



REASONS FOR SCHOOL DROPOUTS AMONG CHILDREN IN SLUMS OF NANDED CITY : A CROSS SECTIONAL STUDY.

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ABSTRACT **Background:** A student who does not complete school severely restricts his adult earning potential. Failure to complete school not only produces negative outcome for the individuals, but also widens the existing social and economic inequalities. The world map of illiteracy coincides with map of poverty, malnutrition, ill health, and high child mortality rates. The objective of the study was to study reasons for school dropouts among children aged 7–16 years residing in the slums of municipal corporation area of Nanded city.

Materials And Methods: It was a community based cross-sectional study carried out in urban slums of Municipal Corporation of the Nanded city in Maharashtra on the children of age group 7 to 16 who dropped out from the school. Total 455 study subjects were studied by using simple random sampling method. A pre-designed and pre-tested questionnaire was used to collect information on socio demographic variables and reasons for school dropout.

Results: The mean age of study subjects was 14.2 (± 1.9 SD) years. Out of total 455 study subjects, 264 (58%) were boys and 191 (42%) were girls. Most common reason for school dropout was poverty, i.e. 280 (61.5%), followed by to fulfil financial needs of the family 181 (39.8%), they compelled to participate in the house hold activities 158 (34.7%).

Conclusions: Poor socioeconomic status, lower educational status of parents, type of family, more number of children in the family, were other sociodemographic factors responsible for school dropout.

KEYWORDS : School dropout, slum area, children, reasons.

INTRODUCTION:

Education is the basic requirement for human development. With education, employment opportunities are broadened and income levels are increased. The development of an individual and the progress of a nation depend on education. It is also the principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values and thus is the strongest force in the development and growth of a child in preparing him/her to be a responsible, intelligent, and capable citizen. Education is also equally important to improve the women's status and autonomy. It contributes to an increase in confidence and decision-making power within the household.¹

Literacy in India is key for socio-economic progress, and the Indian literacy rate grew to 74.04% in 2011 from 12% at the end of British rule in 1947.² Although this was greater than six fold improvement, the level is well below the world average literacy rate of 84%, and India currently has the largest illiterate population of any nation on earth. Despite government programs, India's literacy rate increased only sluggishly, and a 1990 study estimated that it would take until 2060 for India to achieve universal literacy at then-current rate of progress. There is a wide gender disparity in the literacy rate in India: effective literacy rates (age 7 and above) in 2011 were 82.14% for men and 65.46% for women. The low female literacy rate has had a dramatically negative impact on family planning and population stabilization efforts in India.³

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 years. 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.⁴

Amid all the celebrations over the Right to Education (RTE) came into effect from April 2010, there is an elephant in the room that nobody is talking about. It's called dropout Rate.⁵ School drop-outs were defined as those subjects who had not attended the school during the past one year or more.⁶

A student who does not complete school severely restricts his adult earning potential. Failure to complete school not only produces negative outcome for the individuals, but also widens the existing social and economic inequalities. The world map of illiteracy coincides with map of poverty, malnutrition, ill health, and high child mortality rates.⁷

This dropout menace fails the entire educational system of a country. On one hand the educational system becomes ineffective by having these dropout children and on the other it becomes both expensive and wastage due to resources invested in these children.⁸

Considering these fact the present study was planned to study the socio demographic factors and various reasons responsible for school dropout among children.

MATERIALS & METHODS:

The present field based cross sectional study was carried out in urban slums of Municipal Corporation of Nanded city in Maharashtra during period December 2015 to November 2017. Study population were children in the age groups of 7–16 years who dropped out from schools for more than one year, residing in the urban slums of Municipal corporation area of Nanded city for more than six months. Permission from the Institutional Ethical Committee was taken before the start of the study.

Sample size was calculated by taking 47% as a prevalence of school dropout children from 1st to 10th Std. during year 2013-14 as stated by Department of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, Government of India.⁹ Considering 95% confidence level and 10% allowable error with 5% population as non response/incomplete answers. The sample size came to be 455.

