



Work and Family Lives in Telangana:

Preliminary Findings from the 2023–24 Young Lives Round 7 Survey

Introduction

For more than 20 years, Young Lives has followed two cohorts, born seven years apart, from infancy into early adulthood in Ethiopia, India (Andhra Pradesh and Telangana), Peru and Vietnam.¹ This factsheet presents preliminary findings from Round 7 of the Young Lives survey carried out in India in the State of Telangana in 2023–24, when the Younger Cohort was 22 years old and the Older Cohort was 29. It provides an overview of the key labour market, marital and fertility indicators underlining changes over time by comparing the Younger Cohort at age 22 with the Older Cohort at the same age but seven years earlier, in 2016, and documenting the Younger and Older Cohort's progression from age 15 to 22 in terms of work and educational status. The factsheet also reflects on the implications of the findings for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5 and 8.

Headlines

- The transition from education to the labour market is occurring later for the Younger Cohort than for the Older Cohort born seven years earlier.
- Most young people at age 29 are engaged in poor-quality jobs, without a written contract and working long hours.
- A smaller proportion of women compared to men are employed, but the burden of unpaid care work disproportionately affects women, limiting their participation in the labour market.
- Early marriage and early parenthood remain a concern, with 16% of Younger Cohort women being married before the legal age of 18 and 22% having a child by age 19.
- Early-life inequalities are reflected in rates of child marriage and early motherhood.

¹ Round 7 took place in the Young Lives study sites in Ethiopia, India and Peru. On this occasion, data was not collected in Vietnam due to a change in government procedures on the international transfer of personal data.

Key findings

- **The transition from education to the labour market is occurring later for the Younger Cohort than for the Older Cohort born seven years earlier.** Fewer 22-year-olds were working full-time in 2023 compared to 2016 (53% vs. 62%) and more continued studying only (13% vs. 9%) or studying and working (20% vs. 12%).
- **Comparing Older Cohort and Younger Cohort at age 22, we find more than half of both cohorts in employment (in the past week)** with gender gap in favour of men increasing from 31 percentage points in 2016 to 33 percentage points in 2023.
- **Four out of every five (78%) young people at age 29 were working**, with gender gap in favour of men (96% men vis-à-vis 60% women) but majority were engaged in poor-quality jobs, measured as jobs without a written contract and jobs demanding long working hours. Less than 10% of the Older Cohort had a written contract and 40% worked more than 48 hours per week in their main activity.
- **There is a clear gender difference in the distribution of work.** At age 22, Younger Cohort men spend 2.7 hours more per day on paid work than women, while young women spend 4.3 hours more per day on unpaid care work, compared to men.
- **Cross cohort comparison related to age of marriage and motherhood shows a positive trend.** Comparing the two cohorts, we find 16% of the Younger Cohort women being married before the legal age of 18 compared to 32% Older Cohort and 22% of the Younger Cohort women had a child by age 19 compared to 29% of the Older Cohort women becoming mothers by 19.
- **Early life inequalities are reflected in rates of child marriage and early motherhood.** Participants whose mothers had less formal education and those born in socially disadvantaged groups as well as the poorest households are more likely to be married before legal age and have a child by 19.



The policy context of work and family lives in Telangana

Telangana, the youngest State of India, has a substantial working age population (67% between ages 15-59 years) (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 2020), with the labour force participation rate standing at 68.7% (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, 2024). The state’s economy is predominantly driven by the service and industrial sectors, with the service sector contributing a significant 65.7% to its Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) at current prices for the year 2023-24 (Planning Department, Government of Telangana, 2024). However, majority of the employed population works in the agriculture sector (47%), followed by the service sector (33%) (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, 2023).

Gender inequality in workforce is also a major concern, as only 52.7% of women are engaged in labour market activities compared to 85.3% males in Telangana (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, 2024). On the other hand, the unemployment rate among 15-59 years is 5.1%, with a higher rate among youth (15-29 years) and females, ranking Telangana among the top ten States in India (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, 2024). The State remains committed to meeting SDG-5 related targets by 2030 (United Nations, 2015), with the government introducing several schemes such as Sthree Nidhi and Mahila Udyam Nidhi Schemes to support women’s economic participation and empower them, especially in rural areas.

