

A Cross Sectional Study of School Dropouts among Adolescents in Urban Field Practice Area of M. R. Medical College Gulbarga

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Abstract: *Background:* - The dropout problem is pervasive in the Indian education system. Risk factors like poverty, low educational level of parents, family background and domestic problems create an environment which negatively affects the value of education. *Objectives:* - 1) To know the socio-demographic factors of the study population. 2) To identify the reasons for school dropouts and their association with socio-demographic factors. *Materials and Methods:* - The data was collected by house to house survey and a total of 111 adolescent school dropouts were included in the study. Data was analysed by percentage and chi square test. *Results:* - The result shows that of the total 111 dropouts, 50 were male and 61 were female. 40.54% children dropped school in secondary education. 65.8% of dropouts had 3-5 siblings and was found to be significant. 77.48% of dropouts belonged to nuclear family. 54% of the dropouts were of birth order 1 and 2. The most common reason among both male and female dropouts (43.24%) is lack of interest in studies and poor performance at school and was found to be highly significant. The association between socio economic status and one of the reason of menarche and marriage was found to be significant. *Conclusion:* - The dropouts were more among nuclear families and in females. The most common reason among the dropouts is lack of interest in studies and poor performance at school.

Keywords: Dropout, Adolescent, Family

1. Introduction

The Right to Education Act came into effect from 1st April 2010 which ensures free and compulsory education to every child between the ages 6 – 14 years. “Free education” means that no child, other than a child who has been admitted by his or her parents to a school which is not supported by the appropriate Government, shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges. On the other hand, “Compulsory education” casts an obligation on the appropriate Government and local authorities to provide and ensure admission, attendance and completion of elementary education by all children in the 6 – 14 age groups. India currently has 8.1 million eligible students who are either dropouts or have never gone to school. Therefore, bringing them back to school can be considered as one of the major challenges in implementing Right to Education (RTE).¹

Dropout has been defined as the proportion of children that cease to remain enrolled in the schooling system. The reasons of dropouts have been investigated by various social analysts across the world, as dropout problem has turned out to be a global concern. Weber² and Rumberger³ classified the reasons for school dropouts into three categories. They were family related problems, school related problems and personal reasons. The poor socio economic status, disadvantaged groups, low parental education and single parent families are some of the family related problems. The attendance, grades, academic achievement, interest in school and school work are some of the school related problems. The personal reasons included disciplinary problems and

extenuating problems including marriage etc. In an analysis of NSS 62 round of data, Jayachandran found that child not interested in studies in 37.2% of children, unable to cope (16.4%), no interest in parents (12.5%), financial constraints (11.2%) as the main reasons of school dropout among children between 5 & 14 years. The other minor reasons are participation in other economic activities (6.1%), attending domestic duties (3.7%), work for wages and salaries (2.5%).⁴

This study was mainly undertaken with an objective of studying the reasons for the school dropouts and thus promoting a good attendance at schools to enable every child in the society to get education.

2. Materials and Methods

A community based cross-sectional study was carried out among school drop out adolescents in the urban field practice area of M.R. Medical College, Gulbarga from Oct 2013 to Dec 2013. The purpose and objective of the study was explained to the study participants to ensure the cooperation. They were also reassured that the information gathered would be maintained strictly confidential. The information was collected in a pre-designed, pretested, semi structured interview schedule. A comprehensive profile of each dropout child was prepared, giving details about the parent education and occupation, family income, age and class at which adolescent dropped out and the major reason for leaving the school. The data was collected by interviewing the households by a house to house survey. A

total of 111 adolescent school dropouts for a minimum period of 1 year were included in the study. The data thus obtained was analysed by using Statistical Package for Social Services (SPSS) software. The percentage was used for the descriptive purpose and chi square test was used to find out the associations.

Table 1: Sex wise distribution of dropouts

Class at Dropout	Male		Female		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Primary School	10	40	15	60	25	100
Secondary School	22	48.9	23	51.1	45	100.00
High School	18	43.9	23	56.1	41	100.00
Total	50	45.05	61	54.95	111	100.00

chi-square = 1.73, $p > 0.05$, NS

Table 1 reveals that, out of the 111 adolescent school dropouts 61 (54.95%) were females and 50 (45.05%) were males. Among the 25 dropouts in primary school, 15 (60%) were females and 10 (40%) were males. Out of 45 secondary school dropouts 23 (51.1%) were females and 22 (48.9%) were males. Among the 41 dropouts in high school, 23(56.1%) were females and 18(43.9%) were males. There was no association ($P > 0.05$) found between the class at dropout between males and females.

Table 2: Distribution of dropouts according to class at dropout

Class At Dropout	Dropouts	
	No	%
Primary School	25	22.5
Secondary School	45	40.5
High School	41	36.9
Total	111	100

Out of the 111 school dropouts the maximum (40.5%) were dropouts in their secondary schooling followed by 36.9% in high school and the least dropouts (22.5%) were in primary school.

