%) in comparison with urban projects (50.58%) underscored the key role played by Anganwadi in providing nutrition and Pre-School Education, particularly in rural and tribal areas in the islands². Additionally, the study identified an increasing trend of the rate of severely malnourished children from 0.49 percent in 2008-09 to 2.75 percent in 2009-10 in the islands. The study also found a promising coverage of pregnant women (82.75%) and lactating women (84.25%), one of

the related aspects of childrens' health. By shadowing the positive outcomes, inadequate access to basic amenities, and a poor infrastructure sector, proved a depressing sight³. As per the official data, only 19.64% of Anganwadis were functioning in Pucca buildings owned by the Government, while 39.88% of Anganwadis used AWWs or AWHs home as the space. Inadequate drinking water (only 44.61% of Anganwadis had the facility) and sanitation (only 35.60% of Anganwadis had the facility) facilities, and the poor quality of pre-school education were found to be influencing factors in declining the coverage.

The chapter right to development unpacked the situation and status of children in the context of their right to education including schooling, available and expected facilities, exclusion from educational institutions, reasons for dropout and right to play, leisure, and cultural activities. The study found that 91.06% of children depended on public institutions for education irrespective of the regions. This underlined the pivotal role of the state and its apparatus in providing education for children. Considering the multilingual scenario⁴, education was being provided in five mediums in the isles⁵. Out of the total, 44.69% of children were studying in the English medium and the majority followed 33.69% of Hindi medium students. The significant percentage of children enrolled in Bengali (18.15%), Tamil (7.72 percent) and Telugu (4.14 percent) mediums in rural area evidently presented the existing inclination towards mother tongue in the respective region. Consequently, a section of children were denied the opportunity to effectively interact with rest of the community and fruitfully integrate in senior secondary classes⁶.

The study explored the apathetic approach of a section of teachers and parents which in turn noticed as factors for the poor quality of education. Absenteeism of teachers (20.31%) and lack of extra classes for academically weak students (80.19%) found examples of the indifferent response of a section of teachers. An overwhelming majority of parents' poor interaction with the school on their children's studies [out of the total, 59.44% of parents occasionally enquired about their children, while 9.50% of parents regularly visited school. A significant section of the parents (31.06%) never visit school] and ineffective performance of VEC⁷ ultimately resulted in poor quality of education in the islands, particularly in rural areas.

Ineffective community participation was a matter of grave concern with reference to education. The concentration of higher number of educational institutions in South Andaman district⁸ also contributed its own part to the situation. Lack of initiatives for life skill and vocational skill education in schools (88.75%) or any other form that helped children in building a perspective rooted in reality, overshadowed the future of children in the isles. As against the general writing on Andaman, an area “totally free from caste system and any prejudice”⁹, the study explored 6.88 percent of children faced humiliation in schools indicative to their religious or cultural backgrounds. Children from Ranchi, Nicobarese and a section of children from Telugu fishermen background, revealed cases in points of humiliations from school¹⁰. More than 30% of children expressed that school placed restrictions to interact and mingle with other gender. In comparison, private schools revealed a more stringent approach than the government schools. In short, the sound infrastructure facilities in comparison with other parts of the country¹¹ did not positively influence the provision of a quality education in the islands.

The study found 1.72 percent of children excluded from formal educational institutions. Among them majority (44.44%) were dropped out at the secondary stage. The category followed 37.04% of children from middle stage. Based on the official data, it was noticed that generally drop-out rate was increasing in the isles irrespective of gender and stages from 2006-07 to 2008-09¹⁷. From the total sample, illness (25%), failed (21.43%), financial problem (21.43%) and not interested to study (21.43%) were stated as reasons for dropout. Given the poor knowledge background of parents, this finding is not surprising. Influenced by such contexts, the majority of children (53.57%) in the majority of societies had not yet thought about their future. Apart from a section of girls, KSY, a programme for drop-out adolescent girls, did not benefit all. None of the adolescent girls who were interviewed had attended vocational skills training programmes as part of the scheme. This finding underscored the official data¹⁸. Although dearth of funds was an issue shared by the administration, the ineffective utilization of the available fund was noted. The KSY eventually ended as a nutritional programme in the islands, without covering the actual beneficiaries and by losing sight of its objectives.

Apart from the very limited facilities provided by the state in general¹², right to recreation and play was not taken seriously on

the islands¹³. A sizeable percentage of children (32.56%) were getting one to two hours as leisure time, the category followed 30.10% of children who were getting two to three hours. Timing for schooling and educational support¹⁴ influenced the leisure time. Highlighting the inadequate facilities for play and recreation in residing areas, the majority (57.68%) of children stayed at their home. The category followed playground (16.40%). Related with the place for leisure time, majority children (28.38%) watched TV and the category followed 27.88% of children spent their leisure time in playing. Expected facilities for leisure time activities (19.10% of children demanded for playground and, 18.67% for playgrounds and 14.62% for sports equipment) highlighted the children's desire to play and get out from the home. Above all, interventions of non-governmental organizations by establishing Child Development Centers were noted in the study.

The chapter right to protection dealt with various protection issues of children in the islands and highlighted as matter of concern the grave need for effective interventions. The study identified usage of intoxicants¹⁵ by family members (76.97%) and issues of domestic violence (out of the total 1.23% and 50.61% revealed that conflicts happened in home very often and sometimes respectively). Consequently, 35.28% of children indicated that alcoholism and conflicts in home affect their everyday life and study. The study also brought out cases in point of working children (3.01 percent). Among Telugu fisher folk and Nicobarese, social construction of 'masculinity' and socio-cultural background was found to be influential in the indulging of children in work¹⁶. Besides these issues, incidence of emotional and physical abuse (71.81%) was found, while 9.67 percent of children were injured due to physical abuse. The study identified teachers (24.04%), a group of teachers and parents (36.78%) and parents (30.80%) as persons abusing children. The significant percentage of teachers in 'persons abusing children' highlighted the incidence of corporal punishments in schools. Subsequently, punishments either very much (5.56%) or to some extent (43.97%) negatively influences on children. Moreover, the experience of 'bad touch' or dimension of sexual abuse was reported by 9.15 percent of children in the study. Even though not severe, gender discrimination in relation to higher importance to brother(s) (21.95%) and higher attention on education of brother(s) (15.54%) in the family was shared by girls.

With reference to habit of substance use, the study finds that 6.82 percent of children were dependent on various substances. Out of the total users 71.17% of children were taking paan. The category followed 14.41% of tobacco, 8.11 percent of a category of alcohol, pan and cigarette and 3.60 percent of alcohol users. By underlining the study findings in India, 63.97% of children shared that peers influenced them in initiating the habit. The significant percentage of family members (28.82%) as influencing persons shed some light on the familial environment in the socio-cultural context. Poor implementation of The Cigarette and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act 2003 also worsened the situation.

Right to participation, the final analytical chapter, explored the experiences of children in decision-making processes within family, school and local self-governance. It also revealed knowledge of children on child rights and the sources which contribute to their understanding. The study found that participation in decision-making as a form of inclusion was not yet conceptualized in the islands similar to the situation elsewhere in the country. Although the majority of children shared that they had opportunities to participate in decision-making (69.16%) in family, parents were allowed to take 'important decisions' on their behalf. Keen desire to participate in governance¹⁹ and to have a Balsabha (89.68%) in respective villages also substantiated the study's findings on childrens' preference of right to participation (55.47%).

