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## SCHOOL DROPOUT PREVENTION PILOT PROGRAM

# INDIA SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS: FACTORS AND CONDITIONS THAT AFFECT DROPOUT



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**School Dropout Prevention Pilot Program**

**India Situational Analysis:**

**Factors and Conditions that Affect Dropout**

**Submitted to:**

**United States Agency for International Development  
Washington, DC**

**Submitted by:**

**Creative Associates International, Inc.  
Washington, DC**

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## Acronyms

COTR	Contract Office’s Technical Representative
EFA	Education for All
DISE	District Information System for Education
IIP	Investing in People
MoE	Ministry of Education
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
RTE	Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education
SDPP	School Dropout Prevention Pilot
SES	Socio-Economic Status
SMC	School Management Committee
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Framework of Implementation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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## Executive Summary

The School Dropout Prevention Pilot (SDPP) Program is a five-year multi-country program, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, aimed at mitigating student dropout. Its objective is to provide evidence-based programming guidance to USAID missions and countries in Asia and the Middle East on student dropout prevention by piloting and testing the effectiveness of dropout prevention interventions in four target countries: Cambodia, India, Tajikistan and Timor Leste.

This report on the situational analysis of dropout builds on the findings from SDPP's earlier work that the study of dropout in India should focus on Grade 5, where students were at the highest risk for dropping out of school. Conducted in August 2011, the analysis focused on the district of Samastipur in the state of Bihar. It addressed multiple domains of interest – children, their families, their schools, their communities, and regional and national policy.

The findings show that the major risk factors for a child to drop out include the following: (a) failing a subject; (b) a high rate of absenteeism; (c) having a family member who has dropped out; (e) early marriage; and (f) having parents who admit they are not very involved in the child's schooling.

When asked to list the major reasons for dropout, children, parents, teachers, administrators and community members first cited two or three economic causes ("family can't pay school-related expenses," "child needs to work to earn money" and/or "child must help with household chores/family business"). They then added "illness," "marriage" (more often for girls) and "poor school quality" (more often for boys) or "poor academic performance."

School staff expressed concern about dropout, but stated that there is little they can do when the children have so many responsibilities outside of school. Staff claimed to talk to students and their parents if they see a problem but rarely to act in more assertive ways (e.g., give academic support, closely monitor student performance, create student study groups, enlist community support). All schools have at least one community group acting to support education. Although these groups have discussed dropout, they do not seem to have engaged in significant activities to prevent dropout.

Children, parents and school staff offered many suggestions to mitigate dropout, which included providing financial assistance, improving teaching, encouraging teachers and parents to give the children more attention and support, and providing tutoring or remediation classes. To make school more interesting, fun and useful, they would like more sports, more books to read or a library and better/nicer teachers.

Using these suggestions, SDPP has proposed potential interventions, including *after-school activities* that provide students with greater access to textbooks, give them time to study, provide remediation, include sports events and respond to school staff's desires for music and art; an *early warning system* to identify children at risk of dropping out and act to keep the child in school; *parent and teacher training* on the precursors to dropout and options for mitigation; and

*community awareness/mobilization campaigns* about the prevalence of dropout and the benefits of staying in school.



## I. Introduction

For the past two decades, children's access to basic education has been the major focus of national and international education development efforts. However, as more children enroll in school, but fail to complete the full cycle of basic education, school dropout has been recognized as a major educational challenge both in developed and developing countries. Reducing dropout is key to improving access to basic education, particularly in countries with relatively high enrollment rates where most school-age children who do not currently attend school have previously been enrolled in school.

The School Dropout Prevention Pilot (SDPP) Program is a five-year multi-country program, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, aimed at mitigating student dropout. Its objective is to provide evidence-based programming guidance to USAID missions and countries in Asia and the Middle East on student dropout prevention by piloting and testing the effectiveness of dropout prevention interventions in four target countries: Cambodia, India, Tajikistan and Timor Leste. In a three-stage process, it will:

1. Identify best practices in dropout prevention in the U.S. and developing countries.
2. Analyze dropout trends in each country to identify those groups, grades and/or geographic areas most severely affected by dropout, and conduct a situational analysis of the target group to understand the risk factors and conditions affecting dropout.
3. Design, implement and rigorously assess interventions to keep at-risk students in schools in the most acutely affected areas, using randomized control trials and combining quantitative and qualitative methods.

The remainder of this *Introduction* section of the report presents the project's findings thus far in the second stage of the process by summarizing both (a) the results of the trend analysis to examine the statistics on dropout across all grades of schooling and (b) the analysis of government policies and programs that may affect the rate of dropout.

Armed with these data, the next section of the report, the *Design of the Situational Analysis*, describes the approach taken by SDPP to gather primary data on issues related to dropout for the affected children and locations. In the third section, *Situational Analysis Findings*, the report presents the results of the extended visits and questions asked of children, their parents, teachers, school administrators and community members in the course of the situational analysis. In the final section, *Possible Interventions*, the report lists approaches that SDPP might use to mitigate dropout in its pilot intervention. This end-product thus lays the foundation for SDPP's intervention program to reduce the rate of dropout.

### A. Dropout Trend Analysis

To gain a better understanding of dropout issues in each of the pilot countries, individual in-depth country assessments of the statistics on dropouts were conducted. Each country's trend

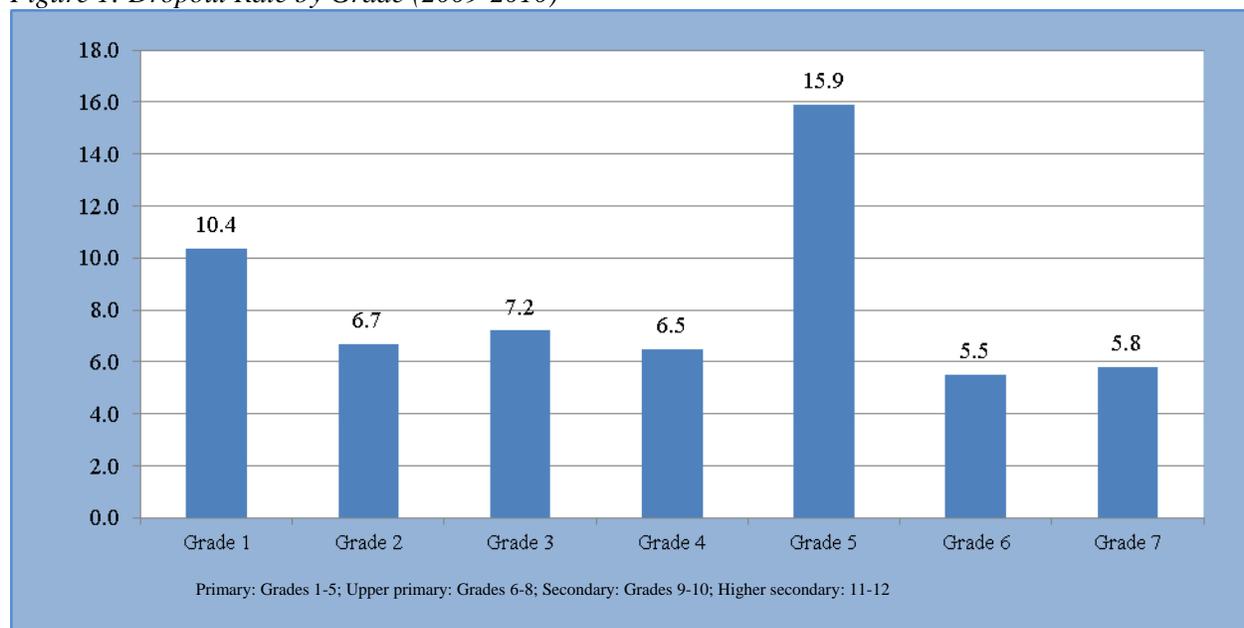
analysis had dual objectives: first, to inform the design of the pilot project interventions and activities, and second, to provide information and analysis to inform future discussion about school dropouts by USAID Missions and host governments.

The activities were organized to answer three key questions about each pilot country:

1. Which basic education grade(s) and population groups suffer most acutely from dropout?
2. What are the primary factors and conditions that affect dropout in these groups?
3. Which policies, practices and interventions show promise in reducing dropouts (increasing retention rates)?

The country assessments used and built on existing data and analysis in each country. In India, data from the country's District Information System for Education (DISE) was found to be the most comprehensive and relevant for SDPP's purposes. The DISE showed that the dropout rate varied within the primary cycle, with Grade 5's rate (15.9%) exceeding all others in both lower and upper primary (Grades 6 and 7). Wide gaps in the net enrollment rates for primary and upper primary also suggest that many students are not making the transition from Grade 5 to Grade 6. In consequence, SDPP selected Grade 5 to receive its intervention.

*Figure 1: Dropout Rate by Grade (2009-2010)*



To select the districts with the most severe problems, SDPP first ranked each state of the country by its dropout, promotion, survival and transition rates. Based on their rankings on each of these four primary indicators, each state was assigned points. The states with the lowest rankings were Jharkhand, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. In addition to the rankings, SDPP took practical considerations into account in choosing the state to target. These included security issues such as

the presence of insurgency and/or civil unrest, the receptivity of the local government and the accessibility of the region. Combining the statistical rankings and practical considerations, the State of Bihar was selected as the focus of the intervention. This state has a high Grade 5 dropout rate of 26.8 percent, a poor transition rate of 71 percent, a low promotion rate of 83 percent, and a low survival rate of 64 percent.

To generate the list of districts in which to work, SDPP conducted a further analysis of the 37 districts of Bihar, ranking each on the primary indicators of dropout rate in Grade 5, promotion rate at the primary level, survival rate from Grade 1 to Grade 5, and the transition rate from primary to upper primary. The top three overall most affected districts are Sheohar, Samastipur and Araria. Taking into account the same practical considerations listed for states, SDPP chose Samastipur as its target district.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>For details see Dropout Trend Analysis: India, Creative Associates International, August 2011 and Inventory of Policies and Programs related to dropouts in India, July 2011.

## ***B. Analysis of Policies and Programs***

India has a number of policies in effect that could influence dropout from Grade 5, though the impact of very few of the policies has been measured:

- The **Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009** requires the provision of quality education to all children and includes the provision of qualified teachers and limited pupil/teacher ratios. **The RTE, Section 27 and the Schedule** of implementation ensures the proper pupil/teacher ratio is maintained. For Grades 1 to 5, classes up to 60 children should have 2 teachers; 61 to 90 children, 3; 91 to 120, 4; 121-150, 5; above 150-200, 5 plus a head teacher; and above 200, the ratio shall not exceed 40 students per teacher. However, many classrooms exceed these requirements in their enrollment of children. The overcrowding may reduce the quality and effectiveness of the education children are receiving and thus contribute to children's poor learning and decision to drop out of school.
- The **RTE, Sections 17(1) and 28**, prohibits teachers from using physical punishment and mental harassment, yet this practice is reported to occur. It, too, may be contributing to students' decisions to leave school.
- The **RTE, Section 3(1)** specifies the right of children from 6 to 14 years of age to free and compulsory education. **Section 3(2)** says that no child shall be obligated to pay any kind of fee or expenses that may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education. Unfortunately, there may well be school-related expenses that need to be covered by the families.
- The **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Framework of Implementation (SSA)** is supposed to provide two sets of uniforms to all girls, children from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and those below the poverty line wherever State governments have incorporated provision of school uniforms as a child entitlement and are not already providing uniforms from the State budgets. SSA may also defray expenses such as textbooks to these disadvantaged groups, with the same restrictions as are true for uniforms. Such provision should defray the family's expenses for these children and may allow children to stay in school.
- The **Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929**, sets the legal age for marriage at 18 years for females and 21 years for males. However, data suggests that some parents have arranged marriages for their children at younger ages.
- Several gender-related policies are in effect to encourage parents to keep their daughters in school. Four fall under **SSA**. First, women teachers are to be recruited so that they represent half of all teachers. Second, SSA's **National Program for Education of Girls at the Elementary Level** aims to (a) develop and promote facilities to provide access and to facilitate retention of girls and (b) improve the quality of education through various interventions and stress the relevance and quality of girls' education for their empowerment. Third, under SSA, the **Mahila Samakhya** program supports poor women by (a) running non-formal education centers, (b) changing popular perceptions of the status of girls in the family, (c) actively working to enroll girls in school and retain them and (d) running "bridge schools" for adolescents. Finally, the **Kasturba Gandhi Balika**

**Vidyalaya** program aims to ensure access and quality education to girls in disadvantaged groups by setting up residential schools at upper primary level for girls. If all of these policies were in effect fully at all elementary schools, they could significantly encourage families to keep their girls in school.

- Under the **RTE, Section 19 and the Schedule**, all schools must meet infrastructure standards that include separate toilets for boys and girls, which could encourage girls to stay in school as they mature.
- **The Child Labor Act, 1986, National Child Labor Policy, 1987, and the National Child Labor Project**, stipulate that employment of children under 14 is illegal, except in family-owned enterprises. Special provisions are made to rehabilitate children who are engaged in hazardous occupations to allow them to attend school.
- **The RTE, Section 29(2f)**, states that the local education authority, when developing the curriculum, shall, as far as practicable, allow the medium of instruction to be in the child's mother tongue. This should encourage children to stay in school, if it is fully implemented.
- **The RTE, Section 16**, and the **SSA** state that no child from 6 to 14 years shall be held back in any class or expelled from school until the completion of elementary education. This policy, if fully implemented, may also encourage children to stay in school.
- **The SSA** assures that there is a school or alternative schooling facility within 1 kilometer of every habitation, so children can easily make the trip to and from school.
- **The RTE, Section 21**, states that all elementary schools shall have School Management Committees (SMCs) to monitor the working of the school, prepare a school development plan and apply for grants to implement the plan and monitor the utilization of the grants received. In this way, communities can assist in keeping children in school.

So, India has established a number of clear education and labor policies, many of which may contribute to a reduced dropout rate. The state requires free quality education for children through the age of 14; assists the poor with the provision of uniforms, books and possibly supplies; prohibits physical punishment; sets a minimum age for marriage well above the age of most elementary school students; makes special provisions for girls such as separate toilet facilities; requires teaching to occur in the child's mother tongue (to the extent possible); places schools within a kilometer of children's homes; and involves parents through the formation of SMCs. All of these actions should encourage students to stay in school. The success of these policies, however, depends on the degree to which they are enforced. Even if all are in place, the economic situation of poor families may not be addressed to a degree that allows them to keep their children in school.

In some cases, school administrators and block education officers interviewed in the situation analysis reported that policies are not implemented in all schools. With regard to automatic promotion, only 50 percent of administrators and 46 percent of education officers reported that the policy was implemented. With regard to class size limits, 56 percent of administrators and 36 percent of education officers said the policy was implemented. With regard to the prohibition of corporal punishment, 72 percent of administrators and 91 percent of education officers reported

that the policy was enforced. And with the legal age of marriage, 69 percent of administrators and 46 percent of education officers said the policy was followed. In the case of language of instruction, all 11 block education officers said the policy was implemented, but only 88 percent of school administrators agreed. If all of these policies were more rigorously enforced, it is likely that fewer children would drop out.

## II. Design of the Situational Analysis

### A. Conceptual Framework

School dropout is a phenomenon driven by influences at multiple levels. The personal characteristics and circumstances of the child and his/her attitudes and motivations are formed by and interact with those of his/her parents and the family situation, the school and his/her peers, and the community in which he/she lives.<sup>2</sup> Underlying all these “spheres of influence” or domains are policies at the regional and national levels that contribute to and shape these other factors. Together, the policy environment and the child-, family-, school- and community-level factors produce the complex phenomenon of school dropout. The purpose of the situational analysis is to identify the factors associated with school dropout in each of the five domains and their relationships to each other. Presented below in Figure 2 is the conceptual framework for dropout with illustrative factors presented in each of the domains.

