CAUSES OF DROPOUT AT PRIMARY LEVEL IN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to provide fresh impetus for thoughts on the issue once more with new approach to facilitate in the achievement of the targets of the proposed Action Plan (2010 –2015) towards universalization of primary education in Pakistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The purpose of the study was to identify causes of drop out at primary level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The respondents of the study were 49 educational managers and 200 primary schools teachers in district Bannu and Lakki Marwat. The researcher self-developed questionnaire was used to collect the data for the study. Percentage and Chi-Square were employed for data analysis. Unawareness of the parents about the importance of education, Poverty of the parents, Heavy work load at home, Teachers' absenteeism, Unskilled and untrained teachers Failure or repetition of grades, Migration of parents were concluded as major causes of dropout at primary level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Keywords: *Drop out, Primary education, Priority, Teachers, Managers*

INTRODUCTION

Education is necessary for both male and female. It is education that increases one's knowledge, broadens one's outlook and sharpens one's intellect. Education plays vital role in building and molding the character of an individual. Education is a fundamental human right "It is the key to Sustainable development, peace and stability within and among the countries and thus indispensible means for effective participation in the societies and economics of the twenty-First century. (The Dakar Framework for action (2000).

Keeping in view the importance of primary education for national and human resource development, Pakistan in all its educational policies and plans has laid great emphasis upon the promotion and universalization of primary education. But it has not succeeded in achieving this goal till today. The literacy rate and its growth in Pakistan is not a satisfactory one. According to the economic survey of Pakistan (2010-11) "The overall literacy rate(10 years & above) which was 57.4 percent in 2008-09 has

increased to 57.7percent in 2009-10, indicating 0.5 percent increase over the same period last year. Male literacy rate (10 years & above) remained 69.3 percent in 2008-09 and 69.5 percent in 2009-10while it increased from 44.7 to 45.2 percent for females during the same period. Literacy remained higher in urban areas (73.2 percent) than in rural areas (49.2 percent) during 2009-10.Province wise literacy data of PLFS (2009-10) shows Punjab stood at 59.6 percent, Sind (58.2 percent), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (50.9 percent) and Baluchistan (51.5 percent)",(Economic survey of Pakistan, 2010-11).

One of the major reasons for low literacy is the dropout of students at primary level in Pakistan. "A dropout is a pupil who leaves the school for any reason except death before completion of education programs of studies and without transferring to another school" (Kamal. A. 2002) .According to Attaullah, (2000), a dropout is a student, who leaves the school for any reason before the completion of the educational program and without being transferred to any other school. In other words a dropout is a child who leaves the school before completing the educational stages in which he was enrolled. In Pakistan children are starting primary school in greater numbers than ever before but dropout rates are significant and lead to low levels of primary school completion in the country.

According to Kamal.A, 2002,there are more than 50% of our children of school going age enroll for getting primary education but there is a serious dropout of children of before they complete two or three years of schooling. This dropping out sometimes is about 75% in certain areas. Again the situation of dropout is the worse in the rural areas in the country. The education for all (EFA, Assessment Report2000) says that in Pakistan the overall male survival or retention rate is higher i.e. 56% then the female i.e. 44 %.. A report by "The Education Compulsory for All" (ECFA 2004), also says that in Pakistan over 50 percent of the enrolled students drop out before completing primary education, the report farther says that the dropout rate among primary students has increased steadily from 40 percent in 1996-97 to 54 percent in 2003-04. More over the dropout rate among girls has been high and is increasing at a faster pace as compared to boys. The report also exposed that, on average, 51 percent of boys and 59 percent of girls leave school before reaching fifth grade.

The performance of the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (NWFP) in the education sector is quite poor when compared with progress achieved in the rest of the country in both enrolment rates and gender disparities and is unlikely to meet the millennium development goals (MDG) by 2015, says a World Bank survey report, (2004). According economic survey of Pakistan (2009-10) literacy rate in Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa is significantly less than in other provinces. It was even less than Baluchistan. Many factors can be held responsible for the dropouts that affect the schooling of a child and compel him to leave the school without completing his education. Some of the common factors such as Poverty, Failure, Repetition of grades, Over loading and vertical type curricula, traditional method of teaching, poor quality of teachers, dull school environment, poorly paid, unprepared, dissatisfied and frustrated teachers, parents neglect, domestic and other work, lack of interest in school, early marriage of girls, absence of medical facilities in schools, absence of guidance service in schools, observed in the Education Policy (1972-80) as the main causes of dropout in Pakistan.