Table 3: Age wise distribution of dropouts

Age at Dropout	Dropouts	
	No	%
6 – 10 Yrs	24	21.62
11 – 13 Yrs	44	39.64
14 – 16 Yrs	35	31.53
17 – 18 Yrs	8	7.21
TOTAL	111	100.00

chi-square = 1.71, $p > 0.05$, NS

Table 3 reveals that, out of the 111 school dropouts the maximum i.e, 44 (39.64%) were found in 11 – 13 years age group followed by 35 (31.53%) in the age group 14 - 16 years, 24 (21.62%) in the age group 6-10 years and the least dropouts i.e, 8(7.21%) were in the age group 17 – 18 years.

Table 4: Distribution of dropouts according to number of siblings

Sl. No	No. of Siblings	DROPOUTS	
		No	%
1	0 – 2	33	29.73
2	3 – 5	73	65.77
3	6 and above	5	4.50
4	Total	111	100.00

chi-square = 2.67, $p < 0.05$, Sig

Table 4 reveals that, out of the 111 school dropouts the maximum i.e., 73(65.77%) were having 3- 5 siblings followed by 33 (29.73%) had siblings up to 2 and the least i.e., 5 (4.5%) were having 6 or more than 6 number of siblings.

Table 5: Distribution of dropouts according to their father's education

Father's Education	Dropouts	
	No	%
Illiterate	58	52.25
Primary	10	9.01
Secondary	12	10.81
High School	17	15.32
Intermediate & Degree	4	3.60
Expired	10	9.01
Total	111	100.00

chi-square = 3.63, $p < 0.05$, Sig

About 52.25% of the fathers in this study were illiterates followed by 15.32% who studied till high school, 12 (10.81%) had completed their secondary schooling, 10 (9.01%) studied till primary school and the least i.e, 4(3.60%) fathers completed their intermediate education and graduation. About 9.01% of the father's educational status was not available as they had already expired and family members had no information about it. The association between the fathers educational status among the school dropouts was found to be significant ($p < 0.05$)

Table 6: Distribution of dropouts according to reasons for dropout

Reasons For Dropout	Dropouts		p-value
	N	%	
Due to poverty, family members didn't approve	24	21.62	$P > 0.05$
Domestic work & care of siblings	13	11.71	$P < 0.05$
Menarche & marriage	08	7.21	$P > 0.05$
Lack of interest in studies & poor performance	48	43.24	$P < 0.001$
Transportation problems	03	2.70	$P > 0.05$
Poor health	07	6.31	$P > 0.05$
Fear of going to school	08	7.21	$P > 0.05$
Total	111	100.00	

The most common reason for dropout was lack of interest in studies & poor performance in 43.24% of the study subjects followed by due to poverty and negative attitude of family members (21.62%), due to domestic work & care of the siblings (11.71%), due to fear of going to school (7.21%), adolescent girls dropped school because of attainment of menarche & married life (7.21%), 6.31% had poor health and the least (2.70%) of the adolescents faced transportation problems. The association between the reason lack of interest in studies & poor performance among the school dropouts was found to be highly significant ($p < 0.001$) and the reason of domestic work and care of the siblings among the dropouts was found to be significant.

3. Discussion

This research paper attempts to explore the underpinning reasons behind the phenomenon of children dropping out of school and their association with their socio demographics. A total of 111(100%) adolescents included in this study were aged more than 6 years age group of which majority

were girls. The dropout rate was more for the children aged between 11 – 13 years followed by 14 – 16 years of age. Increase in education of the parents decreased the chance of dropouts. About 52.25% of the fathers of the children who had school dropout were illiterates, 15.32% were educated up to high school and 10.81% were educated up to secondary education.

There are various reasons for these drop outs. Some of them which we included are poverty, family members didn't approve, domestic work and care of siblings, menarche and marriage, lack of interest in studies and poor performance, transportation problems, poor health and fear going to school.

A study conducted by the Uma rani R shows that finance problem is the major reason for drop out.⁵ In our study we found that lack of interest in studies and poor performance is the most common reason for dropout i.e, 48(43.24%). Besides the lack of interest, 21.62% of the drop out was due to poverty and negative attitude of family members, 13(11.71%) due to domestic work & care of the siblings. A total of 08(7.21%) due to fear of going to school and 08(7.21%) adolescent girls dropped school because of attainment of menarche & married life. The association between the reason lack of interest in studies & poor performance among the school dropouts was found to be highly significant ($p < 0.001$).

Our study has consistently found that parental education and income is a powerful predictor of school achievement and dropout behaviour. High parental income allows them to provide more resources to support their children's education, including access to better quality schools, private tuitions and more support for learning within home. During the financial crisis, schooling of the children becomes the first casualty in poor households. So by observing various facts family members should show interest in child education through implementing various methods to improve their interest in studies and reduce the dropout of children. Along with these, government should also take step forward to reduce the dropouts. Schools should provide the transportation facilities to the children which is the common problem facing in India. Parents should not allow them for child work and provide minimum nutritious food to improve their health.^{6,7}

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