Simple random sampling method was used for inclusion of study samples. A city is having total 246 slum settlements.⁴ The list of school dropout was not available. So it was decided to do house to house survey for active search in all urban slums. The lottery method was used for selection of urban slums. 246 chits of urban slums were prepared and kept in a box. One chit of urban slum was selected from the box randomly. After reaching the chosen slum area, a central landmark was identified, then by rotating the bottle, the side which was

pointed by mouth of the bottle was selected as a first household and presence of school dropout child was ascertained. If any house was having more than one school dropout children, all were included in study. The subsequent house was identified as that house which was geographically closest to the preceding house. In this fashion house to house survey continued till all the houses get covered in that urban slum.

Then the previously selected chit was put back in the box, mixed up with rest of the chits, then again next chit of urban slum was selected from the box randomly (sampling with replacement) and if the previously selected chit came again we have not included it and again put into the box mixed up with the chits and next chit was selected. Same procedure was followed till the inclusion of desired study samples. The investigator had to survey in 112 urban slums for getting 455 study samples.

Face to face interview was carried out in local language (Marathi/Hindi). At the time of visit, the family head and family members were informed about the survey and its purpose and informed consent was taken from the parent/ guardian of the children. Those houses locked at the time of survey were revisited. If they were still locked were excluded from the study and further houses selected.

Data was collected using predesigned, pre-tested, semi structured questionnaire. Information regarding demographic factors such as name, age, gender, educational status, residence, religion, and reasons for school dropout was obtained from the study population as per the predesigned proforma. Age was recorded to the nearest completed year as per information given by the parents of the study subjects and validated from the available records. Data analysis was done using SPSS trial version 20.0.

RESULTS:

The mean age of study subjects was 14.2 (±1.9 SD) years. Out of total 455 study subjects, 264 (58%) were boys and 191 (42%) were girls. Out of total, most of the study subjects i.e. 300 (65.9%) were in age group of 14– 16 years followed by 118 (25.9%) in 11–13 years of age group (Table 1).

Table 1: Sociodemographic Profile Of Study Subjects.

Sociodemographic profile	Male (n=264)	Female (n=191)	Total (n=455)	X ² , P value
Age in years				X ² =22.6 9; df= 2; p<0.05
07–10	9 (24.3)	28 (75.7)	37 (100)	
11–13	63 (53.4)	55 (46.6)	118 (100)	
14–16	192 (64)	108 (36)	300 (100)	
Religion				X ² =33.5 5; df= 2; p<0.05
Hindu	72 (52.2)	66 (47.8)	138 (100)	
Muslim	82 (47.1)	92 (52.9)	174 (100)	
Buddhist	101(78.9)	27 (21.1)	128 (100)	
Sikh	5 (55.6)	4 (44.4)	9 (100)	
Others*	4 (66.7)	2 (33.3)	6 (100)	
Education of participant				X ² =16.5 68; df=2; p<0.05
Primary	45 (41.3)	64 (58.7)	109 (100)	
Upper primary / Middle	155 (63.8)	88 (36.2)	243 (100)	
Secondary	64 (62.1)	39 (37.9)	103 (100)	
Type of family				X ² =7.40 6; df=2; p=0.025
Nuclear	136 (53.5)	118 (46.5)	254(100.0)	
Joint	65 (58.6)	46 (41.4)	111(100.0)	
Three generation	63 (70)	27 (30)	90 (100.0)	
Family size				X ² =25.3 79; df=3; p<0.05
≤2	36 (44.4)	47 (56.6)	83 (100)	
3	64 (64.0)	36 (36.0)	100 (100)	
4	55 (46.6)	63 (53.4)	118 (100)	
≥5	109 (70.8)	45 (29.2)	154 (100)	
Socio – economic class				X ² =4.15 2; df=3; p=0.245
Class I	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	
Class II	28 (60.9)	18 (39.1)	46 (100.0)	
Class III	96 (60.4)	63 (39.6)	159(100.0)	
Class IV	104 (53.1)	92 (46.9)	196(100.0)	
Class V	36 (66.7)	18 (33.3)	54 (100.0)	

(*Others- Jain, Christian).

