

# **STUDY ON STATUS OF CHILDREN BETWEEN 15 AND 18 YEARS IN PUDUCHERRY AND KARAIKAL**

**Conducted by**  
**HOPE**

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# PREFACE

There are legislations for protection of child rights in India. But there are contradictions in defining the age of children among these legislations.

These contradictions not only lead to confusion in enforcement, but also exclude millions of children in the age group of 15 to 18 years from enjoying their legitimate right to survival, development, protection and participation.

India ratified United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1992; UNCRC says, 'a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years'. But even after 20 years of UNCRC in our country, we were not able to uniformly define 'who is a child', let alone ensuring all the rights enshrined in the Convention.

Hence the idea to study the status of children who are neglected by most of the child welfare legislations came up during the discussion between HOPE Team and CRY (Child Rights and You) Team.

This study was started in April 2012 and concluded in May 2013. Right from preparation of the Questionnaire to the Pre-Printing Release, this study was conducted in a participatory manner. I gratefully acknowledge the contributions of Ms. Virgil D Sami, Arunodaya, Chennai; Mr. S. Thomas Jayaraj, CCRD, Chennai; Mr.

C. Nambi, CSED, Coimbatore; Mr. C. Jim Jesudoss, Sakthi Vidiyal, Madurai; Ms. Parvatha Varthini, Littles Trust, Madurai; Ms. Vidyaa Ramkumar, Chairperson, CWC, Puducherry; Mr. Manivannan, Chairperson, CWC, Karaikal; Mr. Shiva Anand, Research Scholar, Pondicherry University and all Child Rights Organisations of Puducherry (CROP) who were with us throughout this process.

I hope this study - initiated during the 20th year of UNCRC in our country - will play a small role in the uniform definition of children as 'any person below the age of 18 years' soon.

My sincere thanks to CRY Team Members Mr. John R, General Manager – Development Support - South, Ms. Vidya Raman, Associate GM – DS-S and Mr. Arivazhagan Rayan, Manager – DS for their support.

**P. Joseph Victor Raj**  
**Director, HOPE**

Municipality / Commune	Wards / Panchayats	Sample	Sample Wards / Panchayats
Puducherry	42	4	Muthialpet
			Vambakeerappalayam
			Thengaihattu
			Kombakkam
Ozucarai	37	4	Mettupalayam
			Moolakulam
			Kalapet
			Sanjeevinagar Alangkuppam
Karaikal	18	2	Karaikal East
			Karaikal West
Bahour	15	2	Bahour
			Karayamputhur
Mannadipet	16	2	Chettipattu
			Thirukannur
Ariyankuppam	11	1	T.N.Palayam
Nettapakkam	11	1	Eripakkam
Nedungadu	4	1	Nedungadu
Niravi	4	1	Niravi
Thirunallar	9	1	Sellur
Kottucheri	5	1	Melakasakudi
Thirumalairayanpattinam	5	1	T.R.Pattinam
<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>23</b>	

PUDUCHERRY SLUMS	Vanarapet
	Kandoctor Thottam
	J.J.Nagar
	Periyarnagar
	Aattupatti
	Annai Indira Ninaivu Nagar
	Narikuravar Kalani Colony

# MAJOR FINDINGS

## GENERAL

- 1) The study was conducted in 10% locations of Puducherry and Karaikal among the 100% respondents (children between 15 and 18). Additionally, 7 slums in Puducherry were also covered for comparison.
- 2) The study has been conducted among 2852 children (58.63) in Puducherry, 1333 children (27.40%) in Karaikal and 679 children (13.95) in slums. The respondents include 51.3% male and 48.7% female.
- 3) Among the study group 37.04% belong to Most Backward Community, 22% Backward Community, 25.6% Scheduled Community and 1.6% belong to others.
- 4) Among the respondents, 87.9% are Hindus, 9.6% are Christians and 2.5% are Muslims.
- 5) Regarding the annual income, parents of 69.7% of respondents fall under the category of below ₹ 24000 (less than ₹ 2000 per month) in Puducherry, 75.2% earn again below 24000 in Karaikal and 78.2% parents of Focal Group draw less than 2000 per month in Puducherry Slums.
- 6) Regarding type of house in Puducherry 39.4% are living in thatched houses, 17.1% in tiled houses and 43.6 % residing in concrete houses.
- 7) About ownership of houses in Puducherry 84.5% live in own houses, in Karaikal 79% live in own houses and in Slums 67.7% live in own houses.
- 8) Regarding occupation pattern, 70.9% in Puducherry, 72.9% in Karaikal and 74.5% in Puducherry Slums work as daily wage coolies.

