

Dropouts in School Education: A Case Study in Chakdaha Block, District of Nadia, West Bengal, India

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Abstract

Considering education is the prerequisite of human development, the educational attainment of an individual is likely to have positive correlation with employment opportunities and level of income. The Right to Education Act (2009) promised free and compulsory education for the children in the age group of 6 to 14 years in India under Article 21A of the Indian Constitution. In many cases, learner fails to make most out of the opportunity to get free and compulsory education as stated in Act, the present work proposes to find out the disparity in respect of dropouts in school education. The present study was conducted in Chakdaha Block of Nadia district, West Bengal to examine the factors associated with school dropouts. Primary data of 60 respondents has been collected from household survey through questionnaire. It was found that school dropout rate is more in case of low educational attainment of the parents of the respondents and among the social groups other than general caste.

KEYWORDS: Dropout, Education attainment, Right to Education

Introduction

Traditionally, growth and development of a country can be measured in terms of per capita national income. Welfare economists have pointed out that individual well-being does not depend on income alone. Although, much non-income attributes for instance, health and education also determine the quality of life (<http://www.hdr.undp.org/>). It was reported that human development is measured by a composite index focusing on three basic dimensions, *viz.*, the ability to lead a long and healthy life; the ability to acquire knowledge, and the ability to achieve a decent standard of living, measured by per capita gross national income.

Education is the prerequisite for human development (Right to Education Act, 2009). The level of education of an individual is likely to have positive correlation with employment opportunities and level of income. Level of education ensures gender equality and empowerment (<https://www.oecd.org/derec/sweden/48350382.pdf>). The said act promised free and compulsory education for the children in the age group between 6 and 14 years in India. However, in many cases, learners fail to make best out of the opportunity to get free and compulsory education as stated in the Right to Education Act, 2009(<https://dsel.education.gov.in/rte>). As a result, there is likely to have a disparity in respect of dropouts in school education.

In this context a survey was conducted in Chakdaha Block of Nadia district, West Bengal to examine the factors associated with school dropouts, which may in other way inflict an insight for further study.

Objectives: The objectives of the present paper is -

- i) To find out the disparity in respect of dropouts in school education.
- ii) To examine the factors those are responsible for dropouts in school education.

Data Source and Methodologies

The study was conducted in Chakdaha Block, Nadia district, West Bengal (October to December, 2019) keeping all the rules and regulations imposed by the Government time to time. For this purpose, primary data of 60 respondents has been collected from household survey. Secondary data has also been collected from Ministry of Human Resource Development; Government of India (2014). The collected data has been analyzed by multiple regression analysis.

Analysis and Interpretation

For analysis of the collected data, the literacy rate of different States and Union Territories (denoted as UTs) in India is shown in Table-1.

Table - 1: Literacy Rates (%) of the States / UTs in India in 2011

States and UTs	Literacy (%)	States and UTs	Literacy (%)
Kerala	94.0	West Bengal	76.3
Lakshadweep	91.8	Dadra Nagar Haveli	76.2
Mizoram	91.3	Punjab	75.8
Goa	88.7	Haryana	75.6
Tripura	87.2	Karnataka	75.4
Daman and Diu	87.1	Meghalaya	74.4
Andaman and Nicobar	86.6	Orissa	72.9
Delhi	86.2	Assam	72.2
Chandigarh	86.0	Chhattisgarh	70.3
Puducherry	85.8	Madhya Pradesh	69.3
Himachal Pradesh	82.8	Uttar Pradesh	67.7
Maharashtra	82.3	Jammu and Kashmir	67.2
Sikkim	81.4	Andhra Pradesh	67.0
Tamil Nadu	80.1	Jharkhand	66.4
Nagaland	79.6	Rajasthan	66.1
Uttaranchal	78.8	Arunachal Pradesh	65.4
Gujarat	78.0	Bihar	61.8
Manipur	76.9	All India	73.0
CV (%)			11.03
Maximum			94.0
Minimum			61.8
Observations			35

Source: Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development (2014)