Awareness regarding child rights which in turn could offer opportunities for participation and ultimately empower children, was questionable in ANI. Only 31.39% of children received information about child rights. Non-governmental organizations (75.93%) found as one of the main sources for the information, which underlined 53.55% of children's knowledge on child rights among the controlled group²⁰.

7.2 Suggestions

Due to its exploratory nature, the study could not delve very deeply into varying issues under the subject matter. As a result, along with opening new areas for research dealing with the issues of children and childhood based on different contexts, the study has produced a few suggestions which could trigger social change in favour of children.

Research works should be conducted in diverse areas dealing with the lives of children both at macro and micro levels. By following distinct disciplinary backgrounds and research methodologies, in-depth inquiries need to be carried out which can not only make out the issues of the children, but also come with solutions. Participatory research methods should be developed which address distinct socio-cultural contexts.

A data bank of children should be prepared and maintained in every government department. Based on data from the data bank, an annual report should be published. Besides the departments, Panchayats should also develop a database, which should be updated annually. The CRC definition of child should be adhered to.

Through legal reform, a formal mechanism for child participation in governance should be established, which can assure the dialogue between national, local government and children.

Existing laws for children should be strictly implemented. Sensitization and training programmes or workshops on child rights and various legislations and laws related to children need to be conducted for police personnel, government officials and PRI representatives.

Mobile medical units should be introduced in remote areas to overcome the accessibility to public health care in the islands.

For improving the quality of early childhood care, joint efforts of ICDS and PRIs is required. Fundamental aspects, such as infrastructure, and basic amenities like electricity, drinking water and sanitation facilities should be assured. Scaling up the skill and knowledge of Anganwadi Worker or appointment of qualified AWWs is important to enhance the quality of preschool education. Playing and study materials need to be distributed. Only proper monitoring will ensure hygienic and quality supplementary nutrition for children.

With reference to education, curriculum should emphasize the Hindi medium. Schools which are providing education in the mother tongue should introduce Hindi as a third language from Primary classes onwards. Proper monitoring is essential to ensure the quality of education in schools. Children should be included as relevant members in School Management Committees along with parents, teachers and PRI members. Separate education support classes should be introduced in government schools for academically weak students.

Special attention should be given to children from Telugu, Ranchi and Nicobarese communities. School social workers or counsellors should be appointed in schools. These school social workers can not only act as a link between parents, teachers, PRI members and children but also assure the mental health of children. Child protection committees can be established in schools and tying up with CHILDLINE can assure its effectiveness. Vacant posts of teachers should be filled in a timely manner, and absenteeism of teachers should be tackled.

Education supportive mechanisms in backward areas should be introduced under community ownership and supervision. Emphasis should be given to languages, particularly Hindi and English. Tapping of resources from the same community would be a more empathetic approach. Libraries should be an integral part of this, and reading habits need to be promoted. Involvement of community members or elders could give exposure to children on oral stories and rich life experiences of them. PRIs and non-governmental organizations could take the initiative on this.

Vocational training and life skills education need to be integrated as a vital part of formal education. Strengthening of existing programmes of vocational training for children in schools is relevant. New programmes need to be introduced through other institutions for children who are excluded from formal educational institutions. Apart from the general focus on female children, male children should be addressed in such programmes or schemes. Needs of formal education of the excluded children should be addressed by introducing context specific programmes.

Construction of playgrounds and parks for children are essential. By collaborating with local youth groups, non-governmental organizations and PRIs, sports materials should be distributed. In addition to this, playgrounds and sports materials should be accessible for female children.

Professional help is desirable in lieu of 'solving' cases of domestic violence from PRIs, which is the present pattern followed in the islands. Children should be taken care of as part of the cases. PRIs need to tie-up with Family Counselling Centres.

As per the 73rd amendment Act, devolution of powers to PRIs is exigent in ANI. Necessary financial allocation is essential for children in Panchayat budgets. Children and their issues in relation to the local

contexts should be encompassed in the village development plans. Children's Councils in respective villages should be consulted while preparing such plans.

Sensitization programmes for parents is vital in addressing child rights violations in the islands. Topics like child rights, laws and legislations related to children, children's participation in decision making, etc. should be encompassed. Instead of following the same methodologies everywhere, different strategies should be considered focusing on distinct socio-cultural contexts.

Rigorous sensitization programmes and workshops for PRI members should be conducted on topics like child rights, laws and legislations related to children, the concept of participation, role and responsibilities of a member of local governance, usage of power as a member to trigger social change etc.

Writings or coverage on children's issues and lives in the media need to be promoted. Instead of treating children as receivers of development plans or programmes and representing them as 'victims' or 'helpless', focus of the coverage needs to be shifted to children's perspectives and experiences based on their agency.

7.3 Conclusions

As a maiden work, the study explored diverse gray areas regarding the lives of children in the islands. The interplay of the state as well as socio-economic and cultural factors of the isles embedded within the historical background invariably underlined the study in relation to the diverse areas covered under the rubric. Even though the Government has done quite a remarkable job in "general" development areas like infrastructure, transportation (both land and sea), communication, similar to all over the country, children issues remain a neglected area. Lack of child participation in any form of policy making aggravates the situation. Along with the state and its apparatus, the role of civil society was also highlighted in the study in changing children from passive to active citizens. The joint effort of the state and various sections of civil society can create an atmosphere, where child rights are recognized and children participate as active citizens with rights and responsibilities. It is anticipated that this study could pave the way for conducting new in-depth, issue-based studies and framing or reframing of existing policies and schemes about children in the islands.

End Notes

1. From 1003 in 2003 declined to 973 in 2009 (for 1000 males).
2. It is noteworthy that from the fieldwork, a significant section of children (9.57 percent) strongly recommended to improve the quality of preschool education in Anganwadis.
3. The Department had not yet prepared data on infrastructure covering varying dimensions of Anganwadis in ANI. Therefore the study depended on available data accessed through invoking RTI.
4. The Census report 2001 shows that 21 scheduled and 28 nonscheduled languages are spoken in Andaman and Nicobar Islands due to its multi-lingual nature.
5. English, Hindi, Telugu, Tamil and Bengali are the different medium of instructions in the islands.
6. It is noteworthy that in majority Telugu and Bengali concentrated areas people are generally using their mother tongue to communicate with each other. As a result, due to being tied-up with the thread of mother tongue in schools, family and neighborhood, children from these concentrated areas face difficulties in communicating in Hindi, the common communication language in the islands. Besides the context, the curriculum also worsens the situation. Hindi is the third language in the curriculum, which starts from 6th standard and ends in 8th standard. In the meantime, children are not getting adequate exposure in English.
7. Focus group discussions with parents and PRI members clearly highlighted the shrinkage of VEC into the area of infrastructure rather than ensuring the quality of education in respective schools.
8. The study found that out of the total institutes, 96% of Pre-primary, 52.17% of Middle, 60.38% of Senior secondary, 100% of Industrial training institutes, 100% of Teachers Training Institutes, 100% of Polytechnics, 50% of Government Colleges and 100% Bed Colleges concentrated in South Andaman district.

