

Name of the Scholar: Payel Thakur
Name of the Supervisor: Prof. Farah Farooqui
Department: IASE, Faculty of Education, Jamia Millia Islamia
Topic of Research: A Study of the Causal Factors of Dropout among the Socio-Economically Deprived Primary School Students in West Bengal

ABSTRACT

Keywords: Dropout, Socio-economic status, Primary education, Push out

Primary education is the first step of formal education. It is the right of every child. Present study deals with students' experiences which led to their dropping out from their respective schools. The study purports to examine why the number of students who drop out are from impoverished socio-economic backgrounds. It examines the stories of dropout students to analyze their experiences of dropping out. Emphasis is given to the narrative of each student to determine the factors which influenced their dropping out of their respective schools.

This study requires a deep understanding of the people and their behavior. I needed to understand and represent accurately the reasons of dropout and also depict the relationship with the socio-economic aspects. I preferred to go for a qualitative approach to this study, which will ensure the detailing and authenticity of the data.

The present study was conducted on a sample drawn from the schools of Purulia district (West Bengal). The unit of observation is primary schools. 41 dropout cases could be identified from the official records, out of which 21 could be contacted and they form the sample of the study. These schools are all Government schools.

The reasons of dropout are many. There are various reasons of dropping out of the children from schools. A single reason does not explain the phenomenon. The factors resulting in dropping out are found to be overlapping to each other and entwined to the context. The causes can be categorized into: structural, cultural and attitudinal.

The socio-economic structures may facilitate or impede education of children. Structures are often found conjoined together – a person low on income may also be low in education, low on health, and low on power. The cultural background of the social group may at times hamper the progress of the children. This includes the time devoted to communal functions, ceremonies and rituals. The kinship bonds are given much importance and lot of time goes into celebration of joys and sorrows together.

The physical distance of the school is at times a hindrance. In the present study, the low family income is the most prominent factor influencing dropping out of the children. Illiteracy of parents is another major cause of dropout. They are unable to assist their children in studies. The findings of the study show that parents' socio-economic status is a major factor which affects dropout in primary schools. The problem becomes more critical when it is conjoined with apathy or teachers' indifference: This emerges as a major problem.

The reasons for dropout are multiple and complex. Medium of instruction is another hindrance. The infrastructure and other facilities in the school add to the problem.

Death of parents is also a cause of dropping out. All the above factors sum up the educational backwardness in the Purulia region. Since societal and educational structures are majorly responsible for the children's drop-out from the schools, it needs to be termed as PUSH-OUT!