Out of 138 Hindu study subjects, 72 (52.2%) were boys and 66 (47.8%)

were girls. Among 174 Muslims, 82 (47.1%) were boys and 92 (52.9%) were girls. Most of i.e. 243 (53.4%) were educated up to middle school and then dropped out followed by 109 (24%) educated up to primary school and 103 (22.6%) educated up to secondary school. The association between education of study subject and gender was found to be statistically significant (p<0.05) (Table 1).

In present study it was found that more than half i.e. 254 (55.8%) were from nuclear family followed by 111 (24.4%) from joint and 90 (19.8%) from three generation family. The association between type of family and school dropout was found to be statistically significant (p=0.025) (Table 1).

Among all study subjects most of the study subjects i.e. 154 (33.9%) were having 5 or more children in their family, followed by 118 (25.9%) having 4 children and 83 (18.2%) were having 2 or less children in the family. The association between number of children in the family and school dropout was found to be statistically significant (p<0.05) (Table 1).

Out of total 455 study subjects, most of 196 (43.1%) were from socio-economic class IV followed by 159 (34.9%) from class III, 54 (11.9%) from class V. No one belonged to class I socio-economic status (Table 1).

After asking the about history of dropout to the parents of study subjects, it was found that out of total 455 study subjects, 247 (54.3%) fathers of children were dropped out and among 455 mothers about half i.e. 227 (49.9%) were dropped out from the school.(Table 2)

Table No. 2: Distribution Of Study Subjects According To Dropout Status Of Their Parents

School Dropout	Father No. (%)	Mother No. (%)
Yes	247 (54.3)	227 (49.9)
No	208 (45.7)	228 (50.1)
Total	455 (100)	455 (100)

While considering the duration of school dropout of study subjects, most of i.e. 209 (45.9%) were dropped out since 1 to 2 years, followed by 128 (28.2%) since 2 – 3 years and 118 (25.9%) since more than 3 years. (Table 3)

Table No. 3: Distribution Of Study Subjects According To The Duration Of School Dropouts In Years

Dropout duration in years	Male No. (%)	Female No. (%)	Total No. (%)
1 – 2	127 (60.8)	82 (39.2)	209 (100.0)
2 – 3	73 (57.0)	55 (43.0)	128 (100.0)
>3	64 (54.2)	54 (45.8)	118 (100.0)
Total	264 (58)	191 (42)	455 (100.0)

Most common reason for school dropout was poverty, i.e. 280 (61.5%), followed by to fulfil financial needs of the family 181(39.8%), they compelled to participate in the house hold activities 158 (34.7%). Some other reasons told by study subjects were reluctance of parents 105 (23%), not interested in studies 57 (12.5%), death of parent(s) 51 (11.2%). Desire for economic independence 45 (9.9%), to look after younger siblings 44 (9.6%), poor school environment 41 (9%), repeated illness 35 (7.7), peer pressure 31 (6.8%), afraid of punishment in school 25 (5.5%) and Illness of parents/ siblings 22 (4.8%) study subjects. (Table 4)

Table No. 4: Reasons For School Dropout Among Study Subjects

Reason	Male No. (%)*	Female No. (%)*	Total (%)*
Poverty	158 (56.4)	122 (43.6)	280 (100)
To fulfil financial needs of the family	136 (75.1)	45 (24.9)	181(100)
Compelled to participate in the house hold activities	63 (39.9)	95 (60.1)	158 (100)
Reluctance of Parents	37 (35.2)	68 (64.8)	105 (100)
Not interested in studies	35 (61.4)	22 (38.6)	57 (100)
Death of parent(s)	30 (58.8)	21 (41.2)	51 (100)
Desire for economic independence	27 (60)	18 (40)	45 (100)

