

## **School Dropout an Evil, who is Socially Responsible? A Study**

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### **Abstract**

School Dropout is a serious social evil which when unattended will have a long run impact in all the sphere of the society. This particular issue should be given utmost importance by the teachers in schools and parents and elders in families. The stakeholders should play a pro-active role in dealing with this problem.

The major reason of dropout is widely hinted at the economic backwardness of the school children. Apart from this cause there are many other causes ranging from issues in the family, at home and even in schools, liking and disliking of schools and teachers also contribute to the cause of dropout. This issue of dropout has become more serious especially after the disaster of Tsunami in 2004.

The issue of dropout has to be viewed in a different angle in fishing / coastal villages. The fishing occupation is no doubt a risky job but it has been lucrative. High lucrative in this profession is positively correlated with the investment in mechanised boats and fish nets. The scenario of this dropout problem took an ugly turn post Tsunami. Post Tsunami, relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction was well undertaken by the Government in a very large scale and equally by the Third Sector (NGOs). The relief was also in the form of Mechanised & Fibre Boat (FRB) distributed by many NGO. Prior to Tsunami the number of FRB was very less in number, so the labour force required was also minimal. The number of FRB increased post tsunami which resulted in labour shortage. This also paved way for the entry of children in the profession of fishing saying goodbye to studies. Was this the starting point of School Dropout? At the backdrop of this scenario, the present research has been undertaken. The present research has taken care to highlight the socio-economic profile of the dropouts in the coastal/fishing villages of Karaikal District, Union Territory of Puducherry. The results support the following statement that "Disaster has a direct bearing on the Education of Children".

**Keywords-** Socio-economic, School Dropout, Education & Disaster.

## **Introduction**

Maithly and Saxena (2008), study in Uttaranchal revealed that 34 per cent adolescents were found to have dropped from school, amongst them 41 per cent were girls and 27 per cent were boys. The main reason for dropping out was financial difficulties for both girls and boys.

Chug (2011) has found that risk factor being to add up even before students enrol in school is poverty, low educational level of parents the weak family structure, pattern of schooling of sibling and preschool experiences, family background and domestic problems that create an environment which negatively affects the value of education and responsible for children dropping out. Children's from unhealthy family environment are very prone to school dropout, alcoholism of parents and family schism are some of the negative factors.

Denteh and Amedeker (2011) investigated the causes and effects of female school dropouts and found that 60 per cent of the dropouts depend on both parents, 6% of the dropouts depend on Father, 20 per cent of the dropouts depend on Mother and 14 per cent of the dropouts depend on Relatives whereas 20 per cent of the dropout parents are Government employees, 42 per cent of the dropout parents are Traders, 20 per cent of the dropout parents are Farmer, 16 per cent of the dropout parents are unemployed.

Datta and Sarkar (2012) conducted a study in order to observe the role of family environment factors on child development in India and found dropout was found higher for the poorest students in comparison to the higher economic class students. Orphan children showed the highest proportion of dropout (14.5%) compared to the children whose parents are alive (5.8%) or either of the parents alive (11%). Dropout rate was higher for rural students compared to urban students, like as dropout is higher among Muslim religion (7.8%) and SC cast (6.9%) compared to other religion and caste respectively exists state level variation in educational status and performance of children. Dropout students are found highest for Jharkhand (11.4%) and lowest for Himachal Pradesh (1.2%).

Mishra and Abdul (2014) have analyzed family factors that contribute to the school dropouts. The study is conducted among the school dropped outs of Bilaspur city of Chhattisgarh. A total of 21 students and their families were assessed through structured in-depth interview; additional information was collected from the school authorities. The result shows that familial factors are significantly correlated with the school dropouts and these family factors have correlated the socio-economic aspects.

After a careful review of literature, the following objectives and hypotheses were drafted to move the research further in a navigated direction.

## **Objectives**

To identify the level of centric problems for school dropouts and evaluate the relationship between socio-economic status of the respondents and problem centric.

To ascertain the reasons for school dropouts and analyze the association between reasons for

school dropouts and socio-economic status of the fishermen households.

### Hypotheses

The school dropout due to difficulty in studies is unrelated to the socio-economic conditions in fishermen community.

The school dropout due to lack of interest is not associated with socio-economic conditions in fishermen community.

