



BREADS

Bangalore Rural Educational
and Development Society



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Slice



Fr Rubin Mathew sdb
Executive Director, BREADS

Director's Message

It's worth reminding ourselves that India assures its citizens of free and compulsory elementary education, as a fundamental right guaranteed by its Constitution. The reality is different and a challenge on many fronts. India, as an entire country, has achieved a mere 25.5% compliance with the Right to Education Act 2009 infrastructural guidelines for elementary schools. The National Education Policy 2020 aims at 100% gross enrollment ratio in schools by 2030 and yet, the dropout rate is increasing, with the national average being 14.6%. In this edition of Slice, we report on how BREADS and its partners in Karnataka address the issue of increased school dropout rates while promoting child rights.

Public Budgeting in the Child Rights Context

Examining the Union Budget 2023-24 for its allocations for children, *HAQ: Centre for Child Rights*, summarised that the 5th largest economy in the world only affords 2.3% of its budget for 37% of its citizens under 18 years. It is a shocking fact indeed, and highlights for us, the priority accorded to the development of children and their rights in the country. However, even the overall spending on the social sector for the entire population is also low, at 18%. These low allocations and the lack of spending of these allocations has a severe impact, especially on the vulnerable sections of society. One of the sectors deeply impacted is the education of children, from preschool to higher secondary levels.

The Educational Context

While examining the situation of education in India, some concepts are relevant: the Gross and Net Enrollment Ratios (GER/NER) and the dropout rate.

The GER is the total enrollment at a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the eligible official school-age population corresponding to that level of education in a given school year. It can be more than 100%. The NER is similarly calculated for the actual corresponding age group. According to the Ministry of Education, the GER and NER percentages in India for 2021-22 were: at primary level—104.8/ **88.6**, upper primary—94.7 / **71.3**, secondary education—79.6/ **47.9** and higher secondary—57.6/ **34.2**.

What can be clearly observed in the NERs, especially for the secondary education levels, is that

many children in India are severely disadvantaged; losing years of their student life because they are unable to study at their age-appropriate levels for various reasons. Another statistic of concern is that 67% of children below 5 years in India are anemic (National Family Health Survey-5).



Other relevant data about the Indian government school system in 2021-22:

- The number of schools that closed were 20,021; of which, 9793 (48.9%) were government schools.
- The number of teachers reduced by 1,89,302; of which, 44,653 (23.6%) were government school teachers.
- The dropout rates (percentage of students dropping out of school midway) at various levels were: Primary—1.45, Upper Primary—3.02, Secondary—12.61

Education in Karnataka according to the Ministry of Education

- Karnataka's compliance with the RTE infrastructural guidelines for elementary schools is 23.6%.
- Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) was: Primary—108.1, Upper Primary—105.5, Secondary—94.7
- Karnataka recorded a low dropout rate: Primary—0%, Upper Primary—1.1%, Secondary—14.7%
- The Karnataka government acknowledges 1,41,358 vacant government school teacher posts.
- The Karnataka government allocated 12% of the total 2023-24 state budget to address the various problems in the Education sector. Whether it gets implemented, is left to be seen.

A Case in Point: Devadurga, Raichur District, Karnataka



Don Bosco Service Center (DBSC) Devadurga, BREADS' partner in Raichur, is well-appreciated by the government district administration for its important contributions, especially towards promoting child rights. On 27 December 2022, Smt. R. Indira, Devadurga Block Education Officer (BEO) request-

ed the collaboration of DBSC in its survey of government high school (SSLC) student dropouts, to bring them back to mainstream learning.

As part of the survey in January 2023, the DBSC team examined the enrollment and attendance registers of children in schools to identify dropouts. They then began an awareness creation process in communities on children's rights, the Right to Education and Article 21-A of the Indian Constitution that guarantees free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of 6-14 years. The DBSC team addressed parents, community partners, School Development Monitoring Committee (SDMC) members, village panchayat members, senior citizens, self-help group members and the youth. They identified dropout students and visited their homes. The survey was conducted in 6 villages by the DBSC staff along with local school teachers.

DBSC Re-enrollment Results

School name	Dropouts class-wise			Total Dropouts	Students re-enrolled
	8 th	9 th	10 th		
GHS B. Ganekal	37	94	18	149	13
GHS Hemanur	17	22	15	54	12
GHS Irabagera	38	25	17	80	9
GHS Koppar	20	10	19	49	18
GHS Kottadoddi	17	44	13	74	10
GHS Mundaragi	20	49	08	77	14
Total	149	244	90	483	76



Why do children dropout of school?

From their interactions with children and communities, the DBSC team identified the following reasons for children to drop out of the school system, clearly demonstrating the systemic nature of the issue:

- Child labour-work for wages
- Child marriages
- Required for household work
- Dropping out at primary levels
- Lack of interest in studies
- Parents' negligence
- Physical and medical problems
- Poor academic performance
- Poverty – weak family income
- Migration
- Education considered unnecessary
- Lack of infrastructure
- Lack of public transport facility
- Lack of teachers

Specifically for girls, the following factors were relevant:

- Child labour
- Child marriages
- Safety concerns
- Lack of basic facilities in school for girls -toilets with water
- Social restrictions related to puberty and marriage



The safety of girls travelling alone is a major concern as families do not allow girls to stay in government hostels as many of them lack separate toilets for girls. Though some schools have separate toilets, they are not maintained properly, creating a reluctance among students to come to school.

