
A Study of Exploring Socio-Economic Determinants of Students' Dropout Rate in Delhi Government Schools

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to find out the problems of drop-out students in Delhi government schools. Dropout rate creates an impact on social development and educational outcomes, especially in areas like Delhi where socioeconomic advancement depends on having access to high-quality education. The paper is mainly based on primary information. The study has taken a total sample of 260 students from 13 districts (20 students from each district) by using a random sampling technique. Data collected with the help of Google form & Intensive interviews with teachers, parents & students have been conducted to procure purposeful information. According to the NEP 2020 and RTE Act 2010, no students could be stopped or retained till grade VIII. To stop the dropout situation at the elementary level of education, the paper recommends strengthening of Early Childhood Education, Inclusive Education Practices and Teacher training as per NEP 2020. The findings of this study are drawn from the extensive literature review of students' dropouts in Delhi. Student dropout rates are influenced by various factors, including financial constraints, parental reluctance, geographical barriers, and lack of basic amenities.

Additionally, substandard education quality, inadequate school infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, inappropriate instruction methods, educator negligence, and security concerns, especially for female students, contribute to the problem. The study also has some policy implications for policymakers, educators and stakeholders to combat this problem, aimed at mitigating dropout rates and fostering a more inclusive and equitable educational environment in Delhi, such as free education programs in collaboration with NGOs & the private sector, curriculum adjustment, Vocational training & skill development, teachers' training workshops, and provision of all facilities in schools. policymakers, educators, and stakeholders alike in designing targeted interventions and policies aimed at mitigating dropout rates and fostering a more inclusive and equitable educational environment in Delhi.

INTRODUCTION

The nation's determination to attain universal elementary education was bolstered by the enactment of the Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002. This legislative measure introduced Article 21-A into the Constitution of India, enshrining free and compulsory education as a Fundamental Right for all children aged six to fourteen years. This constitutional amendment represents a significant milestone in the pursuit of ensuring access to education for every child within the specified age group, underscoring the nation's unwavering commitment to this crucial objective. Despite the progress in educational accessibility under initiatives like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Samagra Shiksha) and the movement towards the right to education, dropout rates persist as a grim challenge within India's educational system. According to the UDISE+ 2021-22 data, India's overall school dropout rate stands at 1.5%.

In Delhi many students leave school before finishing their studies. This is a big issue because education is important for the development of any country. We want to understand why there is a student drop out of school in Delhi specifically in Delhi government schools.

The dropout of students from school is a pervasive issue in the education system. In accordance with the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education, Government of India, a child aged between 6 and 14 years shall be deemed out of school if they have never been enrolled in an elementary school or if, subsequent to enrollment, they have been absent from school without prior notification for a period of 45 days or more, citing reasons for their absence.

Children, who enter school, are unable to complete their education due to multiple factors which are responsible for the dropout of students. Risk factors begin to add up even before students enroll in school, including poverty, low education level of parents, the weak family structure, siblings' schooling pattern, and lack of preschool experiences. The familial circumstances and domestic adversities an individual encounters can cultivate an environment that adversely impacts the perceived significance of education. Such conditions may engender a diminished appreciation for the transformative potential of learning and academic pursuits.

Further, students could drop out as a result of a multitude of school factors such as an uncongenial atmosphere, poor comprehension, absenteeism, attitude and behaviour of the teachers, and failure or repetition in the same grade, etc.

It could be because their families don't have enough money or are not aware about the importance of Education. The socio-economic determinants of student dropout in Delhi encapsulate a myriad of interrelated factors, encompassing household income levels, parental education, access to educational resources, employment opportunities for students and their families, and the quality of schooling infrastructure. Each of these factors exerts its unique influence, contributing to the complex tapestry of reasons behind student disengagement from education.