Methods

This factsheet uses preliminary data from the Young Lives Round 7 survey in India, which was collected between August 2023 and January 2024. A total of 948 interviews were completed (641 with the Younger Cohort and 307 with the Older Cohort) in the State of Telangana, which represents 89.7% of the original sample in Round 1 (Younger Cohort: 90.9%; Older Cohort: 87.5%). Participants from previous rounds who were not interviewed in Round 7 were excluded from the analysis. The total sample for this factsheet pertains to those who were living in Telangana during Round 1 and not those who live in Telangana during Round 7. Participants were categorized based on gender, place of residence (urban or rural at the time of the survey), household wealth (top, middle, or bottom wealth tercile in 2002 as per Briones 2017), caste group, mother’s educational attainment, and early life transitions, including whether women were married before age 18 or had children by age 19, and whether men were married before age 21.

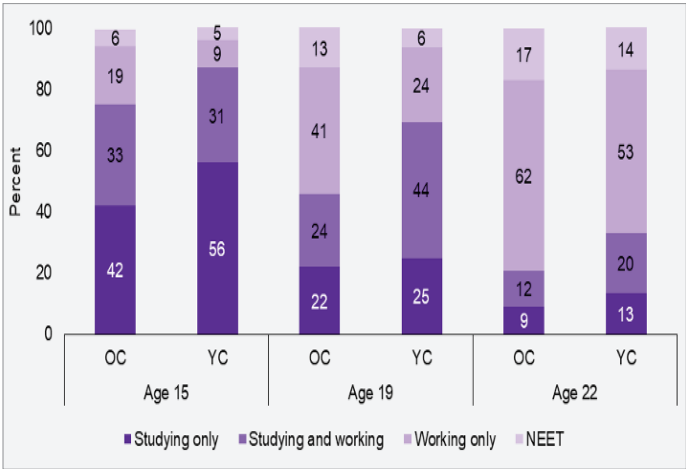
Activities of Young Lives participants

A trend analysis of activities taken up by Younger Cohort (YC) and Older Cohort (OC) between the ages of 15 and 22 years (Figure 1) indicates that across all ages, a higher proportion of Younger Cohort were engaged in education. At age 19 amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, a larger proportion of Younger Cohort were studying (25%) and studying and working (44%). However, at the same age in 2013, fewer Older Cohort were studying (22%) and studying and working (24%).

While a majority of the 22-year-old Younger Cohort in 2023 were working, cross-cohort comparison shows that the shift from education to employment is happening later in life. In 2023, 53% of the Younger Cohort were working only, 20% were working and studying, 13% were studying only, and 14% were Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) in the last 12 months prior to the survey (Figure 1). The Older Cohort at the same age in 2016 had higher rates of working only (62%), lower rates of studying (9%), studying and working (12%) and 17% in NEET category.

Most of the 22-year-olds in 2023 who were not in employment, education or training were women (29%), compared to only 2% of men (Annex 1). This is largely because unpaid care and domestic work are primarily undertaken by women. The most common reason for not working among Younger Cohort women (73%) in NEET category, was being engaged in domestic and childcare responsibilities, while 33% men reported that they were taking coaching or preparing for competitive exams.

Figure 1. Working and studying status by age and cohort (%)



Note: Working status is defined based on at least one hour of work in labour market activities in the last 12 months; studying status is defined based on enrolment in the ongoing academic year (for studying) prior to the interview; NEET refers to those who have not worked, are not in training and are not enrolled in education.

Employment and types of jobs

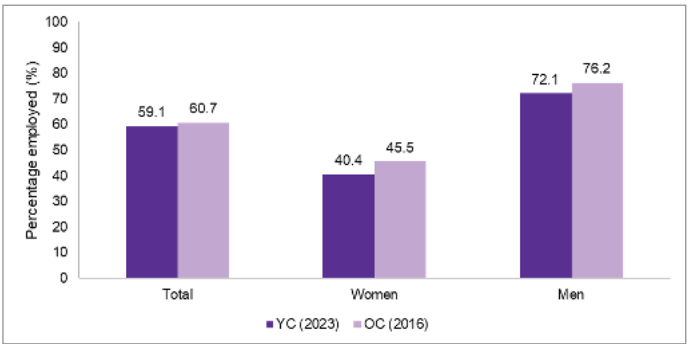
In 2023, the proportion of young people employed in the week prior to the interview was 59%, and 78% for the Younger Cohort (age 22) and Older Cohort (age 29), respectively (Annex 1). Approximately, three-fourths of the Older Cohort were working in 2023 in the past week irrespective of wealth status. Among those in employment amongst the Older Cohort, 98% located in urban areas and 64% in rural areas were engaged in non-agricultural jobs. We find that agriculture remains an important source of employment for women, with 41% of employed women engaged in this sector, compared to only 22% men amongst the Older Cohort.

