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‘Ridiculed For Not Having Anything’: Children’s Views on Poverty and Inequality in Rural India

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[A] Introduction

This chapter reports on research carried out with boys and girls, aged 12 to 15, participating in Young Lives in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. It focuses on young people’s descriptions, explanations, and experiences of poverty and inequality in two contrasting rural communities and highlights implications for research, policy and practice, and rights. Young people growing up in poor communities are generally alert to inequalities and injustices, and to their own disadvantaged situations (see for example, chapter 11 by Gillian Mann; Bissell 2009; Camfield 2010; or Witter 2002). The research presented here indicates that children perceive material inequalities as indicative of wider differences in power and position, of which they are very much a part. Children’s concerns,

explanations, and experiences of the effects of poverty may differ from those of adults, and children often have distinct roles and responsibilities within their families for managing hardship and risk related to household poverty (for example, caring for siblings, carrying out essential household chores, working for pay, and going to school). There may also be important differences in patterns of children's awareness and understanding of inequality, reflecting their varied positioning in the social hierarchy and the range of social expectations they manage (related, for example, to age, gender, class, and ethnicity, or caste).

There is a growing body of research documenting young people's accounts of poverty in both developed and developing contexts (for example, Camfield 2010; Middleton et al. 1994; Ridge 2002, 2003; Tekola 2009; Van der Hoek 2005; Witter 2002). A study of child poverty in India, Belarus, Kenya, Sierra Leone, and Bolivia found that for children 'the personal and immediate effects of poverty, such as the shame of wearing patched shoes, are frequently articulated more strongly than the broader structural trends, like chronic ill health or insecurity of tenure, which adults often tend to emphasize (Boyden et al. 2003: 109).' Across these studies, and echoed in recent research in Europe (for example, Attree 2006; Redmond 2008, 2009; Ridge 2007), what children often find most distressing about the lack of material goods is the sense of shame that comes with 'not having' or not 'fitting in'; they worry about not being able to participate in valued activities (for example, because they might not be able to pay for transportation to see friends) or about their ability to display the symbols

that mark them as ‘somebody’ amongst their peers and in their communities (for example, wearing a clean and correct school uniform). This can be especially important for children’s evolving sense of identity, belonging, and self-efficacy, which are strongly shaped by their everyday social interactions.

This chapter draws on information collected through surveys and qualitative research with rural children in Andhra Pradesh to explore their views on the relationship between the material and social aspects of poverty, and the implications of inequalities for children and their families. There are two fundamental reasons for this analysis. The first is to take account of the distinct (yet diverse) contribution that children make to research and to the generation of knowledge. Capturing poor children’s ‘standpoints’ respects their capacities to think, feel, and aspire beyond ‘survival’ (Ben-Arieh 2005), and acknowledges that they may do so differently from poor adults. In most societies, children lack social power in relation to adults and may be more vulnerable to poverty and other adversities as a result (Harper et al. 2003: 535). Their views and experiences of poverty have important implications for the ways in which policies and services represent and intervene in their lives and communities (cf. Bissell 2009: 538).

The second reason relates to children as bearers of rights (see Beazley et al. 2009; Robson et al. 2009). Key to this is their right to have a say in matters affecting their lives, based on Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Their participation in research may

provide an opportunity for them to negotiate priorities and make choices in the research process with adults and other children (Jabeen 2009: 417). It is especially important in contexts with marked child–adult hierarchies to find ways of increasing children’s participation, while also respecting their right to be researched in accordance with high academic standards.²

[B] Organization of the chapter

The next section briefly describes where the research took place, how it was carried out, and who participated. This is followed by an analysis of a selection of survey variables capturing children’s views and aspirations. The subsequent section is an overview of qualitative research findings, which are explored in detail through two case studies. The final discussion highlights the importance of children’s social relationships, both as a factor shaping their experiences of poverty, and as a resource for dealing with economic hardship.

[A] Background to the research

Around one-third of the population of Andhra Pradesh is under the age of 14, and over 70 per cent of the population live in rural areas, which have the highest incidence of poverty (Mukherji 2008: 17). Andhra Pradesh has done well in terms of reducing income poverty, but concern remains over inequalities: Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes continue to be the poorest groups and this is reflected in different outcomes for children (CESS 2008; Galab et al. 2008; Mukherji 2008).³ The State has also achieved considerable progress on child development indicators since the mid-1990s,

but despite this, significant disparities remain, based on sector (rural versus urban), caste, and region (Galab et al. 2008: iii). Young Lives survey data on 12-year-olds show that school dropout rates ‘are higher in rural areas (10 per cent) than in urban areas (3 per cent), among the poorest households (16 per cent), among Scheduled Tribe children (possibly because of distance to school), and among girls (11 per cent)’ (ibid.: vi).