In light of these factors We find it important to conduct a study exploring the socio-economic determinants of students' dropout rates in Delhi for several reasons. Firstly, understanding why students are dropping out of school is crucial for addressing the issue effectively. By identifying the socio-economic factors contributing to dropout rates, we can develop targeted interventions to support students and prevent them from leaving school prematurely. Secondly, reducing dropout rates is essential for ensuring equal access to education and promoting social mobility. As per the RTE 2010 Education is a fundamental right, and every child deserves the opportunity to complete their schooling. By investigating the socio-economic barriers that hinder students' educational progress, we can work

towards creating a more inclusive and equitable education system. Furthermore, addressing the dropout crisis is vital for the overall development and prosperity of society. Education plays a central role in economic growth, innovation, and social cohesion. High dropout rates not only deprive individuals of opportunities but also have broader implications for the community and the economy as a whole. By tackling the root causes of student dropout, we can foster a more educated workforce and contribute to the socio-economic development of Delhi. Addressing the urgent need to rescue out of school children, the role of Special Training Centres emerges as paramount. The formation and operation of these centres underpin a strategic approach towards reintegrating dropouts back into the educational framework, thus mitigating the long-term societal impacts. This paper aims to delve into the multifaceted reasons behind primary grade dropouts in Delhi, illuminate the critical intervention of Special Training Centres in this regard, and explore both the hurdles and solutions in minimizing dropout rates specifically in Delhi.

In summary, conducting a study on the socio-economic determinants of students' dropout rates in Delhi is essential for identifying barriers to education, promoting equal opportunities, and fostering overall societal advancement.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify the socio-economic factors for the dropout of students from government schools in Delhi.
- To provide insights to Policymakers regarding policy interventions and educational programs to reduce dropout rates and promote educational equity in Delhi.
- To find the role and importance of Special Training Centres in the dropout of students.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted to find out the educational dropout rate in the government schools of Delhi. Random samples of 260 students were selected from 13 educational districts of Delhi, which comprised 20 students from each district. Students were selected from Delhi government schools, especially those who enrolled in Special Training Centres. The data for finding the reason for dropout was collected with the help of Google form and survey was also done with parents and teachers of the related student.

RESULTS

Factors Leading to Dropout: Delhi is the capital and metro city of India, where people come in search of education, income and other facilities. We can see people with diversity in Delhi. That's why the factors contributing to the high rates of dropouts in Delhi are multifaceted, encompassing economic, social, and educational dimensions. It was challenging to group students under a single "reason" because we frequently observed several "reasons" at work simultaneously. Most of the time, "financial" concerns played a role in most cases, and "school issues" and "family issues" overlapped. These factors can be broadly categorized into three main areas as per the responses received by the survey done on students who were dropout or never enrolled in the school system:

- **Family-related factors:** Socioeconomic challenges often play a significant role in the increase in dropouts at school. Economic instability, coupled with a lack of awareness about the importance of education, can lead families to prioritize immediate financial needs over long-term educational investments. In some cases, children may be required to work to supplement family income, especially in lower-income households. Additionally, familial responsibilities, such as caring for siblings or assisting with household chores, can also contribute to absenteeism and eventually drop out. The research conducted by Holmes (2003) revealed that females, on average, receive fewer educational opportunities compared to their male counterparts. Furthermore, the findings indicated that females exhibit a higher propensity to discontinue their studies or are withdrawn from the educational system at an earlier stage, attributable to both economic factors and socio-cultural influences.

According to the data collected, 58.84% of the students cited family-related factors as their reason during the survey. Responses received from the parents & teachers also acknowledged the same. This suggests that family-related factors have the highest drop rate percentage.

- **School-related factors:** Within the School domain, infrastructural deficiencies and inadequate resources can hinder the learning environment. Overcrowded classrooms, poorly equipped facilities, and a shortage of qualified teachers may result in substandard education delivery, making the learning experience unappealing or ineffective for students. Moreover, the absence of supportive mechanisms for students facing academic or behavioural challenges can lead to disengagement and eventual dropout. Lack of extracurricular activities and opportunities for holistic development may also fail to engage students, further increasing the likelihood of dropout. 25.38% of students who had school-related issues during the survey dropped out.



