A comparative study on the dropout problem in Primary Education among Muslim community in relation to gender and economic status

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Abstract: *Dropout from school hinders development as it makes human potentialities unexplored. This creates all round backwardness. Muslim communities are more backward particularly in Malda district, W.B., where the dropout rate is high. Parental decision to dropout their wards from primary education does not depend upon gender, but depend upon their economic status. Poverty influences the parents to withdraw their wards from school.*

Key wards: *backwardness, dropout, economic condition, gender, Muslim communities, primary education,.*

I. Introduction

No country in this world has become developed with her masses as illiterate. Dropout children are remaining out of the purview of our education system and hence not availing the services being catered by the education system. Their potentialities remain unexplored, hence the nation can't take the benefit out of them. Not only that, the dropout masses, as their potentialities were not manifested; their skills were not developed – they themselves find it difficult to manage their livelihood in this competitive world. Hence, many a times they are forced to adopt some unfair means for the sake of their sustenance. This creates social disturbance. So, checking dropout rate is a pre-condition for maintaining social balance, again a pre-condition for any development. In order to check the dropout rate, - finding out of the true reasons behind, is a must. In this regard, this study may be very much helpful in finding out the real causes of dropout in primary education in Malda, a backward district in general and a more backward Muslim community dominated district in particular, in the state of West Bengal. This study also may help the planner of our education in framing effective and sustainable education plan for our nation.

In literacy ranking India stands 134th out of the 179 countries in the world [1]! Out of the total enrolment in class I, in our country only 5.7% reaches up to class XI [2].

According to Kasente (2003), multiple socio-economic related factors in the community and in the school are key in causing dropout in primary schools in Uganda and these are location specific and varied for boys and girls [3].

Musisi et.al., (2003) reported that in Uganda marriage related factors and income generating needs were the biggest causes of dropout for both boys and girls [4].

According to IRIN Asia news and analysis (2007), about 50% of primary and 80% of secondary level students dropout in schools in Bangladesh. Social and economic factors were found to be the cause behind [5].

Sabates, et.al. (2011) reports that in all countries dropout rate is low at 6 - 8 years but drastically high at 10 – 14 years of age. There are many factors associated with drop out, some of which belong to the individual, such as poor health or malnutrition and motivation. Others emerge from children's household situations such as child labour and poverty [6].

Agarwal (2006) reported that approx. 27% children never attend school due to too much costs of education. Approx. 24% dropouts are due to the fact that these children were required for work at home or outside for cash / kind. Near about 14% dropouts were for the reason of too much educational costs [7].

According to Premji (2004), it has been widely acknowledged that the socio–economic conditions in rural India have created a hindrance in the process of primary education and the social inequalities of caste, class and gender have been identified as the major causes of educational deprivation among children in India [8].

Maithly and Saxena (2008), study in Uttaranchal revealed that 34% adolescents were found to have dropped from school, amongst them 41% were girls and 27% were boys. The main reason for dropping out was financial difficulties for both girls and boys [9].

The 2009 Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) — states that the dropout rate in West Bengal is highest while most of the other states recorded a decrease in the number of school dropouts after the launch of SSA [10]. A district-wise analysis of the state, as mentioned in the report, suggests that minority-dominated districts of Malda and Murshidabad are the worst performers.

According to Government reports (Sachar Committee, Mishra Committee, etc.) the condition of Muslim population is of much concern in this regard. Union Human Resources Development Minister, Mr. Kapil Sibal acknowledged that minority-dominated districts of Malda and Murshidabad have the highest dropout rates in the State, and Malda stood at 10.5 per cent —maximum in the state [10]. Hence, there is a strong need to study the reasons of dropout among the Muslim population, including the influence of socio-economic, gender and parental education factors on dropout. Malda is a backward district in general and a Muslim dominated district in particular in the state of West Bengal. This is also the home district of the principal investigator of this project. In this background the research problem originates.

II.   Methodology
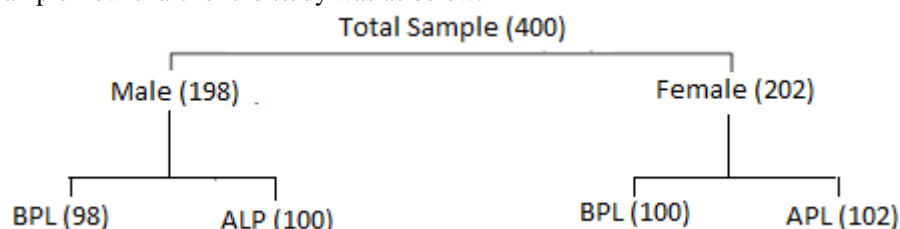
The Methodology of the study was planned as follows:

2.1 Population: All the parents of primary education dropout of Malda district of West Bengal were the population for the present study.

