



A comparative study on the dropout problem in secondary Education among Muslim community in relation to gender and economic status

KEYWORDS

dropout, Muslim community, economic condition, gender.

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ABSTRACT *Dropout from education system suppresses human potentialities. This invites all round backwardness. There are high dropout rate among the Muslim communities. Parental decision to withdraw their wards from secondary education does not depend upon gender, but upon their economic status. Poverty forces them to withdraw their wards from schools.*

1. Introduction

The basis of all development lies on the human decision to deal with this world effectively. And the quality of that decision is linked with quality of developed human resources. Developed human resources mean the educated human beings. Dropout children remain out of the purview of our education system and hence not availing the services being catered by the education system. Their potentialities remain unexplored, hence the nation can't take the benefit out of them. These masses are not converted into human resources but remain as population only. In addition to that, the dropout masses, as their potentialities were not manifested; their skills were not developed – they themselves find it difficult to manage their livelihood in this competitive world. Hence, many a times, they are forced to adopt some unfair means for the sake of their sustenance. This creates social disturbances. So, checking dropout rate is a pre-condition for maintaining social balance, again a pre-requisite for any development. So, in order to check the dropout rate, - finding out of the true reasons behind, is a must. This study is aimed to find out the real causes of dropout in secondary education in Malda, a backward district in general and a more backward Muslim community dominated district in particular, in the state of West Bengal. This study might be helpful to the planner of our education in framing effective and sustainable education plan for our nation.

In literacy ranking India stands 134th out of the 179 countries in the world (Anonymous, 2007 a)! Out of the total enrolment in class I, in our country only 5.7% reaches up to class XI (Anonymous 2005-06). Remaining 94.3% vast majority of India's future citizens are submerged in the darkness of ignorance before they complete their secondary schooling.

Musisi *et.al.*, (2003) reported that in Uganda marriage related factors and income generating needs were the biggest causes of dropout for both boys and girls.

According to IRIN Asia news and analysis (2007), about 50% of primary and 80% of secondary level students dropout in schools in Bangladesh. Social and economic factors were found to be the cause behind (Anonymous, 2007 b).

Sabates, *et.al.* (2011) reports that in all countries dropout rate is low at 6 - 8 years but drastically high at 10 – 14 years of age. There are many factors associated with drop out, some of which belong to the individual, such as poor health or malnutrition and motivation. Others emerge from

children's household situations such as child labour and poverty.

Agarwal (2006) reported that approx. 27% children never attend school due to too much costs of education. Approx. 24% dropouts are due to the fact that these children were required for work at home or outside for cash / kind. Near about 14% dropouts were for the reason of too much educational costs.

According to Premji (2004), it has been widely acknowledged that the socio-economic conditions in rural India have created a hindrance in the process of primary education and the social inequalities of caste, class and gender have been identified as the major causes of educational deprivation among children in India.

Maithly and Saxena (2008), studied that in Uttaranchal 34% adolescents dropped from schools due to financial difficulties for both girls and boys. Out of them 41% were girls and 27% were boys.

The 2009 Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) — states that the dropout rate in West Bengal is highest while most of the other states recorded a decrease in the number of school dropouts after the launch of SSA (Singh, 2010). The Muslim-dominated districts of Malda and Murshidabad are most seriously affected by the dropout problem.

According to Government reports (Sachar Committee, Mishra Committee, etc.) the condition of Muslims is of much concern in this regard. Former Union HRD Minister, Mr. Kapil Sibal acknowledged that Muslim dominated districts of Malda and Murshidabad have the highest dropout rates in the State, and Malda stood at 10.5 per cent —maximum in the state (Singh, 2010). Hence, there is a strong need to study the reasons of dropout among the Muslim citizens, including the influence of socio-economic and gender factors. Malda is a backward district in general and a Muslim dominated district in particular in the state of West Bengal. In this background the research problem originates.

2. Methodology

The Methodology of the study was planned as follows:

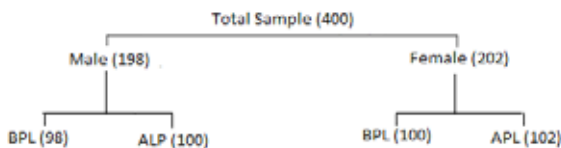
2.1 Population: All the parents of primary education dropout of Malda district of West Bengal were the population for the present study.