This chapter draws on the 2006 Young Lives survey data, collected on 651 rural children aged around 12–13 (and on their caregivers), and on qualitative data, collected in 2007 and 2008. Young Lives collected the latter to explore child well-being, important turning points in childhood (‘transitions’), and children’s experiences of programmes and services. This involved children and adults, and combined individual and group-based interviews. Group discussions with children were aided by creative techniques, including mapping, drawing, storytelling, and video work.

We focus on two communities. ‘Patna’⁴ is a rural tribal village in Srikakulam district with some 1056 resident families. Although it is predominantly tribal, there are also Backward Caste families (less poor than Scheduled Castes), and some Scheduled Caste families in the immediate area. ‘Katur’, a (non-tribal) rural community is situated in Anantapur district with around 400 local families. In Katur, most families belong to the Boya caste (traditionally a hunter group, which later shifted into agriculture, and is now classified as a Backward Caste). There are around nine households

belonging to the Kamma caste (the dominant caste in the community and classified as ‘Other Castes’), and others belonging to a Scheduled Caste.

From these communities, twelve children (six boys, six girls) were selected for case studies, representing a mix of caste and poverty backgrounds, but most belonging to either Scheduled Tribes (five) or Backward Castes (six): one of the children is from the Scheduled Castes and none are from the Other Castes. There is a balance between children in the poorest households (three) and those in the least poor (three) and a good spread in between.⁵ In Patna, all of the case study children were enrolled in school and the poorest children worked on family farms and in the household, mostly during school breaks. In Katur, two of the three girls had dropped out of school (one because seasonal family migration to Mumbai disrupted her studies and the other because the high school was located outside the community). Boys there tended to combine work and school.

In 2008, a further exercise elicited ‘children’s understandings of poverty’. Twenty-one children participated in four gender-specific groups.⁶ They were asked to think about the different families and socioeconomic groups in their communities and to describe what makes them different from each other, how they relate to each other, and how (or if) families move from one category to another (that is, can they move out of poverty). The group discussion aimed to be general, focusing questions on community dynamics and not personal experiences, in part because of ethical concerns around

poverty as a sensitive issue (see Chapter 2 by Virginia Morrow).⁷ However, children sometimes recounted their personal experiences.

[A] Children's views and experiences of poverty and inequality: The survey

In general, rural children placed a high value on formal schooling: they felt that it was 'essential' for their future lives (97 per cent, including *all* those in the poorest households). Most of them were still enrolled in school (88 per cent) and very few wanted to stop before reaching the tenth grade (1 per cent). However, seventy-eight of our rural sample had left school and the most common reason was because they had to work (28 per cent), either at home or for paid work outside the household. The second most common reason was truancy (21 per cent). Children also left school because their families could not afford school-related costs, because of ill-treatment from teachers, or because they had family problems. However, most children managed to combine school with their work obligations. Nearly one in five of them reported working for pay in the past year and most working children said that the job they did made them feel proud, even though a third of them felt they had little choice in the work they did.

When the analysis is disaggregated by children's gender, caste, and poverty levels, some notable patterns emerge (see Table 13.1). First, the differences by gender appear unremarkable on the selected variables, except in relation to aspirations for attending university (more boys than girls) and the slightly higher rates of school dropout by girls. However, it is clear that poverty and

caste background are important factors shaping childhood inequalities. For example, children from the poorest households and from marginalized caste groups were more likely to drop out of school, to be working for pay, and to have missed school because of work. The poorest and most marginalized among working children were also more embarrassed and less proud of their jobs than were working children from richer households. They were more likely to describe their households as ‘struggling to get by’ or as ‘poor’.

[Table 13.1 here]

Common to children across these categories was the value of education. There have been many efforts to achieve universal primary education under the Government of India’s flagship programme, *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (Hindi for ‘Education for All’). Formal schooling is increasingly becoming a key feature of what is considered a ‘good childhood’ for boys and girls in Andhra Pradesh, and even the poorest families aspire to send their children to private, English-medium schools in the hope that this will be a pathway out of poverty.