### B. Research Questions

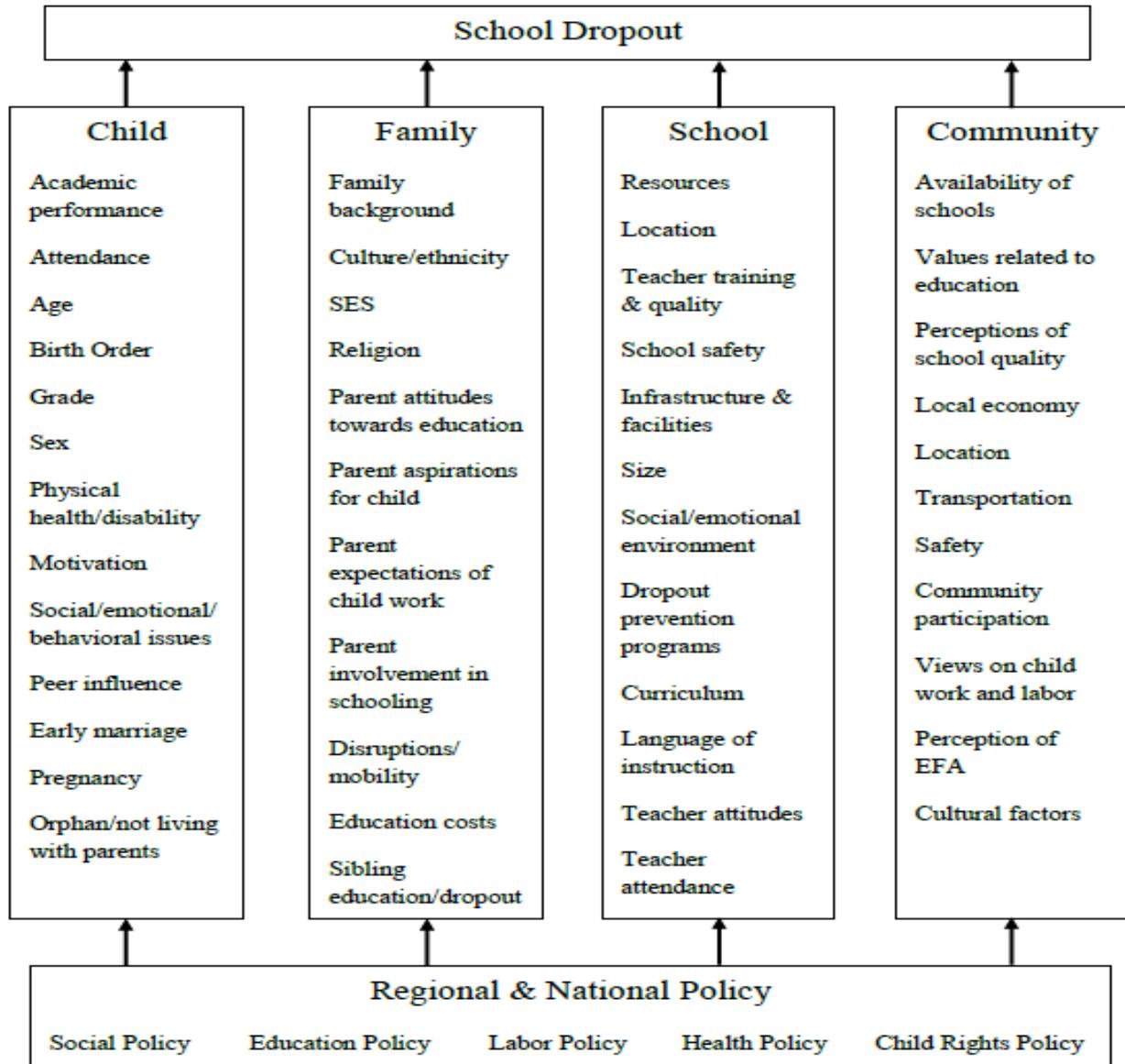
The situational analysis aimed to identify the nature and magnitude of the interaction between dropout behavior and various supply-side and demand-side factors. The following questions were explored to answer the overriding research question—“*What puts a student in Grade 5 in the target district at risk of dropping out?*”

1. What are the characteristics of at-risk students, dropouts and their families?
2. What are at-risk students’ experience with, opinions of and aspirations for schooling?
3. What have parents done to support their child in school?
4. What reasons do children (and their parents) say would cause or have caused them to drop out?
5. How does the school view dropout and address it?
6. What community factors influence dropout?
7. What do children, parents, educators and communities suggest would mitigate dropout?

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<sup>2</sup> For details see SDPP Review of the Literature, Creative Associates International, January 2011.

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework



### C. Research Approach and Sample Description

The situational analysis conducted in October 2011 focused on 13 blocks within the Samastipur district: Bibhutipur, Dalsinghsarai, Hasanpur, Khanpur, Morwa, Pattouri, Pusa, Shivajinagar, Ujjiarpur, Vidyapatnagar, Warisnagar, Mohiuddinagar, Kalyanpur.<sup>3</sup> Using stratified random sampling, 32 schools were chosen, proportional to the total number of schools in each block. Schools were stratified by size (large/small) and type of community (urban/rural). Each school received a pre-visit to identify the respondents and for other logistical arrangements. The pre-

<sup>3</sup> After the study was completed, the number of target districts was expanded to five in order to obtain a sufficient number of schools to ensure the statistical validity of the assessment of intervention impact.

visits allowed the researchers to ascertain whether appropriate schools were selected, develop a relationship with the school administrator, and schedule the interviews. The final sample included the respondents described on Table 1. SDPP exceeded the planned numbers in each category, ensuring adequate respondents for its questions.

“At-risk students” were defined as those who showed at least two of the following characteristics: frequently absent, weak academic performance, multiple grade repetition, overage and/or vulnerable background (poor, orphan, etc.). A “dropout” is a child no longer enrolled in school or attending in the current academic year. The category of “at-risk parents” includes the parents or guardians of students deemed at risk of dropping out; and “dropout parents” are the parents or guardians of children who have already dropped out. “School administrators” are the directors, principals or heads of the schools in the sample. “Community members” are active members of a community group likely to be involved in education (e.g., School Management Committee, Parent-Teacher Association, or Village Education Committee).

*Table 1: Sample Description*

Respondents	Actual	Planned	Percent
Schools	32	30	107
At-Risk Students	372	300	124
At-Risk Parents	352	300	117
Dropouts	317	300	106
Dropout Parents	327	300	109
Teachers	160	150	107
School Administrators	32	30	107
Local Education Officers	11	3	130
Community Members	32	30	107

**Sampled schools.** The school walls were made of concrete (97%) or banco/mud (3%); the floors of concrete (94%), dirt (3%) or mats (3%); and the roofs of tile (84%), thatch (13%) or tin (3%). SDPP teams found that more than 59 percent of the schools had “many” or “all” students standing or sitting on the floor rather than in a chair. They considered 47 percent of the classrooms to be overcrowded. Only one amenity, drinking water (in 94 percent of schools), was available in at least half of the schools. None of the schools had electricity, indoor plumbing, computers for teachers or staff, computers for students, telephone services for teachers or staff, a student dormitory, guards or security. The following amenities were relatively rare: only

- 44 percent had a wall or fence surrounding school property,
- 44 percent hand washing facilities,
- 37 percent separate latrines for boys and girls,
- 19 percent a library or resource center,
- 13 percent clinics or health services, and
- 3 percent a canteen or cafeteria.

The mean number of students enrolled in the 32 sampled schools was 775. Table 2 shows the distribution of students by gender in Grade 5. The enrollment varies, from a small group of 28 students in the grade to a large group of 314. It appears as though the numbers of girls and boys are not hugely different, though boys slightly outnumber girls. On average, the schools in the sample have 6 teachers for students for Grade 5. Overall, the school dropout rates average 9.2 percent; the school repetition rates 1.3 percent; and the promotion rates 92.7 percent.

*Table 2: Student Enrollment by Gender*

Grade 5	Boys Enrollment	Girls Enrollment	Total Student Enrollment
Mean	51	48	95
Range	18-157	9-157	28-314

**Students and dropouts.** The 372 at-risk students were divided between Grades 4 and 5, with 20 percent in Grade 4 and 80 percent in Grade 5. The 317 dropouts sampled left school in Grade 4 (29%), Grade 5 (63%) or Grade 6 (6%). Somewhat more than half of the at-risk students were male (51%) and 59 percent of the dropouts. Nearly all of the children were Hindu, but they came from a variety of ethnic groups/castes, the largest of which was labeled “other” and included 41 percent of at-risk students and 48 percent of dropouts. Those who named their group said they belonged to the following:

- Dushad (20% of at-risk students and 15% of dropouts),
- Chamar (14% and 13%, respectively),
- Yadav (11% and 11%),
- Baniya (7% and 4%),
- Brahmin (4% and 3%),
- Mushar (2% and 4%),
- Bhumihar (1% and 1%),
- Dom (<1% and 1%), and
- Kayasth (<1% and <1%).

The at-risk students averaged 12 and the dropouts 13 years of age.

**Parents.** One of the parents of each child in the sample was interviewed, whichever parent was readily available and willing. Of the 352 at-risk parents interviewed, 67 percent were women. Of the 327 dropout parents interviewed, 69 percent were women. The average age of the at-risk parents was 41 and the average for dropout parents was 42. Eighty-seven percent of at-risk parents and 91 percent of dropout parents were the biological parents of the sampled child; the remaining adults involved in the study were relatives but not parents. The mean number of children in the household was 4 for at-risk families and 3 for dropout families.

**Teachers.** Among the 160 teachers of Grade 5 in the sample, 53 percent were male and 47 percent female. Only 10 percent called themselves “classroom teachers;” the remainder were subject specialists with the following specialties (teachers could designate more than one specialty): math (39%), science (32%), language/reading (27%), literature (13%), geography (5%), history (4%), civics (4%) and “other” (4%). About three-quarters (74%) identified themselves as contract teachers.

The teachers were generally qualified for their positions. Almost all (94%) said they were fluent readers, writers and speakers of the language of instruction. Most (76%) but not all had formal teacher certification, and the group averaged 10 years of teaching experience. Their highest level of education was generally an intermediate degree (44%) or a Bachelor’s degree (29%). An additional 14 percent had graduate degrees, 9 percent attended teacher training college, 2 percent secondary education, 2 percent matriculated, and 1 percent had advanced teacher training. Most of the teachers walked to school (36%) or used a bicycle (32%); some had a personal motorcycle (14%) or used public transport (12%). Two-thirds (66%) reached school in a half hour or less, 25 percent took 30 minutes to one hour, and 9 percent took more than one hour.

**School administrators.** The 32 school administrators were mostly male (91%), and 97 percent of them also taught at the school. Many (44%) had Master’s degrees; 22 percent had Bachelor’s degrees, 22 percent an intermediate degree, 6 percent attended a teacher training college, 3 percent matriculated, and 3 percent completed secondary education. They had an average of 8 years of experience as administrators and 18 years as teachers.

**Block Education Officers.** Of the 11 Local (Block) Education Officers sampled, all were male. They had an average of 4 years of experience as classroom teachers, 2 years as school administrators and 14 years in their current position. Six of them had Master’s degrees and the other five Bachelor’s degrees.

**Community.** The sample of community members is shown as 32; this is the number of answers obtained from community respondents. In fact, a total of 83 people contributed to those answers. Small groups of one to three community members were brought together at each school; as a group they agreed to a single answer to each question. Among the 83 who participated, 73 percent were male. They represented three types of organizations: 40 percent were members of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), 38 percent Village Education Committees and 22 percent Education Resource Groups. Respondents averaged 6 years as members of such groups.

#### ***D. Data Collection***

Research data was collected through the administration of closed-ended questionnaires. Six five-person teams comprising local university students and a team leader collected the data over a two-week period. Two days were spent at each school for data collection from at-risk students, dropouts, their parents, school personnel, a local education officer, and community members.

**Child-level data collection.** Data was collected from two groups of children: (1) students in Grade 5 at risk of dropping out of school

*Around the world, research has shown that the major causes of dropout may be summarized by the acronym ABC: Attendance is sporadic; Behavior is problematic; and Course performance is poor.*

and (2) former students who have dropped out of the school. At-risk students were identified using a set of clear criteria based on “predictors of dropout” identified in the international literature (e.g., overage, grade repetition, absenteeism, poor performance, vulnerable background) and modified or augmented by those identified by key informants in India. A dropout was defined as a child who dropped out of the target grade within the last two years. At-risk student and dropout questionnaires contained questions regarding:

- Demographic information (ethnicity, language, age);
- Household background (parents’ education/occupation, living situation, birth order, dropout among siblings);
- Academic history (age started school, scholastic performance, history of grade repetition/dropout, absenteeism, behavior);
- School experience (like/dislike about school, peers and friends, teacher absenteeism, teacher and school support, involvement in extracurricular activity, distance to school);
- Competing activities and interests (activities that take time away from studies, time spent on chores, work opportunities);
- Attitudes and aspirations (importance of schooling, utility of education, congruence of aspiration with education, plans next academic year, future plans);
- Family support (parent-teacher interaction, parental aspiration, decision points to continue or drop out, financial support by parents);
- Perception of dropout (friends/peers who have dropped out, reasons child may drop out from school, acceptable age to drop out); and
- Dropout mitigation (potential interventions to make school interesting/fun/useful, increase attendance and perform better in school).

**Parent-level data collection.** Two versions of the parent/guardian questionnaire were developed: one for parents/guardians of students at-risk of dropping out and one for parents/guardians of students who have dropped out. One parent per family was questioned, generally the parent most readily available. The questionnaires addressed the parent’s own educational background and family demographics, the child’s schooling, how investments and decisions about education have been made (including the decision to drop out of school for children who have already dropped out), and questions about parents’ values and expectations for their children’s education and economic activity. They captured information about parents’ perceptions and attitudes related to education and school dropout, as well as their priorities for their children, the obstacles to education, and the economic factors that drive educational decisions. The questionnaire for parents of children who have dropped out of school also investigated the decision-making process that occurred around school dropout.

**School-level data collection.** The structured teacher questionnaire was administered individually. It contained questions related to teacher demographics and educational background, qualifications for teaching, training received in dropout prevention or identification of students at risk of dropout, students the teacher considered at-risk and why, attitudes toward teaching such

students and strategies they implement, and awareness of national policies or programs related to school dropout.

Likewise, the school administrator’s questionnaire captured data about any school policies, practices, or programs that address the problem of school dropout, as well as information about the quality of the school such as the language of instruction, the resources available for each grade level, the student-teacher and student-classroom ratios, teacher absenteeism, school fees, and the availability of extracurricular activities. The questionnaire also captured information on the administrator’s attitudes toward teacher training, school dropout, and the factors associated with dropout. An additional school-level tool captured information from school records such as enrollment, dropout and grade promotion rates for the target grades, and summary measures of student performance on standardized or other tests. Another part of this tool included a checklist to capture basic characteristics of the school environment or facilities and attendance through headcount.

**Community-level data collection.** At the community level, a questionnaire was developed for a structured interview with key members of the School Management Committee, Parent-Teacher Association, Village Education Committee or other community group involved in school support. The questionnaire covered topics such as basic community characteristics, the local economy (and its implications for child labor and schooling), community values related to education, causes of dropout, goals for young people in the community, the role of the school in the community, perceptions of school quality, and what could be done in the community to prevent school dropout. Finally, a structured questionnaire for one representative of the local education authority from the Block was developed to capture information about district, regional and national policies related to school dropout and their implementation at the local level, as well as the official’s perceptions of dropout as a problem in their locale and the ways that policies and practices may contribute to or prevent it. Table 3 lists the instruments used in the research.

*Table 3: Data Collection Instruments*

<b>Child</b>	<b>Family</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Community</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At-Risk Student Questionnaire</li> <li>• Dropout Questionnaire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At-Risk Parent Questionnaire</li> <li>• Dropout Parent Questionnaire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher Questionnaire</li> <li>• School Administrator Questionnaire</li> <li>• School Data Capture Tool</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMC/PTA Member Questionnaire</li> <li>• Local Education Officer Questionnaire</li> </ul>

### ***III. Situational Analysis Findings***

The findings are organized to answer the eight research questions, beginning with the characteristics of at-risk students, dropouts and their families, and continuing with the children’s experience with schooling, how parents have supported their child in school, and children’s and parents’ explanations of the reasons for dropout. Following the discussion of responses from the children and families, the findings turn to school staff’s view of dropouts and how they address the problem, the community factors that influence dropout, and suggestions for mitigating dropout.

### A. What are the characteristics of at-risk students and their families?

The literature on dropouts shows that, in most countries, more dropouts come from poor families than those with higher incomes. In addition, children whose parents did not enroll in school are

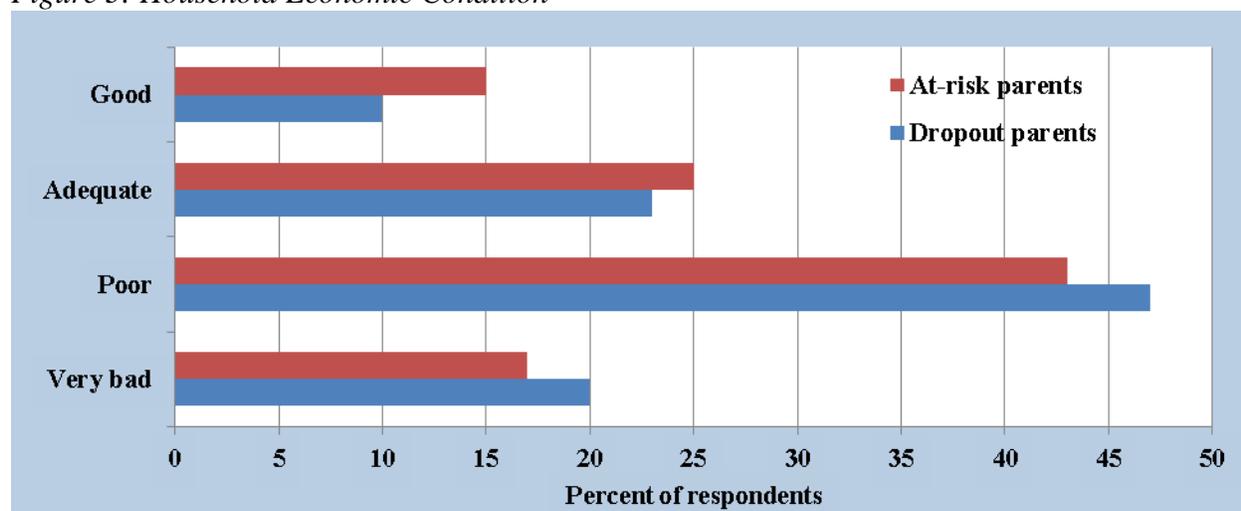
#### Key characteristics of students and their families:

- Most at-risk students and dropouts live in stable home environments.
- Parents describe their economic status as “adequate,” “poor” or “very bad.”
- The language spoken in children’s homes may differ from the language of school.
- There is an appreciation for but not a strong tradition of education among the families.
- Almost all students walk to school with a commute time of less than 30 minutes.
- Few children reported having disabilities.
- More dropouts are engaged or married than at-risk students and more girls than boys.

more likely to drop out, as well as those who attend schools at a relatively far distance from home and those who have a disability or health issue. Among girls, the pressure to marry may also contribute to dropping out. The text box below summarizes the findings for India on these characteristics.

**Economic status.** In India, most at-risk students and dropouts reported living in stable home environments that their parents described as “adequate,” “poor” or “very bad” from an economic perspective (Figure 3). Most have grown up in the same area in which they now live; only 2 percent of at-risk students and 2 percent of dropouts have migrated from other areas. Ninety percent of at-risk students and 90 percent of dropouts reported having two living parents, and 92 percent of the at-risk students and 94 percent of dropouts live with those parents most of the time.

