

S. Rajaram*

Educational Level, School Attendance and School Continuation in India: Evidence from the National Family Health Survey 1992-93

Introduction

IT HAS become closest thing to a global conventional wisdom: a nation's economic prosperity is intimately tied to its stock of human capital, and its human capital depends on the quality of its educational system. Thus, across the world, education reform is now seen as indispensable to economic success. The world community has a special responsibility to ensure that all children receive an education of improved quality and that they complete primary school, as agreed upon at the World Conference on Education for all, held at Thailand, in 1990. Education is also a means to enable the individual to gain access to knowledge, which is a precondition for coping, by any one wishing to do so, with today's complex world. Education is a component of well being and a factor in the development of well being through its links with demographic as well as economic and social factors. The relationship between education and demographic and social changes is one of interdependence. There is a close and complex relationship among education, marriage age, fertility, mortality, mobility and activity. The increase in the education of women and girls contributes to greater empowerment of women, to a postponement of age of marriage and to reduction in the family size. When mothers are better educated their children's survival rate tends to increase. Broader access to education is also a factor in internal migration and composition of the working population.

In the past few years the world has experienced a rise in the educational levels. However, it is more difficult to meet educational needs when there is rapid population growth. India has one of the fast growing populations and is one of the least literate societies in the world. The Constitution of India directed the state to provide free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years within a period of ten years from the commencement of the Constitution, when it was adopted about 50 years ago. According to the National Family Health Survey 1992-93, the school attendance among children age 6-14

*Research Officer. Population Research Centre, Dharwad.

was only about 67 percent. Similarly as per the 1991 census, the over all crude literacy rate for India was only 43 percent. States in India also differ greatly in terms of literacy rate, educational level and school attendance. School enrolment and educational attainment of children age 6-14 in India and its states have been widely examined in both official and academic reports. However, there are absolutely no studies that highlight the differentials in the educational level and school continuation in India. It is expected that such a study can be used to identify key concerns in national educational system. Hence, the study explores the educational level, school attendance and school continuation in India by using the National Family Health Survey data. The present study explicitly throws some light on the school attendance and continuation among children age 6-14 by selected household characteristics. The main concern of the study is to answer the question, whether the highest grade of education attained by a usual adult member in a household has any influence in the school continuation of children age 6-14 in the same household. It is expected that educational level of a member in a household largely influence the educational attainment of children in the same household.

Data and Estimation

Data used for the present study comes from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) that covered 24 states and the National Capital Territory of Delhi. In the NFHS a total of 88,562 households were covered, using uniform questionnaires, sample designs and field procedures. The data collection was carried out on a state-by-state basis from April 1992 to September 1993. Three types of questionnaires were used in the NFHS: the household questionnaire, the woman's questionnaire, and the village questionnaire. For the present analysis we mainly used the information collected in the household questionnaire. All usual residents of each sampled household, plus all visitors who slept in that household the night before the interview were listed in the household questionnaire. Some basic information was collected on each person listed including age, sex, marital status, and education. In addition, information was collected for each person on whether the person is a usual resident of the household or a visitor. The information on ever attendance of school and highest grade completed were collected for each person aged six and above. Additional information on whether the person is still in school was collected for children aged between six and fourteen. This information permit to estimate level of education attained and school continuation rates (or dropout rates) by years of schooling; they also allow an examination of the influence of household and individual characteristics on the school continuation of children in India. A file of household and a file of children were created from this household data. The child file contains only the child aged between six and fourteen. The record of each child includes selected individual and household characteristics.

From the household data we first estimated the highest level of education completed by a usual resident adult (aged 15 and above) member for each household. Separate estimates were obtained for male and female adult member in each household. The average of the highest level of education completed by a usual resident adult/male/female member was computed according to state and also according to selected background characteristics of the

household. Life table technique was adopted to estimate the school continuation rates. The present analysis confines only to the usual children aged between six and fourteen who ever attended the school. As said the data provide the highest grade completed by a child and we added one to this information for obtaining the years of schooling. This is done because, for example, if a child is studying/not studying in the fourth standard, the highest grade reported in the actual data was three. It was considered as the duration variable and school attendance was considered as the censoring variable in the life table analysis. For some children, the highest grade completed did not agree with the age, such observations were dropped from the analysis. School continuation rates were estimated by state and by selected characteristics of the household. Finally we examined the influence of each selected variables on school continuation, controlling for the effect of other variables. This we accomplished by using hazard regression, which is a multivariate statistical method for duration variable (Allison, 1984; Cox and Oakes, 1983; Namboodiri and Suchidran, 1987; Yemaguchi, 1991).

Results

Highest Grade Completed

The educational level attained by an adult member in the household is assumed to influence various social, economic and demographic characteristics of other members in the household. It is also believed to be a major component that encourages the children to complete a higher level of education. Thus in the first stage of the study we examine the highest level of education attained by an adult member in a household. Table 1 shows the percent distribution of households by highest grade completed by a usual adult member in India and its states. Over all, twenty three percent of India's households have no usual adult member who ever completed any grade. The percent of households with a usual adult member completed the grade of 10 and above is a little above thirty eight percent. The average highest grade completed by a usual adult member in the household is about 7.3 years. States also differ greatly in terms of the highest grade completed by a usual adult member in the household. The percent of households having no member completed grade one is below five only in the states of Kerala and Mizoram. However, a number of states namely Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Kamataka, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Orissa, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh have more than one-quarter of the households with no adult member ever completed grade one. Surprisingly, in the National Capital Territory of Delhi, one-tenth of the households have members who never completed any grade. Similarly, it is important to notice that more than half of the households in all the states have at least one adult member who completed primary school. In India as a whole about 69 percent of households have at least one adult member completed five years of schooling. The average of the highest grade completed by a usual adult member in the household is above five years in all the states. The average of the highest grade completed by a usual adult member is maximum in Delhi and it is lowest in Madhya Pradesh. It is also important to notice that more than half of the households in Delhi, Manipur and Goa have at least one adult member who completed the grade ten or above.