Although the poorest children placed a high value on their formal education, they reported lower educational aspirations than did children in the richest homes. In Europe and the USA, some poor children learn to ‘make do’ with their limited resources and opportunities, and lower their expectations for the future (see Attree 2006; MacLeod 1987). Tracking these children’s opinions on this issue will be of interest to the next Young Lives survey, when these children (the Older Cohort) will be aged 15–16, and this sort of

information is crucial for policy intervention with this age group. We turn now to the results from the qualitative research.

[A] Children's perspectives in qualitative research

Children listed the attributes that distinguished 'poor', 'middle-class', and 'rich' families in their communities (see Table 13.2). There were three broad bases of difference, relating first to material goods and services; second, to social relationships; and third, to childhood and families. The second of these includes issues of social inclusion and exclusion, and of the interdependence between poor people who have few resources and rich people who need labour.

[B] Material goods and services

Children's descriptions characterized poverty as inadequate resources and constrained opportunities. Children's descriptions of material difference reflected a continuum of quantity, quality, and access across the three types of families. For example, children's descriptions of varied access to services suggested that wealthy families had more choices and greater access to quality services, whereas poor families had little choice. Middle-class families were 'worse than rich, better than poor', yet still found it difficult to lead a 'smooth life' (Patna). Wealthy families were not only characterized as being of good health: they were also able to use private multi-speciality hospitals if they fell ill. Middle-class families went either to private or government hospitals depending on the seriousness of the illness. Poor families were described as 'mostly ill', yet limited to government hospitals or traditional healers. They were both more vulnerable to ill health and least

able to afford access to good-quality services, and often went into debt trying to cover costs. Material differences were therefore important to children because they reflected and reproduced entrenched relationships of interdependence between those who ‘have a lot’, ‘have some’, and ‘have nothing’, and children saw themselves as very much a part of these relationships and power structures.

[Table 13.2 here]

[B] Children, childhood, and families

In each of the study communities, certain castes or ethnic groups were associated with specific socioeconomic categories (see Tables 13.3 and 13.4). In the tribal community in Patna, poverty was associated with the Savara tribe, who live in interior parts of the forest and on hilltops. In Katur, people from the Scheduled Caste were associated with the poor category, and the Boya caste with the middle class (which included farmers). Children used the term *kammavallu* to refer to rich people (Kamma being the dominant caste).

[Table 13.3 here]

There were other markers that distinguished groups of children and their families (see Table 13.4). More than the other two groups, children in poor households were characterized by vulnerability and were targets of ridicule by other children and abuse by adults. They confronted a variety of risks such as extreme hunger, family debt, exposure to heat, and domestic

violence. One of the girls' focus groups said, 'Even when they [poor people] go to work in the fields, they are asked by the rich to sit separately and eat their food. They're ridiculed for not having anything.'

[Table 13.4 here]

Children's accounts of differing childhoods indicated that shame and humiliation was a particular risk and concern for poor children. One of the boys in Katur described his own experience of fetching milk from a Kamma household; he said that before he was given the milk he was made to sweep and fetch water for them. In both communities, children were portrayed as some of the main perpetrators of the ridicule and exclusion of other children (see also Redmond 2009). Poor children faced 'ridicule from classmates because of their way of dressing and speaking', for not having books, and for falling behind in their studies. In Patna, the tribal village, the boys said that poor children were treated differently – 'cheaply', and they 'kept aside' at functions and parties, suggesting self-exclusion to avoid stigma and shame.

[B]Case studies exploring the material and social aspects of poverty and inequality

Generally, children did not represent themselves as 'victims' of poverty, nor did they represent themselves as wholly in control of their lives. They emphasized the importance of family, of 'belonging', of balancing their different obligations, and the constraints posed by material poverty.

The case studies of Ravi and Preethi explore these themes further. Fifteen-year-old Ravi is from Katur and his story illustrates the way children make decisions about their lives. Fourteen-year-old Preethi is from Patna and is living in a student hostel while she attends school. Her narrative illustrates how children's aspirations and expectations are shaped within the familial context and constrained by poverty. Both cases highlight the importance of family and friendship for children's well-being.

[C] Ravi

Ravi's family belong to the Scheduled Caste and are classed as being in the fourth Young Lives 'expenditure quintile' (among the less poor in terms of expenditure). His parents, elder brother, and nephew live together; his two sisters recently moved out to their in-laws' houses. The family rent their house from an uncle because heavy rains destroyed their previous home. When Ravi was in the fourth grade, aged 10, his parents migrated for work and he was left in his grandmother's care. He often missed school and eventually dropped out.