Similarly Setharam Usha Devy (1989) identified; parental poverty and consequent drive of the parents to employee 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 very important factor for dropout. The researcher further states that family background also plays a key role in retaining the children within 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 schools. Rumberge, W.R, (2001) and Chernichovsky, Dov, (1985) says that dropout in one way or another relates to high unemployment, inadequate income of the parents and poor health outcomes in addition to haunting poverty. It has also been pointed by Horn. L, (1992) that the children dropped out of school are needed by their parents for certain domestic responsibilities i.e. for the look after of other siblings, sharing household works and farming.

The study of Kukreti and Saxena, (2004) reveals the causes of school dropout as need of children for supplementing family earnings, discouraging school environment, illiteracy and ignorance of parents, language problem and early marriage. Grade retention is yet another cause of school dropout. In a study conducted by Grissiom and Shepard (1989) pointed out "grade retention" as an important cause of dropout. Nidhi *et al.*(2007) identified positive correlation between financial & educational status of parents and dropout rate in rural areas, whereas gender discrimination was pointed as cause of girl's school dropout. According to Shahid (2010) students` difficulty in learning, lack of interest in school, lack of interest in studies, class repetition and low socio-economic status of parents are the major causes of dropout. Attaullah (2000) identified health problems &family diseases, domestic work, poverty, rough climate, parental indifference, transportation and irregular attendance as the major contributing factors to school dropout.

To conclude no single factor alone can be held responsible for dropout but different factors attribute to it   "Dropout" is a universal phenomenon in Pakistan educational system at all the levels but is the most serious at primary level which results in considerable wastage of resources. It is a big social problem that leaves long lasting effects, not only on the life of the individuals but on the society as a whole as well. Dropout is not mere a problem that impacts an individual rather it is a problem that has many faces and effects the entire community as it has been noticed that certain dropouts get involved in crimes. So Policies to improve school progression and reduce the numbers of children dropping out of schools in Pakistan are critical to be devised if Universal Primary Education (UPE) is to be achieved by the year 2015 in compliance to the Millennium Development Goal 2: target 3 witch says to ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. Keeping in view the current status of primary education, Pakistanis likely to face the risk of defaulting on EFA 2015 targets. Therefore the study is expected to provide fresh impetus for thoughts on the issue once more with new approach to facilitate in the achievement of the targets of the proposed Action Plan (2010 –2015) towards universalization of primary education in Pakistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the causes of dropout at primary level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
2. To prioritize the causes of dropout at primary level by educational managers and teachers.
3. To explore difference between managers and teachers regarding priority order of dropout.

Target Population

The population of the study consisted of the following:

A. All District Educational Managers (EDO's, DO's, DDO's, ADO's) of E&SE in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
B. All Primary Schools Teachers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Selected Area: District Bannu and Lakki Marwat were selected as target area.

Population of the Study

The Population of the study consisted of the following:

A. **All Educational Managers** he total strength of Managers were 40. That's why all managers were included in the sample.

B. **All Primary Schools Teachers**
   All teachers of Government Primary Schools of District Bannu and Lakki Marwat constituted the population of the study. The strength of primary school teachers were 1946.

SAMPLE

Stratified random sampling method was used for selection of respondents. Sample size was justified the John Curry Formula of sample size. The formula was as under:

Table .1

Population size	Sample size
10-100	100%
101-1000	10%
1001-5000	5%
5001-10000	3%
10000+	1%

Dr John curry, professor of educational research, North Texas state university.

DATA COLLECTION

The data were collected through administering the questionnaires. For this purpose the researcher personally visited the sample institutions and respondents.

Data Analysis techniques

Mean, Percentage and chi-square were used for data analysis

Table 1: Identification and prioritization of causes of drop out by educational managers and teachers

S/No	Causes of dropout	Teachers	Managers	Total	%age	Priority
1	Unawareness of the parents about the importance of education	142	40	182	73.09	1
2	Poverty of the parents	140	41	181	72.69	2
3	Heavy work load at home	132	34	166	66.67	3

4	Teachers absenteeism	120	39	159	63.86	4
5	Unskilled teachers	115	38	153	61.45	5
6	Frequent absenteeism of students	128	16	144	57.83	6
7	Shortage of teachers	112	17	129	51.81	7
8	Failure or repetition of grades /classes	111	15	126	50.60	8
9	Corporal punishment by the teacher	84	29	113	45.38	9
10	Migration of parents	85	13	98	39.36	10

Total respondents =249

Table 1 shows that Unawareness of the parents about the importance of education is the major cause of students dropout at primary level with value of 73.09%, followed by Poverty of the parents (72.69%), Heavy work load at home (66.67%),Teachers absenteeism (63.86%), Unskilled teachers (61.45%), Frequent absenteeism of students (57.83%),Shortage of teachers(51.81%),Failure or repetition of grades /classes (50.60%),Corporal punishment by the teacher (45.38%),Migration of parents in search of livelihood (38.55%).