9. Murthy, R.V.R. (2007). *'Andaman and Nicobar Islands: a geopolitical and strategic perspective'*. Northern Book Centre: New Delhi.
10. Life history of *Ramu*, a boy from a fishing community, underlines the finding.
11. Goes with the official data the study found, building (100%), drinking water (98.63%), Sanitation (95.69%) and playground (92.25%) facilities in schools.
12. It is important to note that playgrounds in villages constructed by the state are generally dominated by male children. Subsequently, this domination excluded female children from the places and denied their right to play and recreation.
13. In focus group discussions, parents and PRI members perceived play as frivolous and complained that children were wasting their time for education by playing or involving in recreational activities.
14. The study revealed that out of the total children 84.69% of them supported by teachers / centres or parents.
15. Majority of the intoxicant users came under the category/ies of a combination of pan and tobacco (46.13%), pan and alcohol (40.86%), alcohol (8.86%) and alcohol, gunja and bidi (1.36%).
16. Out of the total working children, the study identified 44.89% and 28.57% of children from Telugu and Nicobari communities respectively. In the life history, *Ramu's* decision to learn fishing and occupations related to traditional household tasks and work within the Nicobari community, also underlined the findings of the study.
17. In the primary stage, the drop-out rate, 6.37% in 2006-07 reached to 11.89% in 2008-09. In the middle stage, the drop-out rate, 11.54% in 2006-07 reached to 11.80% in 2008-09, while in secondary stage the rate, 15.52% in 2006-07 reached to 16.87% in 2008-09.
18. In 2007-08 and 2008-09, no one attended training programme as part of the scheme.

19. Out of the total, 90.97% of children wished to be consulted with Panchayat before arriving at new decisions which may affect their lives. In the case of different departments (Education-90.29%, Health 87.78% and PWD-84.83%) children shared the same inclination for participation in decision-making processes on matters which may affect their lives.
20. A group of children who had contact with organizations working with the child rights agenda.

APPENDICES

SELECTED LIFE HISTORIES ¹

LIFE HISTORY, vignette of an individual, group or community not only describes in detail the different stages and experiences of an individual come across in life but also brings a general picture of the group or community into focus. Taking this as a cue, life histories of children from different socio-economic backgrounds were documented in the study. Limited time frame and the multilingual population in the Islands indeed was a challenge in documenting the live histories from diverse linguistic groups. Nevertheless selected narratives of children from different socio-economic backgrounds such as Bengali settlers, urban context, traditional and tribal communities present a general account on the situations of children in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

CASE – ONE

Child from the fishing community

Ramu (name changed) barely 14 years old, lives at a Telugu '*Machli Basti*² (Fishermen Colony) in one of the islands in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The study documented the life history with an intention to shed some light on the lives of children from the fishing community. The life history was documented through a series of sessions with the child. The sessions took place at Children's Development Centre³ (CDC) at the neighborhood, or at the residence of the community development worker. As a member of CDC, he was forthcoming in interviews⁴.

Early years of childhood

Ramu was born in a Telugu family. His father was a fisherman and mother worked as an unskilled labourer. About four years ago the father stopped going for fishing due to illness and to make matters worse for the family a year later the mother fell ill and could no longer work. Both his father and mother are illiterate. Ramu has three siblings. His older brother is married and his family of three children and wife live in the parental home. His older brother never went to school. Ramu's two older sisters are also married; according to Ramu they were married even before he was born. They are settled in the 'mainland' ⁵.

As a working woman in unorganized labour sector, Ramu's mother didn't get adequate time for her child as any other working woman who lives in nuclear family set up. Ramu's mother sent him to his aunt's *chinnamma's* ⁶ house during the day. Ramu recalls that due to fear about accidents and fights between children, Ramu's mother did not send him to the neighbourhood Anganwadi. Ramu lost the opportunity of early childhood education by not going to the Anganwadi. The aunt's neighbourhood was alien to him, he had no friends neither did the aunt help him to get to know the children, make an effort to introduce him to her neighbour's children. He spent the whole day inside the house and whenever the aunt was relaxed and relieved of her household chores she would engage him in conversations. His mother would pick him up on her way back from work. Life struggle itself being so over whelming the mother did not have the luxury of indulging her son, spend time talking to him, getting to know his thoughts, and telling him of her childhood stories..... bonding with her son. The early period of his life he spent with two adult women who had no time for him and far away not only from letters but also oral stories as well.

The SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA) programme in their area came as manna from heaven for Ramu. The parents of the area were encouraged to send their children to the SSA centre. Ramu was admitted in the centre. He loved it; he showed keen interest in studies. He learned basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. The medium of instruction was in Telugu. But when he was in third standard the centre was closed down. This incident became a turning point in Ramu's life and he was admitted in government school for further studies. His parents could see the benefits of sending him to school; he could spell his name, read simple sentences which neither of them could do.

Education and life at school

Ramu's parents chose Telugu medium school as all children from '*Machli Basti*' went to Telugu medium school. The rationale behind this decision could be that the child should learn his mother tongue. His favourite subject is Telugu literature particularly Telugu poems. Ramu observes that due to lack of a good library with Telugu literature he is forced to read his text books and has exhausted reading all of them and is quite disappointed that neither the school nor the Panchayat is interested in setting up a good library. As it's his favourite subject, he has scored good marks in Telugu. He considers Hindi and English, especially Hindi as a difficult subject for comprehension.

As a boy interested in studies, Ramu is regular in school. Along with academic studies he participates in extra-curricular activities like sports and arts competitions and programmes⁷. Last year he has bagged a prize in drawing competition, which dealt with the subject of tsunami. Ramu speaks of his disappointment that the school is not equipped with science labs, neither has the school facilitated various activity clubs for children such as science, social science, environment, theatre, arts music and dance nor encouraged children to be part of any social service activity/club. He feels for an all-round development of a child it is important that the child is exposed to extracurricular activities apart from academic studies. Ramu felt the school's infrastructure was poor and was deeply concerned about the demotivating environment prevailing in the school. Ramu suggested that by just painting the school in a bright colour and having a garden would enliven the atmosphere. For now it was dull and uninspiring.

The school has teachers for all subjects but absenteeism of teachers is rampant. Ramu spoke about a teacher who was a mentor and a friend to him and his friends. Most of the students had the confidence to go to him and seek his advice or to confide in him about matters that bothered them. Ramu recalls that recently students had approached the teacher with a complaint against another teacher, an alcoholic, who uses bad language in the class room. Ramu and his classmates do not have the courage to report the matter to the Headmaster of the school. The students hope that the teacher will take up their case with the authorities. Ramu is disturbed not only of the casual attitude of the teachers to their job and constant absenteeism but also the derogatory

language they use to humiliate students. Children coming from lower socio economic class backgrounds are normally targeted and humiliated. Children learn from these teachers and take the cue to harass classmates who come from a poor background. Ramu himself has been a target of such harassment and humiliation by his classmates and some teachers. He remembers quite often being called “*Machliwala*” (Fisherman) and told “*Machli ka badbuaatha he*” (You smell of fish).

Interaction with girls in school is frowned upon. Ramu related an incident of him being caned for having sat next to his female cousin in the class room. Ramu has experienced corporal punishment such as caning and twisting and pinching ears. He spoke of use of corporal punishment to ‘discipline students’. Students weak in studies are ignored as a routine and the school makes no effort to arrange for special classes for them so that they can cope up with the studies.