TABLE 1: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS BY HIGHEST GRADE COMPLETED BY A USUAL ADULT MEMBER IN INDIA AND ITS STATES

<i>State</i>	<i>Educational level</i>				<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Number of cases</i>
	<i>0</i>	<i>1-4</i>	<i>5-9</i>	<i>10</i>			
Andhra Pradesh	36.74	7.2	23.41	32.64	5.92	5.58	4194
Assam	21.04	14.22	30.84	33.89	7.05	5.10	3255
Bihar	38.46	4.53	20.86	36.15	6.26	5.85	4727
Goa	7.62	8.59	27.62	56.16	9.42	4.50	3725
Gujarat	19.76	10.63	28.99	40.61	7.38	5.02	3856
Haryana	17.48	4.42	31.59	46.51	8.05	4.89	2735
Himachal Pradesh	13.28	4.75	33.55	48.43	8.42	4.65	3118
Jammu	15.29	2.85	33.74	48.12	8.66	4.79	2839
Kamataka	26.09	9.16	26.51	38.25	6.96	5.31	4259
Kerala	3.17	7.05	44.35	45.43	9.26	3.67	4383
Madhya Pradesh	33.44	8.11	30.44	28.02	5.84	5.15	5835
Maharashtra	16.41	10.58	32.96	40.04	7.86	4.95	4053
Manipur	10.04	5.16	31.49	53.31	9.34	4.59	1086
Meghalaya	26.21	10.48	34.78	28.53	6.29	4.74	992
Mizoram	2.94	10.76	46.83	39.47	8.54	3.51	1087
Nagaland	14.34	5.38	35.57	44.72	7.90	4.17	1060
Orissa	29.4	12.86	28.6	29.14	6.10	5.28	4595
Punjab	22.04	3.14	30.03	44.79	7.42	4.79	3213
Rajasthan	34.76	4.45	32.24	28.55	5.88	5.10	4991
Tamil Nadu	17.94	9.2	38.16	34.7	7.27	4.86	4282
West Bengal	26.1	15.22	30.39	28.29	6.26	5.05	4238
Uttar Pradesh	29.26	3.93	31.11	35.7	6.76	5.26	10065
NCT Delhi	10.47	2.95	24.02	62.56	10.06	4.96	3659
Arunachal Pradesh	29.55	9.89	33.4	27.16	6.02	4.98	961
Tripura	15.72	11.59	46.18	26.51	7.05	4.39	1139
All India	22.97	7.56	31.03	38.44	7.26	5.15	88347

Similar analysis is carried out separately for males and females and the results are shown in Table 2 and Table 3 respectively. Table 2 suggests that in India 28 percent of households have no adult male member ever completed grade one. Mizoram is the only state where the percent of households with no adult male member completed grade one is below ten. The percent of households with no adult male member completed grade one is highest in Andhra Pradesh and it is about 40 percent. Similarly, more than one-quarter of the households in the states of Assam, Bihar, Kamataka Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh have no adult male member who ever passed grade one. However, in every state, more than half of the households have at least one adult male member who completed the primary education. The average of the highest grade completed by a usual male adult member is maximum for Delhi followed by Manipur and Goa. It is also important to note that Delhi is the only place where more than fifty percent of the households have at least one adult male member who completed the grade ten or above. The average of the highest grade completed by a usual adult male member is lowest in Meghalaya followed by Tripura.

TABLE 2: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS BY HIGHEST GRADE COMPLETED BY A USUAL ADULT MALE MEMBER IN INDIA AND ITS STATES

<i>State</i>	<i>Educational level</i>				<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Number of cases</i>
	<i>0</i>	<i>1-4</i>	<i>5-9</i>	<i>10</i>			
Andhra Pradesh	40.22	7.42	21.46	30.90	5.55	5.57	4194
Assam	26.73	14.38	28.20	30.69	6.43	5.21	3255
Bihar	39.67	4.46	20.54	35.33	6.11	5.82	4727
Goa	16.11	10.39	25.83	47.68	8.18	5.02	3725
Gujarat	23.29	11.75	28.55	36.41	6.85	5.07	3856
Haryana	21.97	4.42	29.80	43.80	7.54	5.03	2735
Himachal Pradesh	23.44	5.23	28.86	42.46	7.33	5.10	3118
Jammu and Kashmir	21.98	2.89	32.79	42.34	7.81	5.05	2839
Karnataka	31.20	9.53	24.47	34.80	6.35	5.38	4259
Kerala	12.69	12.71	42.19	32.42	7.57	4.39	4383
Madhya Pradesh	35.46	8.09	29.58	26.87	5.61	5.11	5835
Maharashtra	21.56	11.45	30.20	36.79	7.24	5.12	4053
Mizoram	14.64	6.35	30.48	48.53	8.61	4.85	1086
Nagaland	34.38	11.19	31.05	23.39	5.40	4.78	992
Orissa	8.83	15.82	42.69	32.66	7.45	4.03	1087
Punjab	20.57	7.74	34.62	37.08	7.02	4.50	1060
Rajasthan	32.60	12.95	27.18	27.27	5.75	5.28	4595
Tamil Nadu	29.07	3.52	29.51	37.91	6.58	4.92	3213
West Bengal	36.41	4.41	31.54	27.65	5.69	5.08	4991
Uttar Pradesh	24.94	9.46	35.61	29.99	6.50	4.99	4282
NCT of Delhi	31.45	13.95	28.13	26.47	5.81	5.11	4238
Arunachal Pradesh	32.08	3.95	29.91	34.06	6.44	5.26	10065
Tripura	13.58	3.25	24.21	58.95	9.48	5.10	3659
All India	36.52	9.16	29.55	24.77	5.43	5.09	961
	22.91	11.94	41.09	24.06	6.31	4.59	1139
	27.75	8.14	29.37	34.74	6.66	5.22	88347

As mentioned, Table 3 provides the percent of households by highest grade completed by a usual adult female member. For India as a whole, more than half of the households are not having any adult female member completed grade one. The states of Kerala and Mizoram have the lowest percentage (about 10 percent) of households with no adult female member completed grade one. For a number of states namely, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh, the percentage of households with no adult female member ever attained grade one is above fifty percent. Although Delhi has the maximum percentage of households with at least one female member completing at least grade ten (39 percent) in the country, an equal percentage of households (39 percent) in Delhi have no female member completed grade one. The results also indicate that more than half of the households in the states of Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu, Kerala, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab, Delhi and Tripura have at least one adult female member who completed primary school. In the country as a whole, the mean highest grade completed by a usual adult female member in the household is

only about four years. The mean highest grade completed by a usual adult female member is the lowest in Rajasthan (1.8 years) followed by Madhya Pradesh (2.4 years), Bihar (2.6 years), and Uttar Pradesh (2.7 years) respectively. Andhra Pradesh and Kamataka are the two south Indian states where the mean highest grade attained by a usual adult female member is below the national average. It is important to note that Delhi's position is fourth in terms of the highest grade attained by a usual adult female member in the household. Kerala tops in terms of the highest grade attained by a usual adult female member in the country followed by Goa. The average highest grade completed by a usual adult female member is above five only for six states (excluding Delhi) in India.