Ravi worked as a farmhand, mostly weeding in the fields of the dominant high caste families. At home he also worked: he swept, fetched water and firewood, and 'took care' of his parents when they returned. He explained, 'I took good care of my parents and protected my mother ... If there were any debts I tried to clear them.' Ravi's father had taken a loan from a Kamma family, which he had been working off through bonded labour, but

his worsening arthritis made it difficult to work. Ravi recalled the day his father's 'master' came to their home and shouted at his father for not repaying the loan. Ravi worried that 'everyone will laugh at me', and decided to take over from his father to clear the family debt.

Ravi described being mistreated by the Kamma family. For example, the 'master' beat him with a broomstick if he did not show up for work. He was made to stay at work even when the rains were bad. He explained:

It was nauseating to pile up the garbage, the dung and the worms ... It was filthy over there ... I just could not work there ... It was repulsive. I had to remain there ... I wasn't allowed to come home. I was made to run all the errands ... They kept on harassing me ... They were telling me to do 'this and that' ... even on the days of festivals I was made to herd cattle and I was made to work from dawn to dusk. They even wanted me to remain during nights at their place. I had to sleep there during nights ...

But he felt he had little choice. When the Kamma family came to his house they said, 'Either pay or we will have him [Ravi] as a farmhand under us and he will serve us.'

After a short while, Ravi told his mother he could not bear the mistreatment and she agreed he could stop. But the family still owed 6000 rupees, which

Ravi planned to pay off by working elsewhere. At the age of 14, through his uncle, he got a job at a stone quarry in Anantapur (about 20 km away), earning 2500 rupees each month. He set aside 500 rupees for himself, and gave the rest to his mother, who used it to pay back loans she'd taken from the Self Help Group.⁸ He lived with his uncle and went home to celebrate a harvest festival and the festival of the local deity.

Ravi enjoyed his days at the quarry, especially since he befriended two boys of his age who worked with him. They played tops and marbles and played 'snakes' on one of the boys' mobile phones. At weekends they swam in the well together and went to the cinema. Ravi did not find the work very difficult, and he liked the way his uncle's wife cared for him, insisting, 'They took good care of me ... They gave me all their love and affection ... like my mother and my father.'

Ravi went home for a month and then left again, this time to learn masonry in Kadapa (about 420 km away), where his eldest sister lived. 'I used to mix sand and cement and hand it over ... They used to tell me to do this and that. In that way I learnt the work by observing them.' Although he earned 150 rupees per day,⁹ he did not like Kadapa as much as he liked working at the quarry. He missed his friends. And instead of going to the cinema, he stayed home in the evenings to watch Chiranjeevi, his favourite film star, on DVD.

Earning money is important to Ravi and the way he sees his role within his family: he can buy new clothes on festival occasions and also support the education of his elder brother and nephew. He explained, 'When someone makes some money ... they are really proud to show it off.'

He still worries about the stigma associated with his family debt and the possibility that when he returns home, villagers will point to him and say, 'He did not repay the loan, that's why he left the village.' There is also some regret about his dropping out of school. His mother noted how other children talked about Ravi rearing cattle, calling him 'shepherd' and 'poor boy'. When reflecting on his time as a bonded labourer, Ravi said, 'I always feel sad about it. I think about why I am like this, when all the others are going to school.' Nonetheless, he finds value in the skills he acquires through his work and believes that if he were at school he would not have the opportunities to see new places outside the village: work closed some choices, but opened up others (see Bissell 2009: 538 on Indonesian children). Ravi did not mention going back to school, but did say he would like to farm in his village. His mother hopes he can purchase at least two acres of land which he could lease out to someone else and cover his basic needs. She said this would be good, otherwise 'forever they live on labour alone'.

[C] Preethi

Preethi is the third of four children: her elder brother and sister still live at home with her parents, who are farmers. The family are in the second

Young Lives 'expenditure quintile' (below average). At the time of the first qualitative research visit (2007), Preethi was studying at a school run by the ITDA (see note 8) and staying in the residential hostel 25 km from her home. She saw her family around once a month. Graduation to the eighth grade (in 2008) meant a change in schools and after passing the entrance exam to a new residential school 3 km from her home, she relocated there. Preethi described how at first she was very lonely and wanted to return home. Her mother did not visit and Preethi did not return to her village, despite her hostel being located near her home. Her father came to the school a few times, drunk, which made her feel sad and want her mother even more. Eventually she became good friends with three girls at the hostel, which helped her settle. In the four months after changing schools, she only returned home once, at the death of her grandfather – for only one day for his funeral, to avoid falling too far behind in her classes.

