Dropout in Higher Secondary School Students-Modeling a case study in the Cuddalore District, Tamilnadu, India

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Abstract

In this study looks at the factors that underlie dropout in higher Secondary schools in the Cuddalore district. A random sample of 10 villages was selected from 40 villages which have higher Secondary schools. A census of higher Secondary school dropouts in these 10 villages was conducted. About 32 dropouts were obtained and interviewed. Applying Chi Square Test, this study shows that poor performance, attitude, punishment, poverty, drug addict, migration and pregnancy are the factors affecting dropout in Cuddalore district, and recommends that educators encourage to the learners to develop positive attitudes and will improve the higher secondary level school curriculum.

Keywords: Attitude, punishment, poverty, drug addict, migration, slow learners, dropout, educators.

Introduction

The history of education in ancient India is fascinating and is recorded and can be tracked to the ancient era. Education in ancient India began around the 3rd century B.C with elements of religious training and impart of traditional knowledge. Education in ancient India was more identified with the Gurugula system. The education system which the british introduced teaching of English knowledge was given greater emphasis and the study of languages like Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit were left to individual efforts.

The National Policy on Education, 1986 and the Programme of Action (POA) 1992 envisaged free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality for all children below 14 years before the 21st Century. The government committed to earmark 6% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for education, half of which would be spent on primary education. The expenditure on Education as a percentage of GDP also rose from 0.7 per cent in 1951-52 to about 3.6 per cent in 1997-98.

The school system in India has four levels: lower primary (age 6 to 10), upper primary (11 and 12), high (13 to 15) and higher secondary (17 and 18). The lower primary school is divided into five "standards", upper primary school into two, high school into three and higher secondary into two. Students have to learn a common curriculum largely (except for regional changes in mother tongue) till the end of high school. There is some amount of specialization possible at the higher secondary level. Students throughout the country have to learn three languages (namely, English, Hindi and their mother tongue) except in regions where Hindi is the mother tongue and in some streams as discussed below.

There are mainly three streams in school education in India. Two of these are coordinated at the national level, of which one is under the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and was originally meant for children of central government employees who are periodically transferred and may have to move to any place in the country. A number of "central schools" (named Kendriya Vidyalayas) have been established for the purpose in all main urban areas in the country, and they follow a common schedule so that a student going from one school to another on a particular day will hardly see any difference in what is being taught. One subject (Social Studies, consisting of History, Geography and Civics) is always taught in Hindi, and other subjects in English, in these schools. Kendriya Vidyalayas admit other children also if seats are available. All of them follow textbooks written and published by the NCERT. In addition to these government-run schools, a number of private schools in the country follow the CBSE syllabus though they may use different text books and follow different teaching schedules. They have a certain amount of freedom in what they teach in lower classes. The second central scheme is the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE). It seems that this was started as a replacement for the Cambridge School Certificate. The idea was mooted in a conference held in 1952 under the Chairmanship of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the then Minister for Education. The main purpose of the conference was to consider the replacement of the overseas Cambridge School Certificate Examination by an All India Examination. In October 1956 at the meeting of the Inter-State Board for Anglo-Indian Education, a proposal was adopted for the setting up of an Indian Council to administer the University of Cambridge, Local Examinations Syndicate's Examination in India and to advise the Syndicate on the best way to adapt its examination to the needs of the country. The inaugural meeting of the Council was held on 3rd November, 1958. In December 1967, the Council was registered as a Society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. The Council was listed in the Delhi School Education Act 1973, as a body conducting public examinations. Now a large number of schools across the country are affiliated to this Council. All these are private schools and generally cater to children from wealthy families.

Both the CBSE and the ICSE council conduct their own examinations in schools across the country that are affiliated to them at the end of 10 years of schooling (after high school) and again at the end of 12 years (after higher secondary). Admission to the 11th class is normally based on the performance in this all-India examination. Since this puts a lot of pressure on the child to perform well, there have been suggestions to remove the examination at the end of 10 years.