- 9) As far as type of family is concerned, in Pudicherry 93% of respondents live as nuclear family, 94.8% in Karaikal and 83.5% in Slums live as nuclear family.

## **SURVIVAL**

- 10) Regarding Birth Certificates, 27 surveyed children in Puducherry (0.9%), 6 children in Karaikal (0.5%) and 38 children in slums (5.6%) do not have Birth Certificates.
- 11) With regard to safe environment, 92.3% children in Puducherry 87.5% in Karaikal said that they live in safe environment. But in Slums, only 35.5% said that they live in safe environment; 64.5% said that they are not living in safe environment in Slums.
- 12) Similarly, 89.3% of the respondents in Puducherry and 88.4% respondents in Karaikal said that they are living in Healthy and Hygienic environment. But in slums, 62.2% said that they are not living in healthy and hygienic environment.
- 13) In Puducherry 67.6% of the respondents is getting drinking water from house tap; in Karaikal 67.9% get from house tap and in slums only 38.6% get water from house taps. The remaining depends upon the street taps.
- 14) In Puducherry and Karaikal, 91.0% and 94.8% of the respondents have access to clean drinking water respectively; but in Puducherry slums only 56.8% of the children enjoy this resource; 42.8% of the children said that they do not have access to clean drinking water.
- 15) Regarding availability of nutritious food, in Puducherry 96.6%, in Karaikal 94.6% children get nutritious food; but in Puducherry Slums only 76.6% get healthy food.
- 16) In Puducherry, 94.6% children get three square meals per day and in Karaikal, it is available for 88.8 % children. But in Puducherry slums, only half of the children population

(49.9%) get three square meals per day.

- 17) Regarding awareness of Reproductive Health, 19.3% in Puducherry, 27.1% in Karaikal and a minuscule 1.2% in Slums have awareness about Reproductive Health Awareness Programme held in Anganwadi Centres.

## **DEVELOPMENT:**

- 18) In Puducherry, 92.3% of the children are currently continuing their studies; and in Karaikal it is 89.5%. but in Slums, only 54.3% are continuing their studies; an alarming 45.7% are dropouts.
- 19) Though drop-out is not much in Puducherry and Karaikal, it is disheartening to note that 2 children have dropped out before 5 years in Karaikal; 10 and 4 children have dropped out before 10 years in Puducherry and Karaikal. 38 and 40 children have dropped out before 14 years in Puducherry and Karaikal. 169 and 94 have dropped out after 14 years in Puducherry and Karaikal.
- 20) In Slums, 2.7% drop-out before 10 years, 8% before 14 years and 34.6% after 14 years.
- 21) Low Family income was the reason for the drop-out for 20% of the children in slum areas.
- 22) Surprisingly in Puducherry 82% of the interviewed children, in Karaikal 93.6% and in slums 92.6% respondents have studied in government schools.
- 23) About the medium of instruction, in Puducherry 61% reported that they studied in Tamil medium; in Karaikal 88.4% and in Slums 83.7% reported Tamil medium. The interesting finding is that in slums 16.2% of children are reportedly pursuing English medium compared to Puducherry's 38% English medium.