- **Individual factors:** 15.76% of students have individual factors leading to school dropout, as found during the survey, according to information provided by students and parents. On the Individual level, factors such as academic performance, motivation, and personal circumstances play a crucial role. Students facing learning difficulties or academic pressure without appropriate support mechanisms may feel discouraged and disheartened, leading them to disengage from their studies. Additionally, personal issues such as mental health challenges, peer pressure, or a sense of alienation within the school environment can contribute to a student's decision to drop out. Lack of motivation, ambition, or interest in academics may also influence dropout rates among primary and elementary students in Delhi schools.

IMPACT OF DROPOUT ON SOCIETY

The societal impact of high dropout rates from educational institutions is profound and multifaceted, affecting various aspects of economic performance, labour markets, and social progress:

1. Economic Impact:

- High dropout rates significantly affect labour markets by creating a workforce without essential educational qualifications, leading to lower employability and productivity.
- The Gross Enrollment Ratio indicates a sharp decline from Grades 6-8. This dropout causes a skills gap in the economy, harming economic growth and development.
- Education is directly associated with economic growth. Therefore, a high dropout rate affects overall development by limiting the spread and transmission of knowledge and culture, essential for innovation and economic progress.

2. Social Implications:

- Education acts as a hurdle of social exclusion, especially for socio-economically disadvantaged groups. High dropout rates, therefore, increase social exclusion and inequality.
- According to the studies, the dropout rate for girls is higher than for boys at all levels of education, which not only reflects gender disparity but also leads to long-term societal impacts by reducing the earning potential of women.

3. Wastage of Educational Resources:



- High dropout rates lead to inefficiency and wastage within the education system, with resources spent on students who eventually leave the system without completing their education.
- A large portion of India's population chooses to discontinue studies after the 10th standard, indicating a significant loss of potential human capital.
- Education level and socio-economic status play an important role in determining the quality of education a child receives, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to reduce dropout rates.

It reflects that educational and socio-economic factors contribute to dropout rates, aiming to ensure that all children have access to complete quality education.

ROLE OF SPECIAL TRAINING CENTRES (STC)

Special Training Centres, established under the Samagra Shiksha - Delhi initiative, play a crucial role in addressing the educational needs of Out of School Children (OoSC) including students who had dropout because of any reason by providing them with Special training to reach age-appropriate class levels. These centres are strategically set up within existing educational facilities, including Govt./Govt. Aided Schools, MCD schools, NDMC, and Delhi Cantonment Board Schools, ensuring that the training is accessible and under the supervision of experienced educational professionals. The MoE has developed an online module named PRABANDH Portal for monitoring of STCs.

Key Features of Special Training Centres:

- **Training Duration:** The special training provided at Special Training Centres spans a minimum of three months, extendable based on the child's learning progress, ensuring individual attention as per the student's needs.
- **Capacity and Operational Hours:** Each STC Centre accommodates up to 30 Out of School Children, functioning for five hours daily for children and five and a half hours for teachers, optimizing time for effective learning and teaching.
- **Curriculum and Mainstreaming Process:** The curriculum is specially designed and approved by academic authorities to meet the learning requirements of OoSC. The STC teachers play a

pivotal role in ensuring the education of these children into age-appropriate classes post-training, highlighting the commitment to reintegrating children back into the formal education system.

