

Causes of School Dropouts among Rural Students: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT:

A dropout is a student who for any reason other than death leaves school before graduation without transferring to another school. Dropping out of school is a well documented social problem and often is considered as daunting circumstances for adolescents. Dropping out is also associated with delinquency and low school achievements. The present study was conducted in District Ganderbal of J and K State for which the sample was selected from four villages of Ganderbal and Kangan tehsil namely; Duderhama, Saloora, Fatehpura and Kangan. The sample consisted of 50 dropout students and one of their parents and a Drop out scale was also administered to the primary students of Government Boys Middle school Duderhama, Govt Boys Middle school Preng, Govt Boys middle school Kangan and Govt Boys Middle school Fatehpura Ganderbal. . To collect information for the Study, an interview schedule was framed. The data obtained was compiled and analyzed using simple numbers and percentages. The main causes of dropping out of girls and boys from school in rural areas were reluctance of parents and participation in domestic activities for girls and child labour jobs because of poverty for boys. The parent's educational status was poor and they did not give much importance to the education of their children. They perceived that working of their children in some factory or Karkana was much better than sending them to school. It was because of the financial constraint that they were facing.

KEY WORDS: Dropout; Parental attitudes; Socialization; Gender disparity.

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Date of Submission: 17-01-2022

Date of Acceptance: 31-01-2022

I. INTRODUCTION:

“Well begun is half done” is a well-known maxim. The entire super structure of educational set up of a nation rests upon primary education. It is on the start that the entire growth development and enrichment of mental as well as physical potentialities of child depend. If the child is looked after well at the primary stage, the secondary education automatically gets a flip. Success is a natural consequence of the foundation laid. It is rightly said that where there is no vision, the people perish. The strength and progress of a country directly depends and rests on the educational foundations of its people. Rightly organized primary and secondary level school education should be the focus area for our educationalists in order to solve the obstinate educational problems of the country.

In India, Primary schooling starts at 6 years of age. The term “Primary Education” is used to refer to a group setting for children between the age of approximately 6 and 11 years old. These settings are specifically designed to provide care, supervision and education for them outside of their homes. Primary schools are by and large co-educational.

One of the major problems that educational system is facing is that of wastage and stagnation. Though incentives such as attendance rewards, free uniforms, free text books and mid day meals etc are given to children to remain in school, the dropout rate at primary stage has remained still high.

According to Dictionary of Education, dropout is the extent to which students fail to complete the school programme. Wastage has been defined by Hortog Committee (1929) as “the premature withdrawal of children from school at any stage before the completion of primary course”. Statistics shows that out of the total drop outs, half are girls, 12% of whom are those who drop out soon after reaching maturity because of having to get married. It is observed that during one academic year, out of 66.5 million students enrolled to Ist standard, 16.5 million eventually completed their secondary education. One of the major reasons for children being kept out-of-school was the lack of education of parents. It seems that either of the parents is literate or especially

when women are literate, they are more willing to send their children, especially girls, to the school. The huge dropout rates, however, indicate that children, girls more often than boys, are needed for other activities such as looking after other siblings, domestic work and help in farm work. Parents play a crucial role in keeping young people in schools. The degree and nature of family support are determined by the factors like a stressful/unstable home life, socio-economic status, minority membership, siblings' completion of high school, single parent household, poor education of parents, etc. The girls who are denied educational opportunities disproportionately as compared to boys suggest clear cut discrimination in household behavior. Parental and social attitudes in most Indian cultural context tend to perpetuate the stereotypes of girls being transient members of families on their journey to marriage and boys being the mainstay of support to ageing parents. The subordination of the adult women in the household runs parallel with a subordination of the girl child, socializing the latter into the pre-ordained role that she will assume as an adult. The implications of such unequal treatment result in limiting the opportunities and choices that girl children may have both in the present and in the future. One way to empower women would be to bring them out of the limiting boundaries of the household into the wider world of social and political relations. Generally, combinations of causes operate in keeping the child away from the school and in this context the road blocks in terms of access include absence of schools in the habitation/village, distance to the school, geographical barriers, inadequate school infrastructure, lack of basic facilities etc. There are various social factors that do not permit children to participate and these include social, cultural and religious beliefs & practices, absence of social norms, social exclusion, poor social positioning, low parental perception, etc. There are also various economic reasons for non-participation which include income or expenditure poverty, deprivation of households due to food insecurity, illness, forced livelihood options, lack of choices, vulnerability to crisis, wage work by children, unpaid or in house farm, household chores, sibling care responsibility, collecting minor forest products, grazing cattle, migration of families, high cost of education, etc. Though Education is basic requirement for human development through eradication of social and economic problems, yet it is also a vehicle by which every generation transmits social heritage to the next generation. Education is the basic instrument in awakening the child to cultural development and growth of a child in preparing him to be responsible, intelligent, strong and healthy citizen. The dropout rate among boys and girls remains high because of our Socio-economic conditions. It is also being felt that the parents are less interested in sending their girls to schools. According to Rao Mohan (2000); illiteracy, poverty, inadequate earnings and poor living conditions of parents force them not only to withdraw their wards from schools but also put them to some jobs for contribution to the family income.