Overall, most of the young people were working in poor quality jobs, measured as those without a written contract and demanding long working hours, with substantial variation by socio-economic factors. On an average, only 4% of the employed 29-year-olds have a written contract. They spent an average of 47 hours per week in their main employment activity, with 40% working long hours (more than 48 hours per week). In addition, 59% reported that they were not satisfied with their jobs. Employment with a written contract was least prevalent among the Older Cohort, among Backward Class and among those whose mother had no formal education.

Gender distribution of work

There has been a persistent gender gap in employment amongst both the Younger and Older Cohorts, consistently favouring men (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Cross cohort comparison in employment by gender (at age 22)



Note: The proportion of participants employed refers to a recall period of the last week. The proportion employed here do not include those not working in the recall period but who have a job.

A comparison at age 22 shows that, the gender gap in employment is similar in both cohorts (32% for Younger Cohort vs. 31% for Older Cohort). There is a noticeable increase in the employment rate amongst the Older Cohort at age 29 (96% men and 60% women).

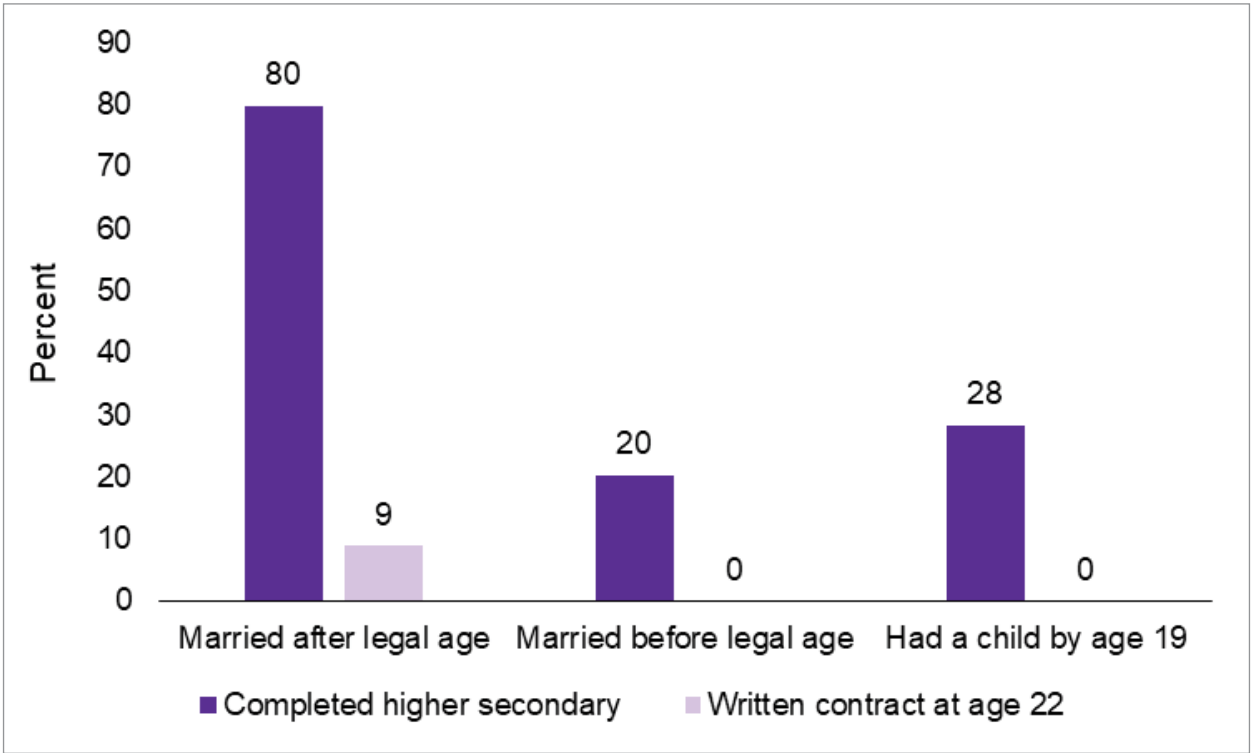
However, the gender gap has increased to 36 percentage points compared to age 22. Notably, employment among Older Cohort women has improved over time, increasing by 15 percentage points between 2016 and 2023 (46% in 2016 vs 60% in 2023) but gender gap remains persistent (Annex 1).