2.2 Sample: Nine Gram Panchayats under Harischandrapur–II Block and two Municipality areas of Malda district, West Bengal were selected by stratified random sampling techniques. A total of 400 parents were selected by purposive random sampling method for the present study.

The dependent variable of this study was – Attitude towards primary education.

Independent variables were Economic status - BPL (Below Poverty Line) and APL (Above Poverty Line), and Gender.

The sample flow-chart for the study was as below:

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                     Total Sample (400)
          ┌──────────────────────────────────────┐
     Male (198)                              Female (202)
      ┌─────┴─────┐                         ┌──────┴──────┐
  BPL (98)    ALP (100)                 BPL (100)     APL (102)
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2.3 Tools used: Data were collected by using a schedule on parental education (reliability 0.94 – by teat-retest method) and gender (reliability 0.93 – by teat-retest method) developed and standardized by the researcher.

The collected data were analysed through descriptive as well as inferential statistics like ANOVA, 't' test by applying SPSS-17.0 and MS Excell software.

III.   Result And Discussion

Table 1: Comparison between the genders of people's attitude about children's Primary Education

Comparison Between Groups	Sample No.	Mean	S. D.	Variance	Df	F-value	t-value	Significant at 0.05 level
Male	198	93.82	3.09	9.55	398	0.76	0.871	No
Female	202	94.83	2.88	8.29				

From Table 1 above, the mean attitude score of the male parents towards children's primary schooling was 93.82 ± 3.09, as compared to the mean attitude score of 94.83 ± 2.88 of the female parents towards children's primary schooling, which was not significant at 0.05 level. So, in overall consideration, the decision for dropout from primary school does not depend on the gender of the parents. That is among Muslim community, both the parents, male and female possess almost similar attitude towards primary education of their wards [4].. Hence, the decision to dropout children from primary schooling among Muslim community is taken equally by the father and mother of the child.

Table 2: Comparison between different economic status groups of people's attitude about children's Primary Education

Comparison Between Groups	Sample No.	Mean	S. D.	Variance	Df	F-value	t-value	Significant at 0.05 level
BPL	198	91.70	2.93	15.44	398	33.27	5.768	Yes
APL	202	96.86	2.62	6.86				

From Table 2, the mean attitude score of the BPL parents towards children's primary schooling was 91.70 ± 2.93 as compared to the mean attitude score of 96.86 ± 2.62 for the APL parents towards children's primary schooling, which was significant at 0.05 level and also significant at 0.01 level. So, in overall consideration, the decision for dropout from primary school depends on the economic status of the parents. This also suggests better attitude towards primary education among the economically well-off Muslim families compared to that among the economically poor Muslim families [5,9]. Thus, among the APL families the dropout rate is low compared to that among the BPL families.
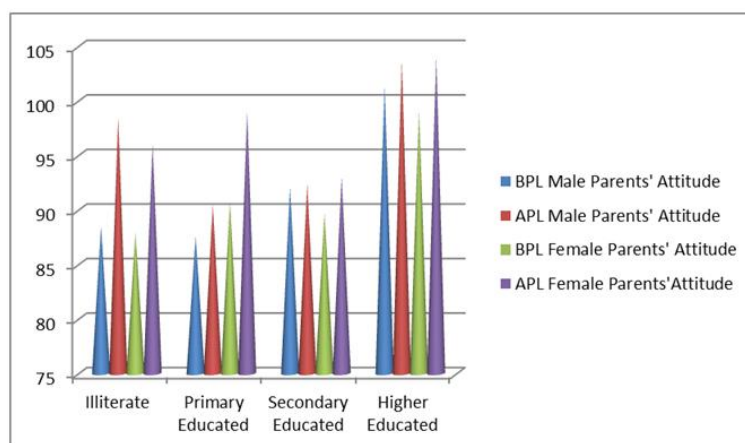

Fig.1: Histogram for different economic and gender groups of parents in Primary Dropout

The Fig.1 above depicts the effect of economic status and gender variation of the parents on the attitude towards primary dropout with the variation of their educational status. With some variations, the general trend is that the parental attitude towards primary education increases with the increase of their educational status. As revealed from the tables above that better economic conditions helps to form positive attitude towards primary education. The Fig.1 above also supports this view by depicting that irrespective of their educational status the APL parents have better attitude towards primary education than their BPL counterpart.

IV.   Conclusion

From the above discussion on the results of this study the conclusion can be drawn on the basis of the following hypotheses -

Hypothesis No. H