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50 pc decline in school dropouts

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BANGALORE: Here is a Good news: there is a decline in number of children dropouts and those who dropped out earlier are back to schools. Thanks to the various initiatives by Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA).

Initiatives like tent schools, mobile school bus (where children from different slums are picked and dropped to nearby government school) and mid-day meals have played an important role in bringing down the number of school dropouts.

According to Bala Saraswathi, Joint Director (Programmes), SSA, this academic year (2009-10), they have identified 35,637 children under school dropouts across the state. This is almost half, compared to the previous year (2008-09), which was around 72,000. Moreover among the school dropouts 32,715 children so far have enrolled for bridge courses.

All of them belong to the age group of 7 to 14 years.

The number of dropouts vary even after completion of identification survey. As many of these children's parents work as construction workers and migrate from one place to another in search of jobs. "Sometime, there are more dropouts than the identified. We will again do a survey and make them enrol for bridge course in a special drive," she added.

Bala Saraswathi said that so far this year, of the total number of identified dropouts, they have completed enrolling atleast 90 per cent children.

She said that they also conduct night census, to identify dropouts in urban areas, where census are conducted at bus stands and railway stations.

One of the main reason for the school dropouts is

migration.

In order to keep track of these people, SSA earlier, an inter-state task force has been constituted.