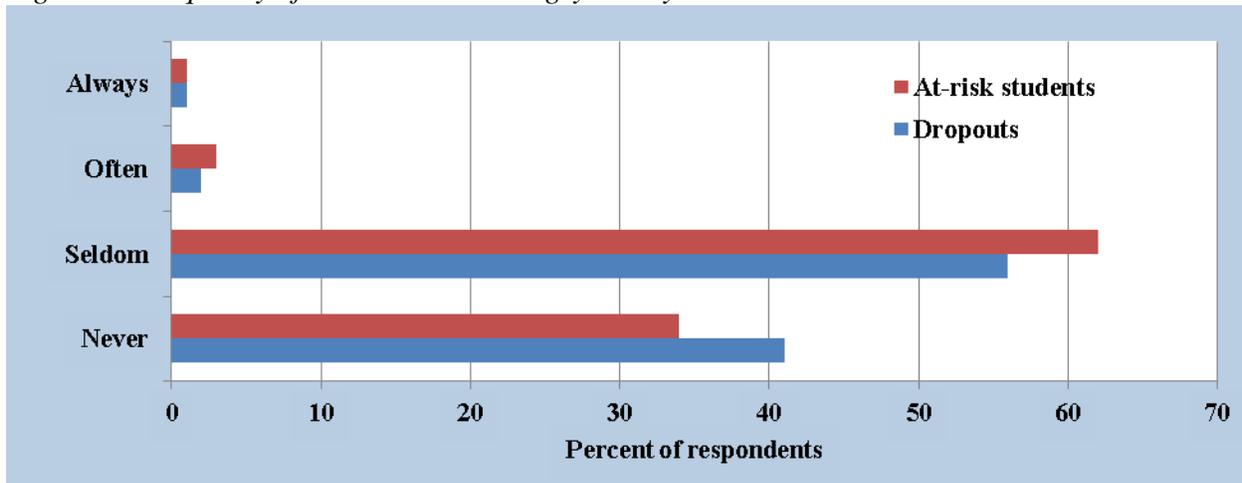
Figure 3: Household Economic Condition



The largest group of at-risk fathers was identified as “laborer” (53%), as was the largest group of dropout fathers (53%). The other frequently cited occupations are skilled worker (16% and 13%, respectively) and farmer (15% and 13%). Most mothers were labeled laborers/domestics (55%

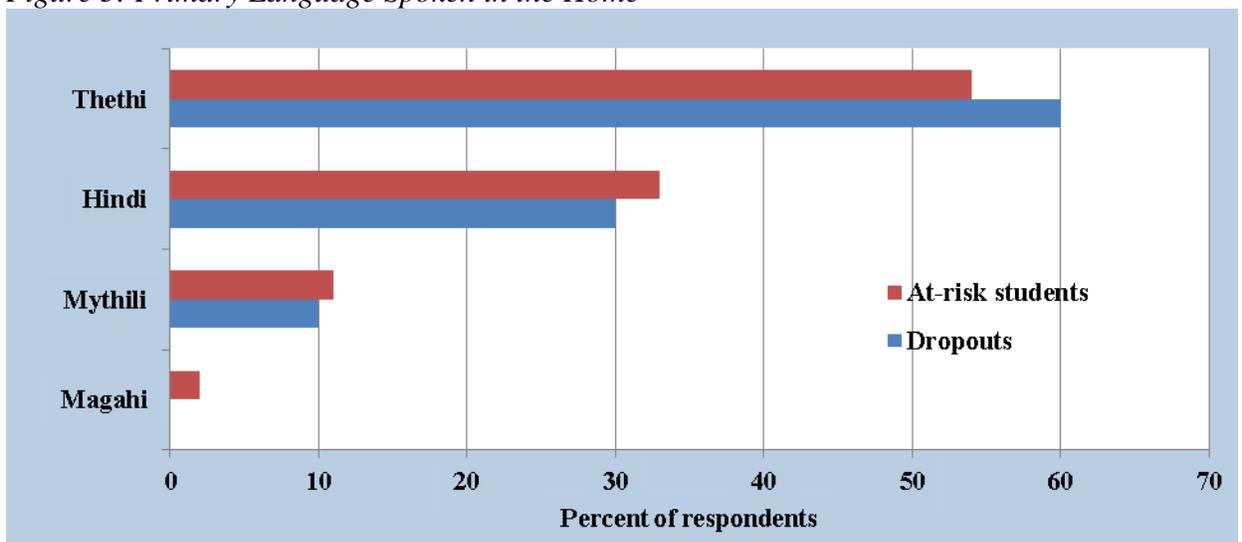
and 80%), with the others labeled homemakers (29% and 2%), unemployed (6% and 10%) and farmers (6% and 3%). Though their parents are not well-to-do, 97 percent of both at-risk students and dropouts reported that they “seldom” or “never” came to school too hungry to pay attention in class (Figure 4). The only differences between the at-risk and dropout groups on these variables is the occupations of their mothers, with more of the at-risk mothers identifying themselves as homemakers and dropout mothers as laborers/domestics.

Figure 4: Frequency of Children Too Hungry to Pay Attention



**Language.** There is significant diversity in the caste/ethnic groups in the sample, as previously listed in the description of the sample. Given this diversity, it is not surprising that the primary language spoken by families in the home differs (Figure 5). The largest group of students identified Thethi as their home language (54% of at-risk students and 60% of dropouts), followed by Hindi (3% and 30%, respectively), Mythili (11% and 10%), and Magahi (2% and 0%).

Figure 5: Primary Language Spoken in the Home



It is important to contrast this diversity of languages with the language of instruction. The official language of instruction for Grades 5 is the child’s mother tongue, but it may be that not

all children in a class have the same mother tongue. According to the children, 8 percent of at-risk students and 7 percent of dropouts did not understand the language the teacher used; and 13 percent of at-risk students and 22 percent of dropouts did not understand the language of the textbook. According to parents, 13 percent of at-risk students and 8 percent of dropouts have a *major* problem understanding the language the teacher uses. Though by no means a majority of students, these statistics show that a relatively large number may not be able to benefit much from their school experience.

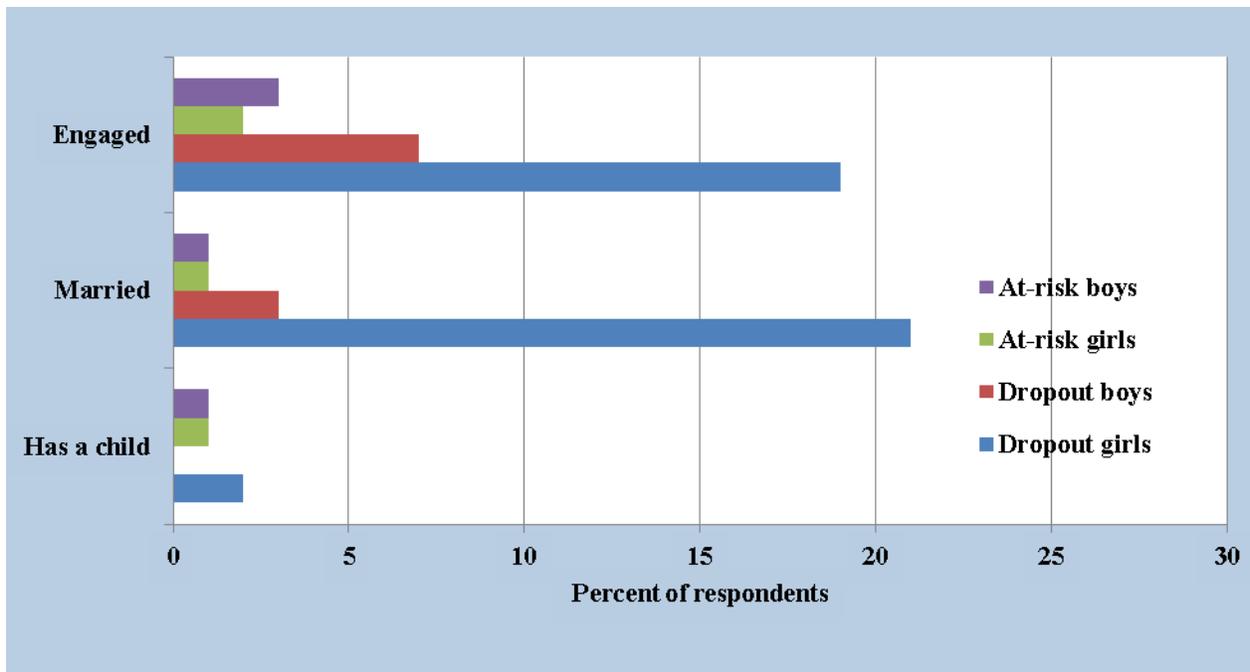
**Tradition of education.** There is an appreciation for education among the families in the sample, but relatively little experience of schooling. About 99 percent of the at-risk and 97 percent of the dropout children questioned said their parents supported the decision to send them to school. According to the parents, 91 percent of the families of at-risk children and 89 percent of dropout families have enrolled all of their school-age children at some point, and most at-risk parents expect their children to complete upper secondary (57%), college (22%) or lower secondary (18%). However, most of the mothers in both respondent groups have no schooling (75% of at-risk mothers and 83% of dropout mothers) and nearly half of the fathers (42% of at-risk fathers and 49% of dropout fathers). About 16 percent of at-risk fathers and 11 percent of dropout fathers set their highest level of education at 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and an additional 13 percent of at-risk fathers and 14 percent of dropout fathers at 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Eleven percent of at-risk mothers attended primary school and 7 percent of dropout mothers; most of the remainder answered that they “didn’t know” their highest level of education.

**Distance to school.** With regard to travel to and from school, nearly all of the children reported commuting on foot (99% of at-risk students and dropouts). About 81 percent of at-risk students and 91 percent of dropouts reported that the commute takes less than 30 minutes; 18 percent of at-risk and 8 percent of dropouts said it lasted from 30 minutes to 1 hour; and about 1 percent of each group said it was longer than 1 hour. Among at-risk students, more girls said they had a longer commute than boys.

**Disabilities.** Few children reported having a disability (4% of at-risk and 5% of dropouts). The children with identified disabilities labeled themselves with the following problems: hearing (1% and 2%, respectively), physical issues (<1% of at-risk students and 2% of dropouts), vision (1% and 1%), and verbal (<1% and <1%), and “other” (1% and 1%).

**Early marriage.** Although the at-risk students averaged 12 years of age and the dropouts 13, there were children in the sample who were engaged, married and had children (Figure 6). Perhaps because of the age difference, more dropouts were engaged, married, and had children than the at-risk students. Within the group of dropouts, girls were significantly more likely than boys to be engaged or married. It is not clear when the decision to become engaged and marry was made. It could have been the reason children dropped out or it could have occurred after dropout, since at that point the child was “free” from the daily obligation of attending school. Whichever is the case, the children are still young for marriage, as Indian law sets a minimum age of 18 for females and 21 for males.

*Figure 6: Gender Differences in Marital Status*



Thus, most at-risk students and dropouts live in home environments that are stable. Most parents are employed and judge their incomes to be adequate or less than adequate. Though less than half of the parents have been to school, most have enrolled all their children in school and have high aspirations for the children’s schooling. Children’s difficulties in school may arise because the families in the sample speak a variety of languages at home, which may not be the “mother tongue” that is spoken by the teacher at school. In addition, a small number of children have disabilities. A larger problem may be the relatively high number of dropouts who are engaged or married, especially girls, though it is not clear whether impending marriage was the cause of dropout or a result of it.

***B. What are at-risk students’ experiences with, opinions of and aspirations for schooling?***

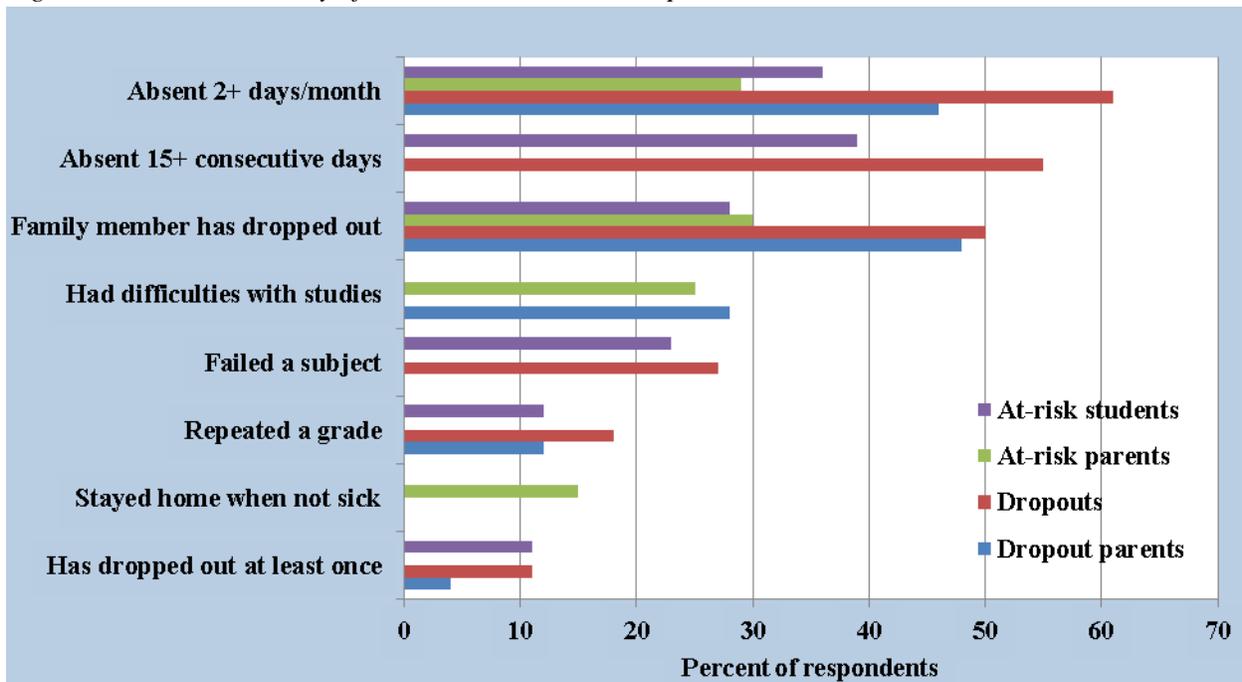
The literature on dropouts shows that these children are frequently low achievers, have often been retained in grade, attend more sporadically than other children, seem to lack interest in or a commitment to school, and more often have discipline problems.

**In India:**

- Nearly a half of parents said their children have difficulty with their studies.
- Most dropouts are frequently absent.
- Half of the dropouts have family members who have dropped out.
- Most at-risk students think school will be helpful in finding a job and a good spouse; fewer dropouts think so. Both groups aspire to complete Grade 9.
- The majority of students do not participate in after-school activities.
- Few children have been in trouble in school.

**Academic performance.** Many at-risk students and dropouts are struggling with school (Figure 7). A quarter of the children admitted they have failed a subject. Parents similarly reported that a quarter of their children have had difficulty with their studies. They expanded on this idea in that 42 percent of at-risk parents and 46 percent of dropout parents whose children had some difficulty said their child had not mastered skills in reading, math and other subjects. About 23 percent of at-risk parents and 29 percent of dropout parents said the child didn't pay attention in class. Many of the children said they rarely or never completed the required homework (38% of at-risk students and 49% of dropouts). It may be that this significant difference in the completion of homework has contributed to children's decisions to drop out of school.

Figure 7: Academic History of At-Risk Students and Dropouts



**Attendance.** Both groups also have relatively high rates of absenteeism, with 36 percent of at-risk students and 61 percent of dropouts reporting missing more than two days of school per month in their last year of school. In fact, 39 percent of at-risk students reported that they had been absent from school for more than 15 consecutive days during the year, and 55 percent of dropouts made that claim for their last year in school. These students may well have had academic problems because they missed so much learning time, and the fact that dropouts are missing significantly more school suggests that absenteeism may well be a contributing factor to dropping out.

*A majority of dropouts were absent 2+ days a month and 15 or more days in their last year of school, and half of them had a sibling who dropped out.*

Many parents of at-risk students and dropouts (91% and 82%, respectively) stated that daily attendance is very important and that they ensured the child attended regularly (89% and 81%). Only 15 percent of at-risk parents said that the child was allowed to stay home from school when not ill. Though this question was not asked of dropout parents, it might be that more of them allowed their children to stay home during that last year in school.

Parents and children provided explanations of the children’s absences (Figure 8), and the most frequently cited reason was child illness, far and away more often mentioned than any other reason. Other explanations included a need for the child to help with housework or chores at home, need for the child to care for sick parent or other relative, need for the child to work on the farm or outside the home, and the child did not want to go to school. In general, more dropout girls stayed home because they were ill or needed to care for sick relatives, and dropout boys stayed home to work on the farm or because they didn’t want to go to school (Figure 9).

