Factors Affecting the School Dropout in Rajasthan: A Study Based on NSSO Data

Bhanupratap Singh Chouhan

PhD scholar, Geography Department, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur

Abstract

Education is the basic requirement for human development. With education, employment opportunities are broadened and income levels are increased. Each welfare state attempts to achieve this goal through universalizing literacy and ensuring the quality of education. As a result, some improvement also observed in Rajasthan in term of literacy rate between 2001 to 2011. The challenge of 'Education for All' is still substantial, especially for some section of society. Despite the government's efforts for education, the phenomenon of school dropouts remains a blot on the progress of education not only in India but also in most the states including with the Rajasthan. Present study is an attempt to understand the differentials and determinant of school dropouts in Rajasthan by analyzing the NSSO 64th Round (2007-08) data on education. We applied cross tabulation and logistic regression techniques to identify the factor which determine the school dropouts among children age 5-29 years. It was found that only 59% of the children in the age group 5 to 29 years are currently attending school. Differential in school dropout are observed not only with socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of household but also with the school infrastructure. Results shows that gender differentials are different in case of Rajasthan as girls are less likely to dropout than boys. Gender and age of children, Residence, caste, monthly household expenditure and the distance from the school are emerged as strong determinant of school dropout in Rajasthan. Therefore, Government needs to special focus on these areas in its education policy and programme in order to overcome with the dropout problem among the children.

Keywords: Education, Rajasthan, School Enrolment, Dropout, NSSO**,** Logistic Regression

Introduction

Education is the basic requirement for human development. With education, employment opportunities are broadened and income levels are increased. The development of an individual and the progress of a nation depend on education. It is also the principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values and thus is the strongest force in the development and growth of a child in preparing him/her to be a responsible, intelligent, and capable citizen. Education is also equally important to improve the women's status and autonomy. It contributes to an increase in confidence and decision-making power within the household. In India, although the percentage of literacy is rising, what is alarming is that the number of illiterate children in the age group of 6 to 14 years is also increasing [Sharma, *et al*, 2007].

In 1990 at the World Conference on Education for All, governments agreed to a broad range of education goals including that of attainment of Universal Primary Education (UPE) by the year 2000. Sadly the millennium year had come and gone, but the UPE goal is still a distant dream, more so in developing countries like India. The millennium development goals as drawn up by the United Nations now directs nations to ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course in primary education by the year 2015. While the government has been making concerted efforts aimed at expanding the reach of education, the phenomenon of school dropouts remains a blot on the progress of education in India. What is cause for particular concern is the enormity of the problem in most states of India and at all stages of school education where unacceptably high dropout rates have been reported [Choudhury, 2006].

The dropouts from primary schools are very large in number and they are the much ignored group of children in India. Over sixty percent of the children in India who start first grade do not complete fifth grade. This record compares unfavorably not only with richer industrial nations but also with countries like Malaysia and Sri Lanka where almost all children complete primary schooling (UNESCO, 1989). The dropouts represent a significant human cost to children and the nation since they will most likely be permanently illiterate [Desai, 1991]. Illiteracy, poverty, inadequate earnings and poor living conditions of parents force them not only to withdraw their wards from schools but also put them in various types of jobs for contribution to the family income [Rao, 2000].

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2007), India has the lowest public expenditure on higher education per student in the world. India spends just 3.5 percent of its gross domestic product on education, way below China's 8 percent. The public expenditure on education has actually declined from around 3.23 percent of GDP in 2000-01 to 2.88 percent in recent times. As a proportion of total government expenditure, it has declined from around 11.1 percent in 2000-01 to around 9.98 in recent years.