For the present study, the sample size was initially fixed at 200. But during the survey, there were less than 200 respondents who fulfil the school dropout criteria. The total number of filled in questionnaire was 186 initially. But after scrutinization, around 24 questionnaires were found with insufficient information which was set aside. So, the final sample size stood at 162. The statistical techniques adopted for measuring the variables under study is explained hereunder.

The main limitation of the present study is that it is limited to Karaikal region alone. Therefore the findings of the study cannot be generalized for the whole population of entire Union Territory of Puducherry. Only the observations of the coastal fishermen are taken for the research and not that of inland fishermen community.

### Discussions

**Table 1.1 Distribution of Respondents by Possession of Agriculture Land and Milk Cattles**

Particulars	Number Respondents	% to Total
<b>Agriculture Land</b>		
No	124	76.5
Yes	38	23.5
<b>Milk Cattle</b>		
Not at all	133	82.1
Only 1	18	11.1
Own up to 3	11	6.8
<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Primary Data.

Similarly, there are no single cattle in 82.1 per cent of the families. However, 11.1 per cent of the fishermen families with dropout students possess only 1 cattle while 6.8 per cent own up to 3 cattle. In sum, it is found that there is no agriculture land, milk cattle in majority of fishermen families with dropout students in the study area.

**Table 1.2 Behaviour of Parents towards Study of Dropouts**

Parents' Behaviour	Extent of Behaviour					Mean
	Never	Rarely	Some-times	Very Often	Always	
Frequency of Interest Shown by Parents in Studies	90 (55.6)	18 (11.1)	31 (19.1)	17 (10.5)	6 (3.7)	1.96
Parent's Positive Attitude Towards Child's Studies	84 (51.9)	14 (8.6)	34 (21.0)	24 (14.8)	6 (3.7)	2.10
Frequency of Quarrelling Among Parents	23 (14.2)	19 (11.7)	25 (15.4)	58 (35.8)	37 (22.8)	3.41

Source: Survey Data; Figures in bracket is percentage to row total

As depicted in the table, 55.6 per cent of the parents have never shown any interest in the study of their children while frequency of interest shown by parents is rarely for 11.1 per cent, sometimes for 19.1 per cent, very often for 10.5 per cent and always for 3.7 per cent of the respondents. On the average, the frequency of interest shown by parents of dropout students in the study of their children is rarely (Mean = 1.96). Similarly, parents' positive attitude towards studies is also never in the case of 51.9 per cent of dropout students in the sample. This behaviour of parents is also rarely on the average in the study area (Mean = 2.10). Regarding frequency of quarrelling among the parents, it is very often in 35.8 per cent and always in 22.8 per cent of the respondents' families. While proportion of never opinion cases is 14.2 per cent, the number of cases (respondents) with rarely and sometimes opinion is 11.7 per cent and 15.4 per cent respectively. On the average, it is almost very often in the dropout students' families. On the whole, it is found that frequency of interest shown by parents in studies and positive attitude of parents towards education of their children is rarely while frequency of quarrelling among the parents is almost very often in the families of dropout students fishing hamlets under study.

The financial and economic status of the families of dropout students in fishermen village under study is ascertained by extent of expenditures on various essential items such as food, clothing, house maintenance, health, religious ceremonies and on others like drinking / smoking. The results of the analysis of respondents' opinion in this regard are given in Table 4.6.

As given in the table, the extent of expenditure on food ranges between too tight (49.4%) and about right (47.5%) and falling in just above too tight level on the average (Mean = 2.54). The expenditure on clothing is about right in 64.8 per cent and too tight in 30.9 per cent of the families and it is about right on the average (Mean = 2.73). The expenditure scenario on house maintenance (Mean = 2.86), health (Mean = 2.86) and social / religious ceremonies (Mean

=2.83) is similar to that of clothing. However, the extent of expenditure on drinking and smoking is too heavy for 16.0 per cent, about right for 25.9 per cent, too tight for 22.3 per cent and never for 35.8 per cent of the families. On the average, the expenditure on these two items is found to too tight (Mean = 2.22).