- 24) Coming to method of teaching, Puducherry reported 11.5% participatory method, Karaikal 20.7% and in Slums only 8.7% reported participatory method. The major share goes to outdated monologue and memorizing methods.
- 25) Awareness about welfare schemes for Students is high among the children, which is 92% in Puducherry, 98% in Karaikal and 88% in Slums.
- 26) Class Teacher was the main source of this information (67%) to the children, next it is Headmaster (32%); Friends (12.7%) and Family (11.3%) also play a major role. Role of NGOs in informing about the govt. welfare measures such as Midday Meals, Free Uniform, Free Note books, Free cycle, Scholarship, etc is minimal (4.3%).
- 27) More than 90% of the children have also accessed one scheme or the other. 8.3% faced difficulties in getting the benefits because of issues such as certificate, bribery and harassment, etc.
- 28) 87.9% children in Puducherry and 95.8% in Karaikal and 94.6% in Slums said that they have clean drinking water facility in Schools.
- 29) Regarding availability of toilet facility in schools, Puducherry indicates 83%, Karaikal 91.2% and Slum 66.7%. In UT capital of Puducherry 16.4 don't have toilet facilities and 33% in slums have no toilet facilities.
- 30) Complaints about verbal abuse by Teachers from schools are reported in all segments i.e. 11.1% from Puducherry, 10.1% from Karaikal and 32.3% from slums.
- 31) Corporal punishment is also reported from all the three sample areas i.e. 8.2% from Puducherry, 6.4% from Karaikal and worrisome 24% from Slums.

- 32) Regarding the fearless learning environment in Schools, 9.5% of the children in Puducherry, 12.7% children in Karaikal and as many as 30.8% children in the slums said that they do not have fearless learning environment in Schools.
- 33) It was found that 52.1% children in Puducherry, 55.9% in Karaikal and 99.4% in slums have not heard about Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009.
- 34) Coming to Life Skill Education, 62.9% respondents in Puducherry report that they have not received any life skill training; in Karaikal it is 67.8% and in Slums 99.4 report that they have had no life skill Education.
- 35) Regarding availability of vocational training in Puducherry only 27.9 % children said that is available, in Karaikal 36.3% and in slums 20.3% alone said that it is available in their neighbourhood.

## **PROTECTION:**

- 36) In Puducherry 61.5% and in Karaikal 47.7% of the interviewed children said that they are not aware of the rights of children. In slums, 97.6% children said that they are not aware of child rights.
- 37) Almost all the children (99.7%) in Puducherry and 98.8% children in Karaikal said that they have not experienced Discrimination at home or in Society. It was 100% in case of slums.
- 38) Similarly, 99.7% of the children in Puducherry, 99.1% in Karaikal and 98.4% slums said that they have not experienced any violence.
- 39) Similarly 99.3% children have said that they have not experienced humiliation and 99.6% have said that they have not experienced rejection.

- 40) Coming to child labour, in Puducherry 4.6% children go for work, in Karaikal 7.7% and in the slums 28% work in various sectors both organized and unorganized.
- 41) On the whole, 2 children entered labour force before 5 years of age, 9 before 10 years, 37 before 14 years and 375 between 15 and 18 years.
- 42) As far as slums are concerned both below 14 and below 18 age groups work in Private Companies (10.5%), Home based work (9.9%) and unorganised sector (6.2%).
- 43) 66 children have said that their working environment is not safe.
- 44) In Puducherry 90.3% children and in Karaikal 74.5% children do not have Life Insurance coverage; in slums, 99.3% children do not have this coverage.
- 45) Awareness about ChildLine Number is 6.3% in Puducherry, 12.4% in Karaikal and 2.4% in slums.
- 46) During the study it was found that in the recent past 67 child marriages has taken place in the Union Territory and among the 67, sixty two are girls and five are boys all below 18 years old.

## **PARTICIPATION**

- 47) In families, the children have participation in decision making; 77% of the children said that they enjoy this right. 45% said that they enjoy this right in Schools; and only 3.4% said that they enjoy this right in the society.
- 48) In Puducherry 47.4% children and in Karaikal 26% said that they do not have Red Cross, NSS or NCC in their Schools; in slums 19.3% children said that they do in slums 19.3% children said that they do not have any of these in their Schools.