The gender gap is even more pronounced for unpaid care work, which includes direct care for the elderly, people with illness and disabilities, children, as well as indirect care or domestic responsibilities. The challenge is that this work is not counted as economic activity despite its valuable contribution. By age 15, girls already spent more than half an hour per day on unpaid care work, and by age 22, this had increased to 4.3 hours more per day compared to men. A significant time-use gap exists even among employed men and women, with employed women spending 3.9 more hours per day on unpaid care work. In comparison to Younger Cohort in 2023, the gender gap in time spent on unpaid care work per day was even larger for the Older Cohort in 2016 (4.6 hours). This is because Older Cohort men spent less time on unpaid care work than Younger Cohort men at age 22 (1.4 hours for the Older Cohort and 2 hours for the Younger Cohort), whereas women in both cohorts spent almost equal amount of time (6.2 hours for the Younger Cohort, 6.0 hours for the Older Cohort). At age 22, Younger Cohort men spend 2.7 hours more per day on paid work than women, compared to Older Cohort men, who spent 3 hours more per day on paid work at the same age. Taken together, this evidence suggests that gender norms and social expectations play an important role in how work is divided both within and outside the household.

Family formation

Young women are far more likely than men to have experienced marriage and parenthood by age 22. In 2023, at age 22, 52% of Younger Cohort women were married or had a child. In contrast, at the same age, only 6% of the Younger Cohort men were married or had a child. A positive shift in child marriage and teenage pregnancy of girls (by age 19) was observed as fewer Younger Cohort women were married before legal age of 18 (16%) compared to Older Cohort women (32%) and fewer had a child by 19 years of age (22% vs 29%). A majority of those who got married before the legal age (18 for women and 21 for men) and had a child early (by age 19) were women. About 16% of the Younger Cohort women got married before legal age compared to 2% men, while 22% of women had a child by 19 compared to 1% men.

Figure 3: *Employment and education of Younger Cohort women who experienced early marriage and early parenthood (%)*



Child marriage and early motherhood are linked to worse education and labour market outcomes, but their prevalence is declining over time. As shown in Figure 3, women who married before the legal age and had a child by age 19 have lower secondary school completion rates, while none had a written employment contract at age 22 compared to those married after the legal age. Lower maternal formal education, household wealth at birth and being from disadvantaged castes are strong predictors of child marriage and early parenthood.



Conclusions and way forward

An increasing number of young people are transitioning from education to labour market at later age compared to their older counterparts at the same age. However, the continuing number of young people not in employment, education and training (NEET), especially among women remains a concern. Although majority of young people at age 29 are engaged in labour market, they lack access to better quality jobs. They often take up jobs without formal contract, face long working hours, and experience dissatisfaction with their jobs. Meanwhile, both men and women have shifted to non-agricultural work across urban and rural areas aligning with Telangana’s substantial share in the service and industrial sector. Gender disparities in employment persist and are prominent for both Younger and Older Cohort, suggesting that women are largely confined to households, bearing the responsibility of unpaid care work.

Child marriage and early parenthood are showing a declining trend amongst women; however, the phenomenon continues to be associated with poorer educational and labour market outcomes. Women from socio-economically disadvantaged groups are especially at higher risk. The results suggest that early life disparities and social norms continue to form barriers for women. This underscores the need for Telangana to review its SDG 5 and 8 targets, which are linked to achieving other SDGs (United Nations, 2015).

Annex 1. Work and family lives outcomes, Younger Cohort and Older Cohort, Telangana