Shri A. Mohandas Moses, Adviser to the then Governor of J&K, in one of his speeches highlighted that the positive features of the educational profile of Jammu & Kashmir are a satisfactory enrolment ratio, scheduled caste enrolment comparable to total enrolment, high teacher pupil ratio, better norms for opening of primary schools, free education up to post-graduation level and a high allocation of the state budget for education. The negative features are a low literacy rate, a high drop out rate, a significant gender disparity, insufficient infrastructure, inadequate facilities for teaching science subjects and very weak NGO support.⁷ For a population of about twelve million, J&K has 9300 primary schools, 2500 middle schools, 1200 high and secondary schools, 32 colleges, 3 Universities and one Research Institute of university level. In all, there are about 595500 teachers in schools and in technical educational institutions. The main issues which need to be tackled are promoting quality primary education, reducing gender disparity, motivating young mothers in the literacy programmes, training of teachers, orienting senior masters in adult education, extending coverage of the Rural Functional Literacy Project especially to remote areas, and providing adequate educational facilities for the border areas. In the field of primary education, one of our main programmes is opening of 1400 schools in school-less habitations so that even in these places, schools would be available within 1 Km and for places having 100 populations. There is a marked gender disparity in enrolment which is the main contributory factor for low female literacy. For every 539 boys enrolled in primary schools, there are only 380 girls. At the secondary level, out of every 125 student only 44 are girls. In order to reduce this disparity at the secondary level, Girls schools need to be given preference in up-gradation programme. The dropout rate is unduly high i.e 45% for the boys and 58 % for girls in classes 1-8. From 1990-91, schemes of providing free uniforms in Girls Primary Government schools has been extended to Boys schools as well. The poverty line criteria for distribution of uniforms has also been removed. Other measures like reducing the prices of text books and for streamlining text book distribution have also been taken. However in spite of the fact that concerted efforts are being taken by the Government for universalization of Primary Education, yet the problem of dropout still exists. It is in this back drop that the present Study was undertaken to know the various reasons of school dropout in rural area of Ganderbal District. The data collected through this study will help the policy makers and NGOs working for the welfare of the children to suggest remedial measures to reduce school dropout rates in Ganderbal area. The present study was taken because as per the 2001 Census, the literacy rate of District Ganderbal was reported as 59.31. In order to ascertain what might be the causes of this low literacy rate and to what extent the incidence of dropout exists, the present Study was undertaken.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To find out the causes related to pupils leading to drop out at primary school level.
2. To find out the family causes related to dropouts at primary school level.
3. To find out school causes related to drop outs at Primary school level.

II. METHODOLOGY:

The Study was conducted in Ganderbal District of Jammu and Kashmir. The sample was selected from four villages of Ganderbal, namely Duderhama, Saloora, Fatehpura and Kangan. The sample consisted of 50 dropout students and one of their parents and a Drop out scale was also administered to the primary class students of Government Boys Middle school, Duderhama, Govt Boys Middle school Preng, Govt Boys middle school Kangan and Govt Boys Middle school Fatehpura. The teachers and Head Masters of various Government schools were interviewed in order to collect information about the causes of dropout from them. To collect further information for the Study, an interview schedule was framed. The data obtained was compiled and analyzed using simple numbers and percentages.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

The dropout from education is the danger signal to our educational system. So to know causes responsible for discontinuing child education, the rural Boys and girls were interviewed and a drop out scale was administered to the primary students of various Government schools. After analysis it was revealed that the major cause of the children leaving schools before the completion of education was reluctance of the parents as expressed by 65% of the respondents. The parents (62%) needed the girls for performing domestic activities. Poverty (68%) was another root cause of Children's dropout. Twenty percent Boys and girls admitted that they left school because they were not interested in studies, 10% and 6% girls left their studies because of illness of parents and Death in the family respectively. Only 4% of the boys and girls blamed the unfair behaviour of the teachers as a reason for leaving their studies. 52% of the children claimed that because of ill health of their parents they could not continue their education. 15% of students left their education as they were teased by their class mates. 8% of students left their primary education because of death of the family member either father & mother.