Figure 8: Primary Reason for Absence

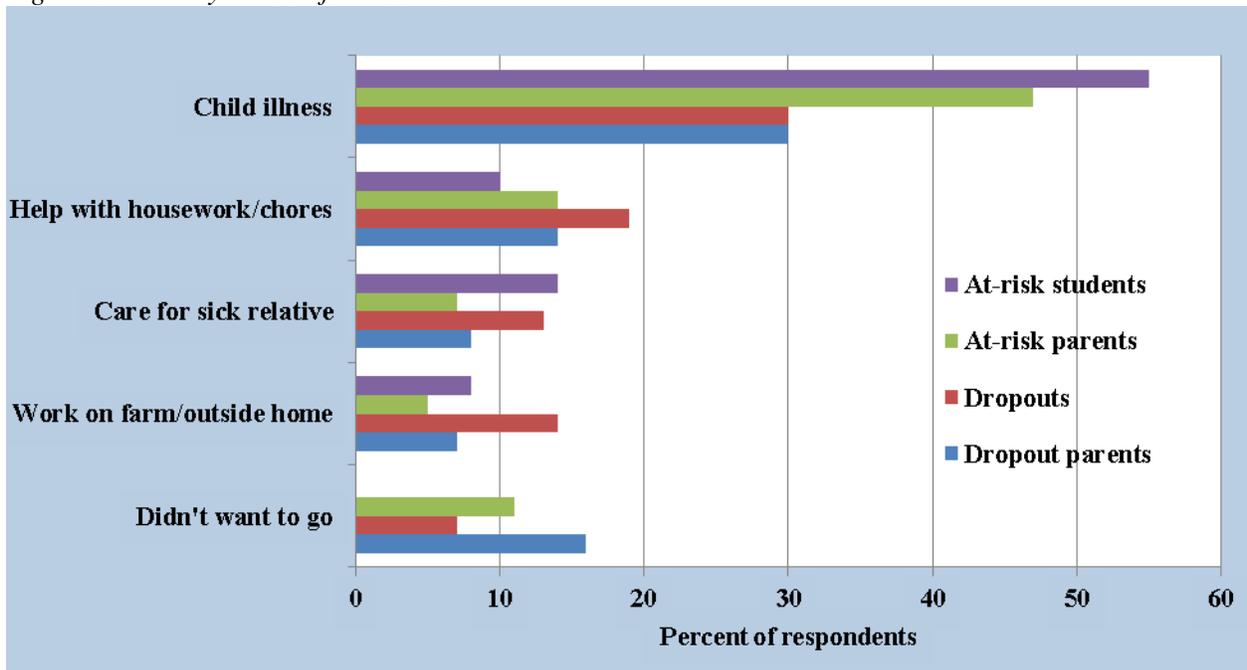
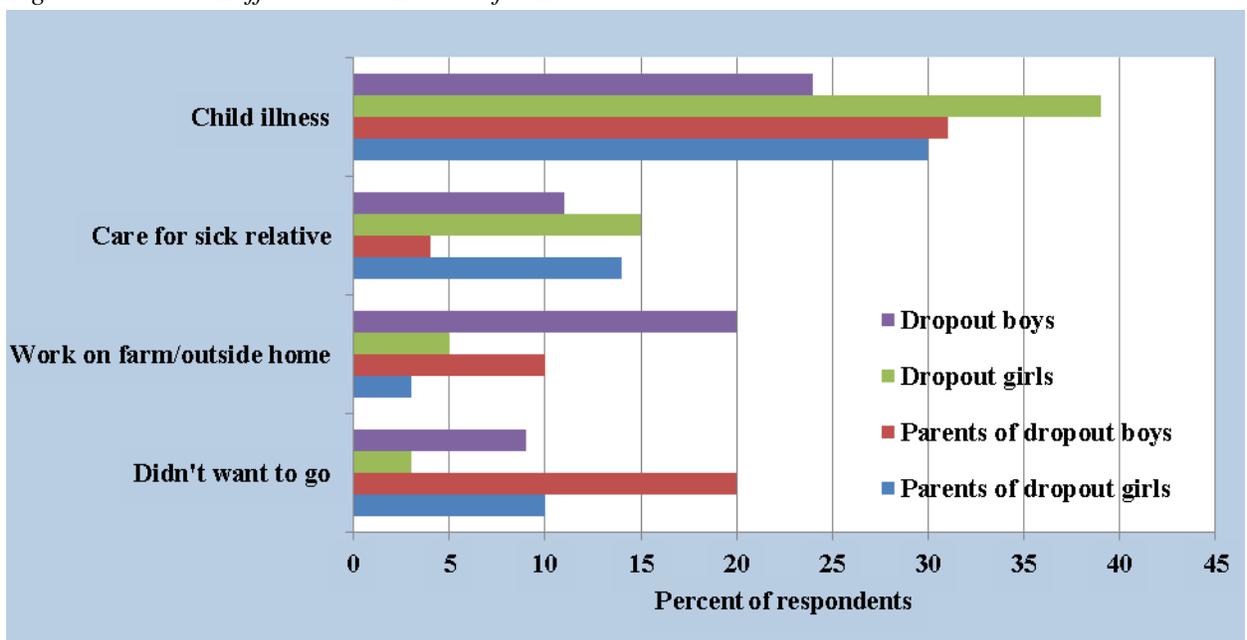


Figure 9: Gender Differences in Reasons for Absence



**History of dropout in the family.** The last of the academic risk factors deals with the history of dropout in the family. Twenty-eight percent of at-risk students and 50 percent of dropouts reported that other children in their family had dropped out, a significant difference that suggests that a history of dropping out in the family may be a precursor to a student dropping out. Among these sampled children, 11 percent of at-risk students and 11 percent of dropouts said they had dropped out at least once themselves (prior to the time of permanent dropout).

**Interest in education.** In general, the parents of at-risk students and dropouts believe that education is important to the child’s future. In India, this view was supported by 98 percent of both at-risk and dropout parents. When asked specifically how education will be important, children and parents had somewhat different ideas. More than 70 percent of at-risk students thought education was important to be happier (82%), find a good job (73%) and find a good spouse (71%). A simple majority of dropouts valued school only to be happier (59%) and smarter (56%). Though a majority of both groups of parents thought education would help the child find a good job (84% of at-risk parents and 83% of dropout parents) and earn more money (57% and 58%, respectively), nowhere near half of parents thought it was useful for any other reason.

There were also clear gender differences in the ways school might prove to be important. All four groups of respondents thought school was more important for boys than girls in its ability to help children earn money (Table 4). More parents of boys thought education would be useful in helping them find a good job. More parents of girls said they valued in it for finding a good spouse.

*Table 4: Gender Differences in Why Education is Important\**

Reason	At-Risk Students	At-Risk Parents	Dropouts	Dropout Parents
1. Earn more money	Boys	Boys	Boys	Boys
2. Find a good job	--	Boys	--	Boys
3. Find a good spouse	--	Girls	--	Girls

\*Results are shown only for gender differences that were statistically significant. Percentages are displayed in Appendix Table A-8.

Both at-risk students and dropouts said they liked going to school (96% and 89%, respectively), they liked to study (98% and 87%), school was fun (93% and 87%), they enjoyed learning new things (91% and 87%), had friends at school (92% and 85%), felt safe at school (81% and 81%) and most of their classes were interesting (81% and 72%). They also shared good opinions about their teachers, saying the teacher:

- Wanted them to succeed in school (90% of at-risk students and 82% of dropouts);
- Liked them (89% and 78%, respectively);
- Was a role model (74% and 73%);
- Thought that they were intelligent (62% and 56%), and
- Cared about their problems (62% and 54%).

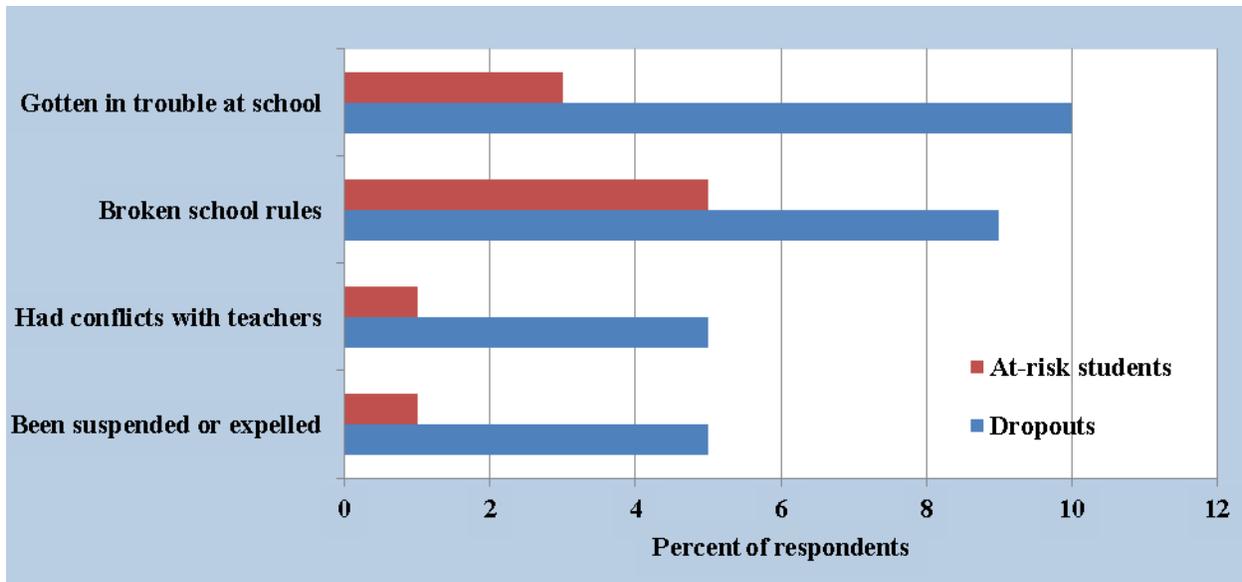
Children seemed to find teachers approachable, in that 73 percent of at-risk students and 67 percent of dropouts have asked teachers for help with their schoolwork; 27 percent of at-risk students and 29 percent of dropouts have sought advice from teachers about personal issues. A number of children – significantly more boys than girls – described teachers as using physical punishment (50% of at-risk students and 53% of dropouts) and accused them of criticizing students for giving the wrong answer (44% and 49%, respectively).

**Educational aspirations.** In terms of aspirations for their schooling, both at-risk students and dropouts reported fairly high goals. At-risk students planned to continue in school, on average, through Grade 9, and their parents were even more optimistic in that 57 percent expected their child to complete upper secondary school, 22 percent university or college, 18 percent upper primary, and just 3 percent lower primary. Significantly more at-risk parents of girls (24%) than boys (13%) chose lower secondary as the terminal grade for their children. More parents of at-risk boys (28%) chose university than parents of at-risk girls (15%). Among the dropouts, 85 percent said they would return to school if given the chance, and that they expected to continue attending school through Grade 9. So, the children who had dropped out valued schooling and, at least at some point, expected to complete several more years.

**Involvement in after-school activities.** Another measure of engagement with school is the involvement of students in activities at school outside of regular classes. Almost half of these Indian fifth graders, however, participate in no such activities (44% of at-risk and 47% of dropouts). Most of the children (69% of at-risk students and 60% of dropouts) explained that they had no interest in the activities. The only activity engaged in by more than 20 percent of at-risk students or dropouts was sports (48% and 47%, respectively). Almost half of the students contributed some sort of physical labor to the school (46% and 50%), and 22 percent of the at-risk students and 23 percent of dropouts felt the required labor was too much.

**Behavioral issues.** Relatively few at-risk students or dropouts claimed to have gotten in trouble at school, broken school rules, had conflicts with teachers; or been suspended or expelled (Figure 10). Though the percentages with behavioral issues are somewhat higher for dropouts, the differences are not statistically significant.

*Figure 10: Behavioral Issues Among At-Risk Students and Dropouts*



Thus, both at-risk students and dropouts claimed to be interested in education, with more boys than girls sure that it would help them earn money. Parents thought schooling would help their sons (more than their daughters) to find a good job, and that it would help their daughters (more than their sons) to find a good spouse. The children said they liked school and their teachers and, on average, aspired to complete Grade 9. Only a few showed behavioral problems. But many – and especially dropouts – failed to complete their homework, were frequently absent and had a family member who dropped out. Few stayed for after-school activities.

### ***C. What have parents done to support their child’s schooling?***

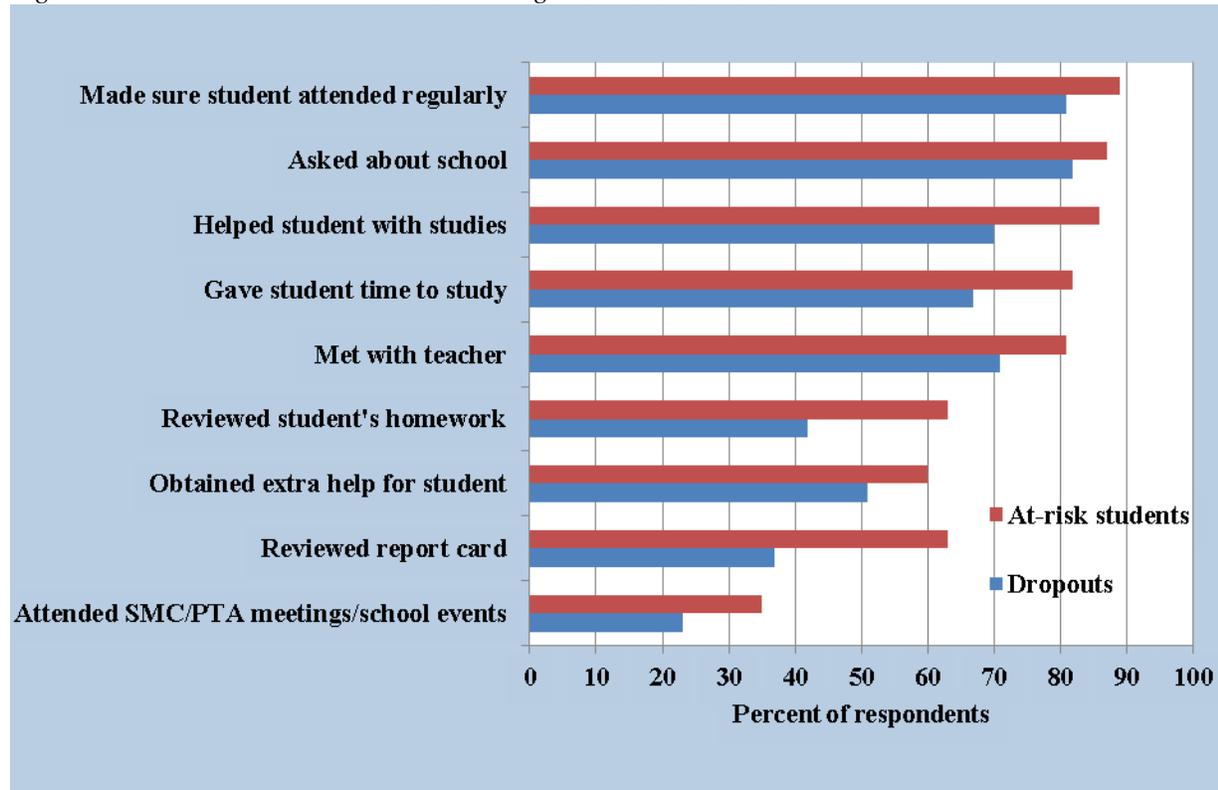
In many countries, a strong predictor of a child’s academic achievement and completion of school is parental involvement in schooling. Children whose parents give them time to study, ensure they have help when it is needed, speak with their teachers and visit the school tend to stay in school.

#### **Key findings for parental involvement:**

- A majority of children said that their parents made sure they attended regularly, asked about school, helped them with their studies, gave them time to study, met with their teacher and obtained extra help for them when needed. They admitted that relatively few parents attended SMC/PTA meetings or school events.
- Parents – especially dropout parents – described less involvement than described by their children. Less than half of them talked to the child’s teacher, talked to the child about dropping out, reviewed the report card or helped the child complete assignments.
- At-risk parents are far more involved than dropout parents, and parents of boys are more involved than parents of girls.

At-risk students and dropouts believe their parents have been involved in the child's schooling in multiple ways (Figure 11). A majority of the children said their parents made sure they attended regularly, asked about school, helped them with their studies, gave them time to study, met with their teacher and obtained extra help for them when needed. From the children's view, then, parents were very interested in what the child was learning, kept up with their work and encouraged them. Less than half of dropouts said their parents reviewed their homework, which could be a reflection of the number of those parents who had not been to school themselves. Not many of the at-risk or dropout children recalled their parents attending SMC/PTA meetings or school events.

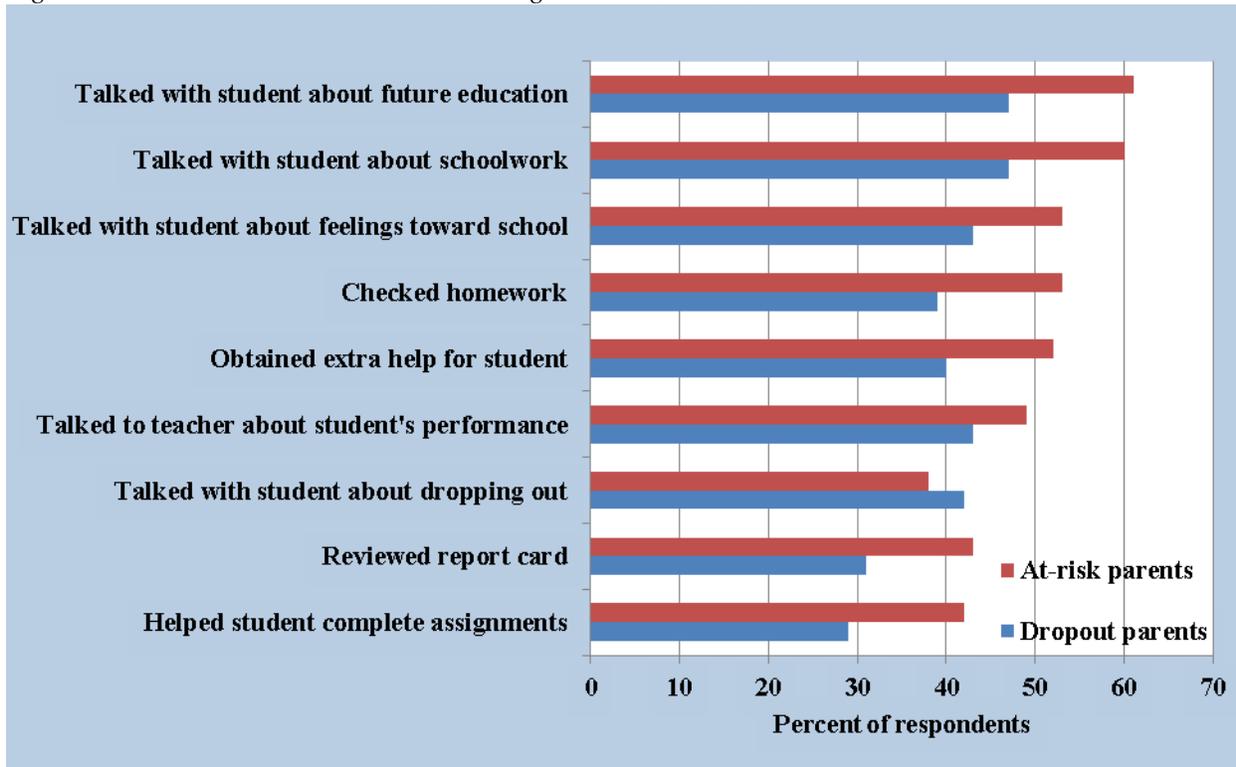
Figure 11: Parental Involvement in Schooling – Children’s Views



The parents of at-risk students and dropouts were asked a similar set of questions (Figure 12), and they did not see themselves as involved as did their children. However, a majority of the at-risk parents said they talked with the child about future education options, schoolwork and the child’s feelings toward school; they checked the child’s homework and obtained extra help for the child, when needed. On no item did the majority of dropout parents say they were involved. In many countries, illiterate parents, such as many of the parents of children in India, find school daunting and are uncomfortable coming for any purpose. This may well be true for SDPP’s sampled group.

There were considerable differences between at-risk students and dropouts in these items of parental involvement in that significantly more at-risk students said their parents gave them time to study, helped them with their studies, reviewed their homework, reviewed their report cards, obtained extra help for them, met with the teacher and attended SMC/PTA meetings or school events. These differences continued in the responses of parents in that significantly more at-risk parents than dropout parents said they talked with their child about feelings toward school, schoolwork, and future education options; helped the child complete homework; checked homework; reviewed the report card and obtained extra help, when needed.

Figure 12: Parental Involvement in Schooling – Parents’ Views



Significant differences were also apparent in that more parents of boys described themselves as involved in the child’s schooling than parents of girls (Table 5). Specifically, more at-risk and dropout parents of boys were likely than at-risk parents of girls to review their child’s report card. More dropout parents of boys were also likely to check the child’s homework, obtain extra help and talk to the teacher about the child’s performance.

Thus, though the majority of children believed that their parents had been involved in their education in many ways, fewer parents said they were. Less than half of parents of dropouts, in particular, claimed to be very involved. The major differences in these responses suggest that at-risk parents are far more involved than dropout parents, and parents of boys are more involved than parents of girls.

Table 5: Gender Differences in Parents’ Reports of Involvement in Schooling\*

Type of Involvement	At-Risk Parents	Dropout Parents
1. Check the child’s homework		Boys
2. Review the report card	Boys	Boys
3. Obtain extra help		Boys
4. Talk to the teacher about child’s performance		Boys

\*Results are shown only for gender differences that were statistically significant. Percentages are displayed in Appendix Table A-12.

***D. What reasons do children (and parents) say would cause or have caused them to drop out?***

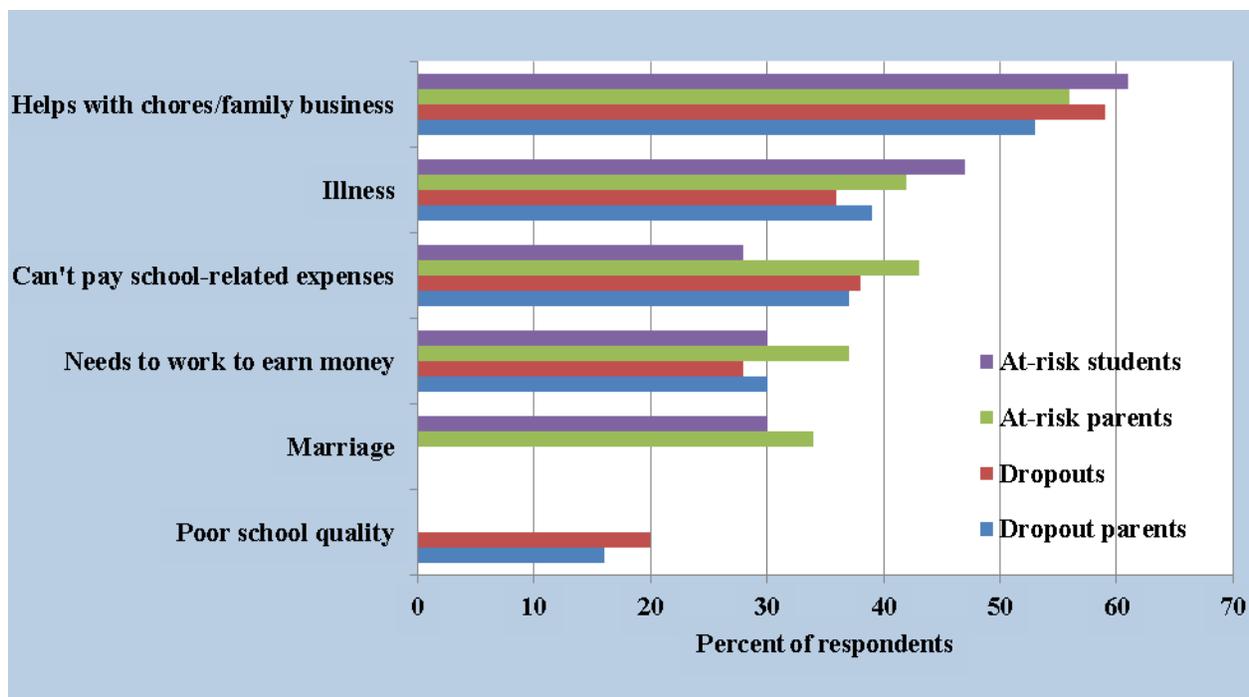
The reasons students drop out of school are complex. Ultimately, there is no one factor that accurately predicts or prevents school dropout. Research demonstrates that dropping out of school is a function of a combination of factors (e.g., gender, work obligations, low achievement, family poverty, living far from the school) across multiple domains (individual, family, school, and community).

**Children and parents gave the following top five reasons for dropout:**

- Children and parents said the three of the top reasons were economic, including need for the child to help with chores or the family business, the family’s lack of finances to pay school-related expenses and the need for the child to work to earn money.
- “Illness” was ranked highly by all respondent groups.
- At-risk students and parents completed their lists with “marriage.”
- Dropouts and dropout parents included “poor school quality.”

For India, there is complete agreement among parents and children concerning four of the major reasons for dropout (Figure 13). Three of these reasons are economic: the family needs the child at home to help with chores or the family business, the family can’t pay school-related expenses, and the family needs the child to work to earn money. The fourth (on which there is agreement) is “illness.” After these four, at-risk children and parents have somewhat different ideas from dropouts and their parents. More at-risk students and parents said “marriage” was a major cause of dropout than other factors; more dropouts and dropout parents included “poor school quality.”

*Figure 13: Top Five Causes/Potential Causes of Dropout*



**Economic reasons** predominate, the highest percentage of all four respondent groups citing the family’s need for the child to help with chores or the family business. The next most frequently cited economic reason for three of the respondent groups was “family can’t pay the school-related expenses,” which dropouts cited significantly more frequently than at-risk students. This reason was followed by “child needs to work to earn money.” At-risk students reversed the ranking of these latter two economic items.

There are some differences in the importance of these economic items for boys and girls (Table 6): (1) for “household chores,” more dropout girls and dropout parents of girls say it is important than the comparable groups of boys and dropout parents of boys; (2) for “work to earn money,” more at-risk boys, at-risk parents of boys, dropout boys and dropout parents of boys say it is important than the comparative groups of girls; (3) for “marriage” all respondent groups ranked the reason more relevant to girls; and (4) more at-risk parents of boys said “poor school quality” was a factor than at-risk parents of girls.

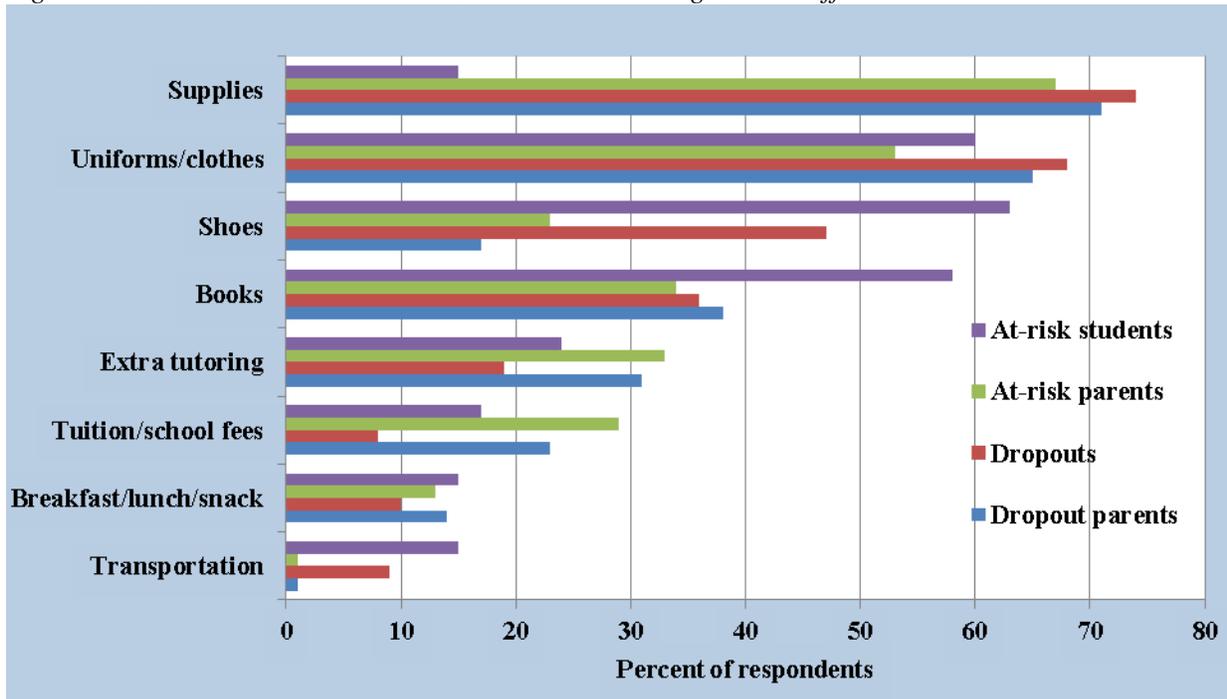
*Table 6: Gender Differences in Causes of Dropout According to Children and Parents\**

Reason	At-Risk Students	At-Risk Parents	Dropouts	Dropout Parents
1. Household chores/family business	--	--	Girls	Girls
2. Need to work to earn money	Boys	Boys	Boys	Boys
3. Marriage	Girls	Girls	Girls	Girls
4. Poor school quality	--	Boys	--	--

\*Results are shown only for gender differences that were statistically significant. Percentages are displayed in Appendix Table A-14.

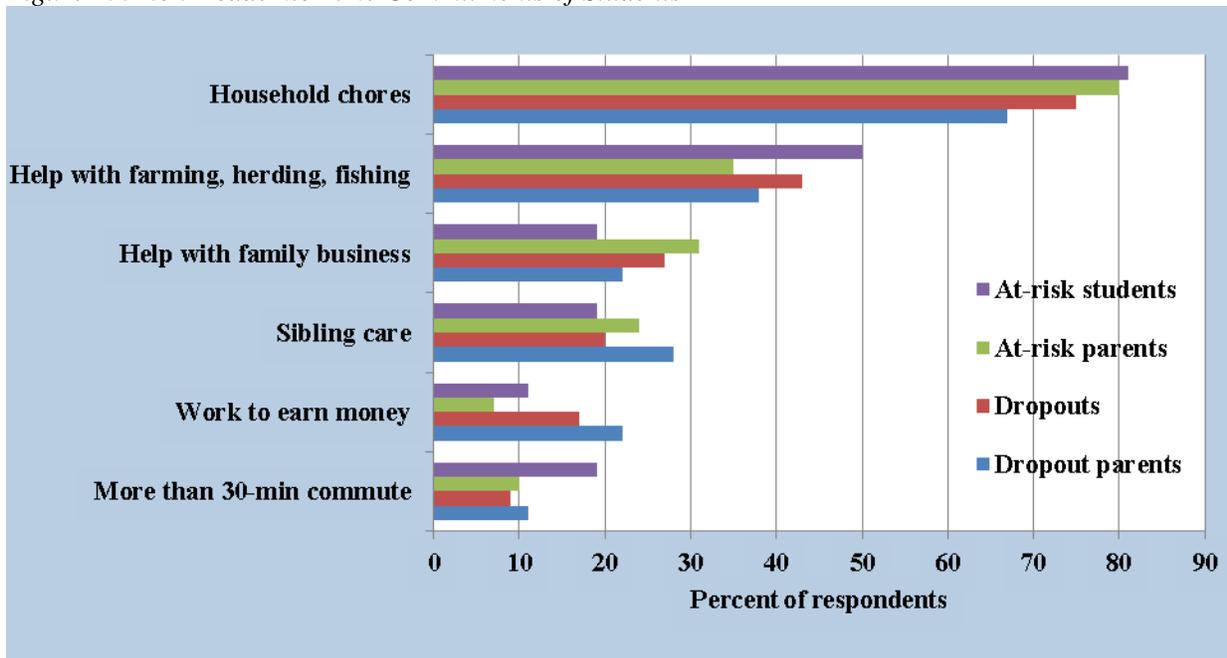
To explore the economic causes further, children and parents were asked to name the school-related items that students lack or cannot afford (Figure 14). The majority of all respondent groups agreed that uniforms/clothes and supplies were difficult to afford, with dropouts mentioning them significantly more often than at-risk students. A majority of at-risk students added books and shoes, citing these more frequently than dropouts.

Figure 14: School-Related Items That Students Are Lacking/Cannot Afford



As might be predicted from the reasons for dropout cited above, when asked about their non-academic time commitments out of school, about three-quarters of children and parents reported the children had household chores to do (Figure 15). The only other item chosen by more than 30 percent of all respondent groups was helping parents with farming or herding.

Figure 15: Non-Academic Time Commitments of Students



In general, more boys were wanted for farming, working in the family business, and earning money, while more girls were needed for chores and sibling care (Table 7). An additional finding relating to dropout is the fact that more dropout parents of girls (34%) agreed with the decision for the child to drop out than dropout parents of boys (20%), and more dropout parents of boys (55%) tried to prevent their child from dropping out than dropout parents of girls (40%).

Table 7: Gender Differences in Non-Academic Time Commitments\*

Reason	At-Risk Students	At-Risk Parents	Dropouts	Dropout Parents
1. Household chores	Girls	Girls	Girls	Girls
2. Help with farming/herding/fishing	Boys	--	Boys	--
3. Help with family business	--	Boys	Boys	Boys
4. Sibling care	Girls	--	Girls	Girls
5. Work to earn money	--	--	Boys	Boys

\*Results are shown only for gender differences that were statistically significant. Percentages are displayed in Appendix Table A-17.

**Additional reasons for dropout.** The next reason for dropout, *illness*, ranked second among at-risk students and parents of dropouts, and third among parents of at-risk students and dropouts. Significantly more at-risk students named it than dropouts.

The final item added to the list by at-risk students and their parents is “marriage,” which is far more often cited as a reason for girls to dropout than boys (Table 6 above). It is very interesting to note that this reason is not included in the top five by dropouts and their parents, who cited it significantly less frequently than at-risk students and their parents. It may be that dropouts and their parents do not wish to admit the importance of marriage for the children or it may be that they truly do not believe this was a major reason for the children to drop out of school.

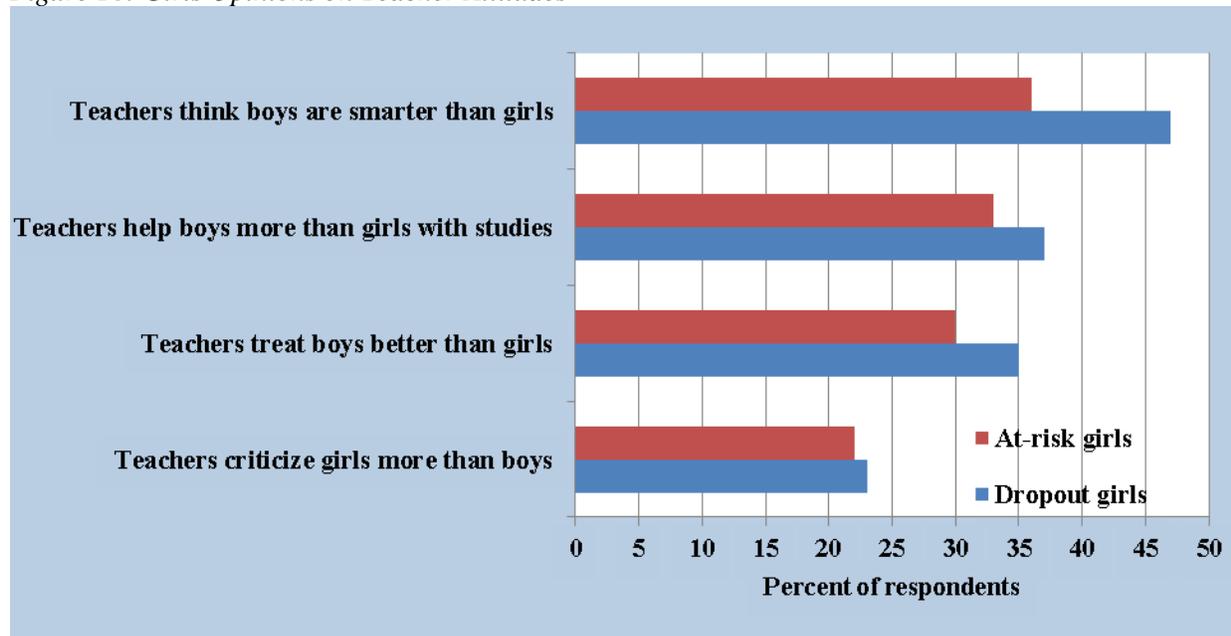
Only one *academic* reason for dropout made it into the top five and that only for two of the four respondent groups. About 20 percent of dropouts and 16 percent of dropout parents said that “poor school quality” was a part of families’ reasons for a child to drop out. At-risk parents of boys named it more often than at-risk parents of girls.

