

Causes of Dropout Among Girls: Study of An Indian District

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Abstract: A dropout is considered when a child who for any reason, other than death leaves the school without transferring to another school. Dropout is also considered to occur when a child is kept out of school of his relevant age. In other words, a dropout is a situation where a child fails to complete the relevant level of the educational cycle. As the problem of dropout and out of school children is detrimental for the overall literacy rate of the population, it is pertinent to know the causes of the dropout. This study is an attempt to know the reasons of girl's dropout. Reasons have been attempted to be answered through the perceptions of the parents of the dropout girls as well as the dropout girls themselves. Some common causes-- both socio-economic and educational— have been tested for their relevance with respect to dropout of girls in an Indian district Vaishali which is located in Bihar.

Keywords: Dropout, Pull out factors, Push out factors.

I. INTRODUCTION

Vaisahli District is one of the few districts of Bihar, India where in the year 2006 through, 'Enrolment campaign' 99% enrolment was achieved. But, by March, 2007 number of out of school children rose abnormally. The main reason found was that those who were enrolled by March 2006 could not continue and were dropped out from the school. So for re-enrolment of dropout children 'Bridge Course' programme was launched. Bridge course was a special course designed for children up to the age of 14 years who had dropped out from regular schools. In this course through special and dedicated 'one to one' teaching, the dropout child was prepared for re-enrolment in regular schools.

This scheme was started in the 07 districts of Bihar where the dropout cases were much more than other districts. For this 'SANKALP' project was undertaken with the help of M.V. Foundation, 'Pratham' and UNICEF. Vaishali district became the first district in Bihar to launch the Residential Bridge Course of girls in October 2007. By January, 2009, 16 Residential Bridge Courses for girls, one in each block were launched (BEP, Bihar, 2010).

In this backdrop it was relevant to know the causes of girl's dropout in Vaishali District. Reasons were attempted to be answered through the perceptions of the parents of the dropout girls as well as the dropout girls themselves. Some common causes-- both socio-economic and educational— were tested for their relevance with respect to dropout of girls in Vaishali district.

In this study a finite population of 1600 dropout girls from 16 Bridge course centres, one each from 16 Blocks of Vaishali district were taken. Each centre had 100 students. These girls were of the age group of 11-14 years. The timing of the study was the academic year 2009-10. The target population were the dropout girls of the 16 blocks, who were in the 16 Residential Bridge course centres exclusively for girls and their parents.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study have been:

- (i) To find out the various socio-economic and educational causes of dropout as perceived by the parents of dropout girls of Vaishali District,
- (ii) To find out which category of factors socio-economic or educational -- are more prominent as perceived by the parents of dropout girls of Vaishali District,
- (iii) To find out how far educational factors are responsible for dropout as perceived by the dropout girls of Vaishali District.

III. METHODOLOGY

Considering the objectives of the study, survey method was adopted. Since the population for the study has been finite number of 1600 girls presently in the 16 Bridge course centres of Vaishali District, sample of 160 was selected through systematic sampling.

In the present study interview schedule was used for data collection from two groups of respondents. The first group of respondents was of the parents of the girls who earlier dropped out from the regular schools and were in the Residential Bridge Course Centres. Two sets (10 each) of questions (i) questions related to socio-economic factors and (ii) questions related to educational factors were framed. Ten likely common socio-economic factors were identified. Questions were framed in such a way that presence of the factor ('Yes' response) meant establishment of relationship between that factor and dropout. The absence of the factor ('No' response) was to infer that there was no apparent relationship between that specific factor and dropout. There was option of 'Can't say' for the neutral respondents. These inferences were taken as inferences as perceived by the parents. In the same manner 10 questions related to educational conditions were framed. Positive educational conditions were put in a question form, absence of which ('No' response) established the relationship between that specific educational factor and dropout. Presence of the specific positive education condition ('Yes' response) showed that there was no apparent relationship between that

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specific educational factor and dropout. Here also the neutral respondents were given the option of 'Can't say' response. In both the categories of factors, socio-economic and educational, same number of questions, (10 each) were taken to have a convenient comparison of factors as a whole. Average of the each category of factors responses gave the data for further comparison and analysis towards finding which categories of factors were more prominent towards leading to dropout.

