



Socio-Economic Determinants of School Dropout in North Karnataka

KEYWORDS

Poor, School, Education, Dropout, society

RAJASHREE S. MARANOOR

Asst. Professor Dept. of Sociology Government First Grade College INDI Dist: BIJAPUR State:KARNATAKA

Dr. C. A. SOMASHEKHARAPPA

Professor Dept. of Studies and Research in Sociology Karnataka University, DHARWAD

ABSTRACT *The alarming incidence of drop-out at primary level is pervasive in many developing countries. The dropout among school children in India is a problem of poor and destitute families where parents can not keep up with the financial demands of schooling or are even unable to provide for their basic subsistence needs. Wide differentials exist in the literacy rate between male and female and the gap is still high despite the various schemes initiated by the government. This paper describes the socio-economic determinants of school drop out in north Karnataka. The main objective of the study was to identify the socio-economic factors that influence dropout of the students*

Introduction

Education is the basic requirement for human development, survival of the society and economic growth. It is universal feature of the society by which every generation transmits social heritage to the next generation. It is education by which one can achieve over all development of body, mind and soul. The development of an individual and the progress of a nation depend on education. Education is a fundamental human right. It is a key factor in the continued economic development of the country and its ability to enhance the quality of life for its citizens as well as to compete within global world markets. According to the article 45, part IV, of the Indian constitution, the state should provide free and compulsory education for all children of the age group 6-14. This target was to be achieved by 1960. Because of immense difficulties involved, such as the dearth of properly trained teachers, lack of adequate resources, tremendous increase in population, resistance to education of girls, general poverty of people and apathy of parents, the constitutional directive of providing free and compulsory education for all children has not been fulfilled yet. The dropout problem is pervasive in the Indian education system. Many children, who enter school, are unable to complete education and multiple factors are responsible for children dropping out of school. Risk factors begin to add up even before students enroll in school that include: poverty, low educational level of parents, the weak family structure, pattern of schooling of sibling, and lack of preschool experiences. Family background and domestic problems create an environment which negatively affects the value of education. Further, students could drop out as a result of a multitude of school factors such as uncongenial atmosphere, poor comprehension, absenteeism, attitude and behavior of the teachers, and failure or repetition in the same grade, etc. The need of the study was felt because of alarming incidence of drop-out at primary level in India. Though the literacy rate has improved sharply among females as compared to males but the gap is still high. The effective literacy rate for males increased from 75.26 per cent in 2001 to 82.14 per cent in 2011 registering an increase of 6.9 per cent while female literacy has increased from 53.67 per cent in 2001 to 65.46 per cent in 2011 registering an increase of 11.8 per cent. The gap between male and female literacy has reduced from 21.59 percent in 2001 to 16.68 percent in 2011 (Census of India, 2001; 2011).

Results and Discussion

Socio-Economic Determinates of Drop Out

Education is of utmost importance for the proper growth and development of the individuals. It does not only shape the life pattern and living but it also helps in shaping thinking, attitudes and views. Parents with low levels of education are more likely to have non-school going children. Even if they attend the school, they tend to drop out in greater numbers

(Blick and Sahn, 2000; Brown and Park, 2002). Table 1 (1) and (2) show the educational status of the father and mother of drop out boys and girls. The table reveals that the educational status of the father is not very much encouraging in the study area as most of the fathers of both the respondents were educated up to primary level or were illiterate. The majority of fathers of boys (41.5 per cent) and girls (36.9 per cent) were found illiterate. Thus, it may be inferred that the educational status of the fathers and dropout rate is closely related. Educated mothers have healthier families and important role to play in the education of their children. Educated mothers have better nourished children, who are less likely to die in infancy. It is evident from the table that most of the mothers of the boys (67.9 per cent) were illiterate. In case of girls, though the educational status was slightly better than the male respondents but it could not made any dent on the drop out of females. It is well established fact that the educated mothers always encourage their children to attend the school. As most of the mothers were illiterate, this is one of the reasons of drop out of the students.

This also means that girls are forced to take up the responsibilities of household tasks at an early age and this affect their education in terms of dropping out instances.

