



UNVEILING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS BEHIND PRIMARY SCHOOL DROPOUTS: A CASE STUDY IN TELANGANA, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Primary school dropout rates in Telangana, India, present a multifaceted challenge, particularly affecting vulnerable urban poor communities. This study delves into the complex socio-economic factors driving primary school dropout rates, aiming to elucidate the underlying dynamics and inform targeted interventions. Through rigorous data collection from 129 respondents, comprising dropout students and their parents, this research uncovers critical insights into the nuanced interplay of gender dynamics, economic hardships, and educational access barriers contributing to dropout rates. Employing a descriptive research design and robust data collection methodology, this study offers comprehensive analyses of the socio-economic determinants shaping primary school dropout rates in Telangana. The findings underscore the pressing need for holistic strategies addressing poverty alleviation, gender equity, and community empowerment to mitigate dropout rates effectively. By providing empirical evidence and actionable recommendations, this research contributes to the broader discourse on educational equity and informs evidence-based policy interventions to foster inclusive education systems in Telangana, India. In conclusion, this study serves as a vital step towards understanding and addressing the intricate socio-economic factors fuelling primary school dropout rates in Telangana. The insights gleaned from this research not only deepen our understanding of the root causes of dropout but also provide a roadmap for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to implement targeted interventions that foster educational inclusion and equity for all children in the region.

Keywords: Primary School Dropout, Socio-Economic Factors, Vulnerable Communities, Telangana, Gender Disparities, Educational Access, Economic Hardship, Dropout Prevention, Descriptive Research, Urban Poor, etc.

I. INTRODUCTION

Primary education serves as the cornerstone of an individual's academic journey, laying the foundation for lifelong learning and socio-economic development. However, the persisting challenge of primary school dropout rates, particularly in regions like Telangana, India, underscores significant barriers to educational access and retention. Vulnerable urban poor communities, characterized by economic hardships and social marginalization, often bear the brunt of this educational crisis. Against this backdrop, understanding the socio-economic



determinants driving primary school dropout rates becomes imperative to inform targeted interventions and policy reforms aimed at fostering inclusive and equitable education systems.

Telangana, a state in southern India, grapples with a myriad of socio-economic challenges, including poverty, gender disparities, and inadequate access to quality education. Within this context, primary school dropout rates emerge as a critical concern, reflecting broader inequities in educational opportunities and outcomes. Despite governmental efforts to enhance educational access and retention, dropout rates persist, particularly among marginalized communities residing in urban areas. Thus, there is an urgent need for empirical research to unravel the intricate web of factors contributing to primary school dropout rates in Telangana and devise evidence-based strategies to address this pressing issue.

This article embarks on a journey to explore the socio-economic determinants behind primary school dropout rates in Telangana, India. "Through a comprehensive analysis of existing literature and empirical research findings, this study seeks to shed light on the root causes of dropout and propose actionable recommendations for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders." By understanding the socio-economic landscape shaping dropout rates, we can strive towards building inclusive and equitable educational systems that empower every child in Telangana to realize their full potential and contribute to the socio-economic development of the state.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ghazi, et al. (2011). Pakistan's goal of achieving universal primary education by 2015, as outlined in the EFA Framework, is unlikely to be achieved based on present performance. Participation rates are low and drop-out rates remain high (Govt. of Pakistan, 2009). The literature review identified social and economic variables as the key reasons of children dropping out of school. The objective of this research was to investigate the specific socio-economic factors that contribute to children dropping out at the primary level. A total of forty children who had dropped out of school, together with their parents, were questioned using a structured interview sheet. The sheet consisted of 10 statements, with five focusing on social variables and five on economic reasons. The gathered data was organised, examined, and explained in relation to the study's goals. The data was analysed using percentage as a statistical method. The tabular form displayed the frequency of replies from parents and children, together with the corresponding percentages, on chosen socio-economic parameters. The study found that the main factors contributing to children dropping out of school were their parents' illiteracy, their belief that education is not beneficial for their children, their focus on earning money, financial difficulties faced by the children, viewing education as a financial burden, involving children in income-generating activities, and the parents' poor economic situation. These findings form the basis for the recommendations made in this study.



