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Gender differences in relation to reasons for school dropouts

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the gender differences among dropouts in relation to reasons for dropping out in the Jorhat district of Assam, India based on the responses of 120 dropouts (60 boys and 60 girls) selected through random sampling. The main reasons for dropping out were due to several home as well as school related. It was found that no significant difference was present among the genders except in reasons such as punishment by teachers, dislike of teachers and illiteracy of parents.

Keywords: Dropouts; socio-economic condition; house hold work; girls; boys; school

INTRODUCTION

The problem of wastage in education in India was recognized as early as the British rule. It was noted that throughout the whole educational system there is waste and ineffectiveness. The phenomenon of wastage has become a hurdle in the way to give the minimum education to all the children. There are many reasons for the dropping out of education system by a large percentage of children in our country (Yadav 1985). It has been found that in the first instance the child is willingly sent to school between the age of 6-9 because at this stage he/she is considered to be more a nuisance at home rather than a help. Around the age of 9 and 10 the child becomes an economic asset and as such he/she is discouraged from continuing at school. This has been found to be particularly true in case of girls who are preferred to be made a part of domestic chores. Moreover the family's poverty results in the poor nutritional intake of the children which delimits their physical and mental growth and renders them incapable of coping up with the school situation (Bhat and Yasmeen 1994).

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in the Jorhat district of Assam. A sample of 120 children was selected randomly for the purpose of study. The sample was again divided into two groups viz boys and girls

consisting of 60 dropouts in each group. 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. 't' test was used to find out the significant difference between the genders in relation to reasons for school dropouts.

$$t = \frac{P_1 - P_2}{\sqrt{\frac{P_1Q_1}{n_1} + \frac{P_2Q_2}{n_2}}}$$

where, P_1 = Percentage of the 1st group
P_2 = Percentage of the 2nd group
$Q_1 = 1 - P_1$
$Q_2 = 1 - P_2$
n_1 = Size of the 1st sample
n_2 = Size of the 2nd sample
't' is based on $(n_1 + n_2 - 2)$ d.f

The calculated value of 't' was compared with the table value of 't' at 5 per cent level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is evident from the results in Table 1 that among the boys the most reported reason for dropping out was lack of parental guidance in studies (90.00%) followed by failure in examinations (85.00%), poor economic condition (83.33%), household work (80.00%), large family (80.00%) and lack of time for study (71.66%). All these reasons show that due to the poor socio-economic status of the family the children were withdrawn from schools at a very early age so that they could work and earn something for the family. Among the girls the major reason for dropping out was found to be household work (96.66%), which was followed by large family (96.66%) lack of parental guidance in studies (83.33%), poor economic condition (78.33%) and failure in examination (73.33%). These reasons are somewhat similar to those given by the boys. These results corroborate with the findings of the studies done by Khan (1980), Nagamani and Rajarajeshwari (1988) and Tara (1985). The girl child is withdrawn from the school for assisting or substituting the mother in carrying out domestic work, care of younger siblings and often supplementing family income by taking up unskilled and ill paid jobs (Krishnaswami and Rajnalkar 1995). Statistical analysis showed that there is no significant difference between the genders in relation to most of the reasons except with respect to punishment by teachers, disliking for the teachers and illiteracy of parents. This may be due to the fact that girls usually dropped out due to household work and poor economic condition of the family while the boys might have dropped out due to fear of punishments in school by the teacher and also due to illiteracy of parents.

Table 1. Gender differences in relation to reasons for school dropouts

S No	Reasons	Males (no)	% value	Females (no)	% value	't' value
1.	Lack of guidance in studies	54	90.00	50	83.33	0.42
2.	Failure in examination	51	85.00	44	73.33	0.81
3.	Poor economic condition	50	83.33	47	78.33	0.34
4.	Household work	48	80.00	58	96.66	1.03
5.	Large family size	48	80.00	58	96.66	1.03
6.	Lack of time for study	43	71.66	38	63.33	0.68
7.	Punishment by teachers	38	63.33	26	43.33	2.04*
8.	Lack of interest in studies by the drop-outs	37	62.66	27	45.00	1.70
9.	Lack of parental interest	25	41.66	28	46.66	0.64
10.	Disliking for teachers	31	51.66	17	28.33	3.10*
11.	Ill health	10	16.66	12	20.00	1.02
12.	Illiteracy of parents	4	6.67	12	20.00	5.06*

* Significant at 5% level of significance

CONCLUSION

This study conclusively pinpoints that the main reasons for dropping out were related to home as well as school related reasons. It was found that no significant difference was present among the genders except in reasons such as punishment by teachers, disliking for teachers and illiteracy of parents. Most of the developing countries are having rapidly increasing population with a larger proportion of children. The adult population invariably is not able to provide universal education, training and other social amenities to all children which results in higher dropout. Therefore more attempts or programmes should be brought forward to solve the problems of these children's education. It must be tackled at the parental level. A social awareness has to be created to induce parents to sustain their children's interest, attitude and level of aspiration to good jobs and higher education.

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