Ramu’s challenge to learn Hindi language

Living in a pre-dominantly Telugu populated area, medium of instruction in school also being Telugu and needless to say his friends are also Telugu, Ramu has not picked up Hindi language. Hindi language is taught in school but he finds it difficult to comprehend. Not well conversed with the language he keeps himself away from children who speak Hindi, although he would love to befriend them. Ramu realizes that it is important for him to learn Hindi language as it is the link language in the Islands. Whenever he needs any kind of help from students of Hindi medium he approaches one friend, who knows Hindi well, to communicate with them. However now Ramu realizes the importance of Hindi in life in the Islands and thus comes to the CDC with an intention to study the language.

Experiences as a working child

Realizing the financial burden of his brother, the only breadwinner in the family and responsibility of marriage of a sister⁸, Ramu has taken a decision to do fishing during holidays. When Ramu presented the idea before his parents and brother, in the beginning nobody accepted the plan. Eventually family members relented or rather surrendered to his tenable arguments. The father opined that it is better to be trained as a fisherman in childhood instead of trying to learn the trade in adulthood. Ramu’s priority is to earn enough so that he can also

save money to purchase study materials, books and personal expenses for coming academic year.

Ramu wakes up around 4.30 am. He normally has a bowl of rice and lentil curry before setting off to fish. Half an hour later around 5.00 o'clock he walks to the *Jetty* (harbour) with a fisherman from the neighbourhood. Normally by 6.00 - 6.30 am, boats are readied and are pushed out into the sea from seashore for fishing with 35 to 40 fishermen. Five children are also included in the group along with Ramu. Children can get into any boat of their preference. The adults in the boat are supportive and protective and willing to teach them the fundamentals of fishing, handling the boat. Ramu shows deference to them and is always respectful to the adults. However Ramu avoids a few of the adults including married and bachelors due to their rough behaviour and drinking habit while out fishing. Ramu likes a young person, who lives near his home, who keeps an eye on him and shields him from the 'bad group'. Ramu enjoys fishing.

Around 8.00 am the boats return to the seashore. Ramu has breakfast on reaching home and then spends time doing his studies/homework. Around 1.30 pm he once again sets off for the Jetty with lunch and helps the colleagues in repairing the yarn/net. When the work is completed, elders usually start to play cards. Meanwhile Ramu play with other children at seashore. Around 3.30 pm with permission of the leader, he attends the CDC activities. Although Ramu's leader gives him permission to attend CDC he has not asked him more about CDC; however, another concerned adult encourages him to take part in all the activities of the CDC.

Ramu earns around 1,500 rupees per month for his work. He hopes to contribute a percentage of his earnings to his mother and the remaining he will use it to buy his books and other learning materials. His older brother also gives a certain portion of his earnings to his mother.... *amma*. Whenever the brothers need money they ask their mother for the same.

Ramu loves his parents and brother but he says he does not communicate much with them as he does not have that kind of bonding with them to share his thoughts, confidences. The normal conversation at home is related to his studies, food and fishing. The parents being ignorant about his school work they either would admonish him if they think he is not concentrating on his studies or request him to sit with his books. On the other hand Ramu shares

with his parents 'selected topics with them, like any achievement of him, odd incidents happened in school, information acquired from CDC workshops and so on. He has never shared difficulties, disciplinary actions he faced in school, his aspirations, emotions and thoughts with them. Whereas, with his brother he rarely shares his every day experiences. However family members communicate with each other while watching TV or having food. Although father and brother consume alcohol, the habit has not resulted in conflicts in the household or domestic violence. Alcohol consumption is a common phenomenon in the locality; Ramu does not pay much attention towards this practice in the household as it seems to be a norm in almost all households'. Ramu is clear in his mind that alcohol consumption is not good and one should not indulge in it.

Recreation and play: Opportunities

Ramu's fishing occupation gives him time and opportunities to play. He gets more than three hours per day as leisure time. He utilizes the free time in-between work, at seashore swimming and playing cricket with children, most of who reside at seashore and in evenings at CDC playing badminton, carom and drawing. In addition he studies Hindi, a language barrier he wants to overcome. Apart from games and arts, Ramu usually watches TV programmes at night. He likes Telugu movies and programmes in Telugu language from various channels like Gemini music, TEJA and ETV. His family members are also interested in Telugu channels. Ramu also plays traditional games, hide and seek etc. with peers in the neighbourhood.

Perspective on participation in governance

Ramu has shared the importance of conducting balsabhas (children's council) at the locality. In addition he thinks it is a necessity for children to participate in governance.

Future prospects.

Beyond a shadow of a doubt Ramu has stated that he wants to continue his studies. Ramu aspires to become a doctor and help the poor and needy people. He plans to take tuition in English language, the only medium of instruction at higher secondary level for science stream to fulfil the dream. Ramu is enthusiastic, studious and focused, he may not have a blue print as to how he will reach his goal, but he has it in him to persevere and attain his dream.

CASE – TWO

Girl Child from Bengali settlers

Sandhya is a 17 year girl from a rural background. She was born in a Hindu Bengali family and dropped out from school in 7th standard. She lives with her family and helps in household chores. Considering the large percentage of Bengali settlers⁹ and for drawing a sketch of out of school children especially girls, the life history has been documented with an aim to explore the situations of children from such backgrounds¹⁰. With the support of Children's Development Worker (CDW) the girl child was identified from the rural area. Interviews have been conducted over a number of sessions and all of them were conducted at the CDC. The rapport of the Educator with Sandhya helped immensely in documenting her story, Sandhya was open and comfortable to talk about her life.

Early Years

Despite the landholding as a Bengali settler, Sandhya's father works as an unskilled labourer¹¹ and her mother is a homemaker. Both her father and mother dropped out from 8th and 5th classes respectively. Sandhya has an elder sister and brother. Her sister was married three years ago and has moved out of the parental home, while brother works as a driver. Her brother too dropped out of school and did schooling only up to 5th standard. She had a fairly protective and caring family environment. As a young child she was most often ignored and disliked by the neighbourhood children. The reason for this was that if she witnessed any wrong doing such as stealing by the older children or her peers she would inform about it to their parents and most often they would get beaten up by their parents. The children felt she betrayed them and considered her as a tattletale. She realizes it was because of this habit of hers that she had no friends in her early childhood. She was quite lonely.

Her parents caught up in their work did not have much time to spend with her, she does not remember any incident or experience that touched her. When asked if her parents related stories to her, she said no, not even their own personal histories. She remembers a gift-a piece of cloth- she received from her aunty at the time of *pooja* (festival). Sandhya recalls experiences and incidents of spending time in an Anganwadi centre. She remembers fights among children, snapshot memories of the Anganwadi worker sleeping, *khichdi*, (a

preparation of rice and pulse boiled together) *daliya* (granulated grain) being prepared. Although she familiarized the basics of language and numeracy while at the anganwadi centre, it was her father taught who her the alphabets and numbers more effectively than the anganwadi worker.

Education and life at school

Sandhya was enrolled in a Bengali medium school. While in school she used to get into fights with her teachers and friends. She recalls an episode when she and her friends plucked some mangoes from the only mango tree in the school compound. It was considered a serious misconduct and they were punished severely for it. Sandhya mentioned that she enjoyed breaking rules, and questioning some of them which she felt was either unfair or ridiculous. She of course got into trouble for this and used to be punished by the teachers. Sandhya believes punishment was not the way to have handled her 'indiscipline' but rather she required counselling at that time. She is of the opinion that teachers should not use physical and verbal abuse as a means to discipline a child rather they should counsel children and keep a positive dialogue between students and teachers. This she feels would be far more effective in guiding children.