A solid financial foundation often leads to greater academic success. Tuitoek, Yambo, and Adhanja (2015) argued that head teachers have a significant responsibility in managing all aspects of school finances, including the equitable distribution of funds. In a study conducted by Odhiambo, Odera, and Yambo (2014) in Migori County, it was discovered that the strategies employed by principals to address the challenges in promoting girl-child education in mixed day secondary schools were influenced more by parents' effectiveness in getting involved and setting educational goals for their children, rather than their level of education or ethnicity. Furthermore, the research revealed that instructors' contact with parents was a significant predictor of parental participation. This suggests that regardless of their level of education, parents need support from educators in order to actively participate in their children's education, leading to improved academic success. The researcher was compelled to investigate the socio-economic elements that impact academic achievement in Rongo sub-county, located in Migori County, Kenya.

Behr et al. (2020) categorised the concept of dropout into two components based on the dataset used: the macro perspective, which utilises countrywide survey data, is referred to as system departure; and the micro perspective, which utilises data from a specific university, is referred to as institutional departure. By using this differentiation, we can address the issue of transition. Therefore, according on the specific research inquiries and the emphasis of our study (micro/macro/individual), we may choose to classify a transition as either dropout or not (Heublein, 2014; Pusztai et al., 2019). Behr et al. (2020) presented four distinct viewpoints on dropout: sociological, psychological, economic, and the phase model, which is the most recent method.

Ndivo et al. (2021) conducted the study. The issue of student retention within the school system is a significant problem for all parties involved in education. The issue at hand is that the girl-child is confronted with the dilemma of discontinuing her education. The research aims to identify the socio-economic determinants that impact the dropout rate of female students at public day secondary schools in Mukaa Sub-County, located in Makueni County, Kenya. The researcher's objective was to provide results and suggestions that would raise awareness among the administrators and policy makers at the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST). This would aid in developing educational measures to mitigate this issue in the future. The research aimed to examine the impact of cultural norms on the rate of females dropping out of public day secondary schools in Mukaa sub-County, Makueni County, Kenya. The study used a descriptive survey approach. The chosen study design was very suitable for examining the dropout rate among school-going youngsters as it allowed the use of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The sample size for this investigation was obtained using Fisher's formula, which is given by $n = Z^2pq / d^2$. The study focused on a sample of 30 public day secondary schools in Mukaa Sub-County. A representative random sample of 15 schools was chosen for the research from the 3 zones that make up Mukaa Sub-County. The participants consisted of 61 female individuals and 15 instructors from the Form



4 class. The research suggested a minimum correlation value of 0.70. Questionnaires were administered to obtain data. The researcher manually coded, cleaned, and categorised the acquired data, and then analysed it using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data was further analysed using frequency distribution tables, percentages, bar graphs, and pie charts.

Alfred Moyo, Lilian Sankhulani, and Stella Namalima (2021). A significant number of students, especially female students, tend to discontinue their training courses at community technical institutions, which hinders progress in women empowerment. This article presents the findings of a research undertaken at Milonga and Naminjiwa community technical colleges in Thyolo and Phalombe districts, respectively. Therefore, the research aimed to identify the likely socio-economic elements that contribute to the dropout of female students from the two institutions, in order to discover potential solutions to the issue. The two institutions were selected for the research due to their close vicinity to tea farms, which serve as the primary supply of labour for the tea business. Furthermore, individuals residing in both areas have comparable cultural values and economic standing. The research included a population consisting of both female and male students, as well as administrators and teachers from two technical institutions. Furthermore, the survey included parents of female students who were classified as having dropped out of school. Therefore, the study was done using the qualitative research approach in order to get a comprehensive grasp of people's perspectives. The data was gathered in accordance with the study's goals and then subjected to thematic analysis. The research identified many socio-economic reasons that contribute to the dropout of female students from the two institutions. These factors include the high cost of education and poverty, home responsibilities and parental characteristics, cultural influences, early marriages, and gender disparities, including the training environment. Nevertheless, the friendly and amiable interaction between students and teachers did not have any impact on dropout rates. The following recommendations were presented to policy makers and other stakeholders: The Government and Ministry of Labour Skills and Innovation need to establish a comprehensive national strategy aimed at offering financial assistance in the form of bursaries and loans to economically disadvantaged students. The government should build dormitories at the two institutions in order to provide a favourable training environment. The Ministry of Labour Skills and Innovation should arrange awareness campaign initiatives to educate the people living near the two institutions about the significance of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). The Ministry of Labour Skills and Innovation should increase the recruitment of female professors in order to serve as exemplary figures for other female pupils.