A critical outlook of the data shows that the percentage of literate people to the total population in India was 73.0 % in 2011. In case of Kerala, Lakshadweep and Mizoram the literacy level was more than 90 %. There were twenty one States and UTs viz., Goa, Tripura, Daman and Diu, Andaman and Nicobar, Delhi, Chandigarh, Puducherry, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Nagaland, Uttaranchal, Gujrat, Manipur, West Bengal, Dadra Nagar Haveli, Punjab, Haryana, Karnataka and Meghalaya in which the literacy level was more than 73.0 % (*i.e.*, average literacy level of India) but less than 90%. In the eleven States and UTs viz., Orissa, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Arunachal Pradesh and Bihar the literacy level was less than 73.0 % (*i.e.*, average literacy level of India). Thus, it has been found that high level of literacy (*i.e.*, level of literacy higher than the national average) is a common feature of twenty four out of thirty five States and UTs in India. In West Bengal, level of literacy is slightly more than that of National Average.

As shown in Table-1, the literacy rate in Kerala is 94.0 % which is the maximum amongst the States while in Bihar literacy rate is 61.8 % which is the minimum amongst the States in the year 2011. The CV (co-efficient of variation) of literacy rate during 2011 has been found to be 11.03 % implying lower disparity with respect to literacy rate among the States and UTs in India (Table -1).

Now, the Gross Enrolment Ratio in Elementary level (I-VIII) in India is shown in Table – 2.

Table - 2: Gross Enrolment Ratio in Elementary level (I-VIII)

Year	Scheduled Caste Students			Scheduled Tribes Students			All Categories of Students		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2011-12	109.8	114.9	108.2	103.0	100.6	101.8	97.2	97.6	97.4
2014-15	105.8	110.5	108.0	104.4	103.7	104.0	94.8	99.2	96.9

Source: Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development (2014).

As shown in Table –2, the proportion of gross enrolment among the scheduled caste students has slightly decreased from 108.2 in 2011-12 to 108.0 in 2014-15. During this period the proportion of gross enrolment among the scheduled tribes students has increased from 101.8 to 104.0. In case of all categories of students, the gross enrolment ratio has decreased by 0.167 per annum during the period 2011-12 to 2014-15.

It has also been found that the gross enrolment ratio among female is more than that of male in respect of all categories of students, whereas the gross enrolment ratio among male is more than that of female for the scheduled tribe students in both the periods 2011-12 and 2014-15.

The dropout ratio in School Education in India is observed in Table – 3.

Table - 3: Dropout ratio across Social Groups in School Education in India

Level of School Education	Year	Scheduled Caste Students (SCs)			Scheduled Tribes Students (STs)			All Categories of Students		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Primary (I-V)	2013-14	4.42	3.85	4.14	7.97	7.98	7.98	4.53	4.14	4.34
Upper Primary (VI-VIII)	2013-14	3.75	5.04	4.38	8.03	8.85	8.43	3.09	4.49	3.77
Secondary (IX-X)	2013-14	18.96	18.32	18.66	27.42	26.96	27.20	17.93	17.79	17.86
Senior Secondary (XI-XII)	2013-14	2.20	1.38	1.81	3.09	2.77	2.94	1.48	1.61	1.54

Source: Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development (2014)

From the Table- 3, the following observations have been found.

1. The dropout ratio has been found to be more among the scheduled tribes than the scheduled caste students irrespective of the level of school education.
2. In case of scheduled caste students, the dropout ratio in respect of males has been found to be more than that of female for primary, secondary and senior secondary school education, whereas in case of upper primary education the dropout ratio has been found to be more for female than that of male students.
3. In case of scheduled tribe students, the dropout ratio in respect of female has been found to be more than that of male students for primary and upper primary education, whereas in case of secondary and senior secondary school education, the dropout ratio has been found to be more for male than that of female students.
4. In case of all categories of students, the dropout ratio in respect of males has been found to be more than that of female for primary and secondary school education, whereas in case of upper primary education and senior secondary school education the dropout ratio has been found to be more for female than that of male students.

