SCHOLASTIC DROPOUT IN AN URBAN SLUM-REASONS AND ASSOCIATED FACTORS

Community Medicine

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ABSTRACT

Introduction- education is the basic requirement for human development. Dropout has been defined as the proportion of children that cease to remain enrolled in the schooling system. The reasons for dropping out may be many.

Objectives- This study was planned to find out rate of school dropout among 6 to 16 year age group children from an urban slum, to identify various reasons and to study the association between socio-demographic factors & School dropout.

Material and methods-A Community based cross sectional study was conducted among 246 children in slum area. House to house survey was conducted and the data was collected by using predesigned pretested questionnaire. Statistical analysis of association between school dropout and socio-demographic status was done by using Fisher exact test.

Results and conclusions- Prevalence of school dropout was 2.85%. Financial constraint, distance from school and no interest in studies were common reasons for school dropout. Association was found between parent's educational status, number of children in family, Socio-economic status and school dropout.

KEYWORDS

School Dropout, Urban Slum, Socio-economic Status

Introduction

To the individual, education means expansion of cultural horizons and employment opportunities. To the nations, it means enhanced prospect of social and economic development. Education is a major factor influencing health. The world map of illiteracy coincides with map of poverty, malnutrition, ill health and high child mortality rates [1]. 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 program of Nation depend on education. It is also the principal instrument in awaking the child to cultural values and thus is the strongest force in the development and growth of a child in her/him to be a responsible, intelligent, and capable citizen [2] .Creating environment to have quality education is a moral responsibility of family, society and state for building the suitable human resources [3]. 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 [2].

Dropout has been defined as the proportion of children that cease to remain enrolled in the schooling system [4] . Getting children to school is one thing, keeping them there is quite another. Indeed a low school completion rate is one of the biggest threats to human development in India, it is imperative to find ways to reduce this and to do so one must examine the potential risk factors for the high dropout rate. High dropout rates are a critical problem in the country. The reasons for dropping out may be many like, failure in academics, non-availability of schools, pushing out due to teachers, behavior/school environment, financial problems etc [5]. The most general reasons are categorized under school centric and parent centric reasons. Both of these factors are crucial reasons for school dropouts [3]. The dropout rate in India in the years of 2011 to 2012 is 5.62%, in 2012 to 2013 is 4.67% and in 2013 to 2014 is 4.34% of children between the 6 to 13 year of age. This study was planned to find out rate of school dropout among 6 to 16 year age group children from an urban slum, to identify various reasons for school dropout and to study the association between socio-demographic factors & School dropout

Objectives:-

1. To find out rate of school dropout among 6 to 16 year age group children from an urban slum.
2. To identify various reasons for school dropout.
3. To study the association between socio-demographic factors & School dropout.

Material and Methodology:-

A Cross Sectional Community based study was conducted in an urban slum which is a field practice area under Urban Health training centre (UHTC) attached to the department of Community Medicine of a tertiary care Hospital. The population of field practice area in 3000 and there are 500 houses.

After taking permission from Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC), project was started. House to House survey was conducted. All the consecutive children of 6 to 16 year age group willing to participate were included in the study (n=246). After taking informed consent, interview of Head of Family was conducted. Information regarding Personal details & socio-demographic information was asked. Socio-economic status of a family was calculated by modified B. G. Prasad's classification (6). Status of schooling of children was enquired.

'School dropouts' were defined as those children who had not attended the school during the past one year or more. In case of children with school dropout, in detail Reasons of school dropout was enquired. The information was entered in a predesigned pretested validated questionnaire. Confidentiality of the data was maintained. Analysis was done by using epi info[TM] software. Association between school dropout and socio-demographic status was tested by using Fisher exact test.

The Children & family members of School dropout children were counseled regarding advantages of schooling and were motivated to attend school.

Results:-

Out of total 246 children, majority of children (43%) were in the age group of 6 to 9 years. Male children were more than Females (54% of Males and 46% of females).6.53% mothers and 1.23% fathers of children were illiterate.36.73%fathers and 26.23% mothers of the children were educated up to SSC. More than 65% of families had 2 children in the family and 2.44% were having 5 children in the family.47.10% children belonged to lower socioeconomic status.

In the present study, prevalence of school dropout was found to be 2.84% (n=7). Majority of children (96%) were regularly attending school (n=237). 0.81% had never attended school (n=2).

