



## FACTORS INFLUENCING SCHOOL DROPOUTS AT ELEMENTARY LEVEL IN PUNJAB

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**ABSTRACT** The study has been designed to investigate the factors influencing the school dropouts at the elementary level in Ludhiana district of Punjab. The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The sample of the study constitutes 91 dropouts selected through random sampling technique. Data were collected through administering a survey schedule. The data obtained were compiled and analysed by using percentage and chi-square statistical techniques. The major factors influencing school dropouts were found to be household work, lack of parental guidance in studies, large family size, poor economic condition of the family, failure in examination, lack of time for study, punishment by teachers, lack of interest in studies etc.

**KEYWORDS :** Dropouts; Elementary level ;School.

### Introduction

Education is a principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him for later professional training and in helping him to adjust normally to his environment (Pandya and Bora, 1997). It is the catalytic factor which leads to human resource development comprising better health and nutrition, improved socio-economic opportunities and more congenial and beneficial natural environment for all (Chauhan, 1997). Education is the process of bringing out the potentialities of an individual and unfolds the natural abilities and interests before the society. It is thus the basic right of every human being and the government should provide the same to every citizen of the country (Harichandran 1992).

In 1990 at the World Conference on Education for All, governments agreed to a broad range of education goals including that of attainment of Universal Primary Education (UPE) by the year 2000. Sadly, the millennium year had come and gone, but the UPE goal is still a distant dream, more so in developing countries like India. The millennium development goals as drawn up by the United Nations now directs nations to ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course in primary education by the year 2015. While the government has been making concerted efforts, aimed at expanding the reach of education. But the phenomenon of school dropouts remains a blot on the progress of education in India. What is cause for particular concern is the enormity of the problem in most of the states of India and at all stages of school education, unacceptably, high dropout rates have been reported (Choudhury, 2006).

The major concern in basic education is ensuring that students stay in school until they complete their education. Dropping out is a serious problem because it denies individual students their fundamental human right to education. There is general consensus that the school dropout problem has reached epidemic proportions internationally and has become a global problem confronting the education industry round the world (Patrick, 2008; Wotherspoon, 2004; Bridgeland et. al., 2006; Oghuvbu, 2008). In this regard, a UNESCO report (2000) on the state of the world's children points out that about 130 million children in the developing world are denied their right to education through dropping out. According to Maton and Moore (2010), the problem of dropping out should be the concern of every member of society since it has negative consequences at both the individual and social level. Thus, dropout is not a mere problem that affects or impacts an individual but it is a problem that affects the entire community as it has been noticed that certain dropouts get involved in crime (Jamil et al., 2010). UNICEF (2013) reported that Eight million children never stepped inside a school and 80 million comprises dropped out and at a risk to be dropped out without completing basic schooling 41% of children dropped out before elementary level.

The major reasons for dropouts identified by NSSO (2010) included "financial constraints (21%), child not interested in studies (20%), unable to cope up or failure in studies (10%), completed desired level or class (10%), parents not interested in studies (9%), for participating

in other economic activities (6%), to work for wage / salary (6%), to attend other domestic chores (5%), for helping in household enterprises (3%). Other reasons included marriage, school was far, unsuitable timing of educational institution, unfamiliar medium of language / instruction, to look after younger siblings, amongst others" (NSSO, 2010). financial difficulties, child not interested in studies, parents not interested in studies, lack of education facilities in the nearby village, lack of quality education, imposition of parents' choices upon adolescents, lack of privacy, and toilet facilities for girls in school and security reasons as reasons cited by adolescent for dropping out (Rani, 2011). Ajaja (2012) has categorized reasons for school dropout into four clusters that include; school related, Job related, family related, and community related. This study was mainly undertaken with an objective of studying the reasons for the school dropouts.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To study the association between gender and age-group of dropouts.
2. To study the association between gender and locale of dropouts.
3. To identify the reasons for school dropouts.

### METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Ludhiana district of Punjab. A sample of 91 dropout elementary school children was drawn for the study. This study is delimited to dropout students from Ludhiana district of Punjab only and to students belonging to 6-14 year of age group. For collection of the required data a survey schedule was used which was prepared by the investigator. Door-to-door visit was made to collect data of the school dropouts. A comprehensive profile of each profile was prepared, giving details about their age, locality and major reasons for leaving the school. The collected data were coded and the percent values of each response were then calculated and chi square test was used to find out the associations so as to draw meaningful conclusions.

