

Factors influencing school dropouts in relation to socio-economic background

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the factors influencing the school dropouts at the primary level in relation to the socio-economic background of them in the Jorhat district of Assam, India based on the responses of 120 dropouts selected through random sampling. The major factors of dropping out in relation to the socio-economic background were found to be lack of parental guidance in studies, household work, poor economic condition and failure in examination. Parents of the low income level families needed to work hard and for a longer period of the day due to which they neither had time nor the enthusiasm to guide their children in their studies. The poor parents could not meet their necessities like books, uniform, fees, etc at the appropriate time and thus withdrew their children from schools. Besides the parents had poor educational background and thus they could not educate their children properly and were not able to give proper attention to their children's education. The children were even made to do the household work due to which they did not get much time to spend on their studies. This led to failure in examinations and ultimately to dropping out from school.

Keywords: Dropouts; socio-economic condition; household work; students

INTRODUCTION

Poverty of the Indian people is the most important factor responsible for wastage in the sphere of primary education. Most of the guardians are so poor that they cannot manage even two ends meals for their families. On the contrary they find it easy to stop their children's education and put them into some trade to earn money (Sharma and Sharma 1996). Besides if parents go for work elder child may be

required to stay back at home to look after the younger sisters and brothers. The vicious circle of poverty leads to keep education occupation earning aspiration on the lower side which in turn seems to weaken the motivation. These factors get compounded if the performance of the children in schools happens to be poor. Thus a large percentage of promising children become the victims of poverty and are deprived of primary education. A major part of the population in India is still illiterate. These

illiterate people do not understand the worth of education. When the parents are illiterate and the primary education is not capable of enabling the children to earn money the guardians soon make their children leave the schools and join some work or trade to earn wages. Among the basal factors in the socio-cultural and educational background of a family poverty low standard of living, inability to pay school fees and financial hardship are the primary causes of dropouts (Khandekar 1974, Sable 1977, Sharma and Sapra 1969, Singh 1987). Illiteracy of parents is another important factor responsible for dropouts (Khandekar 1974, Sable 1977, Singh 1987).

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the Jorhat district of Assam. A sample of 120 children who had dropped school at primary level was drawn for the study. An interview schedule prepared specially for the purpose was used for the collection of data. Door-to-door visit was made to collect data from the school dropouts. The collected data were coded and the per cent value of each response was then calculated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results in Table 1 indicate that lack of parental guidance in studies (92.59%), large family (92.59%), poor economic condition (88.89%), household work (88.89%), lack of time for study and failure in examination (74.07%) were the

major reasons for dropping out by respondents with parents from an income level of ₹ 1,000 to ₹ 2,000. In the ₹ 2,001 to ₹ 3,000 income level the major reasons for dropping out were poor economic condition of the family (88.45%), household work (85.45%), lack of parental guidance in studies (83.63%), failure in examination (80.00%) and large family size (72.73%). This may be indicative of the fact that since parents of the low income level needed to work hard and for a longer period of the day they neither had time nor the enthusiasm to guide their children in their studies. The poor parents could not meet their necessities like books, uniform, fees etc at the appropriate time and thus withdrew their children from school. In the income level of ₹ 3,001 to ₹ 4,000 the main reasons for dropping out were found to be household work (94.12%), large family size (88.24%), lack of parental guidance in studies (88.23%) and failure in examination (82.35%). The major reasons for dropping out in the income level of ₹ 4,001 to ₹ 5,000 were found to be large family size (100.00%), lack of parental guidance in studies (75.00%), failure in examination (75.00%) and household work (75.00%). Due to a large family size the children were required to help their parents in the household work. Even if the mothers were at home the children were made to do such works as cleaning, washing utensils, collecting water, washing clothes, looking after the siblings and sometimes even cooking.