2.2 Sample: Nine Gram Panchayats under Harischandrapur-II Block and two Municipality areas of Malda district, West Bengal were selected by stratified random sampling techniques. A total of 400 parents were selected by purposive random sampling method for the present study.

The dependent variable of this study was – Attitude towards primary education.

Independent variables were Economic status - BPL (Below Poverty Line) and APL (Above Poverty Line), and Gender.

The sample flow-chart for the study was as below:



2.3 Tools used: Data were collected by using a schedule on parental education (reliability 0.94 – by test-retest method) and gender (reliability 0.93 – by test-retest method) developed and standardized by the researcher.

The collected data were analysed through descriptive as well as inferential statistics like ANOVA, ‘t’ test by applying SPSS-17.0 and MS Excell software.

3. Result and discussion

Table 1 about here: Comparison between the genders of people’s attitude about children’s secondary Education

Comparison Between Groups	Sample No.	Mean	S. D.	Variance	Df	F-value	t-value	Significant at 0.05 level
Male	198	96.56	9.17	84.09	398	2.33	1.53	No
Female	202	97.85	7.70	59.29				

From Table 1 above, the mean attitude score of the male parents towards children’s secondary schooling was 96.56 ± 9.17 , as compared to the mean attitude score of 97.85 ± 7.70 of the female parents, which was non-significant at 0.05 level. So, in overall consideration, the decision for dropout from secondary school does not depend on the gender of the parents. That means, among Muslim community, both the parents, - male and female possess almost similar attitude towards secondary education of their wards (Musisis, 2003). Hence, the decision to dropout children from secondary schooling among Muslim community is taken equally by the father and mother of the child.

Table 2 about here: Comparison between different economic status groups of people’s attitude about children’s secondary Education

Comparison Between Groups	Sample No.	Mean	S. D.	Variance	Df	F-value	t-value	Significant at 0.05 level
BPL	198	94.54	9.33	87.05	398	43.12	6.56	Yes
APL	202	99.83	6.58	43.30				

From Table 2, the mean attitude score of the BPL parents towards children’s Secondary schooling was 94.54 ± 9.33 as compared to the mean attitude score of 99.83 ± 6.58 for the APL parents, which was significant at 0.05 level and also significant at 0.01 level. So, in overall consideration, the decision for dropout from secondary school depends on the economic status of the parents. This also suggests better attitude towards secondary education among the economically well-off Muslim families compared to that among the economically poor Muslim families (Anonymous, 2007 b; Maithly & Sexena, 2008). Thus, among the APL families the dropout rate is low compared to that among the BPL families.

I.P. = Illiterate Parents, P.E.P. = Primary Educated Parents, S.E.P. = Secondary educated Parents, H.E.P. = Higher Educated Parents

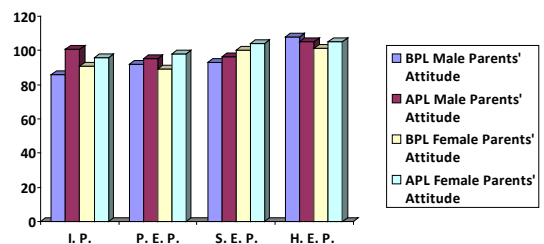


Fig.1 about here: Histogram for different economic and gender groups of parents in secondary dropout

The Fig.1 above depicts the effect of economic status and gender variation of the parents regarding their attitude towards secondary dropout with the variation of their educational status. With some variations, the general trend is that the parental attitude towards secondary education increases with the increase of their educational status. As revealed from the tables above that better economic conditions helps to form positive attitude towards secondary education. The Fig.1 above also supports this view by depicting that irrespective of their educational status the APL parents have better attitude towards secondary education than their BPL counterpart.

4. Conclusion

On conclusion of this research studies discussed above, the following hypotheses testing results are presented -

Hypothesis No. H₁: The difference in attitude towards children’s secondary schooling between male and female parents of Muslim community of Malda district, West Bengal differs significantly. This hypothesis was rejected and the corresponding null hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis No. H₂: The difference in attitude towards children’s secondary schooling between BPL and APL parents of Muslim community of Malda district, West Bengal differs significantly. This hypothesis was accepted and the corresponding null hypothesis was rejected.

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