Causes of dropout as perceived by dropout students:

In terms of percentile of the respondent dropouts, the reasons of dropout are enumerated as follows:

1. Reluctance of Parents 65%
2. Have to participate in domestic Activities 62%
3. Poverty 68%
4. Not interested in studies 20%
5. Illnesses of Parents 10%
6. Teacher's unfair behaviour 4%
7. Death in the family 6%

The majority of the dropouts (68%) expressed that due to family circumstances, they had to engage themselves in household chores and other economic activities. Due to poor economic condition they had to work in fields and factories and so the girls had to help in the household activities. Many of the dropouts (65%) had faced the reluctance of their parents who directly questioned the objective of educating their girls as they believed that their daughters have to go to other's home after marriage, so they should have knowledge of doing domestic chores than education. The overall attitude regarding education of girl child was negative. Their social environment is such where education is considered meaningless for the girls, rather their stay at home and engagement in vocational activities is preferred over education.

Table: 1: Causes of dropout perceived by Students

S.No	Causes	Views in percent
1.	Poverty	65%
2.	Disinterest of children in studies.	53%
3.	Girl students being engaged in domestic activities	47%
4.	Girls not allowed to study but to get some vocational training like arri, sozni or needle work etc.	60%
5.	Illness of parents	52%
6.	Death in family (father or mother of the child)	8%
7.	Teasing by class mates	15%

Causes of dropout as perceived by parents of dropout children:

During the study it was perceived that most of the parents of dropout students were illiterate. Due to poor socio-economic conditions, parents were paying less attention towards the education of their children. The data which was collected during the study from the parent of dropout students revealed that poverty is the main cause due to which they are not able to continue the education of their children. 71% of parents agreed that they engaged their daughters in household activities, 63% of the parents sent their boys to do some labour work (karkhana) or automobile shop, 43% of a parents object the education of the girls as they believed that after marriage they have to go to the others home and have to look after their domestic activities, 37% of parents were of the opinion that they want to send their children to school, but their children do not have any interest in studies.

Table: 2
Causes of Dropout perceived by Parents

S.No	Causes	Views in percent
1.	Parents engaging their daughters in household activities.	71%
2.	Parents due to poor economic conditions sending their sons to do some labour work in a Karkhana, factory or automobile / mechanic shop.	63%
3.	Parents objecting to their daughters' education due to their need to look after their families after marriage.	43%
4.	Girls not interested in Education rather wants to learn some skills like sozni work ari work , paper machine etc.	37%

Causes of dropout as perceived by Teachers/Headmasters of schools:

During the study, teachers & Headmasters of various govt. schools were interviewed in order to ascertain their views so far as the dropout of primary school students is concerned. 75% of Teachers and Headmasters revealed that parents of the children put in very less efforts in the education of their children, 45% believed that children themselves are not interested in studies, 62% believed that poverty of parents is the main hindrance in the continuation of education of the children, 23% believed that the infrastructural facilities in schools are not good to attract the children to study.

Table: 3
Causes of Dropout perceived by Teachers

S.No	Causes	Views in percent
1.	Parents put in less efforts in the education of their wards.	75%
2.	Students not interested in education because of less achievement.	45%
3.	Due to poverty parents sending their wards for work in order to earn.	62%
4.	Poor Infrastructural facilities in schools	23%

Causes of dropout as perceived by enrolled students:

The students, who were studying in different govt. schools namely govt. Middle Schools Duderhama, Saloora, Fatehpora and Kangan, were also interviewed and the dropout scale was also administered in order to find out the causes of dropout from their point of view. After analysis of the data collected it was revealed that students as well as their parents were responsible for dropout of their children from the schools. 75% of students asserted that most of the parents were illiterate, 45% of students believed that children themselves are not interested in education because of less achievements, 62% believed that poverty of parents is the main cause of school dropout and only 13% of students were of the opinion that poor infrastructure in schools is responsible for dropout.

Table 4
Causes of dropout as perceived by enrolled students:

S.No	Causes	Views in percent
1.	Illiteracy of the parents	75%
2.	Students not interested in education because of less achievement.	45%
3.	Poverty of parents.	62%
4.	Poor Infrastructure in schools	23%

IV. CONCLUSION:

The main causes of dropout amongst boys and girls from schools in Ganderbal district were the reluctance of parents and participation in economic activities for boys and domestic activities for girls. In general due to poor educational background of parents, education of the children is not given much importance. The disinterest of children towards education was also found as one of the causes of dropout. Although the literacy rate has gone up since 1951, but the cases of dropout of boys and girls is still there. It has

been observed that most of dropouts occur during Primary and Middle School levels and, therefore, sustained efforts are needed to attract the primary and middle school children to schools and retain them until they complete their education. Special structure programmes can play a vital role in sustaining the children in schools till the completion of their education. Poverty reduction programmes can be of great help in reducing the rate of dropout. Awareness programmes about the benefits of education could also help in reducing the dropout among boys and girls at primary level.

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Prof. Mushtaq Ahmad Khan. "Causes of School Dropouts among Rural Students: A Case Study." *International Journal of Engineering and Science*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2022, pp. 52-56.