Force to look after younger siblings	17 (38.6)	27 (61.4)	44 (100)
Poor school environment	27 (65.9)	14 (34.1)	41 (100)
Repeated illness	22 (62.9)	13 (37.1)	35 (100)
Peer pressure	22 (71)	09 (29)	31 (100)
Afraid of punishment in school	17 (68)	8 (32)	25 (100)
Illness of parents/ siblings	13 (59.1)	09 (40.9)	22 (100)
Interpersonal problems	13 (76.5)	4 (23.5)	17 (100)
Thinks that it is difficult to seek jobs after education	9 (64.3)	5 (35.7)	14 (100)

*Multiple Responses

After asking Interest of study subjects to continue their study if opportunities were provided and it was observed that, out of total 455 study subjects, 342 (75.2%) study subjects were willing to continue their studies if they get opportunity. And 113 (24.8%) were not willing to continue the school. Out of 342 study subjects who were willing to continue their studies, 189 (55.3%) were boys and 153 (44.7%) were girls. The association between gender and interest to continue their study if they get opportunity was found statistically significant. ($p=0.048$) (Table 5)

Table No. 5: Distribution Of The Study Subjects According To Their Interest To Continue Study If They Get Opportunity.

Willing to continue studies	Male No. (%)	Female No. (%)	Total No. (%)
Yes	189 (55.3)	153 (44.7)	342 (100.0)
No	75 (66.4)	38 (33.6)	113 (100.0)
Total	264 (58)	191 (42)	455 (100.0)

($X^2=4.303$, $df=1$, $p=0.048$)

DISCUSSION:

In the present study the dropout rate among boys was higher than girls, this may be because boys are burdened with the responsibility of earning & supporting the family & hence education does not receive its due share of importance. Similar findings were reported in a cross sectional study by **Priyadarshini C et al (2015)**¹⁰ on determinants of reasons for school drop-outs in urban areas of Belagavi showing majority of boys (52%) who were dropped out than girls (48%). Similarly **Khokhar A et al (2005)**⁶ in their study of determinants of reasons of school drop-outs among dwellers of an urban slum of Delhi observed 346 (54.23%) boys and 292 (45.76%) girls as a school dropout.

On other side some study shows girls have more dropout rate than boys. **Umadevi L et al (2015)**¹¹ on their cross sectional study on profile of out of school children in Telangana found that more number of girls (54.9%) were dropped out than boys (45.1%). Also a study on school dropout children living in slums of Delhi by **Sunita Chugh (2011)**¹² observed that the number of school dropout girl students (57.6%) was more than that of boys. An Analysis of National Family Health Survey-3 data by **Sateesh Gouda et al (2014)**¹ found that the dropout among girls was higher (15.2%) in comparison to boys (11.3%).

This gender disparity and higher school dropout rate among girls may be due to the attitude of the parents. India's patriarchal society gives less importance to girl's education due to the socio-cultural and economic barriers prevailing in the society. If poor households cannot send all the children to school, then they will most likely give boys precedence over girls. Girls discouraged to attend schools especially from the onset of puberty and early marriage. Added to this, some other factors are presence of exclusively male teachers, distance and not-so-safe road to school and no separate toilet for girls, etc. These are considered as potential factors for high dropout rate for girls.

In present study it was observed that as age increases the risk to get dropped out also increases. This is because as age increases students get more responsibilities like going for work with their parents, doing domestic work, looking after their siblings. Similar results were found in study on school dropout children living in slums of Delhi by **Sunita Chugh (2011)**¹² showing largest number of children dropped out at the age of 16 years (45.6%) and followed by 15 years (39.6%).

In present study out of 455, most of the study subjects belonged to Muslim religion i.e.174 (38.3%) followed by Hindu 138 (30.3%), Buddha 128 (28.1%) while only 9 (2%) were Sikh and 6 (1.3%) belonged to other religion. (4 Jain and 2 Christian).