Preethi's grandfather had cared for the family's cattle and he received a pension of 2000–2500 rupees per month. After his death, the responsibility for caring for the cattle fell to Preethi's mother and they lost his pension. When Preethi's mother announced she that she wanted to sell the cattle because she could not care for them, Preethi asked where they would get money to celebrate the festivals. Her mother explained that she was unable to visit Preethi at the hostel because she was so busy with the cattle. [I suggest deleting or amending the above phrase because it interrupts the narrative flow. This case study reads as if it's recounted by Preethi, and to

insert something that her mother said to the researcher sounds a bit abrupt here. Also, you've already said that Preethi was sad because no one visited.]

There were also heavy rains, bad crops, and a significant rise in food prices. Like all families in the village, Preethi's family have a white ration card (indicating they are 'below the poverty line') with which they are able to get kerosene and sugar. They also get other food at subsidized prices, but it has still been difficult. Preethi's mother described how she made food stretch, how the 'thick' sauces she used to cook are now thinned: 'It should be served for two meals, what we ate for one meal now we are eating for two.'

Preethi believes that their economic difficulties will have social repercussions and that they might not be able to celebrate festivals as they had done in the past. She described in detail her cousin's recent celebration to mark her 'maturity' (called *Pedda Manishi*, a rite of passage acknowledging the attainment of menarche). This involved an elaborate family party, which Preethi attended.

She had not yet reached 'maturity' and said for herself:

It makes no difference whether such a thing [a big celebration] happens or not... I want it to be a simple affair...

We haven't much money ... if grandfather were alive it would have been different. When grandfather was alive he brought home five thousands or at times ten thousands. It would have

been possible then with that money, in a grand way. My sister's ceremony was done in a big way... .

She believes her parents want hers to be a small event, and has lowered her expectations in recognition of her family's strained economy. It is nonetheless important for Preethi that she has a ceremony to mark her change of status: children's celebrations are important opportunities to strengthen family ties, as well as to mark individual change.

[A] Discussion

A crucial theme emerging from children's views is the importance of their social relationships, their families, and their friendships for shaping their experiences of poverty. Strong social relationships may be especially important in situations of marked material deprivation, and should therefore be taken account of in children-centred policies and programmes. Ravi's network of family and friends protected him from some of the risks often associated with migration. Preethi's experience of moving to a new residential hostel was difficult because her mother was unable to visit her, and she attributed her finally settling to the friendships she made.

Children's experiences also often fall short of the dominant models of 'good' childhoods in their communities. While formal schooling was appreciated as an essential experience for young people in Ravi and Preethi's communities, the case studies show how the ideal of going to school may clash with children's obligations to their families: it may also

clash with their preference or need to work or to get married, or with the poor quality of their schooling environments. The surveys pointed to some of the diverging trajectories among rural children in the study. Poverty and caste or tribal background accounted for many of these inequalities. The qualitative research showed how children perceived these inequalities and their place within them.

Children also demonstrated awareness of the intergenerational transfers of advantage and disadvantage, as they contextualized child poverty within household poverty and social background (for example, tribe or caste). We have illustrated the general phenomenon that poorer households lack insurance resources and are therefore more vulnerable to shocks such as job loss or illness (cf. Davis 2006: 32; Wood 2003: 455). In poorer Young Lives households, young and old shared the burdens of debt and poverty.

Children, therefore, had responsibilities for managing economic hardship and for breaking the intergenerational transfer of poverty. Ravi is a clear example of this: his relationship to his family was based on interdependence and sharing of responsibilities (cf. Punch 2002). Expanding social protection programmes for marginalized families may buffer such shocks and provide children with more options for dealing with them.

In conclusion, young people offer a distinct vantage point from which to understand the effects of poverty in their communities. Their knowledge and experience should therefore be considered a valuable source of information for the design and evaluation of policies and programmes aimed at

improving their lives and the life chances of children marginalized by poverty. This requires acknowledging the validity of children's knowledge, respecting their right to contribute views on matters affecting their lives, and ultimately taking what they say seriously.

