

# An Exploratory Study of Factors affecting School Dropouts of Pune District

Thirumagal J. Pillai\*

Indira Institute of Management, Pune – 411033, Maharashtra, India;  
thirumagalpillai@gmail.com

## Abstract

**Objectives:** The aim of Right to Education Act and the implementation of government educational Schemes is to reduce school dropouts at grass root level. The following study sponsored by ICSSR is an attempt to explore the factors affecting school dropouts in Pune district in India. **Methods/Statistical Analysis:** This study carries forward the data and information collected through structured questionnaire and discussions from the parents of school dropouts. The general information of associated reasons/factors was analyzed especially of government schools and private-aided school dropouts. Stratified Random Sampling method was carried out from the list of schools Taluka-wise available with Zilla Parishad. Sample size consisted of 168 parents. The data analysis was prepared using descriptive statistics and chi-square test. **Findings:** The survey highlights parents of school dropouts are aware of governmental educational schemes. However, to a larger extent, individual and family reasons especially the lack of encouragement/casualness from the parents and financial problems seemed to play a dominant role for school dropouts in Pune district. It is also observed mentoring is received by the dropouts from school authorities to continue studies, but the depth and importance of it still needs to be acknowledged in full swing. The findings corroborates with rest of the available studies. The study will assist policy makers, to certain extent, in identifying the causes for school dropouts and help in formulating prevention strategies at grass-root level. **Improvements:** Further this study could be enhanced by broadly discussing the other facets viz. status of implemented government programs, role of community, enrollment, etc. in the selected schools and other schools of the district. It can be extended to any other region to contain the school dropouts especially when migration of parents from rural to urban and also from one country to another becomes inevitable.

**Keywords:** Factors Affecting School Dropouts, Government Educational Schemes, Parental Opinion, Pune District, Right to Education, School Dropouts

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, deprived of a high school qualification, an individual's chances of carving out a good prospect both socially and economically are not as much. Young people with too little education, lack of experience and job skills are highly likely to become socially dependent or secondary. In the same way, elimination prompted by dropping out of school may result in young people not exercising to the fullest their rights or role as a citizen. It can also be a hindrance to addition into the workforce. The consequences of dropping out of the school are felt

as much socially as well as individual level. As per the reports of Global Education Digest (2012), out of every 10 children enrolled worldwide, it is perceived 4 dropouts happen in Sub-Saharan Africa, 3 children dropout in west and south Asia and likewise 2 dropouts happen in Latin America and the Caribbean. The same report highlights nearly 32 million primary class students repeat in a grade and 80% of them are from these three regions of the world.

Given the population size of India and its socio-economic stats, the problem of child dropout remains somewhat prevalent in India's social setup<sup>1</sup>. Regardless of governmental efforts, huge investment and many innovative programs, the

\*Author for correspondence

school dropout remains alarming high in many states. The growing literature indicates school dropout still is a serious issue.

## 2. Survey of Literature

The literature review brings to light various demand and supply dimensions contributing for school dropouts<sup>1,2</sup>. The review which deals with the issues of dropout indicates that many attempts have been made not only in India, but also in other countries over the years. This suggests that many factors are at play as far as the dropout of both girls and boys are concerned.

It is prominent from various studies that lack of interest in studies by poor households is considered as one among the important reasons for children becoming a dropout. This factor is due to underlying causes such as poverty of households, absence of good quality schooling facilities and high costs of schooling<sup>3-5</sup>. The lack of interest in studies may perhaps be due to multiple underlying causes or due to a combination of many of these factors, which are not possible to sort out. Thus, lack of interest cannot be treated as an independent factor<sup>6,7</sup>.

Fewer studies refer to economic constraints, that is, the need for child labor and the burden of school expenses were the perceived hindrances in case of never enrolled children. While for girls, labor referred to domestic work and sibling care, for boys, helping in farm and other income earning activities were important<sup>8,9</sup>.

Moreover, school related, teacher related and family related factors also contribute to the dropout of children<sup>10-16</sup>. Similar observations are also through Government of India<sup>17</sup>. Parents play a vital support system. Both parents have to stay involved in their children's education from kindergarten to high school. Fathers' and mothers' interest and encouragement of his or her child's education can affect the child's attitude towards school, classroom conduct, self-esteem, absenteeism and motivation<sup>18</sup>.