Similar results were found in an analysis of National Family Health Survey-3 data by **Sateesh Gouda et al (2014)**¹ showing the dropout among Muslim children was high (17.6%) as compared to other religion. Their result of logistic regression showed that children belonging to Muslim households were 1.6 times more likely to drop out of school.

Caste is a historical legacy in India spanning for centuries. Following independence when India formulated its own Constitution, many of the most disadvantaged caste groups were formally recognized under the rubric of backward class. Special plans and policies were put in place to bridge the gap between backward castes and General castes.

Education of children gets affected with the educational status of parents. The same was found in study at Telangana by **Umadevi L et al (2015)**¹¹, which revealed that 94 percent of mothers and 83 percent of fathers of out of school children were illiterates. **Uma Rani R et al (2011)**⁵ in her study found statistically significant association between literacy status of the parents and the desire to educate their children ($p < 0.05$).

Thus, it may be inferred that the educational status of the parents and dropout rate is closely related. Illiteracy of the parents also results in general apathy towards education. The fact that only a few of the parents of study subjects had studied up to high school shows that very few slum children have parents who can coach them and as soon as paid work is available children become dropout from school.

Family size influences children's schooling cycle greatly. With larger family size, the financial burden/potential workload is greater; children are less likely to attend school and often dropout.

In present study, Most common reason for school dropout was poverty, i.e. 280 (61.5%), followed by to fulfil financial needs of the family 181(39.8%), they compelled to participate in the house hold activities 158 (34.7%). Some other reasons told by study subjects were reluctance of parents 105 (23%), not interested in studies 57 (12.5%), death of parent(s) 51 (11.2%). Desire for economic independence 45 (9.9%), to look after younger siblings 44 (9.6%), poor school environment 41 (9%), repeated illness 35 (7.7), peer pressure 31 (6.8%), afraid of punishment in school 25 (5.5%) and Illness of parents/ siblings 22 (4.8%) study subjects.

Similar results were found by **Maitily B et al (2008)**¹³ where the main reason for dropping out were financial difficulties for both girls and boys. Besides the financial reasons 31% boys and 13% girls reported that they were just not interested in further studies. Also, a study by **Priyadarshini Chigari et al (2015)**¹⁰ in urban areas of Belagavi observed that among the total school dropout students, the reasons given by students were poverty 83 (42%), lack of interest 33 (17%).

Similar observations were found in a cross sectional study in Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh by **Ruchita Sharma et al (2007)**¹⁴ on extent of female school drop outs, showing personal and economic factors were the most prominent reason for school dropout (78.6%). Majority of the parents agreed that lack of child's interest in studies (60%), involvement of child in household tasks (58%) and teacher's discriminating behaviour (27.33%) were responsible for the dropout of their girls.

The economic aspects of the family is not a direct factor for school dropouts as there is no financial implications or expenditure need to be spent for schooling but the economic situations of the family makes barriers to proper atmosphere for schooling.

One of the important reason was the disinterest of child in studies and its aetiology is laid down on the incapacity of family especially parents to motivate the child on continuation of their education. Almost all parents wants their child get educated but they are helpless in front of their disinterested child.

Others have also reported the children cannot be blamed for not being in the school as their perception is ignored to the extent that they don't feel involved in whatever they are taught. **Khokhar A et al**⁶ attributes 62% of the drop-out rate in standard X because of lacklustre teaching. Government teachers treat their jobs as secondary as they are forced by district level officers to report for all kinds of emergency duties round the year.

CONCLUSION:

Poverty and fulfilling the financial needs of the family were important reasons for school dropout. Poor socioeconomic status, lower educational status of parents, type of family, more number of children in the family, were other sociodemographic factors responsible for school dropout. Majority of the study subjects were willing to continue their studies if they get opportunity.

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