- 49) On an average only 20% of the interviewed children have taken part in NSS or NCC.
- 50) Regarding freedom of expression 17.8% in Puducherry, 39% in Karaikal and 21.9% in Slums said that they have the freedom of expression.
- 51) As far as access to Information is concerned, 88.3% in Puducherry, 85.3% in Karaikal and 90.9% in Slums said that they have access to Information.
- 52) Television (58%) plays the major role in providing information to the children; Next come Parents (43%), Friends (40.1%) and Teachers (38.1%). Roughly 23.3% access information through Newspapers also; and 14.8% and 14% access information through Radio and Internet respectively.



Prof. M. Ramadoss, Director of Studies, Educational Innovation and Rural Reconstruction, Pondicherry University & Former M.P. released this report on 10th June 2013. Dr. R. Nalini, Head, Department of Social Work, Pondicherry University & Chairperson, CWC, Yanam and Dr. Vidyaa Ramkumar, Chairperson, CWC, Puducherry received copies. Fr. Albert Thambidurai, Executive Director, PMSSS (Child Line Collab. Organisation), Mr. P. Joseph Victor Raj, Director, HOPE and Mr. Y. Thamazhian, Head, Department of Social Work, BWDA College of Arts & Science, Mayilam are also seen.

# **RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **Survival**

- 1) Since the Union cabinet has cleared the new National Policy for Children on 18th April 2013, which, for the first time, lays down a universal definition of the child as less than 18 years, all legislations related to Children should define the age of children as below 18 years.
- 2) The Municipal Administration should conduct a special drive to register the births of the children who do not have birth certificates.
- 3) The living conditions of the children in slums are neither safe nor healthy. The Municipal Administration should conduct immunization and disinfection drive and sanitize the slums areas. Proper arrangements should be done for solid waste and liquid waste management.
- 4) The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) funds should be properly utilized to provide housing and basic services in urban slums. The Territorial Administration should release a white paper on the functioning of the JNNURM from its inception in Puducherry.
- 5) It is disheartening to note that more than 50% of the children do not have access to 3 square meals per day. The pre-school facilities should be strengthened in the slums. The food security of the urban poor should be addressed on war foot.
- 6) Employment Guarantee Scheme for Urban Areas is being discussed from the year 2010. It should be planned and executed immediately. Territorial Administration can also plan its own urban employment guarantee scheme as done by West Bengal.
- 7) Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY) encourages the setting up of self employment ventures by the urban poor

living below the poverty line, and also through providing skills training and wage employment by utilizing their labour for construction of socially and economically useful public assets. This should be utilized properly to the needy population.

- 8) The Territorial Administration should release a white paper on the utilization of the Central Funds of ₹ 6.66 lakhs, ₹ 50.00 lakhs and ₹ 150.00 lakhs for 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2011-12 respectively under Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY).
- 9) More than 90% of the slum population is depending on the public health services, but they are not within the accessible distance. Outreach programmes should be conducted by Govt. Hospitals and Primary Health Centres periodically to address the needs of the slum dwellers regularly. This will also decentralize the services and crowds at the GHs.
- 10) The Anganwadi workers of Puducherry are paid the highest salary in the Southern States; but the attendance of the children in these centres is very low. The Child Care Centres are slowly becoming the Weaning Food Distribution Centres. Revamping of ICDS is urgent and important to provide child care and hot cooked meals.
- 11) The Anganwadi Centres have also been entrusted with the responsibility of providing Reproductive Health Education to the adolescent girls; Less than 30% of the adolescents are aware of this in Karaikal; Less than 20% in Puducherry and less than 2% in Puducherry slums. This is a serious concern and should be addressed immediately.