Impact Achieved: A significant outcome of the special training at Special Training Centres is the notable reduction in the number of children unable to identify the alphabet, demonstrating the effectiveness of the reading campaigns and applied educational strategies according to the needs of individual students. Children enrolled in STCs, ranging between 6 and 14 years old, are actively undergoing the admission process in government and MCD schools, indicating successful transitions from STC training to formal schooling environments. Special Training Centres under the Samagra Shiksha - Delhi initiative represent a targeted effort to bridge the educational gap for Out of School Children, combining specialized training, strategic engagement of skilled teachers, and a commitment to mainstreaming children into formal education.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Addressing the challenges of dropouts in Delhi requires a multifaceted approach, integrating solutions that span from individual support to systemic changes in education policy and infrastructure. The following strategies may outline the key areas of focus:

- **Strengthening Early Childhood Education:** Establishing a strong early education system lays the groundwork for lifelong learning and can help to reduce dropouts later in a student's academic journey.
- **Implementing Inclusive Education Practices:** Ensuring equal opportunities for all students, aside from socio-economic background, gender, disability, or location, is important for maintaining a diverse and inclusive learning environment.
- **Enhancing Infrastructure:** Investing in school infrastructure creates a more conducive learning environment, which is essential for improving student retention and engagement.
- **Strengthening Teacher Training:** Well-trained and motivated teachers play a significant role in engaging students and reducing dropout rates. Continuous professional development and support for teachers can lead to better educational outcomes.



- **Promoting Community Engagement:** Active involvement of the community and parents creates a sense of ownership and responsibility towards education, encouraging consistent attendance and reducing dropout rates.
- **Financial Incentives:** Implementing poverty alleviation programs and providing financial support to families can help mitigate the economic burden and make education more accessible for all.
- **Vocational Training and Skill Development:** Offering vocational training and skill development programs makes education more engaging and relevant, providing students with practical skills that enhance employability.
- **Collaboration with NGOs and the Private Sector:** Engaging with NGOs and the private sector can bring additional resources and expertise, fostering public-private partnerships that support educational initiatives and workforce preparation.

Tackling the dropout crisis requires a comprehensive strategy that addresses educational, economic, and social barriers. By focusing on early childhood education, enhancing infrastructure, supporting teachers, engaging communities, providing financial incentives, implementing vocational training, and embracing policy reforms, it is possible to create a more inclusive, engaging, and effective education system for all children in Delhi.

DISCUSSION

The study aims to identify the factors contributing to dropout rates. The primary causes of student dropouts are social, educational, and economic hardships. By delving into the reasons behind students leaving school prematurely, policymakers and educators can gain crucial insights into the multifaceted challenges faced by students and their families.

The study seeks to provide insights to policymakers regarding policy interventions and educational programs aimed at reducing dropout rates and promoting educational equity in Delhi. The study suggested financial support for low-income families, improvements in school infrastructure, Strengthening Early Childhood Education, implementing Inclusive education, strengthening of teacher education and initiatives to enhance parental engagement in their children's education.

The study aims to examine the role and importance of STC in addressing the dropout of students. STC plays a crucial role in providing educational support to out-of-school children, including those who have dropped out due to socio-economic factors. The study suggested scaling up and improving the reach and impact of STC across the region.

CONCLUSION

This research paper examines factors contributing to student dropouts in Delhi, including economic, social, and educational challenges. These factors fall into three domains: familial, school and individual. The study highlights the complexities of this issue, underscoring the need for a comprehensive approach to address the multidimensional problem. High rates of dropout have a significant impact on society, including social advancement, the labour market and economic performance. The introduction of Special Training Centres as a critical intervention to rescue out of school children highlights a strategic approach towards ensuring that every child receives the education they deserve. By dissecting the factors contributing to the dropout rate and the efforts made to counteract this issue, we have presented a comprehensive overview aimed at understanding and addressing the educational crisis in Delhi. Recognizing the importance of concerted efforts, it becomes evident that reducing dropout rates and ensuring inclusive education for all necessitates with a holistic strategy. This entails not just policy reform and the enhancement of educational frameworks but also active participation from communities, financial support mechanisms and a focused thrust on vocational training to make education more relevant and accessible. The commitment to a brighter educational future is a shared responsibility, beckoning all stakeholders to contribute towards a more equitable and enlightened society.

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