Based on the above notion, the present study tries to understand the parental opinion and reasons for their wards to put an end to studies, consequently becoming a school dropout. However, there is no concrete evidence to show that only a few factors lead to this phenomenon and also, such factors are not only region-specific, but also time-specific. This calls for a thorough study by bringing in all relevant factors for dropout. For this reason, the

present study for Pune district is an attempt to assess the indicators resulting for school dropouts.

## 3. Objectives of Study

The study is conducted with the following objectives:

- To identify precise reasons/factors for school dropouts in different administrative sub-divisions of Pune district.
- To examine the important motives of dropping out from school and the current activities of children who are not in any school (dropouts from governments aided schools and private schools getting aid from the government).

## 4. Methodology

The research design is exploratory and descriptive in nature. Sample size consisted of 168 parents of School Dropouts. Stratified Random sampling method is used in the administrative sub-divisions of Pune District<sup>1</sup>. Data and information were collected through structured questionnaire (for identifying the reasons) and in-depth observations cum discussions with the parents of school dropouts. The dropouts children are identified from all educational levels from the government aided schools and private aided schools<sup>1</sup>. The questions related to were the general information of family economic background and major reasons for discontinuing the studies. The period of study include that of 2015-16 and 2016-17 academic years.

The data analysis was done by using simple percentage analysis and Chi-Square Test. The research is limited to parents only. Considering the limited geography and number of parents, the findings of the study may have their own limitations in their applicability to other parts of the region or state.

The following is the hypothesis formulated for the study:

- H0: There is no significant difference in the administrative sub-divisions and associated reasons for school dropouts.
- H1: There is significant difference in the administrative sub-divisions and associated reasons for school dropouts.

## 5. Analysis and Discussion

### 5.1 Socio-economic Profile of Dropouts

#### 5.1.1 Gender and Age

Dropouts' children are witnessed more or less equally in both the genders and to a maximum it is in the age group of 11 to 15 years (49%) who were enrolled in upper primary or secondary education are Table 1.

**Table 1.** Socio-economic profile of school dropouts

Details	Sub-Details	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Boys	87	51.8
	Girls	81	48.2
Age	Below 10 years	46	27.4
	11 to 15 Years	82	48.8
	Above 15 years	40	23.8
Average monthly income of the family	Less than Rs. 2,000	1	0.6
	Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 5,000	62	36.9
	More than Rs. 5,000	105	62.5
Parents' possess assets	Yes	109	64.9
	No	59	35.1
Type of assets	Own House	55	32.7
	Own House + Assets (cattle/vehicle/Jewels/Furniture)	54	32.1
	Does not possess any Asset	59	35.1
Parents' Liabilities	Yes	39	23.2
	No	129	76.8
Liabilities from source	Bank	14	8.3
	Bank + Friends	1	0.6
	Money Lender	8	4.8
	Friends	2	1.2
	Relatives	14	8.3
	No	129	76.8
Residence	Village	52	31.0
	Town	97	57.7
	City	19	11.3
Distance of the residence from school/ Town	Less than 2 Kms	110	65.5
	2 Kms to 5 Kms	31	18.5
	More than 5 Kms	27	16.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Primary Data

#### 5.1.2 Average Monthly Income of the Family

Average monthly income shows the economic status for the family of dropout. 62.9% of the respondents earned average monthly income of more than Rs. 5,000 followed by 37% of them an average of Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 5,000. The economic status of the families of dropouts does not seem to be a better off nor worse off. Almost every member of the family is observed to be contributing/supplementing for increase in income.

#### 5.1.3 Assets

Understanding the asset knowledge of the families reveals the social status and economic conditions which is considered to be one among the factors for being a student dropout. 65% of the families are perceived to have assets. Maximum parents had their own house and assets either in form of cattle or jewelry and vehicles, etc. Merely 35% of the respondents did not possess any assets.

#### 5.1.4 Liabilities

The liabilities of dropout families. Financial debts are one of the factors contributing for dropout. Maximum parents witnessed do not seem to have several liability which holds back their children from realizing the basic education. 76.8% of the families do not have any liabilities/debts as per the confirmation considered. Merely 23% of them have taken loans/borrowed money from unorganized sources either from friends'/relatives/moneylenders.

#### 5.1.5 School Distance

The distances matters to a larger extent in attending the school regularly. 57.7% and 31% of the dropout students to a larger level resided in towns and villages respectively. Simply 11.3% of the dropout parent respondents stayed in cities. As far as distance from home to school/town is concerned, approximately 65.5% indicated it to be less than 2 kms followed by 18% as 2 to 5 kms and 16% as more than 5 kms respectively. This point out there is no problem of going too far off locations to attend/enroll in the schools. Distance to school or town is not a difficulty for maximum dropout students'. The preparedness seemed to be lacking among parent respondents which hold back their children from completing the elementary and basic education.