Initiatives by the government to improve education

- *Operation Blackboard* (1987–88) aimed to improve the human and physical resources available in primary schools.
- *Restructuring and Reorganization of Teacher Education* (1987) created resource for the continuous upgrading of teachers' knowledge and competence.
- *Minimum Levels of learning* (1991) laid down levels of achievement at various stages and revised textbooks.
- *National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education* (1995) provided a cooked meal every day for children in Classes 1–5 of all government, government-aided and local body schools
- *District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)* (1993) emphasized decentralized planning and management, improved teaching and learning materials, and school effectiveness.
- *Movement to Educate All* (2000) aimed to achieve universal primary education by 2010 through micro-planning and school-mapping exercises, bridging gender and social gaps.
- *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA), started in 2001, is to provide education to children between 6–14 years by 2010, The programme focuses specially on girls and children with challenged social or financial backgrounds.

Review of literature

Despite efforts to incorporate all sections of the population into the Indian education system, through mechanisms such as positive discrimination and non-formal education, large numbers of young people are still without schooling. Although enrolment in primary education has increased, it is estimated that at least 35 million and possibly as many as 60 million, children aged 6–14 years are not in school. Severe gender, regional, and caste disparities also exist. The main problems are the high drop-out rate, low levels of learning and achievement, inadequate school infrastructure, poorly functioning schools, high teacher absenteeism, the large number of teacher vacancies, poor quality of education and inadequate funds. The children 'at risk', such as orphans, child-labourers, street children and victims of riots and natural disasters, do not necessarily have access to schools [Lall, 2005

The poor quality of schooling is responsible for low retention [Colclough, 1993]. Slum dwelling population is vulnerable due to associated influences such as low socio-economic status, lower parental literacy rates, high of juvenile delinquency, and low status of female children [Pratinidhi *et al*, 1992].

Levy (1971) using data from 42 less developed countries tried to explore the relationship between social, political, economic and educational variables and the dropout rate from primary schools. It was found that school systems with high rates of repetition also have high dropout rates over the primary cycle. This suggests that automatic promotion may reduce educational wastage. While increased urbanization and development of communication systems increase school continuation. There is some evidence that the economic returns to education are important determinants of school continuation.

Borooah (2003) examined a large Indian database and observed that while only 11 per cent of children lived in villages without a primary school, 30 per cent lived in villages without a middle school. A similar picture is reflected in urban areas. Similar results have also been reported by Shariff (1995) and Sengupta and Guha (2002).The fact that dropout rate of Muslims is higher in India has also been borne out by the analysis carried out by Bhat and Zavier (2005). They argued that communities that took to education earlier had the advantage that was passed on to the next generation. Higher illiteracy or educational backwardness of Muslims is a legacy of the past. Consequently in urban India, following independence, upper caste Hindus were in a better position to take advantage of opportunities for secondary education than Muslims who lagged behind in primary education and literacy.

Influence of family and household characteristics in school dropouts

Choudhury (2006) argued that as student moves from primary school to a higher stage of school, the chance of dropping out of school increases 2.7 times. The chance of Muslim student discontinuing is 1.9 times than that of Hindus. Further he mentioned that the total number of siblings has been found to be a highly significant predictor of school drop-out. An increase in family size by one increases the chance of dropping out 1.7 times. His analysis confirms that father's level of education is significantly related to dropout behaviour. For each higher class of father's education, the likelihood of a student dropping out reduces by 16 per cent. However "mother's primary education or middle level schooling did not have significant influence on dropouts". Sengupta and Guha (2002) in their analysis of female dropouts in the state of West Bengal have observed that father's level of education is significantly related to dropout behavior.

Rao (2000) also indicate that poverty is one of the main causes of drop out of girls. According to Upendranath (1995) Indian education has been experiencing with high incidence of dropout at middle level (6th

to 8th classes) and this is more for girls than boys. Data shows that in most countries, like India, more girls than boys drop out, resulting in a widening of the gender gap between primary and secondary and between secondary and tertiary enrolment ratios

Need for the study
Despite of governmental efforts, huge investment and many innovative programmes, the school dropout remains alarming high in many states. In this context, it is not only the provision of schooling facilities and quality of education, but also other household and social factors play a major role in influencing the discontinuation of education. NSSO 64th round (2007-08) provides an opportunity to examine the school dropout, based on large nationally representative sample survey of households in Indian context.