Type of family is very important indicator in educational pattern since in nuclear families there are ample opportunities for the students to attend the school while in joint families; it becomes difficult to educate the children since there are various responsibilities to share in the family. Of the total male students, nearly 70 per cent belonged to joint families and only 30 per cent boys belonged to nuclear families. In the case of females, 64 per cent were from the joint families and 35 per cent belonged to nuclear families (Table 1, 3). The family context, in particular the relationship of the child with other members of the household and the child's responsibilities may be important determinants of school dropout

The educational status of the parents of the respondents was very much related to the economic position. An overwhelming majority of fathers of male respondents (73 per cent) was working as labourers, 22.6 per cent were engaged in small business, and only 3.8 per cent were in service (Table 1, 4). In these families the children inherit the family occupation and this is related to drop out rate among children. Most of the mothers (64 per cent) of the male respondents were engaged in labour work and about 36 per cent were house wives (Table 1, 5). It is but natural that when both the parents are workers, they have little time to spend with the children and care of the children. Thus the children are dropped out from the school and assist their parents in their activities or remain with them. Significant relationship was found between occupation of the father and education of girls. The occupa-

tion of most of the fathers (54.0 per cent) was daily wage labour; 46 per cent were involved in weaving, shop keeping and vendors, etc. They are more concerned to earn their livelihood. Therefore their first priority is to get employment. Unemployment and underemployment are the major issues among them. Poverty is the major cause of the dropout rate among these families. Most of the mothers of drop out girls were illiterate, poor and workers. The occupational structure of their mothers shows that 56.6 per cent were house wives; 22 per cent were labourers in construction industry and 21 per cent were maid servants.

They are not in position to bear the burden of school fees and books of many children. This situation has resulted in reduced willingness to support girls' education when resources are insufficient to cover all children, or when costs increase (Nekatibeb, 2002). The mothers are of the opinion that due to their poor economic conditions they do not send their girls to school. The children are considered an economic asset in poor families. Their earning may be a jump in the income of the family.

TABLE 1: SOCIO-ECONOMIC DETERMINANTS OF DROP-OUTS

Socio-economic variables	Number of boys (N = 53)	Percentage	Number of girls (N = 76)	Percentage
1. Education of father				
Intermediate	06	11.3	14	18.4
Metric	13	24.6	18	23.7
Primary	12	22.6	16	21.0
Illiterate	22	41.5	28	36.9
2. Education of mother				
Intermediate	--	--	11	14.5
Metric -	--	--	14	18.4
Primary	17	32.1	20	26.3
Illiterate	36	67.9	31	40.8
3. Type of family				
Joint	37	69.8	49	64.5
Nuclear	16	30.2	27	35.5
4. Occupation of father				
Petty business	12	22.6	35	46.0
Labour	39	73.6	41	54.0
Service	02	3.8	--	--
5. Occupation of mother				
Labour	34	64.1	17	22.4
House wife	19	35.9	43	56.6
Maid servants	--	--	16	21.0
6) family (In Rupees)				
3000-4000	26	49.0	25	32.9
4001-5000	19	35.9	38	50.0
5001-6000	08	15.1	13	17.1

Based on Field Survey (2011-12)

Table 1, 6 shows the monthly income of the drop out boys' and girls' families. A close perusal of the table shows that 49 per cent of families of male respondents have their monthly income ranging between Rs. 3000-4000 and another 35.9 per cent were having their monthly income ranging between Rs. 4000-5000 and only 15.1 per cent families earn more than 5000 rupees. Poor parents are usually poor in both wealth and income. As a result, education of children gets a back seat as compared to two more pressing priorities of food and housing. The finding reveals that since the parents of the respondents are not economically secure, under hard pressing situation it becomes difficult for them to send their children to school and thus the children are dropped out from the school. The monthly income of the drop out girls was very low. Most of the families were having their monthly income ranging between Rs. 4001-5000, 32.9 per cent families managed to earn Rs. 3000 to Rs. 4000 and only 17.1 per cent were having their monthly income more than Rs. 5000. The drop out girls mostly belonged to families with low socio-economic conditions, minimal family education and economic necessity for wage earning to support the family.

5. Summary and Concluding Remarks

Illiteracy and callous attitude towards girl education are the factors for the high drop out of girls in the study area. Academic attainment of parents, large family size and low income occupations are the key determinants that influenced the increasing magnitude of children dropping out of school. The government of India has floated a large number of schemes since the independence to alleviate poverty but it has not made any real dent in the reduction of poverty. Poverty is eating the fabric of the country and whatever is to be done, should be done to redress the situation of the people below poverty line without delay. One improved way to reduce poverty may involve the income support to the poor but this approach may not be effective in the country with huge population. But conditional cash transfer programs as in Mexico and Brazil where cash support is extended to the poor families conditional on children attending school and going to clinics for checkups, if adopted by India may result in reducing poverty and improving education and health that may help in sustaining the future growth. The environment of the school should be made attractive, so that the child may feel at home in the school. If the problem of drop-out is checked at this nodal point, it is likely that these children may continue and complete class V. Sustained efforts are needed to attract the girls to school and retain them until they complete their education. Special structured programmes and coverage by media can play an effective role in reducing the dropout rate among the girls.

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