## 6. Understanding the Opinion/Reasons for their Wards for Discontinuing Studies

From Table 2, the current status of the dropout children can be witnessed. Maximum 93.5% of the dropout children are not working. Only 6.5% of the children of parent respondents are working and supplementing for family income. (It is to be noted Bhor Sub-division and Maval Sub-division parents were not reachable to explore fully for the district).

To a greater extent, the associated/connected reasons are the family, individual and personal reasons followed by economic reasons in combination with Migration.

**Table 2.** Current status of the ward and associated factors/reasons for being a dropout. (Parental Survey)

Current Status of the Ward: Is It He/She is Working			
		Frequency	Percent
What is your child doing at present? Is it he/she is working	Yes	11	6.5
	No	157	93.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Associated Factors/Reasons for being a Dropout			
Associated Reason	Economic Reasons	22	13.1
	Health Reasons	5	3.0
	Family cum Personal Reasons	84	50.0
	Not Interested in Studies	25	14.9
	School Reasons	2	1.2
	Migration	19	11.3
	Married	11	6.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Primary Data

### 6.1 Family/Personal Reasons

When a deeper understanding of the associated factors/reasons is examined, it is witnessed 50% of the dropout

children remained at home due to family/personal reasons.

It is witnessed dropout children remained at home due to family cum personal reasons. School related reasons are barely accepted. This is especially reported to a greater extent from Khed Sub-division (Table 3), children of casual laborers and those working on agricultural farms.

Variety of family reasons emerged from the investigation. The prominent reasons are domestic problems, frequent quarrels between the parents, lack of motivation from parents, father always an alcoholic and do not earn anything. For few it is to take care of sick parents/take care of siblings, etc. The noted down reasons especially for boys are they do not listen to their parents and are addicted to bad company, influence of social media or either ran away from home. As far as girls are concerned, they remained at home to take care of siblings, to help the sick parents in household work. Especially from Khed Sub-division, the parents authenticate that poverty and children supplementing for family income is basically the cause which drives the children to a dropout status.

Another major reason which demoralizes the students from pursuing the basic education is due to parent being not educated. Even though parents are exposed to media and news on free education, lack of motivation by parents has been the major contributor for growing disinterest in studies for children. Free education did not hold prime importance as far as when financial scarcity in a family is concerned.

### 6.2 Not Interested in Studies

15% of the parents acknowledged that their wards discontinuing their studies and remained at home. They certified their wards are not interested in studies. A complex of personal cum individual reasons exists. Due to slow grasping ability, scoring less marks, lagged behind in studies and few of them who could not mingle up with the classmates remained at home. Some of the parents have accepted they do not want the children to study and want them to help parents in petty business such as selling fruits and vegetables, in chikki making, alcohol manufacturing, working as mechanic in two-wheeler repair shops, etc. In Khed sub-division the above mentioned reasons are largely observed.

Girls remained at home to assist their mothers and learn household work. Parents' echoed girls remained at

**Table 3.** Administrative sub-divisionwise of Pune district and reasons for dropouts discontinuing the studies

	Economic / Financial Reasons	Health Reasons	Family cum Personal Reasons	Individual Reasons – Not Interested	School Reasons	Migration (Parents moving to other places for New Job / Better Standard of Living)	Married (Quit studies due to Marriage)	Total
<b>Pune Sub-Division</b>	4	2	9	7	2	15	2	41
<b>Baramati Sub-Division</b>	18	2	10	12	0	1	9	52
<b>Khed Sub-Division</b>	0	1	65	6	0	3	0	75
<b>Total</b>	22	5	84	25	2	19	11	168

  

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Degree of Freedom	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	<b>122.431*</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>.000</b>
<b>Table Value = 21.03</b>			

Source: Primary Data

home, due to slow grasping ability and limited numbers had teenage issues and infatuations, etc. Few of school dropouts are married and Baramati sub-division confirms the highest number (Table 3). 6.5% and 3% of the dropouts are associated with marriage and health reasons. From the study, hardly school related reasons are perceived.

### 6.3 Economic Reasons

13.1% of the reasons were associated with economic issues. Children stopped studying to accompany parents for farm work, few joined petty jobs such as cycle repair, beauty parlors, etc. to supplement the family income.