| | Not in employment, education or training (NEET) (%) | | | Employment in the last week (%) | | | Employment with a written contract (in the last week) (%) | | Hours per day in paid work | | Hours per day in unpaid care work | |
|-----------------------------|---|-------------|-------------|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|---|-------------|----------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| | YC (age 22) | OC (age 22) | OC (age 29) | YC (age 22) | OC (age 22) | OC (age 29) | YC (age 22) | OC (age 29) | OC (age 22) | YC (age 22) | YC (age 22) | OC (age 22) |
| Average of full sample | 13.7 | 16.7 | 15.9 | 59.1 | 60.7 | 78.2 | 5.8 | 3.8 | 3.1 | 3.0 | 3.7 | 3.7 |
| Gender | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Women | 29.3 | 28.6 | 29.9 | 40.4 | 45.5 | 60.4 | 6.4 | 3.2 | 1.6 | 1.4 | 6.2 | 6.0 |
| Men | 2.4 | 4.6 | 1.9 | 72.9 | 76.2 | 96.1 | 5.6 | 4.1 | 4.6 | 4.1 | 1.9 | 1.4 |
| Difference (t-test) | 26.9*** | 24.0*** | 28.0*** | -32.5*** | -30.7*** | -35.7*** | 0.8 | -0.9 | -3.0*** | -2.7*** | 4.3*** | 4.6*** |
| Area of residence (Round 1) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Urban | 21.7 | 30.0 | 22.5 | 46.4 | 34.1 | 69.0 | 10.4 | 2.0 | 3.5 | 3.5 | 3.2 | 3.1 |
| Rural | 10.9 | 12.7 | 13.9 | 63.6 | 70.4 | 80.9 | 4.6 | 4.2 | 3.3 | 3.1 | 3.9 | 3.9 |
| Difference (t-test) | 10.8** | 17.3** | 8.6* | -17.2*** | -36.3*** | -11.9** | 5.8* | -2.2 | 0.2 | 0.4 | -0.7** | -0.8 |
| Wealth index (Round 1) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bottom tercile | 9.7 | 8.1 | 14.9 | 67.6 | 76.0 | 83.4 | 4.1 | 3.2 | 4.1 | 3.5 | 4.1 | 3.9 |
| Middle tercile | 12.2 | 14.5 | 13.7 | 60.1 | 62.3 | 74.0 | 6.0 | 5.6 | 3.0 | 2.6 | 3.8 | 4.0 |
| Top tercile | 18.2 | 25.7 | 19.6 | 46.9 | 36.0 | 72.3 | 8.9 | 3.3 | 2.6 | 3.1 | 3.1 | 3.0 |
| Pearson chi2 | 6.08** | 10.33** | 1.55 | 19.57*** | 40.73*** | 4.90* | 2.56 | 0.63 | 30.51 | 29.49 | 68.66*** | 35.82 |
| Caste | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Scheduled Castes | 15.0 | 8.2 | 17.2 | 55.6 | 65.2 | 75.3 | 5.4 | 4.7 | 3.9 | 3.4 | 3.6 | 3.2 |
| Scheduled Tribes | 9.5 | 16.7 | 15.4 | 59.5 | 62.5 | 75.0 | 4.0 | 5.6 | 1.7 | 3.2 | 3.8 | 4.3 |
| Backward Classes | 12.4 | 17.7 | 14.8 | 64.3 | 65.2 | 81.0 | 6.4 | 0.8 | 3.1 | 2.7 | 3.9 | 4.0 |
| Others | 19.1 | 28.0 | 20.3 | 48.2 | 41.7 | 76.5 | 5.7 | 10.3 | 2.5 | 3.0 | 3.3 | 3.2 |
| Pearson chi2 | 4.57 | 9.08** | 1.73 | 9.65** | 11.23** | 1.31 | 0.47 | 7.68* | 33.04 | 72.78*** | 79.20** | 54.95* |
| Maternal education | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| None | 10.1 | 12.6 | 12.4 | 68.3 | 70.4 | 81.1 | 2.9 | 2.7 | 3.5 | 3.1 | 4.0 | 3.8 |
| 1 to 5 years | 25.3 | 22.6 | 20.0 | 45.7 | 56.7 | 69.0 | 6.3 | 10.0 | 1.5 | 2.2 | 4.7 | 4.2 |
| 6 to 10 years | 16.3 | 28.6 | 31.1 | 41.4 | 24.5 | 67.4 | 9.1 | 3.2 | 2.5 | 2.7 | 2.7 | 2.5 |
| More than 10 years | 24.0 | 100.0 | 0.0 | 45.2 | 33.3 | 100.0 | 50.0 | 33.3 | 0.0 | 3.8 | 2.7 | 4.7 |
| Pearson chi2 | 16.56** | 22.79*** | 8.15** | 39.28*** | 40.78*** | 6.45* | 55.46*** | 9.93** | 28.72 | 46.08 | 81.22** | 78.88*** |
| Number of participants | 641 | 306 | 307 | 641 | 331 | 307 | 641 | 307 | 307 | 641 | 641 | 306 |

Notes: Differences are significant at ***1%, **5% and *10%. Differences are percentage points. Information on maternal education was taken from 2006 (Round 2). Area of residence refers to the household location in 2002 (Round 1) as well as 2023 (Round 7). Household wealth terciles were calculated separately for each cohort using the household wealth index of 2002 (Round 1). Caste uses information from 2002 (Round 1). Here, we use the term Backward Classes, which is equivalent to Other Backwards Castes.