Seldom cited as causes of dropout were the child’s poor academic progress, the family’s migration, child’s pregnancy, child being harassed/bullied, school’s lack of latrines, lack of safety, child overage for grade, or child discouraged by teachers.

**What do girls say?** Gender cuts across a wide range of constraints that lead to drop out. Gendered practices at the household level affect the opportunities of girls to access and complete education. They also shape their attitude towards schooling. Girls do think teachers treat boys and girls differently in some ways (Figure 16). Thirty-six percent of at-risk girls and 47 percent of dropout girls said that teachers think boys are smarter than girls (a significant difference); about a third seemed to believe teachers helped boys more than girls with their studies and

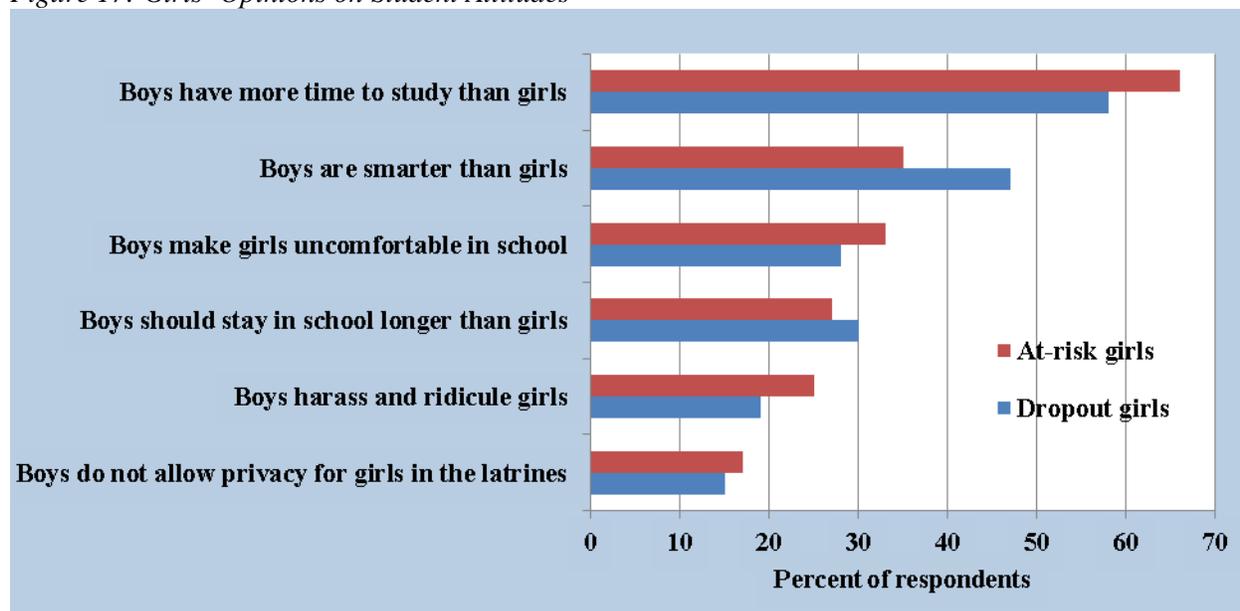
treated boys better than girls. Only 22 percent of the at-risk girls and 23 percent of dropout girls said that teachers criticized girls more than boys.

Figure 16: Girls Opinions on Teacher Attitudes



Responses to other attitude questions show that a majority of girls believe that boys have one distinct advantage over girls: they have more time to study (Figure 17). From a third to a half of the girls believe boys are smarter than girls (more dropout girls than at-risk girls); a somewhat smaller number believe boys make girls feel uncomfortable in school, boys should stay longer in school than girls, and boys harass and ridicule girls in school.

Figure 17: Girls' Opinions on Student Attitudes



In sum, children and parents agreed that three of the top five reasons for dropout were economic. In general, boys need to work to earn money; girls are needed for household chores or sibling care. Illness was also a key factor contributing to dropout, this time for both boys and girls. Finally, either marriage (particularly for girls) or poor school quality (more for boys) was cited. The gender differences are particularly interesting as many girls think that boys have more time to study than girls, suggesting that girls' household tasks are more time-consuming than boys' requirements for earning money.

### ***E. How does the school view dropout and address it?***

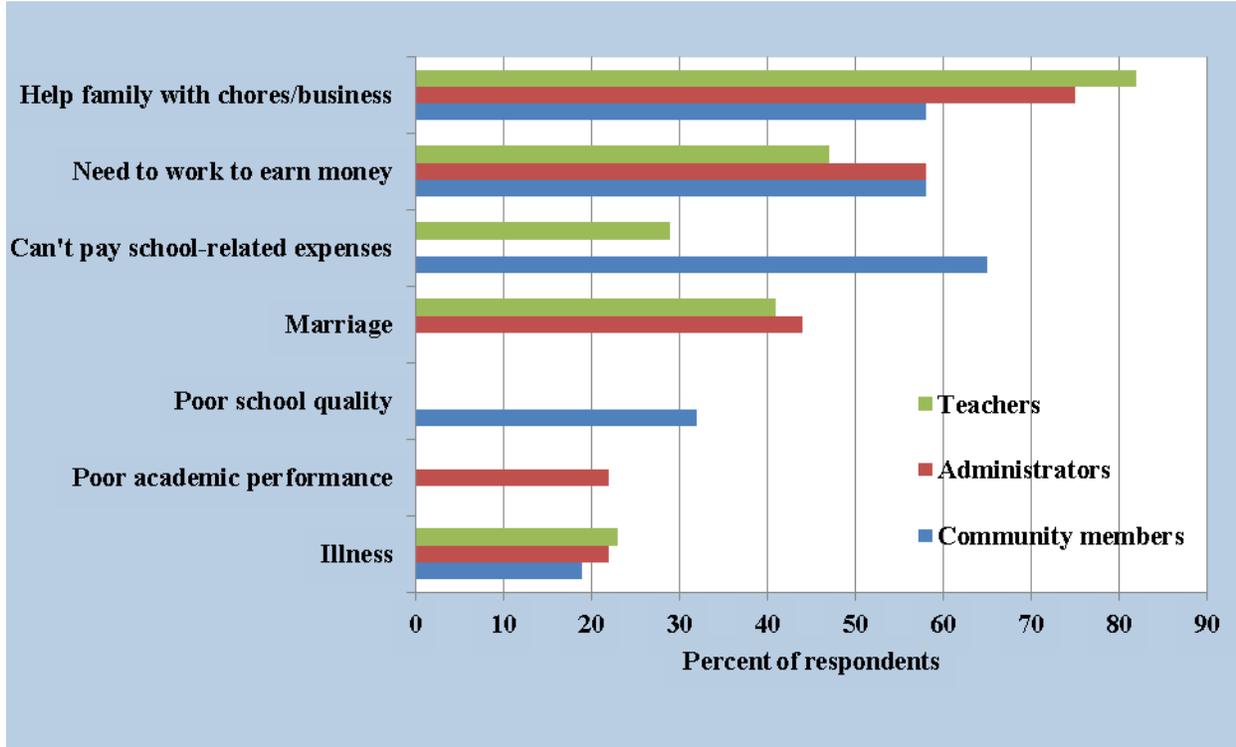
School staff, both administrators and teachers, can have a profound effect on a student's learning and enjoyment of school. Community members who are part of school support groups can encourage children to continue in school or discourage them. What school staff and community members believe about the causes of dropout and its consequences is likely to be communicated to students and influence their decision to dropout.

#### **Key findings:**

- The economic needs for children to “help with chores” and “work to earn money” led the list of causes for dropout cited by school staff and community members. Teachers and community members added “can't pay school-related expenses.”
- All three groups included “illness;” school staff also cited “marriage.”
- Community members gave one school-related reason for dropout (“poor school quality”) and administrators cited a second (“poor academic performance”).
- Administrators agreed that dropout is a problem in their schools, and a majority (but not all) said the phenomenon was defined by number of consecutive days missed.
- Few of the dropouts or dropout parents thought the children were better off now.
- School staff feel some responsibility to prevent dropout but think at-risk children have too many other obligations, outside of school.
- School staff talk to students and their parents if they see a problem but rarely act in more assertive ways (e.g., give additional academic support, monitor student performance, create student groups, enlist community support).

**Causes of dropout.** Teachers, school administrators and community members agreed on three of the major causes of dropout (Figure 18), with the highest frequency of each group citing the *economic reasons* of the family's need for the child to help with chores or business and the need for the child to work to earn money and the *other* reason of “illness.” The additional reasons chosen by the largest number of one or two of these groups of respondents included the *economic* reason that “the family can't pay school-related expenses,” two school-related or *academic* reasons of “poor school quality” and “the child's poor academic performance,” and the *other* reason of “marriage.”

Figure 18: Top Causes of Dropout According to Education Staff and Community Members



The reasons cited by the highest percentages of each of these groups of respondents were *economic*, with more than half of community members, teachers and school administrators citing the “need to help the family with chores or the family business” and the “need for the child to work to earn money.” The third economic item, “can’t pay school-related expenses,” was the most frequently cited item for community members and ranked among the top five for teachers as well. Teachers and school administrators said that the “need to work to earn money” was more critical for boys than girls; teachers also ranked “can’t pay school-related expenses” more highly for boys than girls (Table 8).

Table 8: Gender Differences in Causes of Dropout According to School Personnel\*

Reason	Teachers	School Administrators
1. Work to earn money	Boys	Boys
2. Can’t pay school-related expenses	Boys	--
3. Marriage	Girls	Girls

\*Results are shown only for gender differences that were statistically significant. Percentages are displayed in Appendix Table A-21.

Two *school-related* factors appear on the list of the top five reasons, with “poor school quality” relatively frequently cited by community members and “poor academic performance/failed exams” by school administrators. Of the two *other* items, “marriage” was included on the list of

top reasons by school administrators and teachers, and “illness” by all three groups of respondents. More teachers and school administrators said “marriage” was important for girls than for boys (Table 8).

There is, therefore, close agreement between education staff/community members and children/parents regarding the primary causes of dropout: children are needed to help with chores at home, the family can’t pay school-related expenses, many children (especially boys) are needed to earn money for the family, and illness is all too common. Some, but not all, of the respondent groups added marriage (especially for girls), the poor quality of the school, and the child’s poor academic performance.

**Definition of dropout.** When school administrators were asked if dropout was much of a problem in their school, 66 percent said it was a “major” problem and 22 percent a “moderate” problem. No one said it was not a problem. However, there was not complete agreement on what constituted dropping out. When asked how they defined a child as a dropout, administrators differed (note that they could provide multiple answers, and 7% cited “other” as their answer):

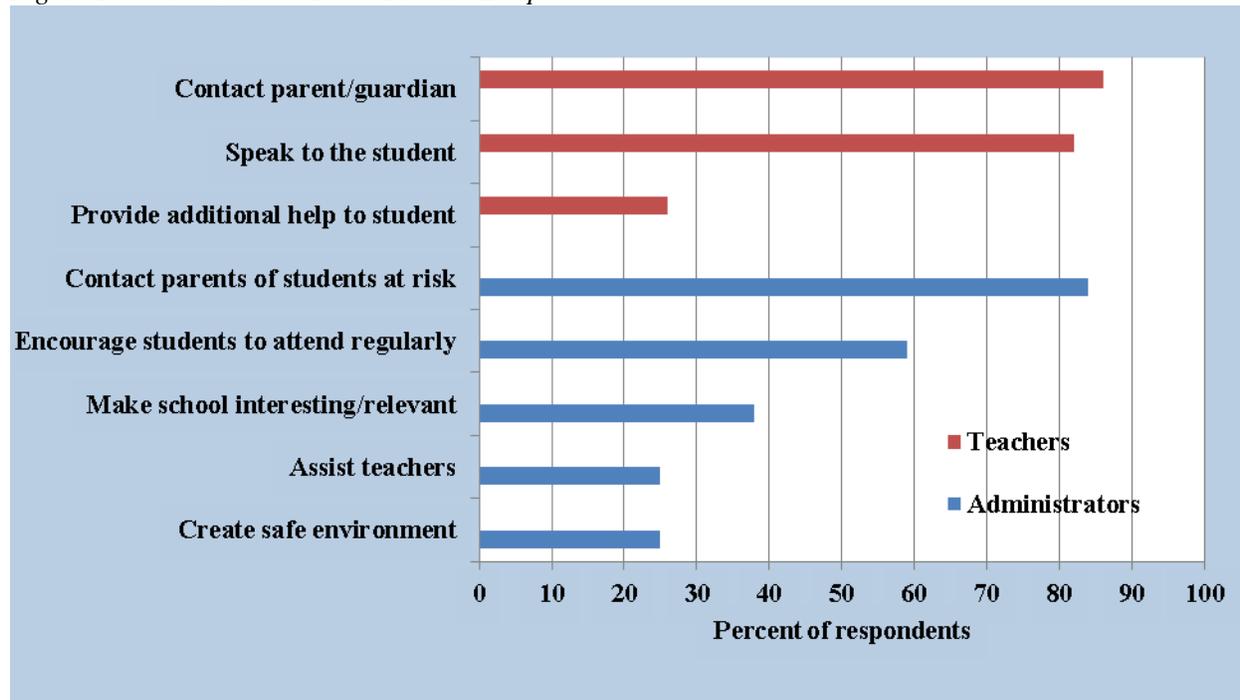
- 60 percent said it was defined by number of consecutive days missed;
- 36 percent said it was a matter of cumulative days missed.
- 33 percent said it was because the student did not sit for exams;
- 13 percent said it occurred when the parent informed the school the student would not return; and
- 3 percent said it was because the student missed the last day of school.

**Consequences of dropout.** Relatively few dropouts (17%) said they were better off having dropped out of school, with 42 percent of this group explaining that they were now available to help the family and 35 percent saying they could earn money. Only 16 percent of parents thought the family was better off, with 35 percent reporting that the child helps more with family work and 27 percent saying the child contributes money to the household. Among the dropouts who believed they were not better off, the two major reasons were that they were bored (reported by 31%) and they weren’t learning anything (20%). Their parents said it was because the children couldn’t find jobs (29%) and can’t get advanced training (25%). When asked their occupations, the dropouts predominantly answered “laborer/domestic” (48%) or “unemployed” (39%).

**Responsibility for dropout prevention.** Though all school administrators said they have a responsibility to prevent dropout, when asked “who is responsible for keeping children in school,” they did not place themselves at the top of the list. Rather, their most frequent response was teachers (mentioned by 44%), followed by themselves (28%) and then parents (25%). However, teachers were not quite sure there was a lot they could do for at-risk children. Fifty-seven percent agreed that “teachers can’t do much for at-risk students;” 75 percent said that “at-risk students need more help than we can provide;” and 87 percent agreed “at-risk students have too many other obligations.”

When asked directly what they were doing to prevent dropout, a majority of school administrators said they were contacting the parents of children at-risk and encouraging children to attend regularly (Figure 19). A majority of teachers reported contacting the parent/guardian and speaking to the student. Relatively few took a more active role in providing additional academic help for students or creating student groups to help each other.

Figure 19: What Schools Do to Prevent Dropout

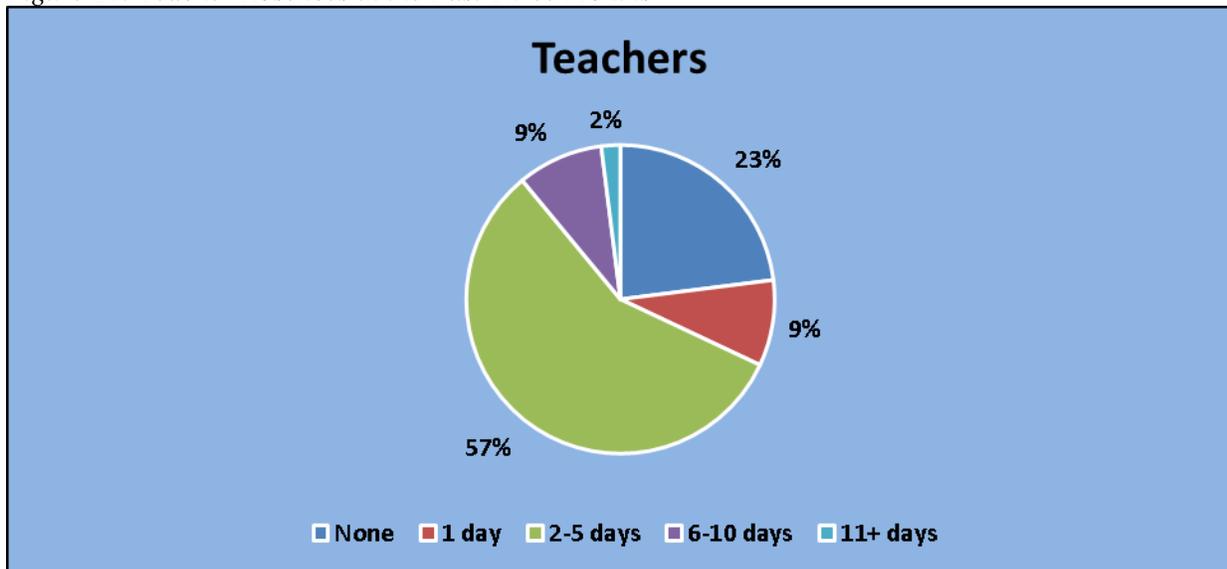


**Monitoring teacher attendance.** School administrators also encouraged regular teacher attendance, as teacher absenteeism can have a ripple effect. If teachers miss many days of school, students may de-value school and decide not to attend, sometimes with the approval of their parents. The teachers reported their absences for the past three months (Figure 20); most had been out of school for 2 to 5 days. Only 23 percent said they had never been absent. An additional 9 percent were absent 1 day, but 57 percent for 2 to 5 days and 11 percent for more than 5 days. When asked to specify the reasons for their absence (respondents could give more than one explanation), teachers cited the following list most often: illness (7%), family issues (31%), personal business (20%), and funeral/traditional ceremony (34%).