Sandhya was an average student. She liked social sciences but not necessarily Hindi language and mathematics. She found the latter two subjects difficult to comprehend and cope with. Her father took special interest in coaching her in mathematics and Hindi language. In fact every day he spends couple of hours helping her to solve mathematical problems. She enjoyed sports, art and crafts and excelled in the same. She participated in dance competitions and won a number of prizes for the school. Sandhya's mother's involvement in her studies was limited to only advising or admonishing her to pay attention to her studies.

Lost opportunity: Out of school

When Sandhya was in 7th standard, her mother-an active social worker of the neighbourhood got an opportunity to participate in a workshop for women in Delhi¹². Sandhya took advantage of this absence of her mother to stop going to school. She hated studies and worse the strict discipline in school. She thought that her *didi* (elder sister) led a stress free life just doing household chores. At that point in her life she felt that this life was far better than going to school. Sandhya gave number

of excuses to her father for not attending school. On her return from Delhi, Sandhya's mother was shocked that her daughter had stopped going to school. Sandhya was advised by her parents to re-join school but she refused. They even beat her but she still refused. Having not gone to school for 15 days there was a fear that her name would be cut off from the register. Sandhya was in two minds to go back to school or stay at home, she vacillated between these two decisions. Her disinterest in studies and strict discipline in school made her make up her mind against going back to school. She was also quite afraid of the punishments, taunts and humiliation she would have to go through at the hands of the teacher and her classmates. Surprisingly no one from the school... teachers came to enquire about her absenteeism. Interestingly her classmates too did not enquire about her absence. If either of them had persuaded and counselled her today Sandhya would have been school. Sandhya's is not an isolated case in the neighbourhood there are cases of other children too dropping out of school for similar reasons. As Sandhya puts it... thus ('aise') she gave up the study.

Attempts at turning ordinary moments into extraordinary: Life as an out of school girl

Sandhya shared the painful days after she gave up schooling. Sandhya was often hurt by taunts of her mother. Comments like "*Jo manghatha hum diya, lekin...*" (we gave what you wish, but...) and "I should make you tired by indulging in household chores" were reverberated in the household. After a month or so her parents resigned themselves to the situation. Sandhya's idea of having a 'better' life doing household chores than studying did not materialise. She was burdened with all household work and at the same time did not have time for play. Her friends' world was different from hers, they had things to share about school, teachers, homework and she found herself left out. Within one year Sandhya regretted about the 'wrong decision'. Even though parents encouraged her to take re-admission in the new academic year, due to the fear of being teased by teachers and class mates and inhibition to sit with juniors, Sandhya decided against re-joining school.

When she sees friends or children go to school, especially out of the locality, Sandhya thinks about the lost opportunity of education. Now in her words, she 'leads a life with very rare extra ordinary moments'. But due to the initiative of CDC at the locality, she gets

opportunities to participate in various programmes. This now gives a fresh breath to her. According to Sandhya, through the CDC activities she learns about health, hygiene, life skill and general knowledge and so on. In addition as a girl, who is enthusiastic in dancing, Sandhyalikes to attend the CDC due to the opportunities for performances. In short, after out of school, CDC becomes a venue to study different dimensions of life and gives a helping hand to her to come out from the closed circle and look at the new horizon. Now she is trying to turn ordinary moments into extraordinary by regularly participating in the CDC activities.

She communicates very rarely with her father. She approaches her father whenever she needs permission to go outside the village. Otherwise Sandhya never takes an initiative to communicate with her father. While when the circumstance demands, like mothers absence in the household, Sandhya's father asks her "to bring a glass of water or to serve food" and so on. On the other end, mother enquires about the activities of CDC, preparation for dance programme, incidents or detailed description of *poojas* (festivals) participated by Sandhya.

Even though there is no compulsion to indulge in household chores, in very rare occasions her mother asks Sandhya to do the chores. Her mother shares her childhood difficulties in comparison with current scenario when Sandhya doesn't obey. In addition, often Sandhya's mother points out the importance of becoming a 'good cook' by pinpointing possible scolding of 'future mother-in-law'. Now Sandhya considers herself as a 'good cook' and perceives the 'responsibilities' in the household being a female in the family. She has shared her brother's 'assistance' in the family like fetching water and other physical activities that are appropriate to the role of males in family. She has acceded to the division of *ghar/bahar* (inside/outside household) for females and males.

Whenever the necessity of money comes, Sandhya approaches her mother, who keeps and spends money in household. Sandhya talks very rarely with her brother. Being a driver, her brother stays outside than with the family. By dint of the consumption of alcohol often household becomes a venue of conflicts between parents. Two or three times Sandhya indicated her to parents to stop it. But despite the 'silence' on the comment, conflicts happen occasionally. Sandhya has shared that she 'feels bad' with reference to the consumption of alcohol and conflicts.

Future?

As a girl, who 'lives in her world', until now Sandhya hasn't thought seriously about the future. She considers this period for playing and recreation and plans to live like this up to 25 years. Now she doesn't think about marriage. She has expressed an 'interest' to study, but yet not searched how or in which way she can continue her study. Meanwhile she has shown a little bit interest in tailoring, but hasn't considered it as an occupation in future.

CASE – THREE

Male child from urban background

The life history of Arun, a studious 16 year old male child from urban well-to-do family¹³ has been documented in the study with an intention not only to dig deep into a life of an urban child but also to give an account of the general characteristics of children in the urban context. Acquaintance of one of the Field Coordinators¹⁴ with the child has helped in getting a heartfelt cooperation from him. Interviews have been conducted from the household of Field Coordinator. As an energetic, open minded adolescent, Arun hasn't hesitated to open-up.

An Introvert boy: Early years of childhood

Arun was born in a Hindu family. His father and mother works in government service as Draftsman and Lower Grade Clerk respectively. In case of education, his father has a technical education, while mother completed her graduation in Arts. Within the multi-lingual context and common thread of Hindi, Arun's parents were married from different linguistic backgrounds¹⁵, father from Bengali and mother from Telugu. However, now the family members are communicating in Hindi¹⁶. Arun has a younger sister and she studies in 9th standard. The family has around two acres of land in the heart of town with buildings. Except AC, all common consumer products are being used in the household.

As the first and only child¹⁷ in the household, Arun was very much pampered in early childhood. During the years Arun got what he wished; toys, clothes etc. By pointing this out, Arun has shared with a smile that still parents keep the items in the household as a memorial.

Due to fear of accidents by falling out side or playing and possible fighting between friends, parents didn't allow him to go outside and play with peers in the neighbourhood. This resulted in a period of forlornness in Arun's life. He interacted and played with parents or grandparents. Meanwhile Arun studied letters, numbers and rhymes from grandparents. Later he was admitted at a kindergarten. At the same time, considering as a support Arun was sent to attend tuition classes. As an introvert and passive he kept distance from classmates. But distance couldn't stop fights between class mates. Due to the peculiarity of character, he was severely beaten by friends. Although he tried to complain the issues to teacher or mother, it didn't make a sea change. However the interaction with friends in two or three years slowly changed the character of Arun from a passive 'crying boy' to an assertive boy. He joined the 'villains' and became part of the group.