Background

Tamilnadu, Cuddalore district: The Cuddalore district is one of the 32 district In Tamilnadu state. The Cuddalore district is in the North of latitude between 15o 5'/11o 11' and 12o 35' and east of longitude between 78 o 38' and 80o. The district covers a land size of area 3.678 Sq.Km. The total population of the cuddalore district , according to 2011 census, is 2605914. In cuddalore district male Workers are 6,36,911, female Workers are 3,36,155, rural Workers are 7,29,764, urban Workers are 2,43,325, cultivators are 1,85,875, agriculture labors are 4,49,204, house hold Indus workers are 30,457, other workers are 3,07,530, marginal workers are 2,43,302. Nearly half (50.35) of the economically active people in cuddalore district are unemployed.

Literature Review

Dropout is a universal phenomenon of education system in India, spread over all levels of education, in all parts of the country and across all the socio-

economic groups of population. The dropout rates are much higher for educationally backward states and districts. Only about 45% of learners who start primary school in a given year write CBSC examinations after 10 years of schooling. A high dropout rate deprives the country of well-informed and competent future leaders.

The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986, has provided for environment awareness, science and technology education, and introduction of traditional elements such as Yoga into the Indian secondary school system. Secondary education covers children aged 14 to 18, 88.5 million children according to the Census, 2001.

Factors Affecting Dropout

The following are cited in the literature as important factors affecting dropout in higher Secondary schools: Motivation to learn; attitude towards learning; substance abuse; encouragement by teachers; peer pressure; pregnancy; and poor performance. When learners are motivated they build some confidence which results in learners performing very well thereby reducing the rate of dropping out (Mullins, 2005: 39; ul.netd.ac.za). The maintenance of high motivation influences psychological and social functioning and facilitates academic performance (Gilman & Anderman, 2006: 375-391). Sanchez (2000) proposes that the way students define themselves determines their success or failure in the future. Thus self-concept or attitudes formed throughout life as a result of social integration and socialization process, counts much for their success or otherwise. The negative attitude towards learning invariably causes learners to perform poorly. Accessibility or otherwise, all affect learners' attitude to learn. Castejon and Perez (1998) found that educator's expectations significantly influence the learner's performance. There is a positive relationship between the When a learner loses interest in attending school because of negative attitude or for other various reasons, he/she is bound to perform poorly. Similarly if she/he gets into bad habit - smoking, drinking, and truancy - the learner will not perform well and will consequently drop out (ul.netd.ac.za). Substance abuse refers to alcohol and drug abuse. Learners who are addicted to alcohol and drugs tend to drop out to work (car wash, taxi driving, security job, etc.) to get money so that they can buy those substances. Thus substance abuse can change ones attitude towards learning leading to a dropout. Moreover attitude to schooling becomes negative when learners take substances and that very often leads to dropout (Hodgekinson, 1990). The abuses of such substances hamper the ability of the learner in several ways; including crime and recklessness. Most crimes committed at schools involve substance use (Cunningham, 1993: 272).

Marchesi & Martin (2002) conducted research in Spain and found that the relationship between the learner and educator is one of the factors that determine academic performance. How the teachers carry themselves, their lifestyles and their educator's motivation and that of a learner, and the socio-metric status of the learner affects performance both directly and indirectly, (Georgiou, 2002; Kriek & Grayson, 2009: 185-203). Peer pressure results in negative decisions, rebellion and moody behavior, which in turn results in poor academic performance and dropout (Sharry, 2004: 1-3). Research by Buote (2001) indicates that there is a positive correlation between academic performance and peer relationships. Learners found to be rejected tend to perform poorly. Most pregnant learners drop out of school because of several different reasons. According to Lynette Vermaas, (Student Development and Support Practitioner at the Directorate of Student Development and Support of Tshwane University of Technology in Pretoria, in South Africa), the increased unplanned pregnancies and the effects contribute greatly to dropout. Students experience post-abortion stress symptoms grievously affecting their psychological well-being, and ultimately leading to poor academic performance and dropout (www.vuma.ac.za). If learners perform poorly (repeat the same grade several times), they tend to lose hope and decide to drop out. Research studies indicate that repetition is a strong predictor of dropout and that there is a strong correlation between repetition and dropout. In 2007, a third of all children at school in South Africa had repeated a grade; and in the year 2009, 9% of learners enrolled in schools were repeating the grades of the previous year (DoBE, 2011: 4).

