

Socio-Economic Factors as a Cause of Children Dropout at Primary Level

* Dr. Safdar Rehman Ghazi

** Dr. Riasat Ali

*** Dr. Saqib Shahzad

*Assistant Professor Institute of Education & Research
University of Science & Technology, Bannu, Khybr Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan*

*Email: drsrghazi@yahoo.com **Email: drriasatali@yahoo.com

***Email: drsaqib577@yahoo.com

Gulap Shahzada

*Lecturer, Institute of Education & Research
University of Science & Technology, Bannu, Khybr Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan*

Email: gulap_786@yahoo.com

Karim Nawaz

*M. Phil Scholar, Institute of Education & Research
University of Science & Technology, Bannu, Khybr Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan*

Abstract Pakistan's commitment to universal primary education by 2015 under EFA Framework appears elusive on current performance, as participation is low and drop-out rates continue to be high (Govt. of Pakistan, 2009). From the review of literature, social and economic factors were found as two main causes of children dropout; problem under study was to know about socio-economic factors as a cause of children dropout at primary level. For the purpose, forty dropout children and their parents were interviewed using structured interview sheet of ten statements; five for social factors and five for economic factors. The collected data was tabulated, analyzed and interpreted in the light of the objectives of the study. Percentage was used to analyze the data as a statistical tool. Parents and children frequency of responses with percentage on selected socio-economic factors was presented in tabular form. It was concluded that the parents' illiteracy and their consideration of education unfruitful for their children, their engagement in earnings, financial problems of the children, considering education as economic burden, engaging children in earning, and parents' poor economic condition were the major areas which caused of their children dropout, and these areas provided sufficient basis for the recommendations of this study accordingly.

Key words: Dropout, Primary, Education, Children, Socio- Economic

1. Introduction

At the time of independence the situation of educational institutions was deteriorated. Iqbal (1977) presented a vivid picture of the condition of education. At that time the citizen of the new country was about 90 % illiterate and there were only a handful of education institutions which were grossly inadequate for the need of the new country. Pakistan received only two of the twenty one universities of undivided India, one located in each wing. But that was the only equal divisions of education resources. In East Pakistan there were twenty nine thousand schools out of the total thirty nine thousand. The ratio was reversed at the secondary level the west wing has 55 hundred out of 9 thousand schools. Provinces Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan have little more than 100 primary schools each. There were a few

schools and only one intermediate college. The country as a whole came away with 83 colleges. Three Engineering Colleges 108 teachers' training schools and 71 associated technical industrial and agricultural institutions. So in spite of other crucial problems faced by the new state, education was given the priority. An all Pakistan education conference was held in November 1947 to consider the educational needs of the ideological state. The conference under the presidentship of Mr. Fazal-ur-Rehman recommended as follows:

- a. The education should be inspired by the ideology emphasizing among many of its characteristics those of universal brotherhood, tolerance and justice.
- b. Free and compulsory education should be introduced for a period of 5 years, which should be gradually raised to 8-9 years.
- c. Primary schools could be co educational or otherwise according to local needs.
- d. A comprehensive scheme should be prepared for the reorganization of technical education suited to the economic needs of the country and the peculiar genius of our people.

In 1959, president Ayoub Khan appointed a commission to suggest recommendations for the re-organization and re-orientation of the existing educational system. The commission paid special attention to primary education with following recommendations.

- a. Compulsory education at the elementary level is indispensable for skilled manpower and intelligent citizenship. For this at least 8 years schooling is required.
- b. The target should be to achieve 5 years compulsory schooling with in a period of 15 years.
- c. (a) Funds required that for compulsory primary education would be raised 50% by a special tax on the district bases in West Pakistan and sub-divisional bases in East Pakistan.
(b) 50% funds from general revenues, of the provincial governments.
- d. The administration of primary education should not be entrusted local bodies. It should be organized at district bases.

In 1969, new education policy was proposed. Although the policy could not be implemented, it discussed at length the ills of the primary education system and put forward the following recommendations regarding the primary education.

- a. The child should have the opportunity of receiving elementary education after the age of 13 years. Comprising 5 years of primary school education from class 1 to 5 (from the age of 5 to 10 years) and three years of school education.
- b. That in the primary schools there should be emphasis on the teaching of 4 i.e reading writing, arithmetic and religion. The medium of instructions should be the mother tongue of the child. Every primary school should has interesting models. Charts and other visual aids to make education interesting and exciting.
- c. There should be no examination in the first two classes. Promotion up to class two should be automatic. There should however be an objective test or examination at the end of class three but no child should be failed, the final examination should be the terminal stage of the primary schools at class 5.