## **Development**

- 12) The implementation of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 is very weak in Puducherry. The Rules were notified only after the Chennai High Court's Order while disposing the PIL Petition of P. Joseph Victor

Raj, State Convener, CACL - TN & PY. The Govt missed its 3 year deadline to fulfill the norms and enforcement on 31st March 2013. The Govt should enforce the Act in its letter and spirit atleast after the deadline.

- 13) Specific Awareness Messages should be disseminated about the RTE Act i.e. children from weaker section can avail 25% reservation in private schools in their neighbourhood, etc.
- 14) More than 80% in Puducherry and more than 90% in Karaikal have studied in Government Schools. There is a good scope and need for strengthening the Government Schools in terms of infrastructure and teaching methods.
- 15) More than 70% of the children have reported that mostly method of monologue is followed by the teachers. The Government School Teachers have good knowledge and skills; but their attitude has to be improved to provide the children their right to education.
- 16) It is a good sign that more than 90% of the children are aware of the Government's welfare measures for the School children and more than 80% have benefitted by them. Now, most of the schemes like morning milk, evening milk, free foot wear, free cycle are suffering some setbacks. The Government should spend its resources on the principle of first call for children.
- 17) More than 10% children in Puducherry and Karaikal; and more than 30% in Slums have experienced physical violence and corporal punishment in the Schools. The Supreme Court directed the States to ensure 'that children are not subjected to corporal punishment in schools, and they receive education in an environment of freedom and dignity, free from fear'. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) released guidelines to eliminate physical punishment on 4 March 2012. The guidelines suggested the formation of Corporal Punishment Monitoring Cells (CPMCs) by schools.

Besides hearing grievances related to corporal punishment, child sexual abuse and mental harassment, CPMCs will forward recommendations to district level authorities within 48 hours of the occurrence. Director of School Education G. Ragesh Chandra on 1st December 2007, directed all school principals and headmasters to form school-level committees for children to voice their views and register complaints, especially in case of corporal punishment. He also asked the schools to put up posters against corporal punishment and about the need to protect the rights of children. None of these have been carried out. HOPE published posters on Child Rights and donated to the Directorate of School Education for display in all the Schools. But not many Schools have displayed them. All Schools should be directed to follow the NCPDR guidelines. It is also important to note here that the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 also bans corporal punishment.

- 18) The pathetic situation of more than 50% of the children not being aware of children's rights will also be ameliorated if the above guidelines are followed.
- 19) Vocational Training is also an integral part of learning. The opportunities for this is very much lacking right now. Apart from the State Level Polytechnics, commune-wise Industrial Training Institutes should also be opened to cater to the needs of rural children.

## **Protection**

- 20) State Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) should be formed immediately in Puducherry. It should not become a body to give opportunity to the party people, who could not be given any other posts. The Chairperson and the members need to be persons of eminence, who have done outstanding work for promoting the welfare of children and should be selected in a transparent manner by a Selection Committee of eminent persons.



- 21) Rules for Protection Of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) should be notified and enforced immediately.
- 22) It is disheartening to note that more than 45% of children in slums are out of schools. Some of them dropped out even at the early age of 8, 10, 12 and 14 years. Nearly 30% of the children have become child labourers. Child Rights Activists have been stressing that the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act enacted in the country in the year 1986 is a toothless Act. Though CLPRA was introduced in the country in 1986, the Child Labour cell in Puducherry has been created as per the direction of the Supreme Court in the W.P. No. 465 of 1986 delivered on 10.12.1996. This cell has started functioning w.e.f. June 1999. The total expenditure between 1999 and 2011-12 is Rs. 1,87,01,319/- according to the details provided by Labour Officer (Welfare Schemes); but only 10 cases have been booked by the Department in the past 12 years in which 3 were acquitted. One was convicted; and after an appeal in Session Court, he too was acquitted. Hence a comprehensive legislation to prohibit the engagement of children upto 18 years of age in any forms of employment and in any place of work during any time period of the day should be enacted.
- 23) The children employed in various occupations and processes, should be admitted in age-appropriate classes as per Rights of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act.
- 24) The children who cannot be enrolled in Schools should be rehabilitated with Vocational Training Facilities with stipend, and seed money to start their own business after 18 years.
- 25) A counseling and detoxification centre should be started exclusively for children to free them from various forms of substance abuses.
- 26) Section 61 of the JJ. Act says, “ The State Government may create a fund under such name as it thinks fit for the welfare

and rehabilitation of the juvenile or the child dealt with under this Act,” but it has not been implemented in Puducherry so far. This rehabilitation fund should be created.