**Table 1.3 Extent of Debt Owned in Dropouts' Families**

Particulars	Extent					Mean
	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Nil	
Debt Owned	8 (4.9)	14 (8.6)	14 (8.6)	25 (15.4)	101 (62.3)	4.22

Source: Survey Data; Figures in bracket is percentage to row total

At the same time, almost one-third of the fishermen households of the dropout students in the study area are under debt ranging between low to very high level. The level of debt is low for 15.4 per cent, moderate for 8.6 per cent, high for another 8.6 per cent and very high for 4.9 per cent of the households. The mean value of 4.22 reveals that the debt level is low on the average among the fishermen households of dropout students in the study area.

The frequency of savings in dropout student families is assessed based on the views of the sample respondents. Table 4.8 presents the results of the analysis of the data. As presented in the table, there is no savings habit in 31.5 per cent of the dropout students' families. Among the remaining dropout families, the savings is very often in 28.4 per cent of the families followed by sometimes in 17.9 per cent, rarely in 13.0 per cent and always in 9.3 per cent of the dropout families in fishermen hamlet under study.

**Table 1.4 Problems for School Dropouts**

Problem Centric	Level of Agreement			Mean
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	
Child Related	87 (53.7)	49 (30.2)	26 (16.0)	1.62
Family Related	47 (29.0)	57 (35.2)	58 (35.8)	2.07
Society Related	94 (58.0)	52 (32.1)	16 (9.9)	1.52

Source: Survey Data; Figures in bracket is percentage to row total

A glimpse at the table reveals that the dropout from school is not child centric for 53.7 per

cent of the students but it is child-centric for 16.0 per cent of the students while 30.2 per cent of the respondents have neither disagreed nor agreed with it. The mean score reveals that the child centric related problems are moderate for school dropouts on the average. Regarding the family centric (family related) problems for school dropouts, 35.8 per cent of the respondents have expressed their agreement when number of disagree and neutral opinion cases are 29.0 per cent and 35.2 per cent respectively. More than half of the respondents (58.0%) have disagreed that the school dropouts is society related (society centric). While 32.1 per cent of the respondents have neither disagreed nor agreed, just 9.9 per cent of the respondents have agreed that school dropout is also due to society related. The mean scores have clearly indicating the role of family and society is moderate for school dropouts. Hence, it is found that problem for school dropout is somewhat family related problems whereas the problems due to child and society related is just moderate in the fishermen area under study.

The respondents' opinion about child centric dropouts is compared by their demographic status in order to ascertain whether the above opinion is consistently expressed irrespective of the difference in demographic status or there is difference in such opinion level in order to arrive at irrevocable conclusion about the child centric problems for dropouts. Table 4.12 shows the results of the frequency and percentage analysis along with F test results.

From the observation of the table, it is understood that the number of respondents across three levels of agreement differ by gender, religion, family type, family size, school type, family income level, house type, number of earning members in the family and location (area of residence). There are also differences in the mean values for respondent groups across categories by above mentioned demographic variables. However, the differences in mean values across respondent categories by gender, religion, family type, family size, school type, house type, and number of earning members in the family are not significant statistically as F values are insignificant. At the same time, the group means differ significantly by monthly income of the family (F value = 7.08,  $p < 0.01$ ) and location (area of residence) (F value = 19.49,  $p < 0.01$ ).

**Table 1.5 Dropouts Due to Difficulty in Studies – Comparison by Respondents' Demographic Status**

Demographic Profile		Opinion			Mean	SD	Test Statistic		
		Disagree	Neutral	Agree			F value	DF	P Value
ReligiSex	Male	4 (3.7)	14 (13.0)	90 (83.3)	2.80	0.49	6.83**	1..160	0.0098
	Female	5 (9.3)	14 (25.9)	35 (64.8)	2.56	0.66			
Religi	Hindu	9 (5.8)	28 (18.0)	119 (76.3)	2.71	0.57	1.59	1..160	0.2086