### RESULTS

The responses from 91 school dropouts were collected through survey schedule. The sample constitute 30 boys and 61 girls. The age-wise distribution of respondents is given in table 1 given below:

**Table 1**  
**Age-wise Distribution of the Respondents**

Age group	Boys		Girls		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
6-8	4	4.39	8	8.79	12	13.19
9-11	15	16.48	44	48.35	59	64.83
12-14	11	12.08	9	9.89	20	21.97
Total	30	32.97	61	67.03	91	100.00

Chi square= 5.922, significant at 0.05 level

Table 1 reveals that, out of 91 school dropouts 32.97 percent were boys and 67.03 percent were girls. Majority of the dropouts (64.83 %) were

found in 9-11 years age group followed by 21.97 percent in the age group 12-14 years and the least dropouts i.e.13.19 percent were in the age group 6-8 years. The chi square calculated value for gender and age-group of dropouts turned out to be 5.922, which is significant at 0.05 level. This reveals that It indicates that gender dropout students has associated with their age-group. Dropping out phenomena is more prominent in girls (48.35 percent) than boys (16.48 percent) in the 9-11 year of age group.

**Table 2**  
**Locale-wise Distribution of Respondents**

Locality of Dropouts	Boys		Girls		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Urban	7	7.69	14	15.38	21	23.08
Rural	12	13.18	10	10.98	22	24.17
Slum	11	12.08	37	40.65	48	52.74
Total	30	32.97	61	67.03	91	100.00

Chi square=6.44, significant at 0.05 level

The responses of both girls and boys out-of-school children has been classified on the basis of location of their residence i.e. urban, rural, slum. It can be noticed from the table 2 that 15.38 percent girls and 7.69 percent boys belongs to urban category. Further, 10.98 percent girls and 13.18 percent boys belongs to rural area. On the other hand, majority of respondents (52.74 percent) are living in the slum areas in which 40.65 percent are girls and 12.08 percent are boys. The value of Chi-Square for gender and locality of dropouts turned out to be 6.44, which is significant at 0.05 level. Thus, it can be concluded that gender of dropout students and their location of residence associated with each other. Thus it can be concluded that dropout phenomena is more prominent in slum areas than in urban and rural areas and in these slum areas the proportion of dropout girls is more than boys.

**Table 3**  
**Reasons for dropping out from school**

Sr.no	Reasons for dropout	Dropouts	
		N	%
1	Need to help family in domestic work	32	35.16
2	Child has no interest in studies	17	18.68
3	Need to take care of siblings	12	13.18
4	Helping family in occupation	9	9.89
5	Poverty	6	6.59
6	Lack of transport facilities	5	5.49
7	Illness or health problems	4	4.39
8	School is far off	4	4.39
9	Parents not interested in studies	2	2.19

Table 3 represents the reasons given by respondents for dropout from the school. It is observed from the table 3 that main reason given by respondents is need to help family in domestic work (35.16percent) followed by child has no interest in studies (18.68 percent). The other reasons given by respondents are need to take care of siblings(13.18 percent), helping family in occupation (9.89 percent), poverty(6.59 percent, lack of transport facilities(5.49 percent), illness or health problems(4.39 percent), school is far off(4.39 percent) and parents not interested in studies(2.19 percent).

## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

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 variables. A total of 91 dropout students 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 9-11 years followed by 12-14 years of age. However, majority of dropouts were from slum areas as compared to urban and rural areas. The main reasons for dropping out from the school as given by dropout students are need to help family in domestic work, child has no interest in studies, need to take care of siblings, helping family in occupation, poverty, lack of transport facilities. School dropout is a complex phenomenon. Government should also take steps forward to reduce the dropouts. Schools should provide the transportation facilities to the children which is the common problem facing in India. Therefore, more attempts or programmes should be brought forward to solve the problems of dropping out from schools. It must be tackled at the parental level. A social awareness has to be

created to induce parents to sustain their children's interest, attitude and level of aspiration to good jobs and higher education. There should be parents teacher meetings on regular basis so that teachers can interact with the parents of dropout students. This will help the teachers to know the actual reasons behind the dropout phenomenon so that they can take effective steps to overcome the problem of dropping out of students from schools.

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