Table 2: Comparison of Teachers and Managers views about dropout

S/No	Causes/factors of dropout	Teachers		Managers		Total	Chi-Square	Table value
		Obs	Exp	Obs	Exp			
1	Unawareness of the parents	142	145.6	40	36.4	182	0.45	3.841
2	Poverty of the parents	140	144.8	41	36.2	181	0.79	3.841
3	Heavy work load at home	132	132.8	34	33.2	166	0.02	3.841
4	Teachers' absenteeism	120	127.2	39	31.8	159	2.04	3.841
5	Unskilled and untrained teachers	115	122.4	38	30.6	153	2.24	3.841
6	Frequent absenteeism of students	128	115.2	16	28.8	144	7.1	3.841
7	Failure or repetition of grades	112	103.2	17	25.8	129	3.75	3.841
8	Shortage of teachers	111	100.8	15	25.2	126	5.16	3.841
9	Corporal punishment by teachers	84	90.4	22	22.6	113	2.27	3.841

| 10 | Migration of parents | 85 | 78.8 | 13 | 19.2 | 98 | 2.49 | 3.841 |

Total respondents= 249 (Teachers=200, Educational Managers=49)

Table 2shows the frequencies of teachers and educational managers' views abou the causes of student's dropout. It shows that the calculated values of all the causes/factors of dropout except "Frequent absenteeism of students" are less than the table value X^2—tab =3.841 with df=01at 0.05 level of significance. As the calculated value falls within the region of acceptance, therefore null hypothesis is accepted. So we conclude that the proportion of teachers views are not significantly greater then Educational Managers in considering the above factors as the main cause of student's dropout at primary level.

The values of the respondents on the "Frequent absenteeism of students" and "Shortage of Teachers" are 7.1 and 5.16 respectively are greater than the table value X^2—tab =3.841 with df =01at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated values falls outside the region of acceptance, therefore null hypothesis is rejected. So we conclude that the proportions of teachers' views are significantly greater then Educational Managers in considering the "Frequent absenteeism of students" and "Shortage of teachers" as the main cause of student's dropout at primary level.

RESULTS
The following factors were found as the major causes of students' dropout at primary level.
- ➢ Unawareness of the parents about the importance of education
- ➢ Poverty of the parents
- ➢ Heavy work load at home
- ➢ Teachers' absenteeism
- ➢ Unskilled and untrained teachers
- ➢ Frequent absenteeism of students
- ➢ Failure or repetition of grades
- ➢ Shortage of teachers
- ➢ Corporal punishment by the teachers
- ➢ Migration of parents   .

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made by the researcher:

➢ It was found from the findings that Unawareness of the parents about the importance of education is the major cause of student's dropout from schools. So it is recommended for teachers and other community leaders to create awareness in parents and general public about the values and importance of education.

➢ It was found in the study that poverty of the parents is one of the major causes of student's dropout. So it is recommended that the Government should provide free notes books & uniforms and monthly stipends to poor students so that they may be able to continue their education.

➢ Findings revealed that very often students are dropped out from school because of Heavy work load at home or domestic chores. It is recommended that Parents should be sensitized about the importance & values of education so that they may extend relaxation to children from domestic work during school hours.

➢ The result of the study revealed that frequent absenteeism of students from school ultimately resulted in dropout. So it is recommended that the teachers frequently contact the parents of students and discuss the issue with them.

➢ Findings showed that the Teachers' absenteeism at primary level has become a common phenomenon and this causes students dropout. In order to check teachers' absenteeism, it is recommended that there should be a strict educational supervision by the education department moreover, the parents teachers council (PTC) should be empowered to check teacher absenteeism.

➢ Findings of the study showed that failure or repetition of grades of students also causes a student's dropout at primary level. In order to avoid the dropout at this level it is recommended that there should be no failure at primary level moreover; special attention should be given to academically poor students in the class by the teacher.

➢ It was found in the study that migration of the parents is one of the major causes of student's dropout. So it is recommended that education department should reconsider the existing admission criteria and extend special relaxation in admission rules for the migrated students.

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