The Open School Initiative: Mysuru

Another BREADS' partner, Don Bosco Makkalaya's Open School initiative involves outreach by its teachers to identify child labourers and school dropouts among the poverty-stricken families and street dwellers in and around the city of Mysuru. So far, they have counselled 2918 young people, and motivated 165 school dropouts to register themselves under the Open School programme to complete their Secondary School Leaving Certificate (SSLC) and Pre-University Course (PUC) examinations. They visited the families of the students and their respective municipal wards, to spread awareness about the importance of education in today's world, inspiring parents to send their children back to school.

The Open School teachers followed up with these children, organising guided classes for them

	SSLC (10 th class)	PUC (12 th class)	Total
2021- 2022	44	29	73*
2022- 2023	42	50	92
Total			165

*Students who passed their exams



through both online or in-person modes. The classes are conducted in a safe, conducive environment at the centre, with opportunities to also develop gardening and cooking skills, to promote their holistic development.

The first batch of 73 students appeared for the Board examinations in March 2022. All of them successfully passed the examination, becoming eligible for higher studies or formal skill training courses. The second batch of students are preparing for the Board exams in March 2023, ably assisted by their teachers. We wish them every success!



School Re-enrollment Initiatives: CREAM

One of the many endeavours of the BREADS' Child Rights Education and Action Movement (CREAM) programme, is to ensure that children access their right to education. This is achieved by motivating adults to send children to school, re-enrolling dropouts, preventing child labour and child marriage, and by working with responsible constitutional bodies such as the Gram Panchayat administration, SDMCs, Child Protection Committees (CPCs) and the government departments, to fulfill their obligations to the children. Some of the most effective stakeholders in the process of promoting child rights and bringing children back to school are the informed and empowered children of the Child Rights Clubs. They, along with the other interested adults, use various platforms such as the Grama Sabhas, to voice their concerns and advocate for infrastructure development to make their schools better equipped for learning.

School Dropouts Re-enrolled in CREAM III (Oct 2020- Dec 2022)				
Actions inspired after attending CREAM workshops				
Districts	Re-enrollment by			Total children re-enrolled
	Other stakeholders	Project staff	Child Rights Club members	
Bangalore Urban	0	0	15	15
Bangalore Rural	0	0	61	61
Vijayanagara	0	25	31	56
Gadag	0	0	10	10
Koppal	0	0	20	20
Bidar	0	0	6	6
Shivamogga	0	6	0	6
Kalaburagi	0	0	2	2
Mysuru	2	28	20	50
Chamara-janagar	26	0	0	26
Ramanagara	8	3	6	17
Mandya	12	8	13	33
Raichur	7	13	8	28
Bagalkot	9	0	7	16
TOTAL	64	83	199	346



We need to keep in mind that the state of Education and the school system of the nation, has tremendous impact on not just its children's learning, but also on their nutrition and health, rights, and social justice, in addition to the economic development of its citizens.

The scale of the challenges that confront the marginalised child and her parents, on her journey towards achieving an education, and thereby better access to freedom and a future, requires the support of numerous stakeholders in civil society but above all, the firm commitment of the State.

Calendar

February 2023

- Monitoring and evaluation of BREADS' projects
- Visits from partner agencies
- Inauguration of the 20th skill training batch—DB BEST Academy
- CREAM state-level staff meeting and training
- Visit of the Economist- General of the Salesian Congregation

March 2023

- Visit of the General Councillor of Youth Ministry in the Salesian Congregation
- Workshop on BREADS' Child Rights approach for other NGOs
- Monitoring and evaluation of BREADS' projects

BREADS NEWS



Deutsche Bank Employees engage with DB BEST Students

BREADS was privileged to host a team of volunteers from Deutsche Bank at DB BEST Academy, BREADS' skill training centre, Lingarajapuram, Bangalore on 2 February 2023...[more...](#)



CREAM Dissemination Workshop in Chitradurga

On 15 February 2023, CHITHRA Don Bosco in collaboration with the district administration, zilla panchayat, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), and government departments...[more...](#)



Job Fair at Don Bosco Vaduthala

Don Bosco Job Placement Network (JPN) in collaboration with Don Bosco Youth Centre, Vaduthala, organised a job fair at Don Bosco Senior Secondary School, Vaduthala, Ernakulam...[more...](#)



Varna Lahari by DREAM Trivandrum

Thirty-nine artists from different parts of Kerala came together to create more than 50 paintings at Thampanoor KSRTC bus station, Thiruvananthapuram on 21 January 2023...[more...](#)

BREADS Don Bosco, #75 North Road, St Thomas Town Post, Bangalore-560 084
Ph: +91-80-25463476; 25805551 | www.breadsbangalore.org