The largest group of school administrators (45%) said that 1 to 2 days a month constitutes excessive absence for teachers, a rate that was shown by a number of teachers. Another 29 percent of administrators said 3 to 5 days was excessive, 16 percent said 6 to 8 days, and 10 percent said 9 or more days. When a teacher has been absent an excessive amount, 81 percent of the school administrators said they follow up by speaking to the teacher about it. Many of them (45%) also investigate the cause of the absence. To handle the class of the absent teacher, 88 percent said the class of the absent teacher is combined with another class; 28 percent call in a substitute teacher. Interestingly, 13 percent said a student teaches the class. Nine percent said

that sometimes a staff member watches the class. None admitted to cancelling the class.  
(Administrators could choose multiple answers.)

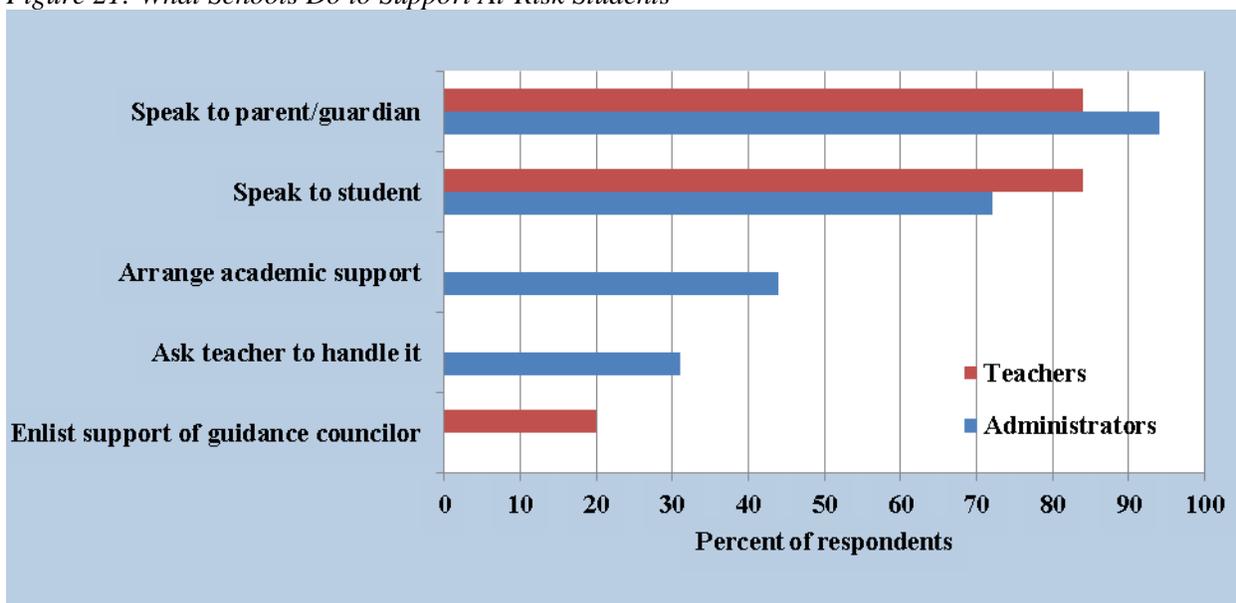
Figure 20: Teacher Absences in the Past Three Months



**Monitoring student attendance and performance.** Another proactive action to prevent dropout is to identify at-risk students and monitor their performance and school engagement. In India, the following percentages of teachers identified at-risk students through the listed indicator: child (i) is frequently late or absent (73%), (ii) does not seem interested (49%), (iii) does not turn in homework (41%), (iv) misbehaves in class (32%), (v) skips classes (32%), (vi) does not participate in class (17%), (vii) is disrespectful (13%), and (viii) struggles to comprehend lessons (10%). School personnel reported responding to the issues presented by at-risk children largely by speaking to the student and/or contacting their parents or guardians (Figure 21).

*99 percent of teachers said they would try to convince a student not to drop out, but 85% agreed “teachers have no control over dropout factors.”*

Figure 21: What Schools Do to Support At-Risk Students

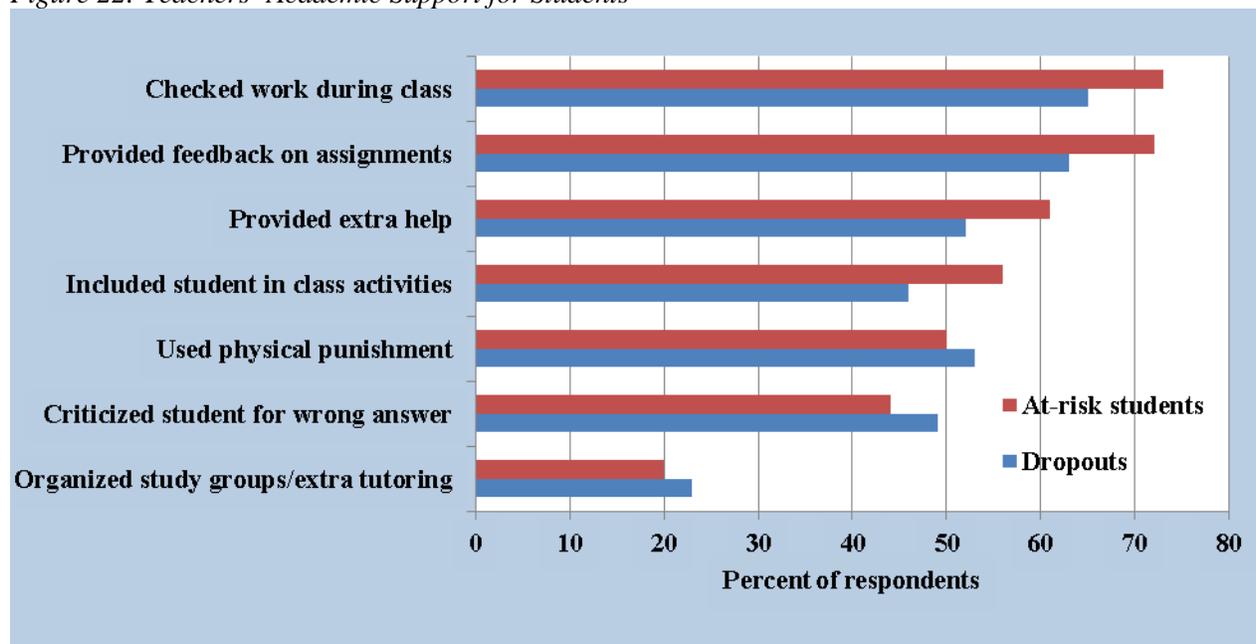


When asked to define “excessive” student absenteeism, the most frequent response (made by 69% of teachers) was 9+ days a month, implying that students must be absent more than a third of the days school is open for absence to be a problem. The next most frequent response was 6 to 8 days a month (given by 19% of teachers). When excessive absenteeism occurs, most teachers contact the parent/guardian (92%) and talk to the student (77%).

When school administrators were asked to identify the major discipline problems among students, the problem they most frequently cited was “talking” (73%). Next on the list was “fighting,” cited by 40 percent of principals, and “disrespectful behavior,” cited by 23 percent. Most administrators (75%) said they reacted by talking about the issue with the student, 75 percent said they spoke to the child’s parent or guardian, and 50 percent said they asked a teacher to handle it (administrators could give multiple answers).

A majority of at-risk students and dropouts reported that teachers provided them with academic support (Figure 22). They said that teachers checked their work in class; provided feedback on assignments, and provided extra help if they were having problems. Fewer teachers seemed to include the at-risk children in class activities or organize study groups or extra tutoring. About half of the children said teachers use physical punishment, and slightly fewer said teachers criticize students for wrong answers.

Figure 22: Teachers’ Academic Support for Students



It thus appears that the typical responses of teachers and/or administrators to absenteeism and behavioral issues are to speak to parents and students. These actions are certainly a good start. It is interesting to note that 38 percent of at-risk parents and 30 percent of dropout parents said they were contacted by a teacher or the school about their child’s absenteeism. Only 35 percent of at-risk parents and 22 percent of dropout parents, on the other hand, were contacted about their child’s grades or behavior. These percentages seem quite low in comparison to the relatively high numbers of students with many absences and difficulties with academics.

**Staff meetings.** All school administrators hold staff meetings at the school, and 97 percent said they had discussed dropout with faculty and staff. According to the administrators, the discussions focused on ways to prevent dropout (97% named this topic), ways to identify at-risk students (74%), specific cases of individual students at-risk (32%) and characteristics of at-risk students (23%). Teachers had a somewhat different view. A full 94 percent remember a discussion of dropout at a meeting, and 62 percent said it included a discussion of specific students, 57 percent said they talked about how to get parents more involved and 52 percent said they discussed ways to keep the students in school.

Principals identified a relevant topics on which teachers have been provided with professional development: how to make classes interesting (74% of administrators), how to get parents more involved (61%), how to manage the classroom (52%), how to identify at-risk students (48%), how to work with students who are struggling (42%) and how to handle disruptive students (29%).

In sum, school staff (as well as community members, students and parents) believe that dropout is a problem, largely caused by economic factors, child illness and the tradition of early marriage. Though they feel somewhat responsible for trying to keep children in school, their actions are limited to speaking to parents and encouraging students to stay in school.

#### ***F. What community factors influence dropout?***

It is possible for community members and community groups to act in support of the local school and assist in keeping children in school. Often such support comes through organizations specifically designed to assist the school.

In India, school administrators reported that 61 percent of the schools have parent-teacher associations (PTAs), 84 percent have school management committees (SMCs), 47 percent work with village education committees, and 94 percent have a student council. A full 65 percent of the members of these groups reported meeting with the principal five or more times each year, 7 percent 3 or 4 times and 28 percent only 1 to 2 times a year.

***Most of the schools in this situational analysis have community groups to support them. Most of these groups have discussed student dropout but few have engaged in any activities specifically designed to reduce dropout.***

According to the principals, the major roles of community groups are to monitor the school's performance and support the school through construction/maintenance and other school improvement activities. Community members agreed, with about three-quarters of them saying the community is involved with teacher and student absenteeism, teacher and student performance and teacher and student misconduct. All groups were said to have some role in school construction and maintenance.

Eighty-four percent of the principals reported that they discussed the issue of student dropout with these groups, including how the group could mitigate dropout (69%), what the group is actually going to do to mitigate dropout (31%) and issues that students are facing that might lead to dropout (23%). Sixty-five percent of the community members interviewed said that local

community groups have tried to reduce dropout by building awareness of the issue, and 70 percent said they have responded with school and student monitoring.

**G. What do children, parents, educators and communities suggest would mitigate dropout?**

Since any interventions to reduce dropout must fit the community, it is important to gather information on local suggestions for ways to mitigate the problem.

<p><b>Respondents had a variety of suggestions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To mitigate dropout, hire better/nicer teachers, provide better quality schooling, increase support from teachers and provide financial assistance;</li> <li>• To help students do better in school, ensure children have time to study and encourage teachers and parents to give them more attention and support; at-risk students specially requested tutoring and remediation; and</li> <li>• To make school more interesting and fun, organize more sports, provide more books to read or a library and bring in better/nicer teachers.</li> </ul>
--

When asked what factors would have prevented children from dropping out, at-risk parents, dropout parents and dropout children had a number of suggestions (Table 9). Among the factors supported by 20 percent or more of each group of respondents, four appear on all lists: “better/nicer teachers,” “better quality schooling,” “more support from child’s teachers” and “financial assistance.” “Better quality schooling” is at the top of the list for dropout parents and second for at-risk parents and dropouts. Both groups of parents added “better teacher attendance,” “better school facilities” and “prevention of bullying.” Dropouts requested more support from their parents and re-emphasized the financial burdens of schooling in asking for “lower costs.”

*Table 9: Recommendations to Prevent Dropout\**

<b>At-Risk Parents</b>	<b>Dropout Parents</b>	<b>Dropout Children</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better/nicer teachers</li> <li>• Better quality schooling</li> <li>• More support from child’s teachers</li> <li>• Better teacher attendance</li> <li>• Better school facilities</li> <li>• Prevention of bullying</li> <li>• Financial assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better quality schooling</li> <li>• Better/nicer teachers</li> <li>• More support from child’s teachers</li> <li>• Financial assistance</li> <li>• Better school facilities</li> <li>• Better teacher attendance</li> <li>• Prevention of bullying</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial assistance</li> <li>• Better quality schooling</li> <li>• More support from child’s family</li> <li>• More support from child’s teachers</li> <li>• Better/nicer teachers</li> <li>• Lower costs</li> </ul>

\*Percentages are presented in Appendix Table A-25.

At-risk students and dropouts also identified the factors they believe would have helped them do better in school (Table 10). The two groups agree on three items: “more time to study,” “more attention/help from teachers” and “more interest/support from parents.” At-risk children added the factor of “remediation or tutoring,” emphasizing the need for more help from their present teachers, retired teachers or community members. Dropouts asked for access to textbooks and

supplies, expressing a desire to improve their performance in school. At-risk girls, more than at-risk boys, wanted more time to study.

*Table 10: Factors That Would Help Students Do Better in School\**

At-Risk Students	Dropout Children
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More time to study</li> <li>• More attention/help from teachers</li> <li>• More interest/support from parents</li> <li>• Remediation/tutoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to textbooks</li> <li>• More interest/support from parents</li> <li>• Access to school supplies</li> <li>• More attention/help from teachers</li> <li>• More time to study</li> </ul>

\*Percentages are presented in Appendix Table A-26.

In addition to the factors discussed above, at-risk students, dropout children, teachers and school administrators responded to suggestions of activities that would make school more interesting, fun or useful (Table 11). The activities cited by 20 percent or more of each group are ranked in order of priority beginning with the activity cited by the largest percentage of respondents (see Appendix Table A-27 for data).

*Table 11: Activities to Make School More Interesting, Fun and Useful*

At-Risk Students	Dropouts	Teachers	School Administrators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More sports events</li> <li>• Better/nicer teachers***</li> <li>• More after-school activities*</li> <li>• Books to read/library</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More sports events</li> <li>• Better/nicer teachers***</li> <li>• Books to read/library</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More sports events</li> <li>• Music/musical instruments</li> <li>• Books to read/library</li> <li>• More comfortable environment</li> <li>• Academic competitions</li> <li>• Computers</li> <li>• Art supplies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More sports events</li> <li>• Books to read/library</li> <li>• More class discussions/debates**</li> <li>• Music/Musical instruments</li> <li>• More comfortable environment</li> <li>• Academic competitions</li> <li>• More school events*</li> <li>• Vocational training*</li> <li>• Computers</li> <li>• Social activities*</li> <li>• Science labs</li> <li>• Art supplies</li> <li>• Field trips</li> </ul>

\*Not asked of teachers

\*\* Only asked of teachers and school administrators

\*\*\* Not asked of teachers and school administrators

\*\*\*\*Not asked of school administrators

Since the lists vary somewhat across the groups, it is not possible to directly compare all items, but many activities had high value:

- All groups agreed that the top item was “more sports events;”
- “Books to read/library” appeared on all four lists;
- At-risk students and dropouts (the only groups asked) wanted better/nicer teachers;
- On no subsequent items is there agreement, among the groups asked, that the activity would make school more interesting, fun and useful;
- At-risk students completed their list with “more after-school activities,” “computers” and “field trips,” none of which were seconded by dropouts; and
- Teachers and school administrators had longer lists of possibilities than children, being especially drawn toward “music/musical instruments,” a “more comfortable environment;” “academic competitions,” “computers” and “art supplies.”

### *H. Summary*

Most of the children in both the at-risk and dropout groups come from poor families with little experience of schooling. Many of the children are struggling in school. They said that they liked school and liked their teachers, but didn’t think education would be particularly useful in their lives. Too many dropouts rarely or never completed their homework; many were absent regularly; and more dropouts than at-risk students had family members who had already dropped out. A majority of children in both groups did not participate in after-school activities, although they expressed a liking for sports.

At-risk parents were more involved than dropout parents in talking with their children about future education, about schoolwork, and the child’s feelings toward school. More at-risk parents checked the child’s homework and obtained extra help when the child needed it. Fewer than 50 percent of dropout parents reported being involved in any of the actions suggested on the questionnaire. When parents were involved, they tended to encourage boys in their education more than girls.

The major reasons for a child to drop out appear to be economic, academic, or related to illness. Dropout children, their parents, teachers, school administrators, and community members all agreed that children drop out predominantly because of economic factors, including the need for the child to help with chores (more often girls than boys) or the family business and the need for the child to earn money (more often boys than girls). All of the respondent groups except school administrators added the family’s difficulty in paying school-related expenses. The importance of economic factors is reinforced by the fact that a significant percentage of children and parents commented on their difficulty in paying for uniforms and school supplies.

Illness was also included in the top five reasons for dropout by all respondent groups. It appears that children are frequently ill. When asked for the reasons that children have extended absences from school, the highest percentage of at-risk students, dropouts and both groups of parents all said it was due to child illness.

Four respondent groups (at-risk students and their parents, school administrators and teachers) said that marriage was a top reason for dropout. It is interesting that two of the groups not including this factor are dropouts and their parents.

The last set of major factors cited as contributing to dropout are descriptive of the academic performance of the children or a quality of the school. Dropouts, their parents and community members included “poor school quality;” school administrators put in “poor academic performance/exam results.”

School officials at all levels are concerned about the relatively high level of dropout and believe they have significant responsibility for dropout. When an issue of attendance, behavior or student performance arises, school staff reported discussing the problem with a parent and the student. However, there is little additional action, above discussion, to prevent dropout. Little training of administrators or teachers has occurred on the subject of dropout or the treatment of at-risk students.