TABLE 3: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS BY HIGHEST GRADE COMPLETED BY A USUAL ADULT FEMALE MEMBER IN INDIA AND ITS STATES

<i>Slate</i>	<i>Educational level</i>					<i>Number of</i>	
	<i>0</i>	<i>1-4</i>	<i>5-9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>cases</i>
Andhra Pradesh	63.5	5.1	17.3	14.1	2.99	4.54	4194
Assam	45.4	11.8	24.9	17.9	4.44	4.89	3255
Bihar	71.6	2.9	12.0	13.6	2.60	4.58	4727
Goa	24.4	10.8	27.7	37.2	6.92	5.05	3725
Gujarat	50.2	8.4	20.9	20.5	4.14	4.87	3856
Haryana	51.6	3.8	24.0	20.6	4.16	4.94	2735
Himachal Pradesh	37.2	4.8	31.3	26.8	5.43	5.00	3118
Janimu	38.7	3.0	28.2	30.1	5.77	5.28	2839
Kamataka	53.5	7.3	20.4	18.9	3.94	4.86	4259
Kerala	10.1	13.4	44.0	32.5	7.66	4.14	4383
Madhya Pradesh	69.6	4.4	16.0	10.1	2.42	4.19	5835
Maharashtra	44.5	10.6	25.3	19.7	4.59	4.93	4053
Manipur	35.7	7.2	26.2	30.9	5.96	5.37	1086
Meghalaya	43.5	13.3	27.8	15.4	4.20	4.48	992
Mizoram	10.4	20.2	46.1	23.4	6.59	3.71	1087
Nagaland	27.4	9.3	37.7	25.6	5.76	4.29	1060
Orissa	59.9	9.3	18.7	12.2	3.05	4.42	4595
Punjab	43.4	2.6	26.6	27.4	4.95	4.94	3213
Rajasthan	77.4	2.5	12.3	7.8	1.83	3.80	4991
Tamil Nadu	41.6	11.2	29.3	18.0	4.46	4.67	4282
West Bengal	50.6	13.7	23.7	12.0	3.59	4.41	4238
Uttar Pradesh	69.3	2.1	15.5	13.1	2.72	4.55	10065
New Delhi	38.5	2.8	19.8	38.8	6.47	5.93	3659
Arunachal Pradesh	59.8	6.7	23.0	10.5	3.09	4.24	961
Tripura	37.1	12.6	37.9	12.4	4.62	4.38	1139
All India	51.1	6.9	22.8	19.2	4.14	4.93	88347

A comparison of the Tables 2 and 3 suggests that the highest grade completed by a usual adult male member is higher than that of female adult member in all the states, except Kerala where the mean highest grade attained by a usual adult female member is slightly higher. The gap between the average highest grade completed by usual male and female member in the household is large in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Surprisingly, in Delhi the male-

female gap in the mean highest grade completed by a usual adult member is about three years. However, this gap is very small in case of Kerala and Mizoram. Delhi comes first in terms of the highest grade attained by a usual adult male member, but Kerala tops in case of adult female member.

Table 4 shows the extent of educational level attained by a usual adult member according to selected background characteristics. It is evident from the table that more households in rural areas have adult members who never completed grade one. More than sixty percent of rural households in India have at least one member who ever completed the primary school. The average highest grade completed by a usual adult member in the urban household is about ten

TABLE 4: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS BY HIGHEST GRADE COMPLETED BY A USUAL ADULT MEMBER IN INDIA ACCORDING TO SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

<i>Background characteristics</i>	<i>Educational level</i>				<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Number of cases</i>
	<i>0</i>	<i>1-4</i>	<i>5-9</i>	<i>10</i>			
<i>Place of residence</i>							
Urban	10.06	4.59	25.80	59.54	9.83	4.89	28740
Rural	29.19	8.99	33.55	28.27	6.02	4.81	59607
<i>Sex of household head</i>							
Male	22.01	7.61	31.28	39.10	7.37	5.14	79084
Female	31.21	7.11	28.85	32.83	6.36	5.21	9263
<i>Source of lighting</i>							
Electrified	11.69	5.01	29.88	53.43	9.10	4.77	52632
Not electrified	39.60	11.32	32.72	16.36	4.55	4.45	35715
<i>Own agricultural land</i>							
Yes	23.83	7.72	33.19	35.26	6.92	4.95	43785
No	22.13	7.40	28.91	41.57	7.60	5.32	44562
<i>Own live stock</i>							
Yes	26.12	8.31	34.62	30.94	6.42	4.80	44579
No	19.76	6.79	27.37	46.08	8.12	5.36	43768
<i>Type of house</i>							
Pucca	7.07	2.79	21.32	68.83	10.68	4.56	24241
Kachha	36.65	11.05	33.73	18.57	4.89	4.54	36447
Senii-pucca	18.88	7.13	35.98	38.00	7.39	4.67	27659
<i>Religion of household head</i>							
Hindu	23.30	7.38	30.44	38.87	7.29	5.22	69007
Muslim	30.30	10.10	34.07	25.53	5.81	4.83	8626
Other	14.92	6.65	32.35	46.09	8.22	4.73	10714
<i>Caste of household head</i>							
Scheduled Caste	33.29	7.88	34.04	24.79	5.56	4.74	10595
Scheduled Tribe	33.31	9.03	30.77	26.88	5.65	4.86	13076
Other	19.19	7.21	30.58	43.02	7.87	5.14	64676

TABLE 5: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS BY HIGHEST GRADE COMPLETED BY A USUAL ADULT MALE MEMBER IN INDIA ACCORDING TO SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