Objectives
- To examine the Factors influencing the school dropouts by their background characteristics.
- To determine the main determinant of school dropout.

Data Source and Methodology
This study is based on the findings of the 64th Round all-India survey on 'Participation and Expenditure in Education', conducted during the period July 2007 - June 2008 by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO). The NSS 64th Round was designed to collect information on (a) participation of persons aged 5-29 years in the education system of the country (b) private expenditure incurred by households on education and (c) the extent of educational wastage in terms of dropout and discontinuance, and its causes. In this study, the person who got enrolled in the school but currently not attending the school among the age 5-29 years are taken for study. The sample size of such cases is 3501.

The person who got enrolled in past and not attending currently has been taken as case of dropout or discontinuations are taken as dependent variables. The study uses selected socio-economic variables and some specific causes for dropout to understand the impact of these variables on dropout ratio. The socioeconomic characteristics are such as Sex, place of residence, age group, caste, religion, sex of household head, educational level of household head, Distance of school like primary, upper primary and secondary from home and monthly household expenditure. In order to see the variation in dropout ratio Cross-tabulation Method has been used with socio-economic variables. Since dropout is a dichotomous variable, Logistic Regression technique is employed to explore the net influences of various variables on dropout after controlling other relevant predictor variables.

Analysis
After doing cross tabulation between dropout ration and background characteristics to study the gross effects, the result show a wide variation of level of dropout ratio with changing socio-economic (**Table-1**) Although among all currently attending school person in Rajasthan, the person are who got enrolled ever but not currently attending is considered the case of dropout. This types of case in Rajasthan is 40.9% (NSSO 64th round,(2007-08). It is found that female (36.3%) has low level of dropout than male (44.2%). Urban areas (33.8%) have less number of dropouts than rural (43.3%). The gap of rural –urban difference is about 10%, that may be due to urban areas have better educational service and quality of service. It is evident that as the age group of person increases the level of dropout also decreases. The dropout in 5-9 age group is 91%, but for next group (10-14) it decrease very rapidly to 59%. In later ages it is tended to decrease smoothly. This may be due to in early ages; probability of educational wastage is always high. If child get fails, not able to cope up with study and school environment and repetition of classes occurs, the chances of dropout increase very high. Religion plays an important role in education. Person of Hindus (40.4) has low level of dropout than Muslims (44.4%) and Sikhs (50.5%). Jains have lowest level of dropout. This may be due to Jains are economically advanced. Other side Muslims is socially and economically backward. Their children face problems due to be friend with children of other religion and mostly they are ignored and even refused to give admission in school.

Household characteristics like sex and educational level of household head have impact on level of dropout. The houses which are headed by male have less number of dropout ratio than female headed household. Mostly, household are headed by male in Rajasthan due to paternity society. Generally, Female becomes HH head in case of widow, divorced. In this situation women have to work to earn money to bring up their family and stays out of house in working times. That 'why children of such kind houses not go to school to handle the household. Educated parents have understanding of value of education than illiterate persons and have high level of wealth. So their children are less likely to dropout.

Distance of school from home also one of the important factor which have impact on dropout ratio. If the schools are situated far from home, female child have low probability to get admission in school. Monthly household expenditure plays an important role to effects the dropout ratio. On basis of quintals, the poorest has near about 50% dropout among their group. It decreases with as the economic status increase. The dropout ratio

decrease a little

Table -1: Percentage distribution of persons of age 5-29 years enrolled in the past but currently not attending (dropout or discontinuing among ever enrolled) by background characteristics.