When it comes to eliciting suggestions of factors that would prevent dropout, help students do better in school or make school more interesting or fun, respondents had many ideas. Better quality schooling and better/nicer teachers headed the list of recommendations to prevent dropout. To do better in school, children requested for more access to textbooks, more interest/support from parents, more time to study and remediation or tutoring. When asked for suggestions for making school more interesting, fun and useful, children asked for an increased number of sports events, better/nicer teachers, books to read or a library and more after-school activities. Teachers and administrators seconded the idea of more sports events and books to read and added a long list of other activities, such as music and art, academic competitions and computers.

#### **IV. Possible Interventions**

Many of the issues faced by India’s students in Grade 5 are financial, and such factors as the family needing the child to work to earn money or help at home are the first to come to mind when children, parents, community members and school staff are asked to define the causes of dropout. The second set of issues that respondents mentioned are illness and child marriage. The last items included on the list of the top five are academic. SDPP is not set up to deal with health issues or to campaign against early marriage, and the project is prohibited from direct financial interventions and teacher training. However, there are some actions that the project might take to ease the financial burdens on students and their families and enhance children’s academic success. The first might come in the form of after-school activities that:

- Provide students with greater *access to textbooks*;
- Give students additional *time to study*;
- Have adults on hand who can tutor children in need and provide some of the *remediation* they require to catch up in class, if possible, in the child’s mother tongue;
- Include *sports events*; and

- Respond to the school staff desires for *music and art* and, perhaps, *academic competitions*.

Finally, several findings of the situational analysis suggest that mitigating dropout may be accomplished by implementation of a system to warn parents, community members, teachers and administrators that a child is at risk of dropping out. Educators talk with parents – or report to the parents – about a child’s absences or academic difficulties, but they rarely go beyond the conversation stage. Community groups may have discussed the issue of dropout but not implemented actions of their own to address the problem. The following interventions might alert adults to pending dropout and involve additional ways to support the child staying in school:

- *Community awareness/mobilization* campaigns to alert all members of the community of the prevalence of dropout and the benefits of staying in school;
- Parent and teacher *training on the precursors to dropout* and options for mitigation; and
- Implementation of an *early warning system* to identify students at risk of dropping out and specify actions for adults to take to prevent dropout.

## Appendices: Tables of Data

*Table A-1: Household Economic Condition*

Rating of Condition	At-Risk Parents N=352	Dropout Parents N=327
Good	15%	10%
Adequate	25%	23%
Poor	43%	47%
Very bad	17%	20%

\*Numbers in this table are represented in Figure 3.

*Table A-2: Children Too Hungry to Pay Attention in Class*

Frequency of Hunger	At-Risk Students N=372	Dropouts N=314
Always	1%	1%
Often	3%	2%
Seldom	62%	56%
Never	34%	41%

\*Numbers in this table are represented in Figure 4.

*Table A-3: Primary Language Spoken in Student's Home*

Primary Language	At-Risk Students N=371	Dropouts N=314
Thethi	54%	60%
Hindi	33%	30%
Mythili	11%	10%
Magahi	2%	0%

\*Numbers in this table are represented in Figure 5.

*Table A-4: Gender Differences in Marital Status*

Status	At-Risk Boys N=189	At-Risk Girls N=181	Dropout Boys N=181	Dropout Girls N=128
1. Engaged	3%	2%	7%	19%
2. Married	1%	1%	3%	21%
3. Has a child	1%	1%	0%	2%

\*Numbers in this table are represented in Figure 6.

*Table A-5: Academic History of At-Risk Students and Dropouts\**

<b>Element of Academic History</b>	<b>At-Risk Students N=372</b>	<b>Parents of At-Risk Students N=352</b>	<b>Dropouts N=317</b>	<b>Parents of Dropouts N=326</b>
1. Was absent 2+ days/month	36%	29%	61%	46%
2. Was absent 15+ consecutive days	39%	--	55%	--
3. Family member has dropped out of school	28%	30%	50%	48%
4. Has had difficulty with his/her studies	--	25%	--	28%
5. Failed a subject	23%	--	27%	--
6. Repeated a grade	12%	--	18%	12%
7. Has stayed home from school when not sick	--	15%	--	--
8. Student has dropped out at least once	11%	--	11%	4%

\*Numbers in this table are represented on Figure 7. A dash means the question was not asked of that respondent group.

*Table A-6: Primary Reason for Absence\**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>At-Risk Students N=139</b>	<b>Parents of At-Risk Students N=320</b>	<b>Dropouts N=168</b>	<b>Parents of Dropouts N=303</b>
1. Child illness	55%	47%	30%	30%
2. Child had to help with housework/chores	10%	14%	19%	14%
3. Child must care for sick family member	14%	7%	13%	8%
4. Had to work on farm/outside home	8%	5%	14%	7%
5. Didn't want to go	0%	11%	7%	16%

\*Numbers in this table are represented on Figure 8. Numbers of child respondents are lower than on other tables because the question was only asked of those who said they had missed 15 or more consecutive days.

*Table A-7: Gender Differences in Reasons for Absence*

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Dropout Boys N=103</b>	<b>Dropout Girls N=65</b>	<b>Parents of Dropout Boys N=181</b>	<b>Parents of Dropout Girls N=120</b>
1. Child illness	24%	39%	--	--
2. Child must care for sick family member	--	--	4%	14%
3. Had to work on farm/outside home	20%	5%	--	--
4. Didn't want to go	--	--	20%	10%

\*Numbers in this table are represented on Figure 9. Blank cells indicate that there was no significant difference on the item for this group of respondents.



*Table A-8: Gender Differences in Why Education is Important\**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>At-Risk Boys/Girls N=191/181</b>	<b>Parents of At-Risk Boys/Girls N=172/162/</b>	<b>Dropout Boys/Girls N=186/131</b>	<b>Parents of Dropout Boys/Girls N=190/127</b>
1. To earn more money	76%/60%	72%/42%	53%/32%	68%/42%
2. To find a good job	--	88%/78%	--	87%/75%
3. To find a good spouse	--	13%/33%	--	12%/35%

\*Numbers on this table are represented on Table 4 in the text. Only significant gender differences are displayed here.

*Table A-9: Behavioral Issues Among At-Risk Students and Dropouts\**

<b>Behavioral Issue</b>	<b>At-Risk Students N=372</b>	<b>Dropouts N=316</b>
1. Has gotten in trouble at school	3%	10%
2. Has broken school rules	5%	9%
3. Has conflicts with teachers	1%	5%
4. Been suspended or expelled by the school	1%	5%

\*Numbers in this table are represented on Figure 10.

*Table A-10: Parent Involvement in Schooling: Children's Views\**

<b>Parent Action</b>	<b>At-Risk Students N=372</b>	<b>Dropouts N=317</b>
1. Made sure student attended school regularly	89%	81%
2. Asked student about school	87%	82%
3. Helped student with studies	86%	70%
4. Gave student time to study	82%	67%
5. Met with teacher	81%	71%
6. Reviewed student's homework	63%	42%
7. Obtained extra help for student	60%	51%
8. Reviewed report card	63%	37%
9. Attended SMC/PTA meetings and/or school events	35%	23%

\*Numbers in this table are represented on Figure 11.

*Table A-11: Parent Involvement in Schooling: Parent's Views\**

<b>Parent Action</b>	<b>Parents of At-Risk Students N=352</b>	<b>Parents of Dropouts N=327</b>
1. Talked with student about future education	61%	47%
2. Talked with student about schoolwork	60%	47%
3. Talked with student about feelings toward school	53%	43%
4. Checked student's homework	53%	39%
5. Obtained extra help for student	52%	40%
6. Talked to teacher about student's performance	49%	43%
7. Talked with student about dropping out	38%	42%
8. Reviewed report card	43%	31%
9. Helped student complete assignments	42%	29%

\*Numbers in this table are represented on Figure 12.

*Table A-12: Gender Differences in Parents' Reports of Involvement in Schooling\**

<b>Parent Action</b>	<b>Parents of At-Risk Boys N=175</b>	<b>Parents of At-Risk Girls N=168</b>	<b>Parents of Dropout Boys N=191</b>	<b>Parents of Dropout Girls N=134</b>
1. Checked student's homework	--	--	47%	36%
2. Reviewed report card	47%	36%	--	--
3. Obtained extra help for student	--	--	48%	27%
4. Talked to teacher about student's performance	--	--	47%	36%

\*Numbers on this table are represented on Table 5 in the text. Only significant gender differences are displayed here.

*Table A-13: Top Five Causes/Potential Causes of Dropout\**

<b>Cause</b>	<b>At-Risk Students N=361</b>	<b>Parents of At-Risk Students N=342</b>	<b>Dropouts N=313</b>	<b>Parents of Dropouts N=320</b>
1. Child helps with chores/family business	61%	56%	59%	53%
2. Illness	47%	42%	36%	39%
3. Can't pay school-related expenses	28%	43%	38%	37%
4. Child needs to work to earn money	30%	37%	28%	30%
5. Marriage	30%	34%		
6. Poor school quality			20%	16%

\*Numbers in this table are represented on Figure 13. A blank cell indicates that item was not among the top five for the designated respondent group.

*Table A-14: Gender Differences in Causes of Dropout According to Children and Parents\**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>At-Risk Boys/Girls N=183/178</b>	<b>Parents of At Risk Boys/Girls N=167/166</b>	<b>Dropout Boys/Girls N=183/130</b>	<b>Parents of Dropout Boys/Girls N=185/133</b>
1. Household chores/family business	--	--	52%/68%	44%/65%
2. Need to work to earn money	42%/24%	55%/18%	37%/17%	40%/17%
3. Marriage	9%/52%	9%/59%	3%/20%	3%/24%
4. Poor school quality	--	21%/13%	--	--

\*Numbers on this table are represented on Table 6 in the text. Only significant gender differences are displayed here.

*Table A-15: School-Related Items that Students are Lacking/Cannot Afford\**

<b>Item</b>	<b>At-Risk Students N=115</b>	<b>Parents of At-Risk Students N=209</b>	<b>Dropouts N=144</b>	<b>Parents of Dropouts N=213</b>
1. Supplies	15%	67%	74%	71%
2. Uniform/clothes	60%	53%	68%	65%
3. Shoes	63%	23%	47%	17%
4. Books	58%	34%	36%	38%
5. Extra tutoring	24%	33%	19%	31%
6. Tuition/school fees	17%	29%	8%	23%
7. Breakfast/lunch/snack	15%	13%	10%	14%
8. Transportation	15%	1%	9%	1%

\*Numbers in this table are represented on Figure 14. Numbers of respondents are lower than on other tables because some said they had everything needed for school and were not asked about specific items.

*Table A-16: Non-Academic Time Commitments of Students\**

<b>Time Commitment</b>	<b>At-Risk Students N=113</b>	<b>Parents of At-Risk Students N=102</b>	<b>Dropouts N=116</b>	<b>Parents of Dropouts N=152</b>
1. Household chores	81%	80%	75%	67%
2. Help parents with farming, herding, fishing	50%	35%	43%	38%
3. Help parents with family business	19%	31%	27%	22%
4. Sibling care	19%	24%	20%	28%
5. Work to earn money	11%	7%	17%	22%
6. More than 30 minute commute	19%	10%	9%	11%

\*Numbers in this table are represented on Figure 15. Numbers of respondents are lower than on other tables because the question was only asked of those who said there were activities that took their time away from school.

*Table A-17: Gender Differences in Non-Academic Time Commitments\**

<b>Time Commitment</b>	<b>At-Risk Boys/Girls N=52/61</b>	<b>Parents of At-Risk Boys/Girls N=44/56</b>	<b>Dropout Boys/Girls N=61/55</b>	<b>Parents of Dropout Boys/Girls N=80/71</b>
1. Household chores	64%/97%	66%/91%	54%/98%	45%/90%
2. Help with farming/herding/fishing	60%/41%	--	53%/33%	--
3. Help with family business	--	46%/21%	34%/18%	31%/11%
4. Sibling care	10%/26%	--	8%/33%	20%/37%
5. Work to earn money	--	--	28%/6%	36%/7%

\*Numbers on this table are represented on Table 7 in the text. Only significant gender differences are displayed here.

*Table A-18: Girls' Opinions on Teacher Attitudes\**

<b>Teacher Attitude</b>	<b>At-Risk Female Students N=180</b>	<b>Female Dropouts N=132</b>
1. Teachers think boys are smarter than girls	36%	47%
2. Teachers help boys more than girls with their studies	33%	37%
3. Teachers treat boys better than girls	30%	35%
4. Teachers criticize girls more than boys	22%	23%

\*Numbers in this table are represented on Figure 16.

*Table A-19: Girls' Opinions on Student Attitudes\**

<b>Student Attitude</b>	<b>At-Risk Female Students N=180</b>	<b>Female Dropouts N=132</b>
1. Boys have more time to study than girls	66%	58%
2. Boys are smarter than girls	35%	47%
3. Boys make girls uncomfortable in school	33%	28%
4. Boys should stay longer in school than girls	27%	30%
5. Boys harass and ridicule girls in school	25%	19%
6. Boys do not allow privacy for girls in the latrine	17%	15%

\*Numbers in this table are represented on Figure 17.

*Table A-20: Top Causes of Dropout According to Education Staff and Community Members\**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Teachers N=160</b>	<b>School Admin. N=32</b>	<b>Community Members N=31</b>
1. Help family with chores or business	82%	75%	58%
2. Need to work to earn money	47%	58%	58%
3. Can't pay school-related expenses	29%		65%
4. Marriage	41%	44%	
5. Poor school quality			32%
6. Poor academic performance/exam results		22%	

Reason	Teachers N=160	School Admin. N=32	Community Members N=31
7. Illness	23%	22%	19%

\*Numbers in this table are represented on Figure 18. A blank means the item was not among the top 5 reasons for that respondent group.

*Table A-21: Gender Differences in Causes of Dropout According to School Personnel\**

Reason	Teachers		School Admin	
	For Boys N=160	For Girls N=159	For Boys N=31	For Girls N=32
1. Work to earn money	71%	23%	87%	28%
2. Can't pay school-related expenses	36%	22%	--	--
3. Marriage	7%	74%	7%	81%

\*Numbers on this table are represented on Table 8 in the text. Only items with statistically significant gender differences are displayed here.

*Table A-22: What Schools Do to Prevent Dropout\**

Action	Teachers N=160	School Admin. N=32
1. Contact the parent/guardian	86%	--
2. Speak to the student	82%	--
3. Provide additional help to student	26%	--
4. Contact parents of children at risk	--	84%
5. Encourage students to attend regularly	--	59%
6. Make school interesting/relevant	--	38%
7. Assist teachers	--	25%
8. Create safe environment	--	25%

\*Numbers in this table are represented on Figure 19. A dash indicates the question was not asked of that respondent group.

*Table A-23: What Schools Do to Support At-Risk Students*

Action	Teachers N=160	School Admin. N=32
1. Speak to parent/guardian	84%	94%
2. Speak to student	84%	72%
3. Arrange academic support	--	44%
4. Ask teacher to handle it	--	31%
5. Enlist support of guidance counselor	20%	

\*Numbers in this table are represented on Figure 21. A dash indicates the question was not asked of that respondent group; a blank cell means that less than 20% of the respondent group selected this option.

*Table A-24: Teachers' Academic Support for Students\**

<b>Action</b>	<b>At-Risk Students N=372</b>	<b>Dropouts N=317</b>
1. Checked work during class	73%	65%
2. Provided feedback on assignments	72%	63%
3. Provided extra help if student was having problems with a lesson	61%	52%
4. Included student in class activities	56%	46%
5. Used physical punishment	50%	53%
6. Criticized student for wrong answer	44%	49%
7. Organized study groups/extra tutoring	20%	23%

\*Numbers in this table are represented on Figure 22.

*Table A-25: Recommendations to Prevent Dropout\**

<b>Action</b>	<b>At-Risk Parents N=346</b>	<b>Dropouts N=317</b>	<b>Dropout Parents N=325</b>
1. Better quality schooling	40%	30%	47%
2. Better/nicer teachers	44%	27%	45%
3. More support from child's teachers	38%	28%	39%
4. Financial assistance	31%	34%	36%
5. Better school facilities	32%		34%
6. More support from child's family	--	32%	--
7. Better teacher attendance	35%	--	28%
8. Prevention of bullying	32%	--	24%
9. Lower costs		22%	

\*Numbers in this table are represented on Table 9. A dash indicates the question was not asked of that respondent group; a blank cell means the item was selected by less than 20 percent of that respondent group.

*Table A-26: Factors That Would Help Students Do Better in School \**

<b>Action</b>	<b>At-Risk Students N=371</b>	<b>Dropouts N=311</b>
1. Access to textbooks		52%
2. More interest/support from parents	43%	50%
3. Remediation/tutoring	38%	
4. More time to study	49%	23%
5. More attention/help from teachers	45%	26%
6. Access to school supplies		27%

\*Numbers in this table are represented on Table 10. Cells are blank if the percentage was less than 20.

Table A-27: Activities to Make School More Interesting, Fun and Useful\*

Action	At-Risk Students N=369	Dropouts N=309	Teachers N=157	School Admin. N=31
1. Sports events	63%	60%	82%	78%
2. Better teachers	51%	44%	--	--
3. Music/Musical instruments			49%	42%
4. More class discussions/debates	--	--		45%
5. School events			--	41%
6. Books to read/library	25%	37%	27%	55%
7. Vocational training			--	34%
8. More comfortable environment			27%	42%
9. Academic competitions			24%	42%
10. More after-school activities	30%		--	
11. Social activities			--	28%
12. Science labs				26%
13. Computers	25%		22%	29%
14. Art supplies			22%	23%
15. Field trips	21%			22%

\*Numbers in this table are represented on Table 11. A dash means the question was not asked of that respondent group, a dash that less than 20 percent of the group said the activity would make school more interesting.