<i>Background Characteristics</i>	<i>Educational level</i>				<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Number of cases</i>
	<i>0</i>	<i>1-4</i>	<i>5-9</i>	<i>10</i>			
Place of residence							
Urban	14.62	5.33	25.73	54.31	9.07	5.16	28740
Rural	34.08	9.50	31.12	25.30	5.50	4.84	59607
Sex of household head							
Male	24.80	8.59	30.41	36.20	6.93	5.16	79084
Female	52.95	4.29	20.45	22.31	4.39	5.20	9263
Source of lighting							
Electrified	16.81	5.97	29.10	48.13	8.35	5.04	52632
Not electrified	43.88	11.35	29.76	15.01	4.18	4.43	35715
Own agricultural land							
Yes	28.11	8.22	31.47	32.20	6.42	5.03	43785
No	27.39	8.07	27.31	37.24	6.89	5.39	44562
Own live stock							
Yes	30.52	8.82	32.72	27.94	5.93	4.85	44579
No	24.93	7.45	25.95	41.67	7.40	5.47	43768
Type of house							
Pucca	11.67	3.36	21.88	63.09	9.89	4.96	24241
Kachha	40.75	11.22	31.05	16.98	4.51	4.52	36447
Senii-pucca	24.72	8.29	33.70	33.29	6.67	4.83	27659
Religion of household head							
Hindu	27.48	7.81	28.98	35.74	6.77	5.27	69007
Muslim	35.83	10.62	30.59	22.95	5.24	4.86	8626
Other	23.00	8.33	30.87	37.81	7.10	4.99	10714
Caste of household head							
Scheduled Caste	37.45	7.86	32.03	22.65	5.16	4.74	10595
Scheduled Tribe	38.26	9.79	28.79	23.16	5.07	4.81	13076
Other	24.04	7.86	29.05	39.06	7.23	5.26	64676

years. The gap in the average highest grade completed by a usual adult member among rural and urban household is above three years. Although a higher percentage of households headed by a female have members who never completed grade one, there is not much variation in the highest grade completed by a usual adult member according to the sex of the household head. Large difference in this measure is observed in case of source of lighting in the household. About 40 percent of the non-electrified households have no usual adult member who ever completed the grade one, while it is only about 12 percent in case of electrified households. More than 50 percent of the electrified households have at least one adult member who completed matriculation or above. Similarly, substantial differences in the highest grade attained

by a usual adult member in the household are observed according to the type of house and religion of the household head. The households headed by a non-Hindu and non-Muslim member are better off in terms of the highest level of education completed by a usual adult member. It is important to notice that thirty percent of households headed by Muslim member have no usual adult member who completed the grade one. No differentials in the educational attainment of usual adult member are observed between households headed by scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Only marginal differences in the highest grade completed by a usual adult member is observed according to the ownership of agricultural land and livestock.

The educational level attained by a usual adult male member according to selected background characteristics is given in Table 5. The level of educational achievement by a usual adult male member is extremely low in the rural households. The differentials are especially very large at the level of matriculation and above. A higher percentage of households headed by a female member have no adult male member completed grade one than households headed by a male member. Similarly, adult male member never attained grade one is more common in the households with no electricity. There is no considerable difference in the highest level completed by an adult male member according to the ownership of agricultural land in the household. Significant differentials in terms of the highest level of education completed by a usual adult male member in the household are observed according to the type of house and religion of household head.

A cross-classification of the highest grade completed by a usual adult female member in the household with the place of residence suggests that level of female education in urban households are relatively higher than their counterparts in rural households (see Table 6). More than two-thirds of the rural households do not have any adult female member who ever achieved grade five. The highest grade attained by a usual adult female member in the household is almost similar according to sex of the household head. In case of the highest level completed by a usual adult female member, the households differ greatly according to ownership of agricultural land and of livestock. There is considerable difference in the highest grade completed by a usual adult female member among households headed by SCs and STs.

School Attendance

After knowing the highest level of education attained by an adult member, we turn our attention to examine the school attendance of children age 6-14. This indicator undoubtedly tells us how much importance is attached to the schooling of children by the Indian society. We use responses to two questions: Has [name] ever been to school? and Is [name] still in school? to construct an attendance profile for those aged 6 to 14 years at the time of survey. This attendance profile records the percentage of children still attending school, dropped out and never attended school at the time of survey. Table 7 shows the school attendance profile for children age 6-14 by states of India. In the country as a whole, about 73 percent of the children age 6-14 are attending school. This result is slightly higher than that shown in the NFHS main report (UPS, 1995). This is mainly because our analysis confines to children who are usual residents in the household. A large percentage of children age 6-14 (about 23 percent) have never attended the school. There are large interstate variations in the school

TABLE 6: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS BY HIGHEST GRADE COMPLETED BY A USUAL ADULT FEMALE MEMBER IN INDIA ACCORDING TO SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

<i>Background characteristics</i>	<i>Educational level</i>				<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Number of cases</i>
	<i>0</i>	<i>1-4</i>	<i>5-9</i>	<i>10</i>			
<i>Place of residence</i>							
Urban	30.9	5.8	25.6	37.7	6.73	5.46	28740
Rural	60.9	7.5	21.4	10.3	2.89	4.11	59607
<i>Sex of household head</i>							
Male	51.8	6.8	22.5	19.0	4.08	4.93	79084
Female	45.4	8.0	25.4	21.2	4.59	4.96	9263
<i>Source of lighting</i>							
Electrified	35.8	6.4	28.0	29.9	5.82	5.21	52632
Not electrified	73.7	7.7	15.1	3.5	1.65	3.12	35715
<i>Own agricultural land</i>							
Yes	57.0	6.8	22.5	13.7	3.37	4.45	43785
No	45.3	7.0	23.1	24.6	4.89	5.25	44562
<i>Own live stock</i>							
Yes	59.8	6.9	22.2	11.1	3.02	4.19	44579
No	42.3	6.9	23.3	27.5	5.27	5.35	4376
<i>Type of house</i>							
Pucca	26.2	4.6	25.5	43.8	7.42	5.41	24241
Kachha	70.3	7.9	17.1	4.7	1.94	3.38	36447
Semi-pucca	47.7	7.7	27.9	16.8	4.15	4.59	27659
<i>Religion of household head</i>							
Hindu	53.2	6.4	21.7	18.8	4.00	4.95	69007
Muslim	58.7	8.8	22.4	10.2	3.02	4.16	8626
Other	31.7	8.9	30.1	29.3	5.90	4.96	10714
<i>Caste of household head</i>							
Scheduled Caste	70.3	5.4	17.0	7.4	2.15	3.72	10595
Scheduled Tribe	58.8	7.0	20.9	13.3	3.18	4.33	13076
Other	46.4	7.2	24.1	22.3	4.65	5.10	64676