Background Characteristics		Dropout (%)	No. of estimated sample[1]
RAJASTHAN		**40.9**	**8176325**
Sex	Male	44.2	4769418
	Female	36.3	3406907
Place of Residence	Rural	43.3	6112889
	Urban	33.8	2063435
Age Group	5-9	91.6	52733
	10-14	59.7	640628
	15-19	46.8	2211474
	20-24	38.2	3059125
	25-29	32.0	2212366
Caste	ST	52.8	837433
	SC	49.0	1614115
	OBC	39.2	3976458
	Others	31.6	1748318
Religion	Hindu	40.4	7240810
	Muslims	44.4	752402
	Sikhs	50.5	145981
	Jains	16.5	30762
	Others	71.5	6369
Sex of Household Head	Male	46.0	829998
	Female	68.8	32930
Educational level of HH Head	No education	100	7889
	Primary	60.4	423055
	Secondary	40.7	332460
	More than secondary	5.90	99525
Distance of primary school from home	Less than 2KM.	40.7	8090440
	More than 2KM.	56.0	85884
Distance of upper primary school from home	Less than 2KM.	40.0	7403337
	More than 2KM.	47.9	772987
Distance of secondary school from home	Less than 2KM.	38.4	4955145
	More than 2KM.	44.7	3221180
Monthly Household Expenditure (Quintal)	0-20 (Poorest)	50.6	1602433
	20-40(Poorer)	47.6	1198622
	40-60(middle)	46.3	1596215
	60-80(Richer)	33.4	2026861
	80-100(Richest)	31.1	1752194

NoofOriginalSample=3501

[1] Weighted cases

Table 2: Result of Logistic Regression

Background Characteristics		B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Sex[1]	Female	-.318	.000	.728***
Types of Residence[2]	Urban	-.200	.031	.819**
Age Group[3]	10-14	-1.791	.005	.167***
	15-19	-2.168	.000	.114***
	20-24	-2.558	.000	.077***
	25-29	-2.793	.000	.061***
Caste[4]	SC	.013	.929	1.013
	OBC	-.227	.083	.797*
	Others	-.487	.001	.614***
Religion[5]	Muslims	.449	.000	1.567***
	Sikhs	.367	.172	1.444
	Jains	.555	.190	1.743
	Others	.900	.334	2.460
Distance of primary school from home[6]	More than 2Km	.754	.044	2.125*
Distance of upper primary school from home[6]	More than 2Km	-.145	.308	.865
Distance of secondary school from home[6]	More than 2Km	.055	.544	1.057
Monthly Household Expenditure (Quintal)[7]	20-40	.016	.899	1.016
	40-60	.018	.874	1.018
	60-80	-.322	.004	.725***
	80-100	-.447	.000	.639***
	Constant	2.533	.000	12.587

No of sample = 3501

Dependent variable: Persons of age 5-29 years enrolled in the past but currently not attending (case of dropout) =0, Attending=1. **Significant level: (*******) = Significant with α<0.01,   (******) = Significant with α<0.05,   (*) = Significant with α<0.10

Reference Categories:
1. Male
2. Rural
3. 5-9 (Age Group)
4. ST (Caste)
5. Hindus
6. Less than 2 KM
7. 0-20 (Quintal, Monthly household expenditure)

till middle class. After this, dropout ratio decrease very rapidly. This is due higher number poorer person in Rajasthan. It is because skewed to poorer.

Logistic Regression Analysis (**Table-2**) shows that gender has a significant role to determine the level of dropout. Female are 28% less likely to dropout than males. This may be due to male have to participate in economic activities early than female. Girls are more sincere and dedicated to their study. Girls have more controlled than boys in family that'swhy they have less chances to indulge in bad hobbits than boys. Age group has significant influence on dropout. Person to belong to 15-19, 20-24 and 25-29 have less likely to dropout 84%, 93% and 94% respectively than 5-9 age group.

Person belonging to OBC and General have 21% and 39% less probability than ST. SC has no significant relation to ST. ST are mostly lives in remote areas, so they have higher probability to dropout. Muslims are only who have 1.57 times odds than Hindus with higher level of significance. Other religion has no significant relation to Hindus. This may be due to small sample size of others religion. Muslims are ignored and even rejected to give admission in school. If they get admission, they have problems to be friend with persons of other religion.