	Christian	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (100.0)	3.00	0.00			
<b>Family Type</b>	Joint	3 (6.1)	13 (26.5)	33 (67.4)	2.61	0.61	2.41	1..160	0.1223
	Nuclear	6 (5.3)	15 (13.3)	92 (81.4)	2.76	0.54			
<b>Family Size</b>	Up to 3	6 (11.1)	9 (16.7)	39 (72.2)	2.61	0.68	2.85	1..160	0.0932
	4 & above	3 (2.8)	19 (17.6)	86 (79.6)	2.77	0.49			
<b>School Type</b>	Government	9 (6.3)	24 (16.8)	110 (76.9)	2.71	0.58	0.37	1..160	0.5464
	Private	0 (0.0)	4 (21.1)	15 (79.0)	2.79	0.42			
<b>Monthly Income</b>	<= Rs.10000	3 (6.5)	12 (26.1)	31 (67.4)	2.61	0.61	1.39	3..158	0.2480
	Rs.10001 - 15000	5 (5.6)	10 (11.2)	74 (83.2)	2.78	0.54			
	Rs.15001 - 20000	1 (5.6)	5 (27.8)	12 (66.7)	2.61	0.61			
	> Rs.20000	0 (0.0)	1 (11.1)	8 (88.9)	2.89	0.33			
<b>House Type</b>	Rented	5 (6.4)	10 (12.8)	63 (80.8)	2.74	0.57	0.36	1..160	0.5498
	Own	4 (4.8)	18 (21.4)	62 (73.8)	2.69	0.56			

Continued...

**Table 1.5 (Continued)**

Demographic Profile		Opinion			Mean	SD	Test Statistic		
		Disagree	Neutral	Agree			F value	DF	P Value
<b>Earning</b>	Only one	3 (7.9)	7 (18.4)	28 (73.7)	2.66	0.63	0.61	2..159	0.5465
	2	5	17	86	2.75	0.53			

	members	(4.6)	(15.7)	(79.6)					
	3 members	1	4	11	2.63	0.62			
	members	(6.3)	(25.0)	(68.8)					
<b>Location</b>	Fishing Hamlet	3	2	18	2.65	0.71	4.32*	2..159	0.0149
		(13.0)	(8.7)	(78.3)					
	Rural	5	24	63	2.63	0.59			
		(5.4)	(26.1)	(68.5)					
	Urban	1	2	44	2.91	0.35			
		(2.1)	(4.3)	(93.6)					

Source: Primary data from Survey

\*Significant at 5% level; \*\*Significant at 1% level

In sum, it is found from the entire inferences that the dropout from schools among the students of all demographic status in fishermen community is due to difficulty in studies and the extent of dropout due to this factor is significantly related to gender levels and area of residence (location) of the respondents.

The difference in dropout due to family problems across different demographic status of the respondents is analyzed and the results of the analysis are provided in Table 4.23. According to the table, there are more number of male respondents with agree opinion (53.7%) while the number of female respondents with neutral opinion is more (42.6%) with dropout due to family problem.

**Table 1.6 Dropouts Due to Lack of Interest – Comparison by Respondents’ Demographic Status**

<b>Demographic Profile</b>		<b>Opinion</b>			<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Test Statistic</b>		
		<b>Disagr ee</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agre e</b>			<b>F value</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>P Value</b>
<b>ReligiSex</b>	Male	7 (6.5)	12 (11.1)	89 (82.4)	2.76	0.56	1.85	1..160	0.1758
	Female	3 (5.6)	14 (25.9)	37 (68.5)	2.63	0.59			
<b>Religi</b>	Hindu	10 (6.4)	25 (16.0)	121 (77.6)	2.71	0.58	0.26	1..160	0.6112



	Christian	0 (0.0)	1 (16.7)	5 (83.3)	2.83	0.41			
Family Type	Joint	4 (8.2)	9 (18.4)	36 (73.5)	2.65	0.63	0.85	1..160	0.3588
	Nuclear	6 (5.3)	17 (15.0)	90 (79.7)	2.74	0.55			
Family Size	Up to 3	4 (7.4)	8 (14.8)	42 (77.8)	2.70	0.60	0.04	1..160	0.8471
	4 & above	6 (5.6)	18 (16.7)	84 (77.8)	2.72	0.56			
School Type	Govern ment	10 (7.0)	23 (16.1)	110 (76.9)	2.70	0.59	1.04	1..160	0.3093
	Private	0 (0.0)	3 (15.8)	16 (84.2)	2.84	0.37			
Monthly Income	<= Rs.1000	4 (8.7)	13 (28.3)	29 (63.0)	2.54	0.66	2.03	3..158	0.1120
	0 - Rs.1000	6 (6.7)	8 (9.0)	75 (84.3)	2.78	0.56			
	1 - 15000	0 (0.0)	3 (16.7)	15 (83.3)	2.83	0.38			
	Rs.1500 - 20000	0 (0.0)	2 (22.2)	7 (77.8)	2.78	0.44			
	> Rs.2000	0							
	0								
House Type	Rented	4 (5.1)	8 (10.3)	66 (84.6)	2.79	0.52	2.88	1..160	0.0919
	Own	6 (7.1)	18 (21.4)	60 (71.4)	2.64	0.61			

Continued...