- 27) Awareness should be created on ChildLine Number in interior villages and slums also.
- 28) Child Marriage Prohibition Officer appointed by the Government of Puducherry as per Puducherry Prohibition of Child Marriage Rules, 2009 should take cognizance of this offence and should take appropriate action; and also take required measures to prevent child marriage.

## **Participation**

- 28) Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that “States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming 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”. Director of School Education, Govt. of Puducherry in his circular on 1st December 2007, also directed all schools to form school-level committees for children to voice their views. Such Child Participation Groups should be formed in all the Schools atleast before the 10th Anniversary of the announcement.
- 29) After conducting the Panchayat Elections in Puducherry, the Territorial Administration should also create Children’s Grama Sabha wherein the children can voice their opinion in the matters concerns them in the village.
- 30) While enforcing the Rights of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, the children should also be included in the School Management Committee, so that the children’s voice is also heard while deciding on the matters concerning them.

## SOME OF THE ORGANISATIONS WORKING FOR CHILDREN IN PUDUCHERRY

NAME & ADDRESS	CHIEF FUNCTIONARY & PHONE, E-MAIL	SPECIALISATION / AREAS
PMSSS CHILDLINE Collab. Organisation #81, Laporte Street, Pondicherry - 605 001 0413 - 2333772, 2331772	Rev. Fr. V. ALBERT THAMBIDURAI, 9994372059, pmsssspondy@hotmail. com	24 hour care and protection services for children
SANTHOSHA NANBAN 645 M.G.Road Puducherry: 605 001 0413-2228264	Mrs.Mangalorine 9487734376 santhoshananban@ yahoo.com	Street Children
SATYA SPECIAL SCHOOL 4, 5 & 6 ECR Road, (Opp to Siva Vishnu Mahal) Karuvadikuppam, Pondicherry 605 003 Ph: +91-413-2263592	Mrs. Chitra Shah Email:admin@ satyaspecialschool.org Cell: 9345454449	Children with Special Needs
SHARANA-SOCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION 33, Lally Tollendal Street. Pondicherry. 605001	Mrs. Rajkala.P 9843337640 rajkala.p@gmail.com	Sponsorship, Community Development, Vocational Training
VOLONTARIAT 54, Dr.Ambedkar Salai, Nethaji Nagar 1, Uppalam, Puducherry 605 001	Mr. Sendil Coumarane 0413-2357677 / 78 volont@volontariat.in	Child Care, Sponsorship, Homes for Destitute & street Children, Health Care, Nutrition

# HOPE

HOPE (Holistic approach for People's Empowerment) is a voluntary organization started in Puducherry in 1996; and is implementing its own programmes and also providing solidarity to other Networks and Campaigns at local, regional and national level.

HOPE visualizes a society where Children, Women, Dalits, Minorities and Coastal Communities feel that they belong to the society they live in.

In the past 18 years, HOPE has published a number of posters on Peace, Child Rights, Right to Information Act, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, Child Rights Protection Committee, Rights of Coastal Communities, Rights of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, etc.

HOPE has also brought out books on Rights To Information Act (PIOs of Puducherry), Right To Information Act (PIOs of Villupuram, Tamilnadu), Status of Tsunami Housing (Tamilnadu & Puducherry), Micro Planning (Rural), Micro Planning( Urban), Status of Water in Puducherry, Status of Panchayats in Puducherry, Status of Environment in Puducherry and Lifestyle of Coastal Communities in Puducherry.