In 1972-80 education policy was a target orientated policy with the following strategy to promote primary education:

- a. Additional classrooms for primary classes will be constructed to provide schools with in easy walking distance from the children home. The universalization of elementary education will require about 225 lac additional teachers. The existing teacher training institutions will turn about 75 thousand teachers during the 8 years period ending in 1980. 75 thousand teachers will be available from the general stream of education. 75 thousand teachers will be provided by establishment of national literacy corps drawn from:
 - a) Local available unemployed persons retired civil servant and ex-service men etc.
 - b) University and college students are proposed for national servant corps.
 - c) Textbooks and writing materials will be provided free to primary schools children according to a phased programme.
 - d) Dignity of labour will be emphasized in school study will be made relevant to individuals and social needs.

The military regime of General Zia-Ul-Hjaq formulated a new education policy in 1978. The policy provided that dropout means wastage in education. Dropout is a student, who leaves the school for any reason before the completion of the educational programme and without being transferred to any other

school in other words a dropout is a child who leave the school before completing the educational stages in which he was enrolled (Attaullah, 2000).

Attaullah (2000) presented the following factors responsible for high dropout, health problems, and sickness in family (family disease) work at home, poverty inclement whether, parental indifference, travel (transportation) and irregular attendance. Theses problems affect the efficiency of the students, which ultimately leads to dropout. He further puts the following reasons responsible for high dropout rate: Lack of education programme to meet the individual's vocational and intellectual needs of the students, Economic pressure that forces a student to assist his family to increase the income, Disinterest on the part of youngsters cause of social pressure for getting a job to provide them money and independence from their families, Unhappy and unsuccessful school experience also causes dropout, The emotional difficulties cause school learning problems, heterogeneous group problem, non adjustment at the school, broader educational disability rather than specific learning problems, The existing outdated method of examination is also one of the root causes of dropout and the poor quality of education is also responsible for the dropout in the country.

Setharam Usha Devy (1989) pointed out: parental poverty and consequent drive of the parents to employ their own children, firm or non firm worked of the house to save on labour or alternative to send their children for paid labour is vital factor for dropout. The writer further describes that family background also plays a major role in holding the children with in the school. Education, occupation and income of parents, the educational statistic as a whole, family size and health status of parents etc. are the external factors which influence the retention of children or their defection from school.

In the light of the various education policies of Pakistan and teachers' views following two were the major causes of dropout at primary level:

a. Economic factors: Low level economy of the country, low per-capita income of the people, inadequate provision of physical facilities in school. Shortage of funds, poor standard of health and nutrition, costly textbooks / exercise books, inadequacy of audio visual aids, poor condition of school buildings and poor motivational level of parents to send their children to the schools are factors effecting educational wastage and cause of dropout.

b. Social/cultural factors: Social cultural inhibitions towards education of the female, rivalry among families specially in Baluchistan, tribal areas, establishment of schools, in the house of Zamindars and tribal chiefs, in difference of communities and parents to education in general and that of girls in particular, and custom of early marriages are some factors causes dropout.

The primary education is a foundation stone in the educational system of a nation. Its importance cannot be underrated as it forms the foundation of all subsequent education. The education policy 1998-2010 recognizes this fact by recording "Elementary education is the fundamental right of all peoples, men and women of all types of areas and places, irrespective of gender, sect, religion or any other denomination". Everyone has "the right of education" states the universal declaration of human rights 1948. In the convention in the right of the child 1989 stressed that the child has a right of education and the state's duty is to ensure that primary education is free and compulsory.

The number of primary schools including mosque school in Pakistan stands at about 124 thousand with enrolment of about 11.5 million. By the year 2002 the population of 5-9 age group will raise approximately to 22 million. To achieve universal primary education additional places will be needed for 10.5 million students. This will require 107 thousand new primary and mosque schools.

The National Educational Policy (1998-2010) has pointed out that the limitations that have obstructed universalization include:

- a) Rapid increase in the population of 5-9 age group
- b) Dropout rate is up to 50 %
- c) Lack of access to primary schools
- d) Resources availability
- e) School hours
- f) Opportunity cost
- g) Low female participation

Dropout has been the main source of wastage in education in Pakistan; Primary education consists of class from one to five. The greatest numbers of any country population's attend the primary stage. It plays fundamental role in promoting the literacy rate but unfortunately Pakistan has badly failed in universalizing the primary education.

According to a survey only 51 % children of the school going age get chanced of enrolment in a primary school and half of them are dropouts. Similarly, in a 1995 comprehensive survey, mere 20.7

percent of total students were competent at a level that is considered basic. The North West Frontier Province had the lowest achievement level at only 9.11 percent. Urban competencies were double those of rural areas 29.2 percent of girls could read with comprehension. Parents want their children to be trained in some professional skills in a very young age instead of wasting their time in schools.