attendance of children. The percentage of children still attending school is above 90 only in five states namely Mizoram, Manipur, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Goa. The lowest attendance is observed in Bihar state followed by Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh respectively. The percentage of children dropping out from school is more in Tamil Nadu. The drop out percentage is very low in Manipur followed by Arunachal Pradesh. More than five percent of the children are dropped out in the states of West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Kamataka, Gujarat, Assam and Andhra Pradesh. Similarly, more than 20 percent of school-age children in Andhra Pradesh (28 percent), Assam (23 percent), Bihar (44 percent),

Karnataka (22 percent), Madhya Pradesh (36 percent), Meghalaya (22 percent), Orissa (24 percent), Rajasthan (37 percent). West Bengal (28 percent), Uttar Pradesh (34 percent) and Arunachal Pradesh (28 percent) have never attended school. The percentage of children never attended is comparatively low in Tamil Nadu (about 8 percent), although it has the maximum percentage of drop outs. As expected, the percentage of children who never attended school is lowest in the state of Kerala.

TABLE 7- PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN AGED 6-14 ATTENDING SCHOOL IN INDIA AND ITS STATES

State	Never attended	Ever attended school			Total cases
		<i>Attending school presently</i>	<i>Dropped out</i>	<i>Missing</i>	
Andhra Pradesh	27.89	63.44	5.71	2.96	4497
Assam	22.98	71.83	5.19	0.00	4335
Bihar	43.71	53.84	2.14	0.31	7381
Goa	4.06	93.74	1.75	0.44	3373
Gujarat	18.22	75.42	5.90	0.47	4271
Haryana	12.80	82.34	4.85	0.00	3749
Himachal Pradesh	6.25	91.66	2.06	0.03	3297
Jammii	10.92	86.60	2.48	0.00	3590
Karnataka	22.27	70.66	6.36	0.70	5392
Kerala	1.97	95.04	2.23	0.77	4313
Madhya Pradesh	35.84	59.33	3.58	1.25	7929
Maharashtra	12.73	81.43	5.31	0.53	4706
Manipur	8.57	90.23	1.20	0.00	1505
Meghalaya	22.11	74.91	2.98	0.00	1443
Mizoram	7.42	90.69	1.89	0.00	1429
Nagaland	7.67	89.44	2.89	0.00	1487
Orissa	23.63	71.49	4.78	0.10	5213
Punjab	15.14	80.86	3.99	0.00	3956
Rajasthan	37.29	59.28	2.23	1.20	7414
Tamil Nadu	7.74	82.05	9.60	0.60	3822
West Bengal	28.36	65.93	5.41	0.29	5116
Uttar Pradesh	34.14	62.42	2.97	0.47	14829
New Delhi	7.93	87.33	3.58	1.16	3795
Arunachal Pradesh	27.64	70.95	1.41	0.00	1346
Tripura	17.20	79.00	3.81	0.00	1419
India	22.98	72.56	3.89	0.58	109607
Total cases	25187	79528	4259	633	109607

The school attendance for children age 6-14 in the rural India as a whole is about 67 percent (see Table 8). However, the dropout of children from school is similar in rural and urban areas. A higher percentage of children in the rural areas never attended the school. The gender disparity in the school attendance is also more pronounced. The gap between male and female children never attended the school is also very substantial. The school attendance is found to be highest for children age 6-14 from Electrified and Pucca households. As

TABLE 8: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN AGED 6-14 ATTENDING SCHOOL BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

Background Characteristics	Never attended	Ever attended school			Total cases
		Attending school presently	Dropped out	Missing	
<i>presently</i>					
Urban	10.89	85.09	3.38	0.65	32167
Rural	28.00	67.35	4.10	0.55	77440
Sex of child					
Male	17.03	78.88	3.50	0.58	57038
Female	29.43	65.70	4.30	0.57	52569
Source of lighting					
Electrified	11.56	84.42	3.38	0.63	62334
Not electrified	38.03	56.91	4.55	0.51	47273
Type of house					
Pucca	7.71	89.18	2.44	0.66	27332
Kacchha	35.65	59.38	4.45	0.53	48412
Semi-pucca	17.19	77.98	4.25	0.58	33863
Own agricultural land					
Yes	25.42	70.47	3.57	0.53	58908
No	20.14	74.98	4.25	0.63	50699
Own live stock					
Yes	27.65	67.97	3.85	0.53	64161
No	16.38	79.03	3.94	0.65	45446
Caste of household head					
Scheduled Caste	28.35	66.50	4.56	0.59	13743
Scheduled Tribe	29.41	66.90	3.33	0.36	17047
Other	20.65	74.84	3.89	0.62	78817
Religion of household head					
Hindu	23.11	72.42	3.85	0.62	83512
Muslim	31.13	63.54	4.72	0.61	13597
Other	13.22	83.29	3.22	0.27	12498
Sex of household head					
Male	23.46	72.09	3.86	0.60	100905
Female	17.42	78.02	4.21	0.36	8702
Highest grade completed by a usual adult		female			
0	38.34	56.46	4.59	0.61	58127
1-4	11.02	83.14	5.34	0.50	8521
5-9	5.70	90.32	3.46	0.52	26147
10+	2.80	95.22	1.38	0.59	16812
Highest grade completed by a usual adult		male			
0	45.83	49.73	3.98	0.46	30312
1-4	24.22	69.25	5.92	0.61	9783
5-9	18.35	76.33	4.69	0.63	34321
10+	7.47	89.46	2.46	0.61	35191
Highest grade completed by a usual adult		member			
0	53.20	42.53	3.81	0.46	25164
1-4	27.01	65.60	6.79	0.60	9023
5-9	18.00	76.61	4.77	0.63	36890
10+	7.06	89.92	2.41	0.60	38530

expected, a higher percentage of children from Non-electrified Kachha households never attended the school. The differentials in the school attendance profile are not very substantial according to the ownership of agricultural land. However, especially large differentials in the school attendance profile is found according to the ownership of live stock, with a low attendance among children from the households having live stock. Considerable differences are evident with regard to the school attendance by caste and religion of the head of the household. The attendance profile of children do not seem to differ among scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. But the drop out of children from school is little higher for scheduled castes. Similarly, low levels of school attendance are found for Muslim children. It is important to note that, children from female headed households are superior in terms of the school attendance of children. But the drop out is little high for children from female headed households. Interesting relationship also emerges between the current school attendance and highest level of education completed by an adult member in the household. The attendance rates are lowest for the children from the households in which there is no adult male/female/ member ever completed grade one. There is an increase in the attendance rate, and hence a decrease in the never-attendance rate as the highest grade completed by an adult male/ female/member increases. However, a fluctuating scenario is observed in case of drop out of children from the school.