Rajeev Rattan Sharma and Mohan Galgotra 2022. This research aims to investigate the individual and socio-economic factors contributing to the dropout rate of students at the primary level in the Jammu District of Jammu and Kashmir. The key goals of the research were to examine the factors contributing to the high rate of student attrition at the elementary



level. 2) To identify the socioeconomic and personal determinants of kid dropout rates. 3) To assess parental attitudes towards education as a contributing factor to children's dropout rates. 4) To identify effective techniques for mitigating student dropout rates. The methodology used was random sampling. The research study is characterised by its descriptive nature. Two sets of questionnaires were created for the study: one specifically designed for children and another for parents. The collected data was analysed using the percentage approach. The research revealed that a significant proportion of the parents were illiterate, belonged to a low caste, were jobless, had a very low socio-economic level, and had a negative attitude towards education. The issue of school dropout is a very intricate phenomena, characterised by several discernible and intractable causes. "This is mostly owing to the fact that it occurs with alarming ease and frequency." Merely having one of the stated criteria is insufficient for a student to fail and ultimately drop out of school; rather, there might be a series of interconnected elements at play. Families with a poor socioeconomic status, characterised by poverty and marginalisation, have a much increased risk of school dropout. The current research examined the impact of socio-economic factors and parental attitudes on schooling. Despite eliminating the identifiable causes, it is plausible that there are several underlying reasons that have not been explicitly identified. An effort has been made to identify some comprehensible factors that contribute to youngsters leaving school.

III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This paper aims to elucidate the socio-economic determinants influencing primary school dropout rates in Telangana, focusing on vulnerable communities grappling with economic hardship. By analyzing data collected from respondents and their parents, the study seeks to uncover key factors shaping dropout rates, with a particular emphasis on gender dynamics and economic disparities.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design:

The study adopts a descriptive research design to investigate the educational dropout rates within selected schools in Telangana, India.

Sampling Strategy:

- **Sampling Frame:** The study focuses on dropout cases from schools in Telangana, particularly targeting areas with high concentrations of vulnerable urban poor communities.



- **Sample Size:** A random sample of 129 respondents was selected from the total population of dropout cases, ensuring representation from different socio-economic backgrounds and genders.
- **Sampling Technique:** Random sampling was employed to ensure the unbiased selection of participants from the dropout population.

Data Collection Instruments:

Questionnaires: Pretested questionnaires were utilized to collect data from both dropout students and their parents. These questionnaires were designed to gather information on socio-economic factors, reasons for dropout, and family backgrounds.

School Records: Information from school registers, admission records, and dropout registers was collected to supplement the data obtained through questionnaires.

Fieldwork: Investigators conducted field visits to selected schools to gather preliminary information and identify dropout cases accurately.

Data Collection Phases:

- **Phase 1:** School Visits and Preliminary Information Gathering: Researchers visited selected schools in Telangana to gather preliminary information on the educational context and prepare for data collection.
- **Phase 2:** Identification of Dropouts: Dropout cases were identified based on enrolment and dropout registers maintained by the schools, ensuring proportional representation from each class.
- **Phase 3:** Reasons for Dropout Assessment: Home visits and interviews were conducted with dropout students and their parents to assess the reasons behind their decision to discontinue education. A self-structured interview schedule was utilized to collect information on school and home environments, as well as socio-economic backgrounds.