Annex 1. (Continued) Work and family lives outcomes, Younger Cohort and Older Cohort, Telangana

| | Married or has a child (%) | | | Married before legal age (%) | | Had a child by 19 years old (%) | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| | YC (age 22) | OC (age 22) | OC (age 29) | YC (age 22) | OC (age 29) | YC (age 22) | OC (age 29) |
| Average of full sample | 25.5 | 39.9 | 78.8 | 8.1 | 19.9 | 9.7 | 15.0 |
| Gender | | | | | | | |
| Women | 52.4 | 63.6 | 94.2 | 15.8 | 31.8 | 21.7 | 29.2 |
| Men | 5.7 | 15.8 | 63.4 | 2.4 | 7.8 | 0.8 | 0.7 |
| Difference (t-test) | 46.7*** | 47.8*** | 30.8*** | 13.4*** | 24.0*** | 20.9*** | 28.5*** |
| Area of residence (Round 1) | | | | | | | |
| Urban | 15.1 | 21.4 | 71.8 | 3 | 5.6 | 3.6 | 4.2 |
| Rural | 29.1 | 45.3 | 80.9 | 9.9 | 24.2 | 11.8 | 18.2 |
| Difference (t-test) | -14.0*** | -23.9** | -9.1 | -6.9*** | -18.6** | -8.2** | -14.0** |
| Wealth index (Round 1) | | | | | | | |
| Bottom tercile | 31.6 | 46.4 | 80.1 | 9.4 | 25.2 | 11.3 | 19.2 |
| Middle tercile | 27.5 | 45.2 | 84.9 | 11.4 | 23.3 | 13.5 | 16.4 |
| Top tercile | 15.2 | 23.2 | 71.1 | 3.1 | 7.2 | 3.7 | 6 |
| Pearson chi2 | 16.19*** | 13.06** | 4.77* | 9.75** | 11.53** | 11.97** | 7.46** |
| Caste | | | | | | | |
| Scheduled Castes | 21.8 | 32.9 | 74.1 | 4.5 | 22.4 | 6 | 15.3 |
| Scheduled Tribes | 25 | 54.2 | 75 | 9.5 | 25 | 11.9 | 25 |
| Backward Classes | 30.4 | 47.6 | 83 | 11.5 | 22.5 | 13.1 | 17.7 |
| Others | 16.4 | 22 | 76.5 | 1.8 | 5.9 | 2.7 | 2 |
| Pearson chi2 | 9.69** | 14.09** | 3.04 | 13.12*** | 7.61* | 12.71** | 9.53** |
| Maternal education | | | | | | | |
| None | 31.2 | 44.5 | 81.9 | 11.3 | 23.4 | 13.5 | 17.6 |
| 1 to 5 years | 31.4 | 37.9 | 75.9 | 4.3 | 17.2 | 4.3 | 13.8 |
| 6 to 10 years | 9.1 | 15.6 | 67.4 | 2.3 | 4.4 | 2.3 | 2.2 |
| More than 10 years | 6.5 | 33.3 | 33.3 | 0 | 0 | 3.3 | 0 |
| Pearson chi2 | 32.92*** | 13.25** | 8.75** | 15.79** | 9.62** | 18.85*** | 7.81* |
| Number of participants | 641 | 306 | 307 | 641 | 307 | 641 | 307 |

Notes: Differences are significant at ***1%, **5% and *10%. Differences are percentage points. Information on maternal education was taken from 2006 (Round 2). Area of residence refers to the household location in 2002 (Round 1) as well as 2023 (Round 7). Household wealth terciles were calculated separately for each cohort using the household wealth index of 2002 (Round 1). Caste uses information from 2002 (Round 1). Here, we use the term Backward Classes, which is equivalent to Other Backwards Castes.

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The views expressed are those of the author(s). They are not necessarily those of, or endorsed by, Young Lives, the University of Oxford, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), or other funders. Photo credit: Young Lives, India. The images throughout our publications are of young people living in circumstances and communities similar to the young people within our study sample.



Young Lives is a longitudinal study of poverty and inequality following the lives of 12000 children into adulthood in four countries (Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam)