

Causes of School Dropouts among Rural Girls in Kathua District

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ABSTRACT A dropout is considered 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 present daunting circumstances for adolescents. Dropping out is also associated with delinquency, and low school achievements. The study was conducted in Kathua District of J and K State. The sample was selected from four villages of Kathua Tehsil namely; Kharote, Janglote, Barwal and Govindsar. The sample consisted of 50 dropout girls and one of their parents. A snowball sampling technique was used for the selection of sample. To get information for the present 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 from school in rural areas were reluctance of parents and participation in domestic activities. Another major reason was problem of financial constraint. The parent's educational status was poor and they did not give much importance to the education of girls as they did to their sons. They perceived that sons support them in their old age.

INTRODUCTION

A dropout is considered, 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 present daunting circumstances for adolescents. Dropping out is also associated with delinquency, and low school achievements

One of the major reasons for children being kept out-of-school was the lack of education of parents. The public report on basic education (popularly referred to as the PROBE report) sought to find reasons for both dropouts and never-enrolment of children in five states (Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Bihar). It was found that parents' attitudes towards education have a major effect on education. It seems that when 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 with farm work. Parents play a crucial role in keeping young people in school. The degree and nature of family support are determined by such factors as a stressful/unstable home life, socio-economic status, minority membership, siblings' completion of high school, single parent household, poor

education of parents and primary language other than English" (Horn, 1992).

The girls who are denied educational opportunities disproportionately as compared to boys suggest clear cut discrimination in household behaviour. 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. To use Amartya Sen's felicitous phrase, "the capabilities of girls will be severely restricted by the denial of education. If freedom is the goal of development, it will be substantially restricted by the fact that illiterate girls will become illiterate women." 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. In order to equip women to deal as men do with that external world, education plays an important role. In contrast, the current policies of the state will perpetuate the confinement of women to their homes and hinder their progress and passage into the world of the 'city.'

Children seldom remain out of school for one

single reason. Generally, a combination of causes operates in keeping the child away from the school. 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. This includes social, cultural and religious beliefs and practices restraining participation; absence of social norms; social exclusion; poor social positioning; low parental perception etc., there are also various economic reasons for non-participation which includes income or expenditure poverty; deprivation of households due to food insecurity, illness, forced livelihood options, lack of choices, vulnerability to crisis etc. wage work by children; unpaid or in house farm, family; household chores; sibling case responsibility, collecting minor forest products, grazing cattle etc; migration of families; high cost of education etc.

The present study was undertaken to know the various reasons of school dropouts amongst girls in rural area. The data collected through this study will help the policy makers and NGO's working for the welfare of the girl child (or women) to suggest remedial measures and suggestions to reduce school dropout rates among girls of rural area. The present study was taken up with the objective to study the various causes of girl's school dropouts as perceived by them and their parents.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Kathua District of Jammu and Kashmir State. The sample was selected from four villages of Kathua Tehsil namely; Kharote, Janglote, Barwal and Govindsar. The sample consisted of 50 dropout girls and one of their parents. A snowball sampling technique

was used for the selection of sample. To get information for the present study an interview schedule was framed. The data obtained was compiled and analyzed using simple numbers and percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Causes of Dropout as Perceived by Rural Girls: The dropout from education system is the danger signal to our educational system. So to know causes responsible for discontinuing child education the rural girls were interviewed.

Table 1 reveals that the major cause of rural girls leaving schools before the completion of education was reluctance of the parents as expressed by 78% of the respondents. The parents (72%) need the girls for performing domestic activities. Poverty (68%) was another root cause of girl's dropouts. Twenty percent 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 girls blamed the unfair behaviour of the teachers as a reason for leaving their studies.

A similar study was conducted in Rajasthan by Kukreti and Saxena(2004) in which parents reluctance to send their wards to school, Need of Children for supplementing household income, discouraging school environment, illiteracy and ignorance of parents, language problem, early marriage were some of the factors leading to Dropout cases among Tribal students.

Causes of Dropout as Perceived by Parents of Rural Dropout Girls: Table 2 shows that majority of the parents (72%) expressed that due to family circumstances, they had to engage their girls in household chores. 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 parents (62%) directly questioned the objective of educating their girl child. They stated that : "*Kudi Ne Padiye Ke Karna.*" (What will a girl gain by study). The attitude regarding education of girl child was negative. Their social environment is such where education is considered meaningless for the girls. Some of the parents (35%) believed that instead of wasting time on education, it was fruitful for girls to stay at home and engage in some vocational activities.

Moreover they were of the view that any

Table 1: Causes of dropout in view of rural girls*

S. No.	Causes	Views (in percent)
1.	Reluctance of Parents	78%
2.	Have to participate in domestic Activities	72%
3	Poverty	68%
4.	Not interested in studies	20%
5	Illness of Parents	10%
6	Teacher's unfair behaviour	4%
7	Death in the family	6%

* Multiple Responses

Table 2: Causes of dropout among rural girls as viewed by parents of dropout girls*

S.No.	Causes of dropout	%
1.	Need of girls in household activities	72
2	Education useless for girls	62
3	No immediate gain from education	35
4	Need of girls at farms and pastureland	8
5	Discouraging school environment	4

* Multiple Responses

economic gain that results from educating a girl will go to her future husband and family.

Only 4% criticized the prevailing condition of schools. They blamed the teachers for not performing their duties seriously. Most common complaint against teacher was that they frequently remain absent from schools.

Readmission Efforts: Majority (86%) of the parents were not interested in re-admission of their daughters (Table 3). They were satisfied with

Table 3: Re-admission efforts made by parents

S.No.	Re-admission efforts	Number	%
1.	Not-interested	43	86
2.	Interested	7	14
	Total	50	100

their daughter's performance in the household activities and were now waiting to get them married. Only 14% of parents were interested for the continuation of their daughter's studies but could not do so because of poverty.

CONCLUSION

The main causes of drop out of girls from school in rural areas were reluctance of parents and participation in domestic activities. Another major reason was problem of financial constraints. The parent's educational status was poor and they did not give much importance to the education of girls as they did to their sons. They perceived that sons support them in their old age.

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