Now, we look the educational attainment of the selected respondents in the study area and presented in Table 4. Selected respondents are found to have dropped out in different levels of school education.

Table - 4: Educational Attainment of Respondents

Level of Education	No. of Respondents	%
Illiterate	3	5.0
Primary (I-V)	5	8.3
Upper Primary (VI-VIII)	12	20.0
Secondary (IX-X)	18	30.0
Senior Secondary (XI-XII)	14	23.3
UG and PG	8	13.3

Source: Field Survey, 2019

In case of the selected samples, 5.0 % respondents have been found to be illiterate, 8.3 % respondents have educational attainment of Class I to Class V, 20.0 % members have educational attainment of Class VI to Class VIII, 30.0 % respondents have educational attainment of Class IX to Class X, while 23.3 % respondents have educational attainment of Class XI to Class XII (Table – 4).

The educational attainment of the parent is likely to have positive correlation with the educational attainment of their off-springs (Sutin., Stephan., and Terracciano, 2018; Lundborg, Nilsson, and Rooth, 2014). Economic status, gender, caste and location may also have impact on the level of education of the selected respondents. The following model has been used for analyzing the data.

The Model

$$Y_i = a + \sum b_j X_{ij} + u_i$$

Where,

$i = 1,2,3,\dots, 60$; and $j = 1,2,3,4,5$.

Y_i = Level of educational attainment of the i-th respondent.

X_{i1} = Level of parent’s educational attainment of the i-th respondent.

X_{i2} = Economic Status of the i-th respondent. For APL dummy variable is 1 and 0 otherwise

X_{i3} = Location. If the location is Urban, this variable is given 1, for rural area 0 is given

X_{i4} = Gender of the i-th respondent. In case of Male, this variable is given 1, otherwise 0 is given.

X_{i5} = Caste of the i-th respondent. In case of General, this variable is given 1, otherwise 0 is given.

The multiple regression analysis has been carried out using data on 60 respondents and the results have been reported in Table – 5.

Table – 5: Results of Regression involving 60 observations

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
Intercept	4.425	1.319	3.355	0.002
Parent's Educational Attainment (X_1)	0.435 *	0.131	3.326	0.002
Economic Status (X_2)	0.593	0.877	0.676	0.502
Location (X_3)	-0.820	0.968	-0.846	0.402
Gender (X_4)	1.071	0.793	1.351	0.183
Caste (X_5)	2.135 **	0.911	2.343	0.023
R-squared	0.344			
Adjusted R-squared	0.278			
F-statistic	5.25 *			0.00

Dependent Variable: Level of Educational Attainment (Y), Observations: 60

*Significant at 1% level of significance

** Significant at 5% level of significance

R-squared has been found 0.344. It means that about 34% of variance in Y has been explained by the explanatory variables. Adjusted R- squared has been found 0.278. F-statistic has been found to be 5.25 which has been found to be significant at 1% level of significance. The model has explained a small part of the variance of the dependent variable.

The regression coefficient of parent's educational attainment has been found to be positive and statistically significant at 1% level of significance. The regression coefficient of Caste (General) has been found to be positive and statistically significant at 5% level of significance. The results suggest that low educational attainment (school dropout) has been found in case of low educational attainment of the parents of the respondents. School dropouts or low educational attainment also observed among the social groups other than general caste.

Conclusion

The Right to Education Act of India, 2009 has ensured free primary education, yet in reality the scenario is something different. India makes the lowest public expenditure on higher education per student in the world. India spends only 3.5% of its gross domestic product for education and it has declined from around 3.23% of GDP in 2000-2001 to 2.88% in recent times (UNESCO, 2007).

It is found that school dropout rate is more in case of low educational attainment of the parents of the respondents and among the social groups other than general caste. To reduce school dropouts, parents should have general awareness about the necessity of education. Teachers have to play a more active role in bringing back the dropout students into the main stream. Government policies like mid day meal etc may likely to reduce school dropout level at an early stage.

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