Methodology

Materials/data

A random sample of 10 villages was selected from 40 villages in the district which have higher Secondary schools. A census of higher Secondary school dropouts in these 10 villages was conducted. About 28 dropouts were obtained and interviewed. A structured questionnaire was used in the interview. Some of the questions in the questionnaire were the following: Are you a drop-out of school?; Which class were you when you dropped out?; What made you to drop out; (Performance, Pregnancy, Attitude, Punishment, Finance, Drug addict, Poverty, Family matters, Migrated, Sickness)?; Did you repeat a grade before?; If poverty was the main reason, what did you need money for? (To pay fees, buy uniform, money for transport to school, money for books)? what is the distance from your home to school?; what is the mean family monthly income? (Less than Rs.1000, Rs.1001–Rs.2000, Rs.2001 –Rs.3000, Rs.3001 – Rs.5000, Rs.5001 and above)? Do you have friend who have dropped out?; If yes your friends and you, who dropped out first?; How old are you, your friends, etc.?

Methods/analysis: After basic statistical analyses, Chi-square test analyses were also done.

Results

Variable	Frequency	%
Performance, Attitude	12	22.22
Poverty, Finance	05	09.25
Sickness, Drug addict	16	29.62
Punishments	09	16.66
Married, Pregnancy	08	14.81
Migrated, Family matters	04	07.40

Table 1 shows that 29.62% of learners dropped out of school because of sickness and drug addict. 22.22% of learners dropped out of school because of poor performance and attitude, 16.66% dropped out because of negative approach of punishment, 14.81% dropped out because of marriage and pregnancy., Learners who dropped out because of Poverty and finance is 9.25% and that of those who dropped out because of migrated and family matters is 7.40%, The Two variables, viz.: Performance, Attitude (22.22%) and Sickness, Drug addict (29.62%) constitute 51.84% of the dropouts' cases. Remaining four variables Poverty, Finance (9.25), Punishments (16.66), Married, Pregnancy (14.81) and Migrated, Family matters (7.40) constitute 48.12.

Hypothesis

1. Dropouts are equally likely to occur on the above variables.
2. Dropouts are not equally likely to occur on the above variables.

Total numbers of dropouts to attend the above variables are 54.

On the assumption, the expected number of dropouts in one district .

Let O denote observed frequency and E denote expected frequency

S.No.	O	E	O - E	$(O - E)^2$
1	12	9	3	9
2	5	9	-4	16
3	16	9	7	49
4	9	9	0	0
5	8	9	-1	1
6	4	9	-5	25
Total	**54**	**54**		**100**

$$\chi^2 = \sum\left[\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}\right] = \frac{100}{9} = 11.11$$

N = number of classes 6. Therefore number of degrees of freedom = n - 1 = 6 - 1 = 5.

For 5 of degrees of freedom the table value of χ^2 is < the table value of χ^2 is 11.11.

Therefore calculated value of χ^2 table value of χ^2,

Hence the hypothesis 1 is Dropouts are equally likely to occur on three districts accepted. This means that dropouts are equally likely to accrue on the above variables.

Conclusion

The above data's and calculations, the impact of six variables are equal percentage in the dropouts. The comparison of component wise the most of the dropouts are Performance, Attitude (22.22%) and Sickness, Drug addict (29.62%) constitute 51.84% but the lowest percentage of dropouts are Poverty, Finance (9.25), Punishments (16.66), Married, Pregnancy (14.81) and Migrated, Family matters (7.40). The suggestions to reduce the percentage of dropouts more concentrate to the awareness of higher secondary course, health problems and mainly drug addict and add vocational education syllabus with experimental learning method will give extra assistance to under-performing learners, sex education and will be given with seriousness to reduce unwanted pregnancies.

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