**Telangana Social Development Report 2020**

***Barriers to Education***

**Brief Summery**

The idea of a state social development report emerged from the India Social Development Report, the trigger for which was based on the Copenhagen Summit in 1995 and the UN Human Development Report process. Such an attempt to focus on quality of life was undertaken for the first time in Telangana. The formation of Telangana state offered a unique opportunity to assess the state of its development performance, amplify its strengths and achievements and address its deficiencies and disparities. Council for Social Development, Hyderabad is committed itself towards enabling Telangana government in exploiting this important opportunity. Telangana Social Development Report (TSDR) emerged out of this commitment. The Telangana Social Development Report 2022: Barriers to Education (TSDR 2022) is a Special Report on the status of education in Telangana supported jointly by the Department of Planning, the Government of Telangana, and the Asmita Resource Centre for Women, Hyderabad.

**Objectives**

TSDR 2022 aims to identify barriers to attain educational attainment for all in Telangana state. Main objectives are as follows – to understand what extent the right to education was denied or curtailed to children (6-16 years) if so, examines motives and rationale behind parents’ preference for private education and students’ choice of courses in higher education and reasons for why adolescent/adult girls (16-29) do not pursue higher education and why, if any.

**Methodology**

An exploratory study involving field-level observations, interactions and interviews with stakeholders covering not only individuals but Anganwadi teachers, school/college teachers and students, welfare hostel inmates/officials, community leaders, panchayat representatives and officials, among others, was undertaken to ascertain the various aspects related to educational status in Telangana. After the exploratory study, Census data 2011 (Primary Census Abstract) was used to identify the mandals/villages for census listing of households falling under newly formed 33 districts and 553 mandals. From these census households, the task at hand for the research team was to select a sample from following broad four categories from 55922 households: dropouts/never enrolled (479/420 persons), girls not in higher education (1990 girls), preference for private institutions (2304 respondents) and choice of courses (1249 respondents) whose total comes upto 6642 respondents across 33 districts.

**Findings**

*Dropouts (children in the age group of 6-16 years)*

The current study found 479 dropouts, of which the proportion of male dropout (53.4 per cent) is relatively higher than the female (46.3 per cent). The empirical data shows the majority of dropouts of rural females and urban males are more and the highest proportion under rural areas reported from Adilabad, followed by Asifabad (9.4 percent), Mahabubabad (9.1 percent), and Bhupalpally (8.8 percent) respectively. The dropout rate in urban areas was reported to be comparatively higher in Adilabad (32.1 percent), followed by Hyderabad (23.6 percent), and Nirmal (17 percent). Higher number of dropouts were observed during the last schooling of standards between 8 and 10 followed by the primary standards (standards between 1 and 5) and the standards between 6 and 7. Girls’ dropout is primarily influenced by household work/domestic activities, economic activities to support the family, marriage, unsafe passage to school, economic activities to support the family and taking care of siblings and elderly persons.

*Never Enrolled*

There were a total of 420 people never enrolled with different ages, though they broadly fall under the age group of below 16 years, with few among them above 16 years. The data illustrates that the majority of never-enrolled students are found in the district of Jayashankar Bhupalapally, which accounts for 15.7 percent, followed by Adilabad, Khammam, Sangareddy, Nirmal, Mahabubabad, Hyderabad, Wanaparthy, Asifabad, Gadwal, and Nizamabad. The overall proportion of never enrolled is very high in rural areas compared to urban areas. The never enrolled school-aged children were involved in households’ activities, economic activities outside the home and some get paid for the same. Family’s economic conditions, vulnerability in terms of living conditions, debts and livelihoods, and nature of childhood were significant, influential factors of never enrollment. Girl and boy child’s schooling was hampered by engaging in household work and other domestic activities. The additional burden of taking care of a sibling or elderly falls only on the girl child and hence, affects.

# *Girls Not In Higher Education*

A total of 1990 girls/women were identified from selected households from different ages and social groups who are not enrolled in higher educational institutions from 33 districts of Telangana. The majority of students reported that marginal household incomes (14.4 percent) are the main reason for not enrolling in higher educational institutions, while additional expenditure on siblings, lack of financial support in terms of scholarships, large size of families, sometimes inadequate accommodation or higher levels of accommodation charges, and the burden of heavy transportation charges are also reported to be hindrances for girls not enrolling in higher educational institutions.

*Opting for Private Schools*

The study identified 2433 students in different age groups in private schools from the selected sample households. In terms of gender, the proportion of girl students (44. 6 per cent) who were in private schooling was less than boy students (and 55.4 per cent). Data shows that the majority of the students enrolled in private schools were from rural areas, with 78.3 percent while urban area was 21.7 per cent. The gender proportion of students who opted for private is relatively higher among male students (55.8 per cent) than female students (44.2 per cent). The study found that out of 2433 sample students, 36.9 percent reported that the decision taken jointly by the parents was considered to be the main advice to join private schools, while other sources of advice were also significant (23.0 percent). In contrast, advice from teachers, neighbours, and other relatives has been found to be very less influential on joining private schools. The data on reasons for opting for private schools among the selected students in rural and urban settings reported that the main reason is mainly because of English education (66.1 percent), while other factors like availability of transportation, good education, better quality of teaching (teaching in English), better quality of teaching (monitoring of students), and better quality of teaching (teachers) available for all students were among the highest reasons for opting for private schools.

*Choice of Course*

The study has covered 2298 students of different age groups from different courses and academic streams. Regarding gender, 56 per cent of male students and 44 per cent of female students were selected from the selected sample households. Advice in choosing the course is largely evident in one’s own decision that of parents, siblings, relatives, neighbours, teachers, friends, parents of friends, and other institutions and organisations. The study finds that the majority of students choose their course on their own; however, advice from others (other than themselves) is reported to be very minimal. The proportion on self- or own advice is slightly different between males and females, as it is evident at 41.4 percent and 33.6 percent, respectively.

##### **Policy Recommendations**

1. There should be a coordination mechanism between Gram Panchayats and the Department of School Education in rural as well as agency areas, similarly between Ward level Monitoring cell and the Department of School Education in urban locations.
2. The field-level data highlighted that students engaged in different domestic and economic activities. There should be a specific component to deal with the day-to-day economic affairs of students to meet essential daily expenditure.
3. There should be a separate mechanism to handle fear of learning as some proportion of students reported dropouts because they could not cope with running class teaching. There should be a special mechanism to streamline students of differently-abled in rural and urban areas.
4. There should be a unit-level monitoring cell with a regular calendar of recruitment and reshuffle (recruitment and transfers) to avoid disturbance in the teaching calendar.
5. There should be a specialised academic unit at each level in educational institutions – for instance – at the end of high school, higher secondary/Intermediate, under-graduation, post-graduation and research institutions – to guide the students to identify the future course or pursue further studies skill-based courses, professional courses and research studies based on students’ interests, critical thinking. .