School Continuation

It is already found in the previous section that only about 77 percent of the children age 6-14 in India ever enrolled in schools. Out of that about 4 percent of them are dropping out from the schools. However, for educational planning it may be necessary to identify the educational continuity of children once they were enrolled in schools. Thus an attempt has been made in this section to study the proportion of pupils that continue their schooling after they were enrolled in schools. This is mainly estimated by utilizing the life table technique. The life table is constructed mainly based on the responses to the questions: Has [name] ever been to school? If attended school: What is the highest grade [name] completed? Is [name] still in school?. The response to the question "Is [name] still in school?" is used as the censoring indicator. Similarly, the response to the question "What is the highest grade [name] completed?" is used as the duration variable. This analysis confines to children age 6-14 who have ever attended school. After removing the cases with missing values and cases for which the age did not match with the grade completed, the number of cases available for the life table analysis is reduced to 83,055. Out of that 78,828 children age 6-14 are still attending school and 4227 were dropped out of school at the time of survey. The results indicate that in India as a whole about 95 percent of the children age 6-14 who ever enrolled in schools continue to study the fifth grade (see Table 9). However, about 85 percent and 75 percent of them continue to study the eighth and the tenth grade. If one account for the children never attended schools, the proportion of children attaining fifth grade is about 72 percent and it is only 62 percent and 51 percent for eighth grade and tenth grade respectively. It is evident from the results that the discontinuation is very low in the first few years of schooling. In the states of West Bengal and Assam more than 10 percent of the pupils discontinue the schooling

before grade five. The discontinuation of children from school before grade five is very low in Kerala and Goa. In Delhi, which is predominantly urban, about four percent of the children discontinue before fifth grade. In a number of states namely, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Kamataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Tripura, where between 5-10 percent of the children do not continue to study the fifth grade. However, Kamataka tops in terms of the proportion of children dropping out before eighth grade followed by West Bengal. Surprisingly, a sizeable proportion of children in the state of Arunachal Pradesh are found to continue their schooling in the eighth standard. Between 10-20 percent of the children in the states of Assam, Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Tripura are discontinuing their studies before grade eight. It is also important to notice that around 19 percent of the children from Delhi are not continuing their education after ninth grade. In case of the dropping out of children before matriculation, the state of Kamataka tops first. Arunachal Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh are the only two states in India, where the discontinuation rate before matriculation is below ten percent. Above thirty percent of the children in the states of Gujarat, Kamataka, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh discontinue their schooling before tenth grade.

TABLE 9: SCHOOL CONTINUATION RATES FOR SELECTED YEARS OF SCHOOLING IN INDIA AND ITS STATES

<i>States</i>	<i>Years a/schooling</i>			
	<i>1</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>10</i>
Andhra Pradesh	0.9973	0.9244	0.7694	0.7032
Assam	0.9859	0.8984	0.8417	0.7465
Bihar	0.9976	0.9533	0.9004	0.7667
Goa	0.9994	0.9816	0.9565	0.8927
Gujarat	0.9961	0.9360	0.8002	0.6453
Haryana	0.9904	0.9453	0.8248	0.7812
Himachal Pradesh	0.9852	0.9769	0.9373	0.9038
Jamini	0.9973	0.9693	0.9176	0.8774
Kamataka	0.9979	0.9139	0.7426	0.6320
Kerala	0.9995	0.9844	0.9384	0.8698
Madhya Pradesh	0.9945	0.9376	0.8478	0.7491
Maharashtra	0.9977	0.9351	0.8120	0.6428
Manipur	1.0000	0.9848	0.9555	0.7440
Meghalaya	0.9889	0.9305	0.8623	0.6467
Mizoram	0.9992	0.9774	0.9493	0.8137
Nagaland	0.9969	0.9575	0.9256	0.8358
Orissa	0.9979	0.9194	0.8305	0.7980
Punjab	0.9962	0.9602	0.8622	0.7867
Rajasthan	0.9984	0.9692	0.8615	0.7520
Tamil Nadu	0.9994	0.9108	0.7761	0.6470
West Bengal	0.9859	0.8837	0.7661	0.6617
Uttar Pradesh	0.9968	0.9576	0.8617	0.6860
NCT Delhi	0.9969	0.9630	0.8880	0.8136
Arunachal Pradesh	0.9967	0.9689	0.9689	0.9689
Tripura	0.9866	0.9243	0.8241	0.7178
India	0.9961	0.9457	0.8545	0.7492

The experience of educational continuity of children age 6-14 by selected characteristics of households and its members are shown in Table 10. As expected, the discontinuation of

TABLE 10: SCHOOL CONTINUATION RATES FOR SELECTED YEARS OF SCHOOLING IN INDIA ACCORDING TO SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