Table no.1 Reasons of School Dropout and never attended school (N=9)

Reasons of leaving school	Total No. (%)	Male no. (%)	Female no. (%)
1. Not interested in study	3(33%)	2(22%)	1(11%)
2.Financial constraint	8(88%)	3(33%)	5(55%)
3.Distance of school	1(11%)	-	1(11%)

*Multiple response were allowed

Financial constraints (88%), no interest in studies (33%) were the reasons mentioned for school dropout.(table no.1)

Table no.2 Association between socio-demographic factors and school dropout (n=244)

Socio-demographic factor	School drop out		P value
	Yes	No	0.1670
1)sex of child			
female	5	108	
male	2	129	
2)Father's education			0.0000028*
<SSC	7	35	
≥SSC	0	202	
3)Mother's education			0.0000014*
<SSC	7	45	
≥SSC	0	192	
4)number of children in the family			0.00000917*
<3	0	195	
≥3	7	42	
5)Socio-economic status			0.00439*
Upper(grade 1,2 and 3)	0	130	
Lower(grade 4 and 5)	7	107	
total	7	237	

*significant association

Among all the children with school dropout (n=7), level of education of father as well as mother was found to be less than SSC. Highly significant statistical association was found between level of education of parents and school dropout. All the children with school dropout (n=7) belonged to the families with three or more than three children in the family. Highly significant statistical association was found between level of education of parents and school dropout. All the seven children (100%) with school dropout belonged to lower Socio-economic status (grade IV and V according to modified B.G. Prasad's classification).A highly significant association was found between socio-economic status and school dropout.

School dropout rate among female children was found to be more than male children (4.42% and 1.5% respectively).But No association was found between sex of children and school dropout. (table No.2)

Discussion:-
Out of the total 246 children, 54% of the participants were males and 46% were females. Khokhar A et al [7] conducted a study in urban slums of Delhi among 638 participants out of which 54% were males and 46% were females. This is similar to the present study findings. Majumdar A et al [4]conducted a study on the Indo-Bangladesh border region among 1066 primary school children, out of which 61% were males and 39% were females.

In the present study, prevalence of school dropout was found to be 7(2.85%).Patel BG [8]conducted a study of girls school dropout in rural Gujarat and found 9.4% dropout rate among girls. Ravi P et al[9] conducted a study among adolescent girls from marginalized community in North Karnataka and found 8.7% girls reported secondary school dropout. Dropout rate was found to be more than dropout rate of girls in the present study (4.42%).Present study was conducted in urban slum area with improved facilities of education as compared to rural areas. This may be the reason for present study findings.

Association between socio-demographic factors and school dropout
Out School dropout rate was found to be more among female students than male students. Few authors [7],[10] had similar study findings. Maithly B et al [11] carried out a study in three districts of Uttaranchal and found total 34% adolescents dropped from school, amongst them 41% were girls and 27% were boys.

Sajjad H et al [10]conducted a study to find out socio-economic determinants of primary school drop-out in South East Delhi. The findings revealed that income, education of parents have direct influence on dropout rate. This is similar to the present study findings.

Reasons for school dropout
Financial constraints (88%), no interest in studies (33%) and distance from school were the reasons mentioned for school dropout in the present study. Maithly et al[11] found financial difficulties, not interested in the studies ,family did not approve continuation of study were common reasons for school dropout. This is similar to the present study findings. Reluctance of parents, participation in domestic activities financial constraints were the reasons mentioned by few authors [7],[4],[12].Poverty ,family's social and demographic circumstances were the reasons mentioned in a quantitative study conducted in Indian states and UTs [5].taking care of siblings and home, social restrictions , more distance from school and financial constraints were the reasons mentioned for school dropout of girls from rural Gujarat [8].

A study was conducted by Baruah S R and Goswami U [13]among 120 children who had dropped at primary level in Jorhat district of Assam. Reasons expressed for school dropout by respondents were household work, lack of parental guidance in studies, large family size, poor socio-economic status, lack of time for studies. In a study[9] conducted among adolescent girls from marginalized community in north Karnataka ,economic factors, social norms and practices and school related factors were associated with school dropout.

Conclusions
Prevalence of school dropout was 2.85% among 6-16 age group children from an urban slum. Financial constraint, distance from school and no interest in studies were common reasons for school dropout. Association was found between parent's educational status, number of children in family, Socio-economic status and school dropout.

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