Distance of school from home is not significant expect in case of primary school. Household expenditure shows that person belongs to richer and richest class has 36% and 27% less probability to dropout respectively.

Conclusions

The present study tried to understand the differentials in school dropouts for selected background characteristics at Rajasthan. Based on the data from NSSO 64th round, it was found that only 59 percent of the children in the age group 5 to 29 years are currently attending school. As expected, the gender differentials are different in

Rajasthan as girls are less likely to dropout than boys.

Government should develop the educational infrastructure in remote tribal areas. It should be insured that a children of backward community and caste will be given privileged in school enrollment and try to be retain them in system. It is important to emphasis here that improving the school infrastructure, quality of education and huge investment in school education can only reduce the extent of dropout to a limited extent. Unless and until there is considerable improvement in the economic status of households and change in the social attitudes of parents, achieving the goal of universalisation of school education will remain a major challenge for India.

References

Bhat, P N Mari and A J Francis Zavier (2005): 'Role of Religion in Fertility Decline: The Case of Indian Muslims', *Economic and Political Weekly*, XL, 5, pp 385-402.

Borooah, Vani K (2003): 'Births, Infants and Education: An Econometric Portrait of Women and Children in India', *Development and Change*, 34, pp 67-102.

Choudhury, Amit (2006), "Revisiting Dropouts: Old Issues, Fresh Perspectives", *Economic and Political Weekly,* December 16.

Colclough, C. (1993). "The Impact of Primary Schooling on Economic Development: A Review of the Evidence*". World Development,* 10:167-185.

Desai, Uday (1991), "Determinants of Educational Performance in India: Role of Home and Family", *International Review of Education,* Vol. 37, No. 2 pp. 245- 265

Dongaonkar, Dayanand (2006), Missing Links in Education System in India. Paper is part of "Mission Literacy" published in the special issue of *University News*, on 'Role of Universities in Empowerment of Socio-Economic Weaker Sections' for the 80th Annual Meeting, AIU, New Delhi.

Heyneman, Stephen P. and William A. Loxley, (1983), "The Effect of Primary-School Quality on Academic Achievement Across Twenty-nine High-and Low-Income Countries" *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 88, (6) pp. 1162-1194

Husain, Zakir (2005), "Analysing Demand for Primary Education Muslim Slum Dwellers of Kolkata", *Economic and Political Weekly,* January 8, 2005

Kaul , Rekha,(2001), "Accessing Primary Education: Going beyond the Classroom", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Jan. 13-19, 2001), pp. 155-162

Lall, Marie, (2005), "*The Challenges for India's Education System*", Chatham House, New Delhi,

Levy, Mildred B, (1971), "Determinants of Primary School Dropouts in Developing Countries" ,*Comparative Education Review*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Feb.,), pp. 44-58

NUEPA and Govt. of India (2008), "Enrolment-Based Indicators", *Report* ,National University of educational planning and administration, New Delhi and Department of school education , Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India.

Peter S, Raman K.J and Ravilochan P, (2007), "School Dropouts of SC and ST Students in Chennai Corporation Schools", *The Indian Journal of Social work*, Vol 68, (2)

Rao, Mohan, M.J. (2000). "Migration of labour and school dropouts", *Social Welfare,* 47(6): 26-31

Rao, Rama G and. Mohanty S.K, (2004), "School Enrolment and Dropout: Policies and Achievements", Paper presented in *seminar on follow-up of the National Population Policy- 2000: Focus on EAG states,* 25-27 Oct. 2004.

Sengupta, P and J Guha (2002): 'Enrolment, Dropout and Grade Completion of Girl Children in West Bengal', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 37(17), pp 1621-37.

Shariff, Abusaleh (1995): 'Socio-Economic and Demographic Differentials between Hindus and Muslims in India', Economic and Political Weekly, 18, pp 2947-53.

Sharma, Ruchita, Shubhangna Sharma and Shipra Nagar, (2007), "Extent of Female School Drop outs in Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh", Journal of Social Science, 15(3): 201-204.