From introvert to extrovert: Life at school

Giving emphasis on 'quality education', Arun was sent to a private English medium school. The school is run by a Hindu charitable trust and follows certain particular rules and regulations underpinned on the vision of their founders. Sanskrit language¹⁸ is used in prayer sessions in the school. Chapters of Bhagvat Geeta¹⁹ are also a part of the prayer sessions. Apart from the 'elocution' Arun doesn't know the meaning of the Sanskrit verses and he hasn't taken it seriously. In addition, the school strictly prohibits non-vegetable food items at the school compound. Arun recalls explanation of one of the teachers on the practice. The teacher described that Hindus consider school as a sacred place like *mandir* (temple), while another teacher gave a 'scientific justification' that, 'vegetable food items are easy to digest'. But apart from the school timing Arun regularly takes non-vegetable items.

In case of infrastructure facilities and services, the school gives a fair picture especially with reference to so called facilities like building, playground, drinking water and sanitation, library and lab facilities. But apart from these, social science, science, music, dance clubs/associations, scouts and guides, red cross or any social service units, garden and training for vocational skills are absent in the school. Although recently eco-club was formed in the school, which does not functions effectively.

Arun has teachers for all subjects and they are punctual.²⁰ Arun has a good relationship with teachers. As a studious boy, he is a favourite of one or two teachers. Arun remembers that last year one teacher occasionally made phone calls during the time of exams and encouraged him. In spite of the academic support and relationship, Arun never share a positive perspective towards teachers. In his words, “students can challenge the teachers in their subjects”. He has evinced this with an example. His former mathematics teacher often failed to solve the problems accurately in class rooms. In a few occasions, the teacher corrected the problem by copying students, who already covered the problem at tuition classes! He has added that “most of the teachers come to this profession due to their inability to find a space in other professions, which needs more ‘competency’ and ‘intelligence’”. Thus he doesn’t consider the teachers in general as role models, especially with reference to academic excellence. He likes sports teacher due to his character. The sports teacher gives free karate classes to children and sending the second hand sports shoes after repaired to orphans. The teacher has a good knowledge in his subjects and affectionate relationship with students.

However Arun has undergone punishments like scolding, comparing with siblings and students from teachers and parents. But he hasn’t shared such incidents with teachers or parents. Instead Arun communicates these experiences with his close friends.

Arun gives whole hearted attention to study. He wakes up around 3.30 am in the morning and goes for tuition at 5 o’clock. After one hour tuition he comes back home and goes to school which starts at 7.30 am and ends up at 1.30 pm. Then after having his lunch he studies at home and goes for tuition at 3.00/5.00 pm, which ends at 5.00/7.00 pm. Later he spends half an hour in front of television and before 9 o’clock he goes to bed. Arun has shared that tuition remarkably supports study and makes the exams easier. Now except English he takes tuition for all subjects.

In addition to tuitions, parents also support and give impetus to him. Arun presents his class room lessons and projects before mother. Because of her educational-Arts-background, his mother is not able to provide critical comments to the presentations. Nevertheless the listening itself sharpens Arun’s understandings. Although busy with work, father also enquires about his study, especially difficulties. Arun communicates generally during the time of traveling with father on

bike. In spite of visit and interaction with the head of institution at the time of signing progress report, Arun's parents never go to school for further enquiries.

Arun communicates especially two topics; study and football with father. Likewise his father Arun is also interested in football²¹. He always asks permission from father for participating in any competitions. On the other hand Arun shares matters regarding study, achievements in school and jokes with mother and small talks with sister.

Even though there is no compulsion, in very rare occasions Arun 'assists' mother in household chores. His assistance generally includes fetching water from dug well in urgent situations and any kind of physical activities, which can be done by 'physical strength'. He feels shame to assist other 'feminine household chores' like cooking, washing clothes and so on. Occasionally his sister does the so called feminine works in the household. In his view, the 'level' of male and female is different. In connection with 'physical strength' and fruitful 10th exam result, now he is a devotee of Hanuman²².

Tuition, its influence and implications

From kindergarten onwards Arun attends tuition classes. Currently, except English Arun takes tuition for all subjects. He has conveyed the difficulty for finding adequate time for tuition particularly in morning hours due to the school timing. Now Arun has become a dependant on the parallel support system. Even though he is disturbed by understanding the psychological tendency, feels something 'missing' when not attending the tuition classes. Last year he didn't seek tuition for social science due to the difficulty to find time. He faced extreme pressure by the thought of 'missing something'. Therefore two months before the exam he started to study social science.

Arun acknowledges tuition classes as a fruitful supportive system. In his view he gets accurate notes, particularly focused on exams from tuition classes and this would help to build a career. However apart from the support, he never considers tuition teachers as influential characters.

Opportunities for recreation and play

Being a good football player, Arun loves to play. But the dream of 'career' restricts him to find time for playing. Nowadays he only plays

at physical training hours in school. Other than the science magazines he doesn't like to read other books or journals. He also expresses a jaundiced view on the importance of social science in curriculum. Along with playing football he is interested to watch 'mind relaxing' television programmes in Hindi such as music shows and cartoon programmes. But except holidays, he never spends more than half an hour per day for it. He calculates that after building a career, a secure and reputed job, he can enjoy and compensate this period.

Perspective on punishments and participation in governance

Other than scolding, shouting, and comparing with siblings and other students from parents and teachers, he has never faced any severe punishments in his life. Arun has rejected severe modes of punishments, but acceded to verbal methods. Surprisingly he has shared unawareness regarding child rights. With reference to participation in governance he has opined that it is not necessary for children.

Future prospects

Arun aspires to be with Indian Police Service (IPS) after completing his graduation in engineering and masters in business administration. He is influenced by the dream by noting a successful candidate in the Islands, i.e. the Lieutenant Governor. But Arun doesn't know the stage and pattern of the exam. He has shared that an IPS officer gets respect and honour from people. In his view apart from the potential of leadership, meeting and talking with people, there is not much work to do with respect to the post. In addition the post would get all the facilities like car, house etc. However to fulfil his aspiration he plans to shift to mainland for higher studies.

End notes

1. All names have been changed to protect confidentiality.
2. The word *Machli* in Hindi literary means fish and Basti means village/colony. The term MachliBasti is popular in the Islands for denoting a place where the majority traditionally indulges in fishing and allied activities. Aftermath of tsunami the Basti is a part of permanent shelters, constructed by government, however before tsunami it was on the seashore.

3. CDC is an initiative of Butterflies, programme with children in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The Centre conducts different types of programme for the overall development of children. Children's Development Worker (CDW) facilitates the programmes at the centre.
4. The respondent's poor command over Hindi sought translation from Telugu to Hindi by the CDW for documenting the life history
5. Considering the separate geographical entity, generally people of the Islands referred rest part of India as mainland.
6. In Telugu, mother's sister is known as *chinnamma*.
7. The school conducted annually a sports meet and different programmes like drawing, quiz, and essay writing competition, etc. in special days.
8. Dowry system is a common practice in the community. Even though his sister was married before the birth of Ramu, his father failed to pay the dowry on time. Recently due to extensive pressure and threat from the side of brother-in-law, the amount, Rs 10,000/ has been paid through taking small debts from different individuals at the neighbourhood. Now the family has to repay the amount. It is important to note here that his brother had also demanded an amount of Rs 3,000/ as dowry, in his marriage.
9. As per the invitation of government of India, as well as in settling the East Bengal persons who were displaced at the time of partition of the country were given the choice to settle in ANI. According to the classification, now they counted as one of the groups with OBC status in the Islands. In Census 2001, Bengali was the higher percentage in languages in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
10. Though no authentic statistical data, there were number of such incidents reported and related by children and community members. In Andaman and Nicobar Islands incidents of child marriage and its correlation with drop outs was common among Bengali, Ranchi and Telugu communities.
11. The land was given to lease for cultivation.

