

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF RAISING CAUSES FOR SCHOOL DROPOUT RATE

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ABSTRACT

The subject of child dropout has been heavily contested in education studies in the last few decades in developing countries like India. Insignificant attention has been devoted to examining the causes and effects of girl child dropouts in secondary schools especially in the countryside where the problem is widespread. Yet, girl child dropout is a serious problem that dramatically impact on national development. Dropout is not a distinct event, but rather a process of events, situations and contexts which worked together to produce dropouts. Thus the contributing factors for dropout from school is the significant objective of this paper. Therefore for better demonstration researcher has divided the factors into four groups which are familial, cultural, school and personal contributing factors.

KEYWORDS: Dropout, Familial Factors, Cultural Factors, School Factors and Personal Factors

INTRODUCTION

The development of a society can be judged by measuring the issues that extend educational inequality prevalent in the society. The prevalence of unequal distribution of education in male and female students hinders the national development at every stage. According to the World Conference on Education (2001), all children particularly girls, must have access to and complete quality education by the year 2015. We know it very well that both boys and girls have equal right to be educated and in developing a nation it is important to provide education irrespective of gender. The irony of the fact is that even after 62 years of its independence, a vast majority of Indian children, especially girls are deprived of these benefits. The statistic shows that 60% of all children from rural areas in the age group 6-14 years do not enroll themselves in schools and dropout rate at the elementary level is found as high as 60% (Sixth All India Education Survey). As with other educational indicators, regional and gender disparities are conspicuous in regard to enrolment and retention. A growing body of literature shows that girls' dropout rate is higher compared to boys' in most parts of the world. For instance, according to UNESCO (2012), the dropout rate is higher for girls in 49 countries compared to boys. Chimombo (1999) observes that though the enrolment in school is almost same for girls and boys, boys have a higher likelihood of continuing school compared to girls. Holmes (2003) also found that girls overall attain less education and tend to drop out earlier as compared to boys.

Thus, when dropout rate varies by gender and if girls tend to drop out earlier compared to boys, it manifests that there are some unique factors contributing to the increase in the dropout rate, particularly for girls. In other words, there are some factors which extensively contribute to an increase in girls' dropout though same factors also impact dropout rate for boys. In this respect, the findings of Holcamp (2009) also support our argument when the author found that some socio-cultural factors highly impact girls' dropout rate though those factors also contribute to boys' dropout rate but to a lesser extent. Therefore, we can argue that some particular factors produce poor educational outcome which consequently

increase the dropout rate for girls. However, dropout is not a distinct event, but rather a process of events, situations and contexts which worked together to produce dropouts. Thus *to study the contributing factors for dropout from the school is the significant objective of this paper.*

Dropout rate does not occur through a single factor; it is a composition of several factors. A number of studies have been conducted on girls' dropout issue based on particular regions, societies and cultural perspectives in various parts of the world. In this paper, we accumulate the factors and illustrate a conceptual model of dropout for girls which can give further opportunity to researchers to view the relevant factors on girls' dropout issue. For better demonstration we have divided all the factors into four groups which are familial, cultural, school and personal factors.

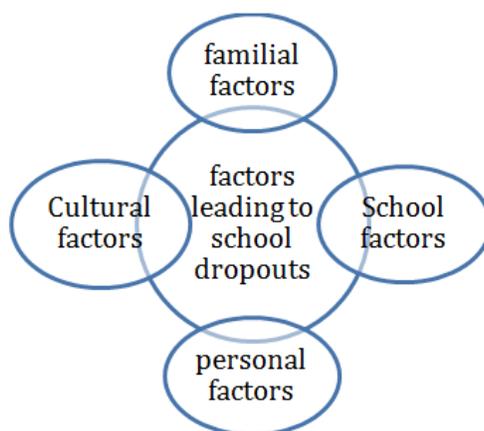


Figure 1

Familial Factors

Familial factors such as poverty, poor economic status, involvement of child in house hold chores, lack of support and encouragement from parents are responsible factors. However more number of children in family and the illness/death of parents or family members are accountable for greater dropout rate of children. Poverty is major factor at all the level of school education irrespective of the locality. This in turn leads to child labor problem under extreme poverty situation of the family. Family problems make the child to get into a work to become independent or to support the family. Both statistical data and empirical research suggest that children from better off households are more likely to remain in school, while those who are poorer are more likely never to have attended, or to drop out once they have enrolled (Holmes, 2003). Poor economic conditions make the parents unable to send their children to 'free' schools because of costs other than the tuition fee and of forgone income from the children's work (Tilak, 1996). Even those who can meet the expenditure of the education of their children, spend less on the schooling of their daughters than the sons (Tilak, 1996; Chanana, 1996). Many responsibilities in the home like taking care of siblings, doing household work and engaging themselves by the child in some other responsible works by the child were the main reasons for the school dropouts.

Cultural Factors

In many communities girls are married at the very young age. This is the main reason for dropout at secondary level. Educationists has said that in cities like Mumbai too, certain communities refuse to allow their daughters to pursue higher education after a certain stage. "They believe marrying at the 'right' age is more important than studying. Many find higher education is unaffordable. If they do have money, they prefer sending their sons to colleges (Times of India, April,

18, 2013). Likewise castes namely SC, ST and other minority groups in the sample emerge at the bottom of the educational ladder. Caste and community of children influence educational participation and outcomes.

