

A Study of Girls School Dropout in Rural Gujarat



Medical Science

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: According to National Commission for Protection of Children's Rights (NCPCR) report, in India, girls ages 6-14 spend an average of nearly eight hours a day caring for other children in the family. Government statistics show that while about 25% of girls drop out of school between the ages of 6 and 10, that rate doubles to more than 50% for girls ages 10-13yrs. In this study we aimed to evaluate the school dropout rate of girls and its reasons in rural area of Gujarat.
Material methods : This is an observational study in rural area of Vadodara district of Gujarat done from july 2010 till june 2011.
Results : out of 720 girls enrolled in classes from first to seventh we had 68(9.4%) dropouts due to reasons like taking care of siblings and home(40 i.e.58.8%), social restrictions eg. menarche and marriage(6 i.e. 8.8%), more distance of school (18 i.e.11.7%), working with parents for financial reason(4 i.e.5.8%). After class fifth most important cause of dropout(18,i.e.11.7%) was unavailability of higher school nearby. Out of these 36 (52.9%) were attending special classes organized by govt. of Gujarat for dropout children.
Conclusion: Though condition of girls education has improved in rural areas, there are still things to be done about above problems.

Introduction:

By the twentieth century, women were winning greater access to educational programs at all levels. Feminists of various orientations have overtime made considerable contribution to politics of gender awareness and empowerment as well as issues of equal opportunity and access to resources such as property, wealth and education.¹

Currently, girls' education has been viewed as a primary predictor for a number of development indicators including national fertility rates, infant mortality, family income and productivity. World Bank economists have recognized girls' education as single development intervention with the greatest individual and social returns.²

UNICEF (2004) report indicates that girls' education leads to more equitable development, stronger families, better services, better child health and effective participation in governance. Despite the obvious benefits of education to national development, research findings indicate that girls' dropout rate from school was higher than that of boys. Further, report indicates that girls' primary school completion rate was far behind that of boys, at 76% compared to 85% for boys. This gender gap meant that million more girls than boys are dropping out of school each year.³ Girl child school dropout rate in Gujarat is 7.28% in 2014.⁴

In this study we aimed to know the school dropout rate for rural girls in Gujarat and the most important reasons behind this dropout from school.

Materials and Methods : This was a rural girls-based study with a cross sectional design, evaluating all girl children in the age group of 6-14. Sample size is totaled to 720 female students. The instrument used was a questionnaire targeting the children. The questionnaire was designed to include items related to the reasons for dropout given by the parents. The instrument was applied to each student, after parents' authorization. Rural children in different age group in different villages of Vadodara District, Gujarat, took part in the study. Though both boys and girls were given questionnaires, only girls responses alone were taken for study, since girls dropout rates are high when compared to boys. But boys' responses were also considered to find out different facts.

Reasons for Dropout

The outcome used in the data analysis was primary reasons for rising drop-out rates in rural girls. The following are the primary reasons given by parents of children in the age group of 6-14 for dropping out of school.

- Child not interested in studies
- Parents not interested in studies
- Financial constraints
- Unable to cope
- To work for wage/salary
- Participation in other economic activities
- Attend to domestic duties
- Facility for study doesn't exist in the nearby town
- Taking care of siblings and home
- Social restrictions eg. Menarche and marriage
- filled questionnaire were analysed statistically

Results : Out of 720 girls enrolled in classes from first to seventh we had 68(9.4%) dropouts due to various reasons which are enlisted as follows:

Reasons	Number of girls dropout (n=68)	%
Taking care of siblings and home	40	58.8%
Social restrictions eg. Menarche and marriage	6	8.8%
More distance of school	18	11.7%
working with parents for financial reason	4	5.8%
unavailability of higher school nearby	18	11.7%g

Out of these 68 dropout girls, 36 (52.9%) were attending special classes organized by govt. of Gujarat for dropout children. After class fifth most important cause of dropout was unavailability of higher school in nearby area..

Discussion: Amid all the celebrations over the Right to Education (RTE) coming into effect from April 1 2010, there is an important problem of school dropout rate. The spotlight till now has been on expanding the infrastructure, appointing teachers, ensuring that schools are at walk able distances, and so on. All this is undoubtedly needed. But the biggest problem facing the schooling system is that over 50% of children who join up in Class I drop out by Class VIII. It is not about children who never attended school—those are a separate and fast diminishing category. Total enrolment in primary classes (Class I to V) was 134.4 million in 2008-09, the latest year for which complete data is made available in the District Information System for Education (DISE) flash statistics, collected by the National University for Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA). In Classes VI to VIII, the total enrolment had dramatically dropped

to 53.4 million. Earlier data from 2006-07 containing class-wise enrolment shows that with each successive class, students quit in large numbers. By Class V, every third kid has dropped out and by Class VIII every second student is no longer attending school.^{5,6}

In our study main reason for school dropout of girls was to take care of home and younger siblings as both parents were working. In a study conducted in rural areas of Salem, Tamilnadu The main reason for dropping out was financial difficulties for both girls and boys. Besides the financial reasons 31% boys and 13% girls reported that they are just not interested in further studies. A total of 28% girls said that their family and relatives did not approve their further continuation of the studies. A total of 9% girls and 1% boys reported lack of education facility in the nearby village as the reason for dropping out. Parents wish to discontinue the children's education was cited as the most important reason (29.03%) for school dropout. This was mainly done so that girls could look after their siblings (53.33%), which is similar to our study.⁷

As per the DISE report of 2011-12, Gujarat has 40943 schools, 2.73 lakh teachers for 8.37 million children. PTR (Pupil Teacher Ratio) is 31, slightly more than the desired level of 30, 5 indicating a need to recruit more teachers. The NER (Net Enrolment Ratio) for lower primary is 85.7 (GER is 110.2), while at upper primary is 49 (GER is 69.2), indicating that the state has big challenges in achieving universalization of primary education. Meanwhile, as per the SEMIS flash report of 2010-11, Gujarat had 2.33 million children in secondary and 0.78 million children in higher secondary schools. The transition rate from secondary to higher secondary is 96%. The approximate GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio) for secondary was 105% for secondary and 35% for higher secondary. Table 3 also makes it clear that Gujarat needs to improve its gender ratio although it has made significant progress during the decade 2001 to 2011. For instance, society's awareness and its value for the girl child needs to increase. The government should crack down on clinics that unabashedly continue with sex determination, and awareness drives by the government, media and NGOs need to be taken up a notch. Indeed, the state has a long way to go before it can claim to have won the war against female feticide.⁸

Conclusion: Although condition of girls education has improved in rural areas of Gujarat, there are still things to be done about the problems like availability of higher schools in rural areas or nearby, increasing awareness for educating girls, prevention of child marriage etc. These issues should be addressed sincerely to decrease the female child school dropout rate significantly. The initiative of special classes for dropout children is appreciable and should be followed by all states.

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