The second group of respondents were the girls who had dropped out from the regular schools and were in the 'Residential Bridge Course Centres, where they were being prepared for their re-enrolment in the regular schools. Two sets of 10 questions- (i) questions related to the left out schools and (ii) questions related to 'Bridge Course Centres' were framed. 10 common positive educational conditions were identified and put in question form. Absence ('No' response) of the condition pertaining to left out schools established that as perceived by girls themselves there was a relationship between educational factors and dropouts. Presence ('Yes' response) or Absence ('No' response) with regard to positive educational conditions in Bridge Course Centres made it feasible to relate the findings as perceived by the parents with the finding as perceived by the girl student themselves. While collecting responses from the dropout girls questions related to 'socio-economic' factors were not included because they were of the age group of 11-14 and hence minor. They were not able to respond questions related to socio-economic factors in a matured manner. All interview schedules were administered in local language Hindi.

IV. FINDINGS RELATED TO INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

The first objective of the study was to find out the causes of dropout among girls of Vaishali District, as perceived by the Parents. 10 commonly expected socio-economic causes and 10 commonly expected educational conditions were examined by the way of responses from the parents of the dropout girls. Findings with relation to each factor are presented herewith.

- (i) Only 47.5% parents were of the opinion that education of the girl was a costly affair. This was slightly low than the percentage of parents who consider the education of girl child was not costly affair (i.e. 48.75%). So it becomes evident that for majority of the parents, cause of dropout was not the cost of the education. However substantial number (47.5%) parents still find educating a girl child as costly affair.
- (ii) 45.62% parents admitted that their daughters were working and earning before their admission to the regular school. So, for 45.62% girls one of the factors for dropout is that their earning discontinued after their enrolment in regular school.
- (iii) Only 38.75% of the parents think that for girls attending household work is more important than attending school. So, for 38.75% cases of dropout one of reasons is that after enrolment to regular schools, girls are unable to attend their household work, which their parents feel more important than attending school.
- (iv) For 31.2% parents cause of the dropout of their daughters has been the marriage of the girl child. But for the substantial number of parents (68.12%) this is not a reason for the dropout. So early marriage cases are reducing.
- (v) For only 30% of the parents social discomfort was the reason for the dropout. For the substantial number (66.25%) parents this was not a cause.
- (vi) The security concern was the cause only for 36.25% parents. For 51.25% parents this was not a cause for dropout. This shows improvement in the security perception of the parents.
- (vii) Only in 30% cases illness of the girl was the reason of dropout. For 70% parents this was not the reason. This shows the general health condition, which is seems to be stable.
- (viii) The majority of the parents (66.9%) informed that the age of their daughters was much more than the average age of their class. So, for 66.9% parents this may be one of the reasons for dropping out of their daughters from school.
- (ix) 31.9% parents were of the opinion that it is more important to educate boy than to a girl. So, for 31.9% parents this social thinking was one of the causes of dropout. But for majority of the parents (58.1%) this was not perception. Hence it is not a cause of the dropout for them.
- (x) Only 30% of the parents were having fear of their daughter marrying against their will after the completion of education. So this fear was one of the causes of dropout only for 30% parents. For 50% parents there was no such fear. Hence, this fear was not so important for majority of the parents.
- (xi) Parents perception about interest of the girls in school education was that 56.25% of the girls were not having interest in school education. So, absence of interest in education was a major reason for dropout.
- (xii) 51.25% parents had the perception that their daughters were not treated with love and affection in the school. So lack of love and affection from school teachers was also a major reason for dropout. This situation demotivate the child and hence dropout.
- (xiii) Only 38.13% parents believe that there was good teaching in the schools. For 58.75% parents there was absence of good teaching in the school, So, absence of good teaching may be one of the reasons for dropout as perceived by 58.75% of parents. In fact quality of teaching matters a lot. It is a factor which keeps the student retained in the system.
- (xiv) Only in 26.25% cases extra tuition beyond school hours was available. In 71.25% case there was no extra tuition available for the girls beyond school hours. In the absence of good teaching in the schools, if extra tuition is not available, this may lead to under preparation, under performance, dissatisfaction and hence dropout.
- (xv) Only 36.25% parents were called from time to time by the school for appraising them about the status of their daughter's studies. For 61.88% parents it was missing.

So lack of this parent-teacher interaction may be one of reasons for dropout.