Menstruation for girls is a time of biological flowering that immediately brings with it restrictions, rules, confinement and changed expectations in many cultures. The physical manifestations of puberty and the lack of safety, dignified practices to manage menstruation have somehow created a complex, heavy silence around this important and very positive lifecycle change. The resulting restrictions in self expression, schooling, mobility, freedom and space have far reaching and deleterious impacts on girls and women globally.

School factors

Some people are not interested in classes because the education provided to them is no interesting or demotivation by the school authorities by scolding them or not considering them. Behavioral problem children are given corporal punishment still in school level. The practice of meting out corporal punishment in schools could be responsible for children dropping out from schools (Times of India, April, 18, 2013). Chronic neglect, sexual abuse as well as teacher's misbehavior with the girl students are possible reason. Coeducation could be the cause in such way that, boys have the nature kidding and chatting with their friends about another girl child. So girl child may feel shy and withdraw herself from the school. Along with above mentioned reasons, lack of school facilities like no transportation to school or school at distance could be the casual factors. Hence the students lose interest in studies and they dropout from schools.

Personal Factors

Personal factors like lack of interest, attainment of pubertal changes, poor memory, poor understanding of the subjects in the school, poor academic functioning and inconsistent attendance in the school and health problems pulled the children away from school. One more possible explanation for drop out of girl child particularly is her private issue that, the menstrual flow in every month. Therefore they feel more uncomfortable and unclean during their periods and they can't manage themselves in the classroom. Some of the girls think that anyhow it is inevitable, so it is better to be in the home and they drop their education and spend time in the home. So we can conclude that the above mentioned factors could be the causal factors for the girl children to drop from the school.

CONCLUSIONS

This study reveals that though several inter-related social, economic, school and cultural factors affect school dropout outcome regardless of the gender of the students, among some particular factors increase the dropout rate particularly for girls. In general these particular factors produce lower educational outcomes among girls. The financial factors constrain parents more especially those who have lower socioeconomic status compared to those who have higher status. Parents with lower socio-economic status face difficulties to bear the expenses of their daughters' education. In addition, parents sometimes use the gender of their children to decide who gets more education can be benefited more in the future. In these circumstances male children eventually get more priority compare to female children. Besides these, girls also experience disadvantage for the unequal labour force participation in the world. Female usually experience less opportunities especially in productivity in the labour market and earn less compared to males which discourage parents from continuing the education of their daughters. Some school related factors insufficiently affect the increase in dropout rate of girls. However, most of these factors are allied with school resources and an unequal distribution of school resources markedly linked to the geographical location of schools. For instance, sanitation facilities, equipment of

extracurricular activities, quality female teachers and other resources and environmental factors which are less available in rural schools. In these respect a growing body of literature has found that girls' dropout rate is significantly higher in rural schools compared to urban schools. Inequalities in school resources exist much especially in developing countries compared to developed countries and this is because dropout rates of girls are higher in the developing parts of the world. Cultural reasons also play an important role in high incidence of early dropout of girls. Sometime it depends on parents on how to perceive girls' education. On the one hand, there are human perceptions formed by several factors such as education, socio-economic status, religion and environment of the community where they live in. These perspectives constrain girls' education especially in developing regions of the world. Some traditional cultural practices and beliefs of a particular religion or community massively affect as barriers to girls' education, especially in the male-dominated societies.

Hence efforts towards awareness of gender justice and women empowerment are to be stressed upon as women motivate the society for girls to be married at an older age; they work for spacing between child birth leading to a healthier mother and child and also population control. Clearly, if the "Right to Education" is not to remain merely a paper exercise, policy makers need to develop deep into the broader social and political architecture of our society at the grassroots. To address the huge problem of dropouts, policy makers need to look at the factors that make the children to leave school at various stages.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The above discussion provides a few important recommendations which the policy planners may adopt for future intervention.

- Most of the parents in rural areas are below the poverty line. The government must give scholarship to the poor students in greater number and control the price of reading material and other stationeries, school uniform and shoes, so that common man can easily afford these necessities for their children.
- Efforts should be made to encourage wealthy and influential people of the society to provide financial assistance to the poor and needy students to continue and complete their education. In addition to this the community must keep itself in touch with schools, so that their problems and difficulties are sorted out.
- It is also recommended that government should investigate the parents to give proper attention to their children. It is also the prior duty of the government to inform the parents about the value and importance of education through mass media like TV, Radio, Newspaper, and magazines.
- It is also suggested that the government should provide basic facilities in school premises like drinking water, electricity, toilet, sitting –mats, furniture, and black boards on priority basis.
- Co-curricular activities must be started in high schools on large scale to engage the attention of the students in their daily programs.
- The government should start some religious education programs at secondary school level for the spiritual development of the students.
- The curriculum should be designed according to the actual needs of the society.
- Vigorous change should be brought into curriculum and in the method of teaching. Children from agricultural

background and environment should be given practical opportunities for gardening and farming in the school.

- Our present educational system is mostly theoretical emphasizing rote memorization. Government should introduce activity based curriculum and should discourage rote memorization. Activity method should be made compulsory the development of an inquiring mind, a liking for manual and technical work.
- The government should start teacher welfare programmes to reduce the problems of the teachers in this way the teacher would be able to give due attention to their duties and students.
- Government must setup industries to minimize the problem of unemployment of educated persons.

DIRECTION FOR THE FURTHER RESEARCH

We observe that most of the studies measured the direct impacts of the factors on dropout outcome of girls. However, the effect of a factor sometimes can be mediated by other underlying factors. Therefore, to clarify the effects of these factors on dropout outcome we recommend measuring the meditative effects / causal effects of the factor is needed of the hour.

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