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Table 13.1 Rural children's opinions on work, school, and poverty by wealth level, caste, and gender (%)

Question	Expenditure quintile		Caste/ethnicity				Gender		All
	Poorest	Richest	Scheduled Caste	Scheduled Tribe	Backward Caste	Other Caste	Male	Female	
Not enrolled in school	19	5	14	11	11	4	10	13	12
Worked for pay in past year	24	10	20	37	20	10	19	19	19
Missed school in last 4 years because of work	18	3	11	13	9	3	8	9	8
Embarrassed by the work have to do (agree/strongly agree)*	21	7	27	15	20	3	24	23	24
Job done makes child feel proud (agree/strongly agree) ^a	79	93	80	86	83	87	82	80	81
Believe school will be useful for future life ('essential')	100	97	94	96	98	99	99	96	97
Would like to go to university	52	81	65	74	62	67	73	56	64
Child describes household as 'struggle to get by/poor'	57	30	59	50	38	21	41	46	43

Source: Round 2 Older Cohort Child Questionnaire

* Questions asked to children who reported paid work

Table 13.2 Children’s indicators of inequality: material goods and services

Rich	Middle-class	Poor
<i>Material possessions</i>		
Big, neat, multi-storey houses	Own small, thatched or tiled, ‘pukka’ houses (p/k)	No house or live in huts or rented homes (‘not neat’); some live in new drain pipes on building sites or at rail stations, bus stops, etc. (p/k)
Money (k)	Own less land than the rich / small gardens (p/k)	No money or assets (p/k)
Land and factories (varied land, inherited from ancestors) (p/k)	Less money & property than rich, but more than poor (p/k)	
Bullock cart and animals (k)	No assets (k: g); some livestock and a cart (k)	
Cars, tractors, scooters	Small cars (p)	
Good, fresh and adequate food (p/k)	Have grain and rice to eat but not always enough (k); variety of food not as good as rich, but better than poor (p)	No land (k); most sold their small lands for their urgent needs (p)
Good clothes and jewellery (k)	Good clothes (k)	Not enough food or clothes (p/k) / young children may die from heat and hunger (p)
Home appliances, colour TV, mobile, etc. (p/k)	Only have black & white TV, one fan, bicycle (k)	Clothes are not good (k)
Cook on gas stove (k)	Cook on earthen or electric stove (k)	
<i>Service access and quality</i>		
Servants do all household work, care for children (p/k)	Children go to government schools (p/k); some may attend private schools (p)	No money to send their children to schools (p/k); go to government schools (p/k); use welfare hostels (p)
Children study in highly reputable schools and live in hostels with all facilities; some of them are living abroad (p); use private English-medium schools (k)	No servants so must do household work themselves (p)	If no electricity, use kerosene, oil or street lamps (p)
Children get extra tuition if they need it (p)	Depending on seriousness of illness, may go to government or private hospitals (p)	Most are ill and use government hospitals or traditional healers (p)
When ill, use private multi-speciality hospitals (p)		

Note: p = Patna, k = Katur, b = boys, g = girls.

Table 13.3 Children’s indicators of inequality: social relationships and marginality

Rich	Middle-class	Poor
<i>Status and inclusion/exclusion</i>		
Well respected, recognized, have political contacts and influence people (p) Feared by others and people listen to what they say (p) Treat others as ‘cheap’ (p) / treat other groups poorly and refer to them by caste (k) (examples: If poor or middle-class people are smoking and rich person comes along, smoker has to put out cigarette (k); they say, ‘Veetikintha kovva?’ (‘How dare they? They have a lot of “flesh” [gall]’) if poor or middle class do not obey them (k); they make servants use separate plates and glasses and don’t allow them in the house (k) Have money for celebrations and leisure (cinemas, picnics); visit big towns (p/k)	Cannot influence higher authorities and politicians (p) Deposit money in banks for their children’s marriages & studies (p); their children marry good people (k) Only buy clothes for important festivals (k)	Excess debt may drive them to suicide and to kill family (p) Many do undignified jobs like scavenging or domestic work, near landlords & in rich houses (p) Must save money to celebrate festivals (k)
<i>Jobs and opportunities</i>		
High-level jobs, good pay (in tribal site, ITDA job)* (p); don’t do daily labour (k) Can eat, buy, and do whatever they want, no matter what the cost (p) Have business opportunities to earn money (p); lease their land and take half the yield so they don't go to the fields (k) Deposit money in the bank and give loans to poor at high interest rates; may keep poor children as bonded labour (p)	Few jobs, may work own land or work for others on wage basis or in small government jobs (p/k) Small-scale businesses (p); in vegetable business, tailoring, or woodworking (k); take care of own cattle (k) May migrate to earn money (p) Get loans for children’s education as have assets (p) No one helps them, except the government, a little,	Cannot even get wage labour so often ‘sleep without food’ (p/k) Adults & children may not get work in some seasons (p) If no work, may turn to begging or migrate (p) Cannot get loans because lack assets (p)