- (xvi) In 43.75% cases school was near to house of the girls. But still, in 56.25% cases it was away from their houses. So, for 56.25% cases distance of school may be one of the reasons for dropout. This is more vital in view of the fact that in a caste ridden society sending the girl by one caste parent to another caste dominant area for schooling is a difficult proposition
- (xvii) 38.12% of the parents felt that time table of the school was convenient for them. But for 45% of the cases one of the reasons for dropout may be the inconvenient time table. In rural areas this is an important aspect.
- (xviii) For girl students availability of toilet facility is considered as an important aspect of educational facilities. Still in 41.25% schools toilet was not available. So, for 41.25% cases one of the reasons for dropout may be non-availability of toilets for girl students. Especially for the girls of the age group 11 to 14 this is matter of concern.
- (xix) When asked about the usefulness of education regarding ability of the girl for earning after completion of her education, 56.25% parents answered in negative. So, there is a perception in 56.25% parents that even after completion of the education their daughter will not be able to earn. This perception may be one of the reasons for girl's dropout.
- (xx) Schools at elementary level are of co-education. But still 33.12% parents disliked co-education. But 51.25% parents have no problem with co-education at elementary level. So, for majority of the parents co-education was not a reason for dropping out their daughter from school.

V. FINDINGS WITH REGARDS TO RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL FACTORS

The second objective has been to find out whether socio-economic or educational factors are more prominent for the dropout of girls in Vaishali district, as perceived by parents of the dropout girls. This analysis reveals that only 38.82% parents considered socio-economic factors as important for dropout. A majority of 54.43% parents do not consider socio-economic factors so important. So, importance of socio-economic factors, as perceived by the majority of parents of the Vaishali district is not dominant.

Again, 53.12% parents found absence of positive educational conditions in the school. So for them absence of positive educational factors is the dominant cause of dropout.

After comparison, it came out that 53.12% parents considered educational factors responsible, whereas by only 38.82% parents socio-economic factors was considered important. So as per the perception of parents, educational factors are more important. However, it is to remember that these factors are not mutually exclusive. In fact, these factors work at a same time and for many cases a group of factors lead

to dropout which include both socio-economic as well as educational factors.

VI. FINDINGS WITH REGARD TO EDUCATIONAL FACTORS AS PERCEIVED BY DROPOUT GIRLS

The third objective of this study has been to find out how far educational factors are relevant for dropout cases, as perceived by the dropout girls themselves. After analysis it was evident that:

73.75% of the girls were unable to understand the teaching by the teachers in the regular school, which they left, whereas only 20% girls were unable to understand the teaching in the Bridge Course Centres. So absence of effective teaching as perceived by girls was a cause of dropout in majority of cases.

Girls liking of the teacher's of left out school was only 41.88%, whereas 69.38% girls liked their teachers of the Bridge Course Centre. So teachers approach towards student is also a vital factor which may affect the dropout cases.

- (i) 61.25% girls did not like the conventional exams of the regular schools which they left. Whereas only 17.50% girls were disliking the more informal exams prevalent in Bridge Course Centres. So, conventional exam is also a negative educational condition which may lead to students disliking and hence dropout.
- (ii) Computer education was neither there in the regular schools which the girl left nor in the Bridge Course Centres.
- (iii) Mid-day meal of the left out school was liked by 47.50% girls. Similarly, meal provided at Bridge Course Centres was liked by 49.37% girls. So liking or disliking of meals provided at schools was not perceived by girls as a major factor. But the very availability of meal may be a motivating factor for continuance of their school education.
- (iv) Only in 23.75% schools left out by the girls there was facility of games and sports, whereas, in 73.75% Bridge Course Centre such facilities were there. So, absence of games and sports facilities in regular school might have contributed to the reasons for dropout.
- (v) According to the girls, in 36.87% of regular schools music and painting was taught. With regard to Bridge Course Centres this figure was 41.25%. Hence nothing specific could be concluded regarding impact of the teaching of Music and painting on dropout.
- (vi) Only 18.75% regular schools were having actively based teaching; whereas, as perceived by girls, 73.75% Bridge Course Centres were having activity based teaching. As the absence of activity based teaching leads to withdrawing attitude from education. This may lead to dropout.
- (vii) Cultural programmes which involve student in school and education was organised only in 33.12% schools, whereas in 70% Bridge Course Centre it was organised. Absence of cultural programme leads to disinterest and hence dropout.