<i>Background Characteristics</i>	<i>Years of schooling</i>			
	<i>1</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>10</i>
Place of residence				
Rural	0.9955	0.9351	0.8205	0.6762
Urban	0.9973	0.9637	0.9046	0.8405
Sex of the child				
Female	0.9951	0.9350	0.8283	0.7118
Male	0.9969	0.9541	0.8757	0.7804
Source of lighting				
Electrified	0.9978	0.9659	0.8925	0.8005
Not electrified	0.9929	0.8982	0.7523	0.5940
Type of house				
Pucca	0.9985	0.9784	0.9303	0.8780
Kacliha	0.9933	0.9076	0.7652	0.5777
Semi-pucca	0.9970	0.9499	0.8489	0.7252
Own agricultural land				
No	0.9956	0.9437	0.8532	0.7655
Yes	0.9966	0.9476	0.8559	0.7301
Own live stock				
No	0.9966	0.9521	0.8747	0.7898
Yes	0.9957	0.9398	0.8341	0.7020
Caste of household head				
Scheduled Caste	0.9941	0.9251	0.7948	0.6835
Scheduled Tribe	0.9953	0.9390	0.8560	0.7084
Other	0.9966	0.9499	0.8624	0.7616
Religion of household head				
Hindu	0.9962	0.9466	0.8605	0.7592
Muslim	0.9950	0.9199	0.7542	0.6104
Other	0.9966	0.9606	0.8943	0.7907
Sex of household head				
Female	0.9956	0.9495	0.8699	0.7456
Male	0.9962	0.9453	0.8529	0.7495
Highest grade completed by a usual adult female				
0	0.9932	0.9005	0.7306	0.5683
1-4	0.9963	0.9201	0.8097	0.6688
5-9	0.9980	0.9707	0.8835	0.7572
10+	0.9992	0.9908	0.9715	0.9146
Highest grade completed by a usual male				
0	0.9918	0.9000	0.7324	0.5992
1-4	0.9920	0.8815	0.7417	0.6215
5-9	0.9969	0.9397	0.8084	0.6427
10+	0.9984	0.9786	0.9347	0.8542
Highest grade completed by a usual adult member				
0	0.9895	0.8759	0.6538	0.5032
1-4	0.9901	0.8413	0.6694	0.5206
5-9	0.9970	0.9384	0.7976	0.6218
10+	0.9985	0.9798	0.9365	0.8557

children from various years of schooling is very high among children from rural households. It is found that about 32 percent of rural children ever enrolled in schools are dropping out before completing matriculation. However, for children from urban households the same is only about 16 percent. Large differentials in school continuation are found between various groups of children by certain household characteristics such as, source of lighting, type of house and ownership of live stock. The school continuation is very poor for children from non-electrified households. Similarly, a large proportion of children (about 42 percent) from the Kachha households are discontinuing their studies before completing matriculation. The children from Muslim headed households are also a considerably disadvantaged group in comparison with Hindus and all others in terms of school continuation. It is found that only 61 percent of Muslim children continue their study in the tenth grade as compared to 76 percent and 79 percent for Hindu children and all other children respectively. Discontinuation is relatively low among male children. Marginal differentials in terms of school continuation are found among children according to sex of the head of the household and ownership of land holding. Considerably more pronounced differentials are obtained for school continuation of children by highest level of education completed by a usual adult male/female/member in the household. The school continuation of children increases as the highest grade completed by a usual adult male/female/member increases. It is important to notice that almost fifty percent of the children are not reaching tenth grade, if no adult member in the household ever completed grade one. The foregoing discussion, so far, is based on from the analysis in which there have not been any controls for the socio-economic factors. In the next stage of the analysis, socio-economic controls are introduced by applying Cox proportional hazard model (Cox, 1972). We have fitted two models: one model includes only the socio-economic characteristics, while the other model includes possible interaction terms and regional controls in addition to the background characteristics. For the easy understanding of the results, the coefficients obtained by fitting the Cox hazard model are converted into hazard ratios (exponent of the coefficients). The results must be interpreted with respect to the omitted (reference) category for the variables represented by dummies. Dummy variables are created for most of the characteristics, except for the level of education completed by a usual adult male/female/ member in the household. The reference category is female for the variables namely, sex of the household head and sex of the child. The reference categories are Hindus and Scheduled Castes with respect to religion and caste of the head of the household. For the variables of place of residence, type of house, source of lighting, ownership of land and live stock, the reference categories are rural area, kachha house, non-electrified house, and "no land" and "no live stock" respectively.

The hazard ratios and the respective 95% confidence intervals obtained by fitting the first model are presented in Table 11. Significant differentials in the educational continuity are observed among children according to sex and religion of the household head, highest level of grade completed by a usual male/female/member, sex of the child, source of lighting, ownership of land holding, and type of house. It is surprising to note that the children from male headed households are 1.25 time more likely to drop out of school compared with female headed

households. The chances of dropping out from school reduce as the highest grade completed by a usual adult male/female/member increases. Although the children from urban households are less likely to discontinue their education, the effect is not significant when other factors are accounted for. As expected, the hazard ratio for sex of the child indicates that the dropping out of school is most likely to occur among girls. Similarly, discontinuation is significantly less likely to occur among children from electrified, the landed, pucca and semi-pucca households. Conversely, the discontinuation is substantially higher among children from non-electrified, the landless, and kachha households. The drop out is more likely to occur for scheduled caste children as compared with scheduled tribes and all others, but it is not significant after controlling for other factors. Similarly, the risk of dropping out is significantly higher for Muslim children and is considerably lower for all other children as compared with Hindu children.

TABLE 11: HAZARD RATIOS FOR SCHOOL CONTINUATION IN INDIA FROM MODEL ONE

<i>Backgorvnd characteristics</i>	<i>Hazard ratio</i>	<i>95% confidence interval</i>		
Sex of household head	1.253	1.120	1.401	0.0571
Highest grade completed by a usual adult female	0.888	0.878	0.898	0.0058
Highest grade completed by a usual adult member	0.953	0.930	0.977	0.0127
Highest grade completed by a usual adult male	0.977	0.955	0.999	0.0114
Place of residence	0.957	0.879	1.043	0.0436
Sex of the child	0.543	0.510	0.577	0.0314
Source of lighting	0.689	0.643	0.739	0.0355
Own agricultural land	0.767	0.713	0.824	0.0369
Own live stock	1.011	0.939	1.088	0.0377
Type of house				
Pucca	0.561	0.507	0.622	0.0525
Semi-pucca	0.814	0.758	0.875	0.0365
Caste of household head				
Scheduled Tribe	0.984	0.870	1.113	0.0628
Other	0.930	0.851	1.016	0.0453
Religion of household head				
Muslim	1.453	1.332	1.586	0.0447
Other	0.880	0.783	0.989	0.0595