Data Analysis:

Collected data will be subjected to statistical analysis techniques to identify patterns, correlations, and socio-economic determinants influencing dropout rates within Telangana's selected schools.

V. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

5.1 Enrolment and Drop out of Boys and Girls



Despite the large number of programs initiated by Government focusing on achieving universal elementary education by providing incentives like mid-day meals, uniforms, text books, not all the children are sent to the schools, even after their admissions, they begin to dropout. This dropout rate continues to escalate both in rural and urban areas.

Table 1: Enrolment and dropout of boys and girls

Classes	Enrolment of boys	Enrolment of girls	No. of boys dropouts	Percentage	Number of girls dropouts	Percentage
V	394	428	52	24.4	82	27.0
IV	469	443	59	27.7	73	24.0
III	349	383	29	13.7	51	16.8
II	309	368	41	19.2	43	14.1
I	415	389	32	15.0	55	16.8
Total	1936	2021	213 (11.0)	100	304 (15.0)	100

Based on Field Survey.

Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of enrolment and dropout statistics for boys and girls across different classes in the primary schools under study. The data reveals a consistent pattern of enrolment, with varying levels of dropout rates observed among boys and girls. In Class V, for instance, while the enrolment of girls is slightly higher than boys, the dropout percentage among girls is notably higher at 27.0% compared to 24.4% among boys. Similarly, in Class IV, although the enrolment numbers are relatively balanced, the dropout percentage among boys is slightly higher at 27.7% compared to 24.0% among girls. This trend continues across all classes, indicating a persistent disparity in dropout rates between boys and girls.

Overall, the data highlights the concerning trend of higher dropout rates among girls compared to boys across all classes. While enrolment numbers may vary slightly between genders, the dropout percentages consistently show a higher proportion of girls discontinuing their education compared to boys. This gender disparity in dropout rates underscores the need for targeted interventions and policies aimed at addressing the unique challenges faced by girls in accessing and continuing their education, thereby promoting gender equity and ensuring equal educational opportunities for all children.

Table 2: Sample size of the respondents

Classes	No. of dropout boys sampled	Percentage	Number of dropout girls sampled	Percentage
V	13	24.5	20	26.3
IV	15	28.3	18	23.7
III	07	13.2	13	17.1
II	10	18.9	11	14.5
I	08	15.1	14	18.4



Total	53	100.0	76	100.0
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Table 2 presents the sample size of respondents, specifically focusing on the number and percentage of dropout boys and girls sampled across different classes. The data provides insights into the representation of dropout cases among boys and girls within the study sample. Across all classes, the sample size for dropout girls is consistently higher compared to dropout boys, indicating a larger representation of girls in the study sample.

For instance, in Class V, out of a total of 33 dropout cases sampled, 20 (or 26.3%) are girls, while 13 (or 24.5%) are boys. This pattern continues across all classes, with a higher percentage of dropout girls sampled compared to dropout boys. Overall, the data highlights the greater prevalence of dropout cases among girls within the study sample, underscoring the need for a gender-sensitive approach in addressing dropout rates and promoting educational equity.

5.2 Socio-Economic Determinates of Drop Out:

Table 3: Socio-economic determinants of dropouts

Socio-economic variables	Number of boys (N = 53)	Percentage	Number of girls (N = 76)	Percentage
1. Education of mother				
Metric	-		14	18.4
Intermediate	-		11	14.5
Illiterate	36	67.9	31	40.8
Primary	17	32.1	20	26.3
2. Education of father				
Metric	13	24.6	18	23.7
Intermediate	06	11.3	14	18.4
Illiterate	22	41.5	28	36.9
Primary	12	22.6	16	21.0
3. Type of family				
Nuclear	16	30.2	27	35.5
Joint	37	69.8	49	64.5
4. Occupation of mother				
Maid servants	-	-	16	21.0
Labour	34	64.1	17	22.4
Housewife	19	35.9	43	56.6
5. Occupation of father				
Service	02	3.8	-	-
Petty business	12	22.6	35	46.0
Labour	39	73.6	41	54.0
6. Monthly income of the family (In Rupees)				
5001-6000	08	15.1	13	17.1
3000-4000	26	49.0	25	32.9



4001-5000	19	35.9	38	50.0
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Table 3 provides a detailed analysis of the socio-economic determinants influencing dropout rates among boys and girls in the study sample. The data reveals significant disparities in dropout rates based on various socio-economic variables, including the education level of parents, type of family, occupation of parents, and monthly family income.