(viii) Visit to some tourist spot in school trip also involves and motivates school children towards their retention in schools. Only in 22.50% cases such trips were organised in the regular schools. For Bridge Course Centre, it was slightly high at 32.50%. So, there is a need for more school trips by the schools.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study shows that among the socio-economic factors of dropout, as perceived by the parents of the dropout girls, major factors have been age of the girl being more than the average age of the relevant class (56.90%), education being a costly affair (47.50%), stoppage of the earning of the girl child (45.62%), hindrance in performing household work by the girl (38.75%) and fear of security of the girl in sending her to school (36.25%). This implies that 'pull-out' factors still play an important role in many cases of dropout. In fact, for a group where majority of the parents are daily wagers, it is quite common that initially girls are engaged in household works and caring of their siblings. It becomes late when on their own or in view of the endeavour of the Govt. agencies, the parents start to think about the girl's education. So, for regular school, their daughters become age-wise misfit. In view of the enrolment campaign of the state agencies girls are enrolled in the schools, but many socio-economic factors start to work together as pull out factors. These family centred factors are such which can be minimized only with betterment in economic well-being of the families and socio-cultural change.

Among the educational factors of dropout, the study shows that majority of the parents (more than 50%) feel that there was the absence of good teaching, absence of love and affectionate behaviour of the teachers, lack of interest of the child towards school education, absence of parent-teacher interaction and feed-back mechanism, distance of the school, absence of extra tuition and perception about inability of education system in enabling the child to earn the livelihood. In fact, these are the push-out factors which act to push the child out of the educational system. When the child is enrolled in school, educational conditions prevailing in the educational system start to work. A good and affectionate behaviour of the teacher availability of sport, games and extracurricular activities, etc. motivate the child to continue in the school. If these motivation factors are not there, their absences contribute to the dropout. Perception of the parents of Vaishali district proves that educational factors do play a role as 'push out' factor in dropout.

Again, when the responses of the parents and dropped out girls were analysed, it was evident that, generally a combination of causes operated in leading to dropout. In fact, it seldom happens that a child is pulled out or pushed out of school for a single reason. So, the reasons identified for dropout of girl child in Vaishali district are not mutually exclusive. They operate simultaneously and in combination of more than one.

With regard to relative importance of socio-economic and educational factors, it was evident from this study that overall educational factor (53.12%) are more prominent than the socio-economic factors (38.82%) as perceived by the parents

of the dropout girls. In fact educational factors are school centred or 'push-out' factors that act to push the child out of the educational system. Socio-economic factors are family centred reasons or 'pull-out' factors that pull the child out of the educational system. Prominence of 'push-out' or educational factors proves that now parents are interested, inclined and capable of enabling their daughters to get school education. But the educational conditions are not up to the mark. After enrolment of the child the educational factors play the role of pushing out. They present a situation where the pupil is compelled or indirectly led to come out of the educational system. For a welfare state, it is a must that such an educational condition is created which minimises the push-out factors.

Again, findings related to girls perception about educational conditions as prevailing in the regular schools and the Bridge Course Centres shows that the prevailing conditions of the regular school do not satisfy, motivate and attract the students. Overall a majority of the girls (65.50%) perceive negative educational conditions prevailing in regular schools, whereas for Bridge Course Centres they (54.90%) perceive positive educational conditions prevailing. It means that, if educational conditions are improved it will have the positive impact on retention of the child in the schools.

Method of teaching and approach of the Bridge Course Centres also present a situation where a lot of lessons can be learnt for improvement in the educational system.

Based on this study, it can be concluded that Socio-economic factors as well as educational factors perceived by the parent do play significant role in the dropout of a girl child. These factors do not work in isolation. For a dropout case, there may be combination of many factors which work at the same time (Kotwa, Nidhi and Neelima, 2007).

When the relative importance of socio-economic and educational factors is examined it is found that educational factors are more dominant in leading to dropout. So, 'push-out factors' are playing an important role in dropout of girls in Vaishali district.

The finding that now educational factors are playing more dominant role than socio-economic factors is a finding which may inspire future research in the fast changing Bihar.

VIII. REFERENCES:

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