

HINDU, FEB 18th 2002

Dropout rate in primary school 84 p.c.

By Our Staff Reporter

BANGALORE, FEB. 17. The Government Lower Primary School in the Ragigudda slum has three small rooms, courtesy charitable benefactors, and one other room within the slum itself. The dropout rate in the school is as high as 84 per cent.

"The functioning and the orientation of the school indicate that it is not able to retain most children even up to Class IV," says a "local education report" on urban poverty and basic education deprivation, from the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), which studied the slum as a specific case.

As reported in the study, data from 1994 to 2001 show that the school had 163 registered students. Of these, in 1995-96, 55 children enrolled in Class I. By 1998-99, there were only nine students left in Class IV, a dropout rate of 84 per cent. An average of 77 per cent of children, who enrolled, dropped out between 1994 and 2001. As part of its field research, the NIAS team interviewed the children going to the school in the

slum or two other government schools located within the ward, to find out why they left school.

The findings say 81 per cent of out-of-school children were dropouts. Of these, 60 per cent cited family-related reasons for leaving school. As much as 30 per cent of students cited school-related reasons.

Family-related reasons include financial problems or sudden economic crises in the family (20 per cent), migration of the family (15 per cent), several families here are from neighbouring States and keep going back and/or to other places.

More boys left on their own, while girls were withdrawn to help at home and/or with their mothers' work as unpaid domestic help, look after siblings, and when an adult fell ill at home.

School-related reasons include being "bored with school" (15 per cent), ill-treatment by teacher (five per cent) and distance from school (10 per cent).

There were several other important reasons that took a child in the slum away from school, including the mid-day meal not being served.