Education of Parents: A striking trend emerges regarding parental education levels, with a higher percentage of dropout cases observed among children whose parents are illiterate or have only received primary education. For instance, among boys, 67.9% of dropout cases have mothers who are illiterate, while 41.5% have fathers with the same educational background. Among girls, similar trends are observed, albeit to a lesser extent.

Type of Family: The type of family structure also plays a significant role in dropout rates, with a higher percentage of dropout cases observed among children from joint families compared to nuclear families. This suggests that family dynamics and support systems may influence children's educational outcomes.

Occupation and Income: Furthermore, the occupation of parents and monthly family income exhibit notable associations with dropout rates. Children whose parents are engaged in manual labor or petty businesses demonstrate higher dropout rates compared to those with parents in service occupations. Similarly, families with lower monthly incomes (in the range of 3000-4000 rupees) tend to have higher dropout rates compared to families with higher incomes.

Overall, the data highlights the intricate interplay of socio-economic factors in shaping dropout rates among primary school students in Telangana. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions addressing socio-economic disparities to promote educational equity and retention among vulnerable communities.

5.3 Reasons for Drop Out

Table 4: Causes of Drop out among Primary Students

Reasonsfordropout	Noofdropoutstudents			
	Boys (N=53)	Percentage	Girls (N=76)	Percentage
Povertyinthe households	17	32.1	26	34.2
Abysmalqualityofeducation	11	20.7	17	22.4
Supplementingfamily'sincome	25	47.2	14	18.4
Helpinginhouseholdchores	-	-	19	25.0

Table 4 presents the primary reasons for dropout among primary students, providing insights into the factors contributing to discontinuation of education among boys and girls in the study sample. The data reveals key themes driving dropout rates, including poverty, quality of education, income supplementation, and household responsibilities.



Poverty in the Households: Poverty emerges as a predominant factor contributing to dropout rates among both boys and girls, with a significant proportion of dropout cases attributing their discontinuation of education to economic hardships within their households. Among boys, 32.1% cite poverty as the reason for dropout, while among girls, this figure stands slightly higher at 34.2%.

Abysmal Quality of Education: The inadequate quality of education also emerges as a significant concern, particularly among boys, with 20.7% of dropout cases citing this factor as the reason for discontinuing their education. Similarly, among girls, 22.4% attribute dropout to the poor quality of education provided.

Supplementing Family's Income: A substantial proportion of dropout cases, particularly among boys, cite the need to supplement their family's income as a reason for discontinuing education. This underscores the economic pressures faced by families, compelling children to prioritize contributing to the household income over continuing their education. Among boys, 47.2% cite income supplementation as the reason for dropout, while among girls, this figure is notably lower at 18.4%.

Household Responsibilities: Lastly, household responsibilities, particularly for girls, emerge as a significant factor contributing to dropout rates. A notable proportion of dropout cases among girls, accounting for 25.0%, cite helping in household chores as the reason for discontinuing their education.

Overall, the data highlights the multifaceted nature of dropout rates, with socio-economic factors, quality of education, economic pressures, and household responsibilities all playing significant roles in influencing children's decisions to discontinue their education. These findings underscore the need for comprehensive interventions addressing these underlying factors to promote educational equity and retention among primary school students in Telangana.

