

Economic Activities and School Attendance by Children of India

Fifth Quinquennial Survey
NSS 50th Round 1993-94

National Sample Survey Organisation
Department Of Statistics
Government Of India

May, 1997

Preface

The National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) in its 50th round (July 1993 - June 1994) devoted to the fifth quinquennial survey on employment - unemployment, has collected data on the activity profile of children of age 5-14 years with the objective to make available useful information relating to child labour and its causes. Information was collected on school attendance, participation in household chores and work related activities.

This report dwells on children's participation in economic activities vis-a-vis their school attendance. It consists of four chapters. While Chapter one is introductory, Chapter two sets out the conceptual framework. Chapter three gives the sample design and estimation procedure adopted in the survey; and Chapter four deals with summary findings of the report. Tables containing related data are also included in this report.

The field work of the survey was done by the Field Operation Division; data processing and tabulation work were handled by the Data Processing Division and the Computer Centre, respectively. The Survey Design and Research Division designed the survey and prepared the report.

I am indeed thankful to the members of the Working Group for their valuable guidance at various stages of the survey activity - from designing of the schedule of enquiry to the preparation of this report. I am grateful to the members of the Governing Council, Heads of the Divisions of NSSO and their colleagues for their efforts which have gone into producing the report. I hope the report will serve as a reference document to planners and policy makers.

May, 1997

P. R. Dongre
Chief Executive Officer
National Sample Survey Organisation

HIGHLIGHTS

- **D**uring 1993-94, 36.1 per cent of the Indian population consisted of children under 15 years of age, of them children in the age-group 5-14 years comprised 66 per cent. They formed 3.2 per cent of Indian work-force according to usual status (principal and subsidiary status together).
- **T**he school attendance rate among the boys was 70 per cent in the rural areas and 85 per cent in the urban areas, it was 55 per cent and 80 per cent among the girls in rural and urban areas, respectively. Only about 2 to 4 per cent of children had never attended a school. Out of every 100 girls who were ever enrolled in school, 42 in rural India and 18 in urban India discontinued studies before completing the class/level they attended last. The corresponding numbers for boys were 27 and 14.
- **A**bout 7 to 8 per cent of rural children and a little lower, 3 to 4 per cent of urban children had worked, albeit nominal, with 'reasonable regularity'. The work of 77 to 89 per cent of working children had resulted in economic benefits to their households.
- **A**bout 31 to 34 per cent of girls helped in household chores as against 24 to 26 per cent of boys.
- **T**he proportion of working children or of children helping in household chores was highest among the drop-outs and the sex-differentials in these proportions were also maximum among the drop-outs.
- **I**n rural areas, a majority of working children was engaged in household enterprises and mainly in the agricultural sector. In urban areas, on the other hand, a majority of the working children worked as hired labourer and mainly in the non-agriculture sector.
- **T**he proportion of working children engaged in 'manufacturing and building & construction industries' was about 7 per cent in rural areas but 24 per cent in urban areas.
- **A**bout 57 to 63 per cent working children reported the need "to supplement household income" as the principal reason for their work.
- **A**bout 22 to 36 per cent working children in rural areas had to miss school as against 5 to 10 per cent of working children in the urban areas. Further, about 20 to 25 per cent of rural working children and 8 to 10 per cent of urban working children were unable to prepare for their studies due to work.

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CONTENTS

	<u>Pages</u>
Chapter 1 : Introduction	1 - 2
Chapter 2 : Conceptual Framework	3 - 5
Chapter 3 : Sample Design and Estimation Procedure	6 - 9
Chapter 4 : Main Findings	10 - 20
Appendix : All-India Detailed Tables	A1 - A61

List of Detailed Tables

Table No.	Description	Page No.
Table 83	Distribution of children working by type of activity for each school attendance status and broad age group by social group	A1 - A24
Table 84	Distribution of children of age 5 - 14 years by status of school attendance and work for broad age group and household social group	A25 - A30
Table 85	Distribution of children of age 5 - 14 years by status of school attendance and work for each household mpce	A31 - A36
Table 86	Distribution of children (5-14 yrs.) working in manufacturing and building & construction by process in which working by broad age-group and number of children working in manufacturing and building & construction per 1000 working children	A37 - A38
Table 87	Distribution of children (5-14 yrs.) working by reason for working for each mpce class	A39 - A44
Table 88	Proportion (per thousand) of working children (5-14 yrs.) by effect on studies and schooling by type of activity	A45 - A47
Table 89	Proportion (per thousand) of working children (5-14 yrs.) by effect on studies and schooling by mpce class	A48 - A53
Table 90	Distribution of children (5-14 yrs.) by reason for not currently attending school for each mpce class	A54 - A59
Table 91	Distribution of children (5-14 yrs.) not currently attending and seeking/available for work by reason for seeking/available for work for children dropped out and never attended	A60 - A61