but not as much as
government helps
the rich (p)

Dependencies

Rich depend on poor for their labour; poor get financial help from rich (k)	Do not work under the <i>kammas</i> but cultivate their own land (k)	They always depend on rich people (k); may be cheated by the rich (p)
Help release poor and middle class if jailed; lend tractors and carts (k)	Will not work as bonded labour at <i>kamma's</i> family (k)	May sell body parts or organs to rich for low price to get food (p)
	Poor and middle class help each other out, share bullock carts (k)	Some kidnap children for ransom to cover basic needs (p)

* Integrated Tribal Development Agency. This Agency was set up by the Government of India to promote the socioeconomic development of tribal communities through income-generating schemes, infrastructure development, and protection of tribal communities against exploitation. Provision of boarding hostels for boys and girls to attend school, scholarships, training for jobs, job placements, etc., are some of the special services available to tribal children. [Why is it rich people who benefit from this scheme? Do you want to comment on that?]

Table 13.4 Children’s indicators of inequality: families and childhood

Rich	Middle-class	Poor
<i>Families and childhood</i>		
Small families (p)	Boya (k)	Savara people who live in interior parts of the forests and on hilltops (p);
Look very neat and smart, speak well and have good lifestyle (p/k)	Difficult to lead life smoothly; worse than rich, better than poor (p)	Scheduled Caste (k)
Children wear clean clothes, study in private English-medium school; may not study if financially secure; don’t do household work (p/k)	Children attend government school (p/k); they do housework and work in fields (p); have less leisure time and work hard (p);	Have many children (p); children work for wage labour and may drop out of school (p/k); go to government schools (p/k); stay at welfare hostels (p)
Arrogant and proud because of wealth; speak harshly (p/k)	parents cannot afford school costs (p); some families are educated, some illiterate (p)	Eldest child may care for younger siblings (p)
Alcoholism (p)	Not healthy but not very ill (p)	They don’t apply oil to their hair (k)
	Alcoholism due to a lot of loans and natural disasters (p)	Bad habits and addictions (p); beat wives and may murder their women and children (p); household head always pre-occupied (k)
		They don’t have money but they have more affection (g)

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² ‘Participatory’ approaches have been used with adults in Andhra Pradesh to identify ‘the poor’ and to measure poverty (for example, The Andhra Pradesh Human Development Report 2007), but it is still unusual to involve children in these efforts.

³ ‘Scheduled Tribes’ and ‘Scheduled Castes’ are legal terms for population groupings in India. Scheduled Tribes consist of indigenous tribal groups and are outside the traditional caste system. Scheduled Castes are the lowest in the caste system and, like Scheduled Tribes, have been historically marginalized (Galab et al. 2008: 6). Legislation to protect these groups is in place, and there are special government schemes to promote opportunities for them. Nevertheless, they are mostly poor and disadvantaged. The ‘upper castes’ in our sample are primarily captured in the ‘Other Castes’ category.

⁴ The names of communities and children are pseudonyms to preserve their anonymity.

⁵ With the poorest households classified as quintile 1 and the least poor as 5, two children were in quintile 2, three in quintile 3, and one in quintile 4.

⁶ This included both Young Lives and non-Young Lives children, aiming at five or six participants per group.

⁷ One of the concerns was in relation to the sensitivities around asking ‘poor children’ about their experiences of poverty, especially in group settings in which children from differing socioeconomic backgrounds participated.

⁸ In this context, a Self Help Group is a small group of people, often women, who come together to work on a common problem, such as livelihood generation, with a degree of self-sufficiency.

⁹ Note that a day's work through the Indian National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) earned Rs80, recently increased to Rs100. The scheme was rolled out nationally in 2008 and guarantees up to 100 days unskilled manual labour for every adult available to work on that day.