2. Identification of the Problem

The education is a basic human right, and it is the responsibility of the government to provide free education to its all citizens. The system has not with standing optimistic proposals by various governments. Even still we have not yet succeeded in universalizing basic education. Statistical surveys show that in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa the total population of 5-9 age group is 3.25million while the gross enrolment ratios in boys is 75 % and girls 50 % but the net enrolment ratio is 59 % and 37 % accordingly. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which has 957 union councils and 24 district governments, has total 17.74 million populations; with the growth rate of 2.8 % have 35.2 % literacy rate. While the population 5-9 age group 3.26 million in which the enrolled are 2.04 million with the 18% dropout ratio approximately.

According to the National Education Policy (1998-2010) poverty, attitude of parents, illness, ignorance of parents, unattractive schools, poor quality of teachers and irrelevance of curriculum etc. are the factors causing dropout. From the review of literature, considering social and economic factors as two main causes of dropout; the problem under study was to know about socio-economic factors as a cause of children dropout at primary level in district Bannu, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

2.1 Objectives of the Study

The following were the objectives of this study:

1. To explore different social factors which make the students to leave the school;
2. To point out different economic factors which cause the dropout at primary level; and
3. To give recommendations to eliminate the socio-economic causes of dropout among students at primary Level.

2.1.1 Delimitations of the Study

This study was delimited to the views of dropped out children at primary level and their parents in district Bannu of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Population and Sampling

Dropout children at primary level from the primary schools of district Bannu and their parents constituted the population of this study. Forty dropout children and their parents were taken as a sample using convenient sampling technique.

3.1.1 Instrumentation

A structured interview sheet of ten statements; five for social factors and five for economic factors, was constructed. It was translated into Pashto (local language). Using volunteer services of one of the students of principal researcher, children and their parents were interviewed in Pashto.

3.1.2 Analysis of Data

The collected data was tabulated, analyzed and interpreted in the light of the objectives of the study. Percentage was used to analyze the data as a statistical tool. Parents and children frequency of responses with percentage on selected socio-economic factors was presented in tabular form.

Table 1: Parents and Children Frequency of Responses on Socio-Economic Factors

S. No	Factors	Parents				Children			
		Yes		No		Yes		No	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Tense environment at home.	19	47.5	21	52.5	15	37.5	25	62.5
2	Illiteracy of the parents.	38	95	2	5	40	100	0	0
3	Family enmity of the parents.	11	27.5	29	72.5	6	15	34	85
4	Lack of spouses' understanding.	9	22.5	31	77.5	11	27.5	29	72.5
5	Considering education unfruitful.	30	75	10	25	38	95	2	5
6	Parents' engagement in earnings.	36	90	4	10	38	95	2	5
7	Financial problems of the children.	40	100	0	0	40	100	0	0
8	Education as economic burden.	33	82.5	7	17.5	17	42.5	23	57.5
9	Engaging children in earning.	35	87.5	5	12.5	34	85	6	15
10	Parents' poor economic condition.	35	87.5	5	12.5	38	95	2	5

Above table shows that 52.5% parents and 62.5% children do not support that tense environment at home was a cause of dropout. 95% parents and 100% children are in favour that illiteracy of parents was a cause of dropout. 72.5% parents and 85% children do not favour that family enmity of parents was a cause of their children dropout. 77.5% parents and 72.5% children do not support that lack of spouses' understanding was a cause of dropout. 75% parents and 95% children are in favour that they considered the education unfruitful that cause dropout. 90% parents and 95% children are in support that parents' engagement in earnings was a cause of dropout. 100% parents and children are in favour that children left schools due to their financial problem. 82.5% parents considered education as economic burden while 57.5% children do not think so. 87.5% parents and 85% children agreed that engaging children in earning was a cause of dropout. 87.5 parents and 95% children are in favour that parents' poor economic condition was the cause of children dropout at primary level in district Bannu of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

4. Conclusions

1. Tense environment at home, family enmity of the parents, and lack of spouses' understanding were not the major causes of children dropout.
2. Two social factors, parents' illiteracy and their consideration regarding education of being unfruitful for their children secured future were found the major causes of children dropout.
3. Parents' engagement in earnings, financial problems of the children, considering education as economic burden, engaging children in earning, and parents' poor economic condition were the major economical areas of the family which caused of children dropout.

4. Recommendations

1. Adults' literacy programs with incentives should be introduced at lower level.
2. Media may play a vital role to aware the society regarding the importance of education and the government should produce more and more chances of employment for educated persons.
3. Parents should take keen interest in the solution of educational problems of their children. Especially focusing on their financial problems as a priority other than daily life problems.
4. Parents should be given helping hands regarding their children education. Government may allocate budget for the purpose to improve economic condition of parents.
5. Rules of child labour must be strictly observed by the government.
6. As majority of the parents cannot afford educational expenses of their children, therefore, students may be awarded scholarships.

7. Education budget may be increased up to 5% of GNP to overcome the financial matter regarding children education.
8. There is need of serious implementation of universal primary education rules.

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