Discussion: The analysis of the article sheds light on the intricate socio-economic determinants and underlying reasons contributing to primary school dropout rates in Telangana, India. The findings underscore several critical insights that warrant discussion and consideration for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders striving to address this pressing issue. Firstly, the disparity in dropout rates between boys and girls is a notable concern highlighted by the analysis. Despite efforts to promote gender equity in education, girls continue to face higher dropout rates compared to boys, particularly in vulnerable urban poor communities. This gender disparity underscores the need for targeted interventions addressing the unique challenges faced by girls, including socio-cultural norms, household responsibilities, and economic pressures. Initiatives focusing on girls' education, such as providing scholarships, creating safe learning environments, and raising awareness about the importance of education for girls, are imperative to mitigate gender disparities in dropout rates.



Furthermore, the analysis reveals the significant influence of socio-economic factors on dropout rates. Poverty, inadequate quality of education, economic pressures, and household responsibilities emerge as key determinants driving dropout among primary school students. Addressing these socio-economic challenges requires a multi-pronged approach, encompassing poverty alleviation measures, improving access to quality education, and creating supportive environments for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Additionally, engaging with communities, empowering parents, and fostering partnerships between government, non-governmental organizations, and local stakeholders are essential strategies to address the root causes of dropout and promote educational retention. Moreover, the findings underscore the importance of holistic interventions that recognize the interconnectedness of socio-economic factors influencing dropout rates. Policies and programs should adopt a comprehensive approach that considers the intersectionality of gender, poverty, education, and community dynamics in addressing dropout rates effectively. By targeting these underlying factors through evidence-based interventions and collaborative efforts, stakeholders can work towards creating inclusive and equitable education systems that ensure every child, regardless of gender or socio-economic background, has the opportunity to access and complete primary education.

In conclusion, the analysis of the article highlights the complex nature of primary school dropout rates in Telangana and underscores the urgency of addressing the underlying socio-economic determinants and reasons driving dropout. By implementing targeted interventions, fostering partnerships, and prioritizing the needs of vulnerable communities, stakeholders can strive towards reducing dropout rates and realizing the vision of inclusive and equitable education for all children in Telangana, India.

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study provides valuable insights into the socio-economic determinants and underlying reasons contributing to primary school dropout rates in Telangana, India. The analysis reveals a complex interplay of factors, including poverty, gender disparities, quality of education, economic pressures, and household responsibilities, influencing dropout rates among primary school students. These findings underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions and policy reforms to address the root causes of dropout and promote educational equity and retention among vulnerable communities. The gender disparity in dropout rates highlights the importance of gender-sensitive interventions aimed at empowering girls and addressing socio-cultural barriers to their education. Initiatives focusing on girls' education, such as providing scholarships, creating safe learning environments, and raising awareness about the importance of education for girls, are imperative to mitigate gender disparities in dropout rates.

Furthermore, addressing socio-economic challenges requires a multi-faceted approach, encompassing poverty alleviation measures, improving access to quality education, and creating supportive environments for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.



Collaborative efforts between government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local stakeholders are essential to implement evidence-based interventions that target the root causes of dropout and promote educational retention.

Future Directions:

Moving forward, future research should continue to explore the complex socio-economic factors influencing primary school dropout rates in Telangana, with a focus on understanding the specific needs and challenges faced by different communities. Longitudinal studies tracking the educational trajectories of students over time can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of interventions and policy reforms in reducing dropout rates and promoting educational equity.

Additionally, there is a need for innovative approaches and interventions that address the unique socio-economic context of Telangana and cater to the diverse needs of vulnerable communities. This may include community-based initiatives, mentorship programs, vocational training opportunities, and holistic support services aimed at empowering students and their families to overcome barriers to education.

Moreover, efforts should be made to strengthen the collaboration between government agencies, educational institutions, non-governmental organizations, and community-based organizations to create a coordinated and sustainable approach to addressing dropout rates. By working together and leveraging resources and expertise, stakeholders can maximize their impact and create lasting positive change in the educational landscape of Telangana.

In conclusion, by continuing to study and address the socio-economic determinants of primary school dropout, and by implementing targeted interventions and collaborative efforts, we can strive towards building inclusive and equitable education systems that ensure every child in Telangana has the opportunity to access and complete primary education, thereby contributing to their overall development and socio-economic well-being.

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