We have seen that there is a large differential in the school continuation of children by state. In order to explore whether there are additional factors at work, in the second model specification, we have included dummy variables representing each of the states in India. Various states in India are grouped into six regions as described in the NFHS report (UPS, 1995). First region represents the southern states, states of western region are grouped into second region, northern states represents the third region, fourth region includes states from central India, the states from eastern area forms the fifth region and finally the north-eastern states constitutes the sixth region. The fifth region, i.e. the states from central India namely

Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, is treated as the reference category for the analysis. All possible two-way interactions between various factors are examined and only five of them come out to be significant. The final model specification includes only the interactions that have shown significance. The five two-way interactions that found to be significant are between, sex of the household head and ownership of agricultural land (Int1), sex of the household head and highest grade completed by a usual adult male member (Int2), sex of the household head and highest grade completed by a usual adult member (Int3), highest grade completed by a usual adult male member and that by a usual adult member (Int4), and Muslims and highest grade completed by a usual adult female member (Int5). Table 12 gives

TABLE 12: HAZARD RATIOS FOR SCHOOL CONTINUATION IN INDIA FROM MODEL TWO

Background characteristics	Hazard ratio	95% confidence interval		S.E
Sex of householdhead	0.928	0.775	1.112	0.0921
Highest grade completed by a usual adult female	0.887	0.877	0.899	0.0063
Highest grade completed by a usual adult member	0.915	0.876	0.956	0.0223
Highest grade completed by a usual adult male	1.076			
Place of residence	0.979	1.028	1.127	0.0237
Sex of the child	0.547	0.899	1.067	0.0439
Source of lighting	0.698	0.514	0.581	0.0315
Own agricultural land	0.448	0.649	0.751	0.0371
Own live stock	1.033	0.357	0.563	0.1164
Type of house		0.957	1.115	0.0389
Pucca	0.569	0.510	0.634	0.0553
Semi-pucca	0.797	0.740	0.859	0.0380
Caste of household head				
Scheduled Tribe	1.009	0.890	1.144	0.0641
Other	0.920	0.840	1.008	0.0464
Religion of household head				
Muslim	1.351	1.212	1.506	0.0554
Other	0.905	0.802	1.021	0.0617
Regions				
Reg1	1.150	1.039	1.274	0.0522
Reg2	1.128	1.004	1.266	0.0590
Reg3	1.071	0.960	1.194	0.0555
Reg4	1.182	1.062	1.316	0.0546
Reg5	0.961	0.842	1.097	0.0675
Interactions				
Int1	1.835	1.454	2.317	0.1188
Int2	0.936	0.892	0.982	0.0246
Int3	1.062	1.011	1.114	0.0247
Int4	0.996	0.994	0.997	0.0009
Int5	1.027	1.002	1.052	0.0122

the hazard ratios and the respective 95% confidence intervals from the model two. The main deviation from the model one is found with respect to the effect of the factors namely, sex of the household head, highest grade completed by a usual male member, and scheduled tribes. Also the effect of sex of the household head turns out to be not significant. The direction of the effect of all other factors remain unchanged as the model one. The regional effect in terms of school continuation is significant only for the southern region (reg 1), western region (reg2), and eastern region (reg5) as compared with the central region (i.e., reg4). Children from these three regions are significantly more likely to discontinue their schooling as compared to their counterparts in central region. The children from the north-eastern region are less likely to discontinue from schools. But the effect is not significant.

Conclusions

Education for all children is the best investment any country can make in today's complex world. There is also interdependence between education and demographic and social changes. And also for a better educational planning, it may be important to have a look at the school attendance and continuation among children. Thus in this paper an attempt has been made to study the level of education, school attendance and continuation in India. Attempt has also made to bring some possible factors accountable for the school continuation in India. The data used for the present study comes from the NFHS.

Our preliminary analysis of the data shows that about one quarter of the Indian households have no adult member ever completed grade one. The gender disparity in the highest level of education attained by a usual adult member is also very wide. More than half of the Indian households do not have any adult female member who ever completed a formal education. Households in the various states in India also differ greatly in terms of the highest level of education completed by a usual adult male/female/member. The highest grade completed by a usual adult member among males is maximum in Delhi and among females it is maximum in Kerala. However, it is very surprising to note that in Delhi, which is predominantly urban area, a large proportion of households do not have any adult female member ever completed grade one. Large differentials in the highest grade completed by a usual adult male/female/member is found between households according to various household characteristics and social groups. The highest grade completed by a usual adult male/female/member is relatively large for electrified and pucca households.

About 23 percent of the children age 6-14 in India never attended schools. There are interesting state wise variations in the school attendance of children. Highest grade completed by a usual adult male/female/member is found to be most important in the school attendance of children age 6-14. The most disadvantaged group of children in terms of school attendance is from non-electrified, Muslim headed, SC headed, ST headed and Kachha households.

Educational continuity among children is also very low in India. The educational discontinuity seems to be very low in the first few years of schooling. In India as a whole, 75 percent of the children continue to study the tenth grade. However, assuming a pass percentage of 50 for the tenth grade in the country as a whole, it can be found that in India only around 37 percent of children complete matriculation. While considering the children never attended school, the

percentage of children completing matriculation comes down to 25 percent. Striking differentials are found among children according to states. The experience of educational continuity of children age 6-14 by selected characteristics suggests that the school continuation is very poor among children from households headed by Muslims, without electricity, and from Kachha households. The most important characteristics that found to affect the school continuation are the highest grade completed by a usual adult male/female/member in the household. The same finding is also observed from a multivariate analysis.

Over all, our analysis of NFHS data on education suggests that:

- (1) The level of education completed by a usual adult male/female/member has substantial and differential impact on the school attendance and continuation of children in India.
- (2) The children from the Muslim headed, Kachha, non-electrified, and landed households are in a vulnerable position in terms of school attendance and continuation of children.
- (3) Sex of the child also seems to be an important factor in educational continuity.

It is, therefore, of vital importance for educational planning to provide formal education and to seek educational continuity, particularly to the clearly identified vulnerable section of the population. The present analysis undoubtedly highlighted the vulnerable sections of the population in terms of school attendance and continuation among children in India. The explanation for such observations has both economic and social dimensions. It is possible that children from such vulnerable sections may be forced to participate in economic activity due to the poor economic conditions of the family. The other reasons seems to be that some of the children may be suffering from chronic diseases, may not be interested in studies, and may be used for looking after the siblings.

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