12. Aftermath of tsunami number of voluntary organizations came to Andaman and Nicobar Islands with different objectives and strategies for 'development'. One of them selected Sandhya's mother for the workshop.
13. He was one of the 28 students, who scored A+ for all subjects in Andaman and Nicobar Islands in last year CBSE Xth exam.
14. Butterflies, programme with children has been in three islands in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, i.e. South Andaman, Little Andaman and Car Nicobar since 2005. Each Island has a Field Coordinator to manage various programmes. The urban area includes in South Andaman and through the Field Coordinator the child has been identified.
15. It was observed during the field work that even though inter-religious, caste [according to administration and rules, division of caste 'does not exist (?)' in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. But during the field work, subtle presence and influence of caste, which came with the people from 'mainland' was noticed in the daily lives of people, especially in arranged marriages, notions on people from certain categories like Tribes from Ranchi area, lower caste from Andhra Pradesh, who indulged in fishing and so on] and linguistic marriages are very common in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, female partners invariably integrated into the male partners socio-cultural backgrounds. Here Arun's mother changed her name and title after the marriage.
16. It is interesting to note that though included in OBC category as a descendant of post 1942 Bengali Settlers, Arun considers himself as a member of 'general' category as he scared of being labelled as 'from reservation quota and consequent marginalization' in future from educational institutions in 'mainland'. The decision was taken by his father. Now without understanding the context of inequality based on caste, Arun supports the idea of 'merit' instead of reservation.
17. In early childhood Arun's younger sister was brought up by grandparents, far away from the household.
18. Sanskrit is considers as the sacred language in Hindu mythology. Vedas were written in the same language.

19. BhagvatGeeta, the soul of Mahabharata, deals with advises given by Lord Krishna to Arjuna, when he was bewildered at the battle field by facing his teachers, relatives and friends in opposition.
20. If any teacher doesn't perform up to the mark of students and management, the individual would be removed. Arun recalls that last year one mathematics teacher was removed due to poor performance.
21. Last three years the school football team played under the captaincy of Arun.
22. Hanuman, one of the Gods in Hindu mythology, is known as an ardent devotee of Lord Rama.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

Sl No. _____

PERSONAL PROFILE

1. Name (optional) :
2. Age :
3. Gender : Male / Female
4. Religion : Hindu/Muslim/Christian/Jain/any
other (specify)
5. Caste/ Community : ST (mention name)
..... / Pre-1942
Settlers – local born/ Bhantus / Moplas /
Karens / Post-1942 Bengali Settlers /
General
6. Mother tongue :
7. Education :
8. Occupation : Student/ any other (specify)
9. The house you
belong is : Own / rented / sharing
10. Locality : Rural/urban (Specify name of the village)
11. Nature of Family : Joint / nuclear
12. Land holding : No land at all/ 0-50 cents/ 50 cents-1 acre/
1acre or more

13. Family profile :

Sl No	Name (Optional)	Age	Education	Marital status	Occupation	Income

14. Facilities in the house :

Material of the roof	Concrete	Tiled	Tin sheet	Thatched
Floor	Granite/Marble	Mosaic	Cement	Mud
Rooms	One	Two	Three	More than three
Electricity	Yes	No		
Drinking water	Own Dug-well/ Tube well	Neigh- bourhood	Public Dug well/ tube well/piped	
Sanitation Facility	Flush toilet	Toilet with septic tank	Without septic tank	No
Others	TV, radio, Newspaper	Fridge, AC, Washing machine, Mixer, Gas stove	Phone, Computer	Phone, Two/Three/ Four wheeler

Right to participation

15. Do your parents ask you for your opinion, suggestion or views regarding your studies, choice of schools, friends, play, your vacation, etc.? Yes / No
16. Do you get any opportunity to participate in decision-making with regard to the services and programmes in the school? Yes / No

Rights to be heard

17. Do your parents listen to you when you have something to say about yourself or others? Yes / No
18. Which of the two rights you think are the most important to you?

Rank them in preference

.....

Participation in governance

19. Would you like to have a Children's Council /
Balsabha in your village? Yes / No
If Yes, Why do you think it is important?
.....
20. Do you think Panchayats should consult you when
they are proposing a new scheme/ project which
may affect your life ? Yes / No
21. Do you think Education Department should consult
you when they are proposing a new scheme/ project
which may affect your life ? Yes / No
22. Do you think Health Department should consult
you when they are proposing a new scheme/project
which may affect your life? Yes / No
23. Do you think PWD should consult you when they
are proposing a new scheme/ project which may
affect your life ? Yes / No
24. Should children be consulted by government officials
and politicians whenever they decide a new project? Yes / No
Go to Q. 38 ? (If you are not attending school)

Right to education

25. Type of School : Govt / aided / private / any other
(specify)
- a) Timing of School : 7.30a.m. - 1.30p.m. / 8.45a.m. - 3.00p.m.
- b) Does this create any kind of difficulties to you? Yes/ No
If Yes, What ?
- c) Which timing you prefer ?
- d) Medium of Instruction: English/Hindi/Tamil/Bengali
- e) Does the medium of instruction create any
difficulties in your study ? Yes / No
If yes, which language you prefer ?

f) Why you opted this school :

g) Distance of school from your home :

h) How do you go to school ?

By foot / By public / private bus / By school bus

26. Basic amenities in the school

Building	Yes/ No	very good	satisfactory	poor	very poor
Drinking water	Yes/ No	very good	satisfactory	poor	very poor
Sanitation facility	Yes/ No	very good	satisfactory	poor	very poor
Mid day Meal	Yes/ No	very good	satisfactory	poor	very poor
Library with internet facility	Yes/ No	very good	satisfactory	poor	very poor
Lab facilities	Yes/ No	very good	satisfactory	poor	very poor
Garden	Yes/ No	very good	satisfactory	poor	very poor
Play ground and sports kits	Yes/ No	very good	satisfactory	poor	very poor
Music and dance clubs	Yes/ No	very good	satisfactory	poor	very poor
Scouts & guides/NCC/ Red cross	Yes/ No	very good	satisfactory	poor	very poor
Science, social science & environment clubs	Yes/ No	very good	satisfactory	poor	very poor

a) What is missing in your school ?

b) If you were asked to design your school what would you do differently ?

27. Would you like to continue your studies ? Yes / No

If Yes/ No, Why ?

28. Does the school conduct extra-curricular activities ? Yes / No

If Yes,

a) How often ?

b) Do you participate in it ? Yes / No

c) If yes, please mention the programme/ item:

.....