Parents acknowledged that their wards stopped studying due to poverty/poor financial conditions. To mention, few had taken casual job in small companies near Pune city industrial belt, some accompany parents for farm work etc. Girls go together with their mothers in domestic work. Few joined beauty parlors as assistants, etc. to supplement the family income. Very few surveyed is contributing for increase in family income. Baramati sub-division (Table 3), dropouts display high frequency for the above mentioned economic reason.

When considered the parents' profile (referring to the parents' survey statistics) the economic status of the families of dropouts does not seem to be a better off nor worse off. Almost every member of the family is observed

to be contributing/supplementing for increase in income. 65% of the families are supposed to have assets. Maximum parents had their own house and assets either in form of cattle or jewelry and vehicles, etc. Concentrated parents observed does not seem to have several liabilities which hold back their children from realizing the basic education. But still financial debts are expressed as one of the factor contributing for dropout.

### 6.4 Migration

Migration which is the family cum economic reason seems to backmost children remaining a dropout. 11.3% is associated with migration. This response was recorded largely through the relatives of dropout children. Dropouts children basically happen in Pune schools are from the migrating families. This is majorly observed especially in Pune Sub-division, Khed sub-division (Table 3) of the district.

Maximum parent respondents though they had assets such as own house, still travelled to other parts of district along with their children for their means of support. Also more number of children at home is mentioned as the reason for the child to remain a dropout. Higher cost of living in Pune and also more number of children at home is mentioned as the reason for the child to remain a dropout.

(Especially, Pune Sub-division and Khed sub-division dropouts exhibited this reason to a larger extent) Thorough going reasons for dropout are the lack of motivation by parents and not so good financial conditions which exist in the family environment.

### 6.5 School Reasons

School related reasons played an insignificant part to mention as a cause for student dropouts. From the study, hardly school related reasons are observed, if any it is merely distance/ location issue. (Less than 3% dropouts from the whole quoted this as an associated reason).

Understanding the school related reasons disclosed acknowledged bothersome aspects especially of syllabus and evaluation system. Discontinuing the school was linked to the aspect that they were not able to understand the lessons especially, they faced difficulty to learn science, mathematics and other languages. Parents admitted evaluation pattern in examination is very difficult for them and subjects' syllabus is very vast and confirmed it is difficult for their children to remember and write answers in the examinations. As far as teachers and their behavior towards class students are concerned, maximum responded saying the teachers are well behaved. Simply objections were in peer groups who are not friendly towards their wards. Referring to other basic facilities, there are hardly any complaints related to bus timings, congestion of buses, approach road facilities, etc.

Distance to school or town is not a difficulty for maximum dropout students'. The preparedness seemed to be lacking among parent respondents which hold back their children from completing the elementary and basic education.

However, the interactions with parents are concerned, society related reasons such as narrow outlook towards schedule castes, schedule tribes, minority communities and female education etc. is not a hindrance for their wards becoming a dropout.

## 7. Test Statistics

Chi-Square indicates an association between variables. The results of chi-square test taken to verify the hypothesis shows clearly that there is significant difference in the administrative sub-divisions and associated reasons for school dropouts. (In view of the fact that the calculated

value is higher than the table value and the results are significant at 5% level, the null hypothesis is rejected).

## 8. Conclusion

The findings of the present study very well corroborates with the literature. The dropouts are observed in both boys and girls and in all educational levels. The associated reasons are to larger extent individual and personal reasons followed by fewer of economic reasons in combination with migration.

As far as awareness on Governmental Educational Schemes are concerned, it is witnessed parents of school dropouts are familiar with overall free educational schemes available for school going students. The survey highlights the dropouts received mentoring from school authorities and class teachers to continue studies. Neighbors who are involved in social welfare have also correspondingly played their role in generous counseling's for the student dropouts. Few of them responded to pursue education/register again their wards if there are more provisions arranged exclusively for them.

To a larger extent, individual and family reasons and especially the lack of encouragement/casualness from parents seemed to play a dominant role in Pune district dropouts. Though free educational schemes of government is quite made aware (through various platforms) to all the parents, but the depth and importance of it still needed to be acknowledged in full swing.

There is further scope for investigating the other facets. Similar studies can be made in other districts of Maharashtra state with different variables that are applicable to various geographical and socio-economic conditions of the district. Additional studies can furthermore be brought down, not only on problems of school dropouts, school system, role of community etc., but also on their success factors, status, successful government programs and its implementation on the education system.

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