Factors influencing school dropouts

Table 1. Income level of the parents and its relation to the reasons for school dropouts

Reason	Family income (₹)							
	1,000- 2,000 (n=27)	%	2,001- 3,000 (n=55)	%	3,001- 4,000 (n=34)	%	4,001- 5000 (n=4)	%
Lack of parental guidance in studies	25	92.59	46	83.63	30	88.23	3	75.00
Failure in examination	20	74.07	44	80.00	28	82.35	3	75.00
Poor economic condition	24	88.89	47	85.45	24	70.59	2	50.00
Household work	24	88.89	47	85.45	32	94.12	3	75.00
Large family size	25	92.59	40	72.73	30	88.24	4	100.00
Lack of time for study	23	85.19	35	63.64	21	61.76	2	50.00
Punishment by teachers	15	55.56	31	56.36	17	50.00	1	25.00
Lack of interest in studies in dropouts	13	48.15	29	52.73	19	55.88	1	75.00
Lack of parental interest in continuation of studies	10	37.04	28	50.91	13	38.24	3	50.00
Disliking for teachers	14	51.85	20	36.36	12	35.29	2	50.00
Ill health of self	4	14.81	7	12.73	11	32.35	2	50.00
Illiteracy of parents	6	22.22	3	5.45	2	5.88	1	25.00

Results given in Table 2 show that lack of parental guidance in studies (100%), household work (100%), lack of time for study (93.75%) and failure in examination (93.75%) were the major reasons for dropping out among respondents with

illiterate parents. Household work (100%), lack of parental guidance in studies (96.7%), lack of time for study (96.7%) and large family size (93.55%) were found to be the major reasons for dropping out among the respondents with parents who

Table 2. Educational background of the parents and its relation to reasons for school dropouts

Reason	Educational level				
	Illiterat (n=16)	Able to read & write (n=31)	Under Matriculate (n=56)	Matriculate (n=15)	Higher Secondary (n=2)
Lack of parental guidance in studies	16 (100.00)	30 (96.77)	48 (85.71)	10 (66.67)	
Failure in examination	15 (93.75)	27 (87.97)	45 (80.36)	6 (40.00)	2 (100.00)
Poor economic condition	14 (87.50)	28 (90.32)	47 (83.93)	7 (46.67)	1 (50.00)
Household work	16 (100.00)	31 (100.00)	49 (87.50)	9 (60.00)	2 (100.00)
Large family size	14 (87.50)	29 (93.55)	41 (73.21)	13 (86.67)	2 (100.00)
Lack of time for study	15 (93.75)	30 (96.77)	30 (53.57)	6 (40.00)	
Punishment by teachers	12 (75.00)	19 (61.29)	28 (50.00)	5 (33.33)	
Lack of interest in studies in dropouts	14 (87.50)	22 (70.97)	24 (42.86)	4 (26.67)	
Lack of parental interest in continuation of studies	13 (81.25)	21 (67.74)	17 (30.36)	2 (13.33)	
Disliking for teachers	12 (75.00)	13 (41.94)	18 (32.14)	5 (33.33)	
Ill health of self	9 (56.25)	10 (17.86)	3 (20.00)		

Per cent value in parentheses

were able to read and write only. This indicates that due to the poor educational background of the parents they could not educate their children properly. Among the respondents with under matriculate parents the major reasons reported to be responsible for dropping out were household work (87.5%), lack of parental guidance in studies (85.71%), poor economic condition (83.93%) and failure in examination (80.36%). Among the respondents with matriculate parents large family (86.67%), lack of parental guidance in studies (66.67%) and household work (60.00%) were found to be the major reasons responsible for dropping out. This indicates that due to the limited education of the parents they were not able to give proper attention to their children's education. The children were even made to do the household work due to which they did not get much time to spend on their studies. This led to failure in examinations and ultimately to dropping out from school.

CONCLUSION

The study findings indicate that socio-economic condition of a family has a remarkable influence on the reasons relating to school dropouts at the primary level. A majority of the respondents' parents had a monthly income of ₹ 2,000 to ₹ 3,000 and also had a poor educational background. The main reasons found to be responsible for dropping out in these conditions were lack of parental guidance in studies, household work, poor economic condition and failure in examination.

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