Table 1.6 (Continued)

Demographic Profile		Opinion			Mean	SD	Test Statistic		
		Disagr ee	Neutra l	Agree			F value	DF	P Value
Earnin	Only one	0	8	30	2.79	0.41	0.54	2..159	0.5866

		(0.0)	(21.1)	(79.0)					
	2 members	9	14	85	2.70	0.62			
		(8.3)	(13.0)	(78.7)					
	3 members	1	4	11	2.63	0.62			
		(6.3)	(25.0)	(68.8)					
<b>Location</b>	Fishing Hamlet	0	2	21	2.91	0.29	4.84**	2..159	0.0092
		(0.0)	(8.7)	(91.3)					
	Rural	7	23	62	2.60	0.63			
		(7.6)	(25.0)	(67.4)					
	Urban	3	1	43	2.85	0.51			
		(6.4)	(2.1)	(91.5)					

Source: Primary data from Survey

\*Significant at 5% level; \*\*Significant at 1% level

Average scoring of respondents under all demographic categories in agree range have clearly revealed that lack of interest is one of the major reason for dropout from schools among the students of fishermen community irrespective of the difference in the demographic status. The insignificant difference in the mean scores (average perception score) among respondent groups with different gender levels, religion, family type, family size, school type, monthly income, house type and earning members further reveals that lack of interest for dropout from schools is independent of these demographic factors.

At the same time, the degree of agreement vary significantly among respondent groups residing in fishing hamlet, rural and urban areas (F value = 4.84,  $p < 0.01$ ), in turn indicating that dropout from schools due to lack of interest among fishermen community is related to area of domicile. On the whole, it is found that the lack of interest is one of the major reason for dropout from schools among the students of all demographic status in the fishermen community. It is however found that area of domicile is an important demographic factor in determining the extent of dropout from schools due to lack of interest in fishermen community.

The Table shows the results of analysis relating dropout due to transport problem and demographic condition of the respondents in the area under study. As shown in the table, the number of cases with disagree opinion about transport problem as the reason for dropout is higher compared to the number of cases with neutral and agree opinion in each respondent category across every demographic variable.

The respondents in each category across every demographic status variable except the respondents in the category with monthly income between Rs.15001-20000 have also scored in disagree level on the average (Mean perception scores ranges from minimum of 1.15 and maximum of 1.48). Though, the respondent category with monthly income between Rs.15001- 20000 have scored in neutral range, the group means across four monthly income categories does not differ significantly (F value is insignificant).

### **Conclusion& Suggestions**

In this research, an empirical evaluation of socio-economic profile of school dropouts in the fishing hamlets of Karaikal district, Union Territory of Puducherry has been prepared. As far as the reasons for dropout are concerned, it is concluded that the difficulty in studies and lack of interest are the major reasons followed by family problem. Therefore, to conclude the researcher would like to propose the following few practical suggestion to overcome the menace of dropout.

The parent- teacher meetings should be organized at regular interval for discussing child's performance and developing mutual understanding to avoid dropouts from schools. This will bridge the gap between the school and home.

The school administration/ teachers should keep a regular track of students who regularly abstain from classes and preventive and even proactive steps must be ensured.

The Social Workers/ Counsellors should provide regular counselling to students and motivate them to continue their higher studies. This Social Worker can act as a bridge between teachers and parents.

It is also observed that students who find it difficult in coping with study are due to sudden change of medium of English from Tamil. It would be better to have both Tamil and English medium of instruction in all the schools. The student who feels comfortable with the medium shall opt for it and there is a greater chance of him/her to continue the studies.

The village panchayat of fishing villages are closely woven with a greater degree of social control over the community. So, the Panchayat can also play a pro-active role in dealing with the menace. No doubt they will have to take a strong step, but they will have to part with something at present to build a better future for their succeeding generation. A very strong move in implementing a complete ban on employing children below

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