29. Does your school have a sports teacher ? Yes / No

30. Does your school have an arts and crafts teacher? Yes / No

31. Does the school teach life skill education and or vocational skills ? Yes / No

If Yes, please mention details :

a) Do you feel it is important ? Yes / No

If Yes why? :

32. Does the school conduct any special classes or programmes for students, who face difficulties in study? *Regularly / Occasionally/ Never*
33. Do you have teachers for all subjects ? Yes / No
34. Do teachers come regularly and take the classes ? Yes / No
35. Are there any restrictions put by the school to interact and mingle with other gender in class room & school?
Very much/to some extent / not at all
- a) Have you ever under gone any disciplinary action? Yes / No
If yes, what ? Please give details :
36. Have you ever experienced any kind of humiliation with regard to your religious or cultural practice in school ? Yes / No
If yes, from whom?
Teachers / school authority / non-teaching staff / school mates/any other (specify):
37. Do parents take interest in your study?
Very much / Hardly / Not at all
- a) Do your parents help you in your studies or send you for tuition? Yes / No
- b) Does your mother or father come to school and enquire about your study and progress with teachers and school authority ?
Always /occasionally / never

Only for drop-out children or those who excluded from educational institutions

38. Have you ever been to school ? Yes / No
- a) If yes: in which class did you drop out / stop the study ?
- b) Why ?
- c) What you would like to do/learn to get a job ?
.....

Only for drop-out adolescent girls (11-18 years)

- d) Do you get regularly supplementary nutrition from Anganwadi ? Yes / No

- e) Does the Anganwadi provide you required literacy & numerical skills through non-formal education ? Yes / No
- f) Did you attend any training programme conducted by the Anganwadi on vocational skills for adolescent girls ? Yes / No
- g) Did you attend any awareness classes conducted by the Anganwadi on health, hygiene and nutrition for adolescent girls ? Yes / No

Early childhood care development

Experiences in Anganwadi

39. Did you go to any Anganwadi ? Yes / No
- a) Which types of services were you received from there? *Supplementary nutrition/immunization/ health check-up/ nutrition and health education/ pre-school education/referral service/all*
- b) What else do you think should be included in Anganwadis?
- c) How did Anganwadi Worker treat you & your friends?
Very good / satisfactory / need to be improved

Right to protection

40. Does anyone use any kind of intoxicants in your family ? Yes / No
If Yes,
- a) Who ? *Father/ Mother/ Brother/ Sister/ Grand father/ uncle / any other*
- b) What kind of ? *Alcohol / ganja / charas / bhang / heroin / brown sugar / hashish / pan, tobacco, bidi, cigarette*
41. How often conflicts happen within your family in between your parents or between your father /mother and children / grand parents?
Very often / sometimes / never
42. Do these incidents affect your study and daily life? Yes / No
43. In your knowledge, is there any financial difficulty

(debt or loan) in home? Yes / No
If Yes, Do you know any reason for it?

Gender discrimination — Only for girls

44. Do you have brother(s) ? Yes / No

a) Do you think your brother gets higher importance, in case of food, cloth, respect and love from parents? Yes / No

b) Do you think your parents give more attention on the education of your brother ? Yes / No

Working children

45. Do you indulge in any kind of work along with schooling or else ? *If NO Go to Q. 48* Yes / No

If Yes,

a) Nature of the work

b) Why you opted this

c) Working hours

d) How many days in a month do you work

e) Earning ? Money (how much per day) /
Gifts/ any other

f) Ways of spending

46. Does the work affect your study ?
Very much / to some extent / not at all

47. Does the work affect your relationship within the family, friends & daily life? *Very much/to some extent/not at all*

Child sexual abuse

48. Have you ever been touched by any grown-up in such a way that you felt it was not right ? Yes / No

49. Have you ever been treated in a way that you feel children should not be treated ? Yes / No

If yes, please give an example

Punishments / Emotional & physical abuse

50. Last 12 months have you faced any kind of punishment? Yes / No

If Yes,

- a) By whom? *Father/mother/ elder brother/elder sister / teachers/school authority/care givers/employer/others (specify)*
- b) What were the modes used ? Please tick

Physical	Emotional
Beating or slapping	Scolding, shouting (words used)... ..
Caning and pinching	Ignoring
Twisting ears	Harsh treatment
Kicking	Comparing with other siblings/ students
Shaking	Blackmailing

Any other (specify)

- c) How often you have been undergone these experiences? *Frequently/occasionally/very rarely*
- d) Did this beating result in physical injury? Yes / No
 If yes, were you treated by a doctor? Yes / No
 If yes, nature of treatment
- e) Did you share this with any one? Yes / No
 If Yes,
- f) With whom?
- g) Do you feel hurt by the experience? Yes / No
- h) Do these experiences affect your study, daily life and relationship with family members & peers?
Very much / to some extent / not at all

Physical impairment

51. Do you have any physical impairment? Yes / No
 If Yes, Please mention the impairment
- a) Do you get any kind of assistance from government or other institutions / NGO's ? Yes / No
 If Yes, Please give details
- b) Being differently abled do you face any problems with your a) peers, b) community, c) relationship with family members, d) in your daily life? Yes / No
 If Yes, What

Right to Health

52. Have you been ill in the last 12 months? Yes / No
 If Yes,

- a) Which type ?
- b) What treatment did you get ?
Allopath/Ayurveda/Homeopath/Unani/Traditional
- c) Type of hospital ? Govt (CHC / PHC / Dispensary) /
private / any other (specify)
If no treatment was given, specify why ?
- d) Distance of the hospital from the home ?
- e) Did you get adequate attention and care at that time?
Very much / hardly / never
- f) Usually who takes care of you, when you fall ill?
Mother/father/brother/sister/grand parent /
servant/any other (specify)

Substance abuse

53. Do you have the habit of substance abuse? Yes / No

If Yes,

- a) How often ? *Always / occasionally / very rarely*
- b) What kind of? *Alcohol / ganja / charas / bhang*
/ heroin / brown sugar / hashish / pan, tobacco,
bidi, cigarette
- c) Why and who got you initiated you in taking
substance? *Father / mother / brother / sister /*
uncle / friends / relatives / neighbor / any other
(specify)

Right to Leisure, recreation & cultural activities

54. How much time are you getting as leisure time?

-
- a) Where you are spending it? *At home/ park/ play*
ground/ street/ arts and sports clubs/ library/ any
other (specify)
- b) Please describe your leisure time activities
.....
- c) What are the facilities available at the 'space' –
where you spend your leisure time –
for recreation / play?
Playground/ infrastructure facilities for in-door

games / sports tools/ TV/ books/ other (specify)

.....

d) What would you like to have at that 'space'?

.....

Child rights

55. Are you aware of child rights?

Yes / No

If Yes, Please explain what do you mean by child rights ?

From which source you have got the information?

.....

a) What would you do if you are a witness to a violation of a child's right ?

.....

Remarks :

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you

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This book attempts to unfold the life experiences and perspectives of children in Andaman and Nicobar Islands and offers a comprehensive understanding about the social situations within the wider context. It also identifies areas of intervention for the state and civil society organizations for improving the lives of children in the Union Territory. Following the framework of child rights, in which children are seen as social actors/agents with rights and their own perspectives, the book captures voices of children in the local milieu. Engaging with administrative data and existing literature, the book makes a departure to delineate the situations in transition. The study explores varying issues and inequalities experienced by children cutting across age, gender, class and allied aspects and looks into the dimensions of right to survival, development, protection, and participation. The analysis points out interplay of the state as well as socio-economic and cultural factors of the isles embedded within the historical background in shaping the life situations of children. Hence joint efforts of the state, civil society and communities are proposed in order to create a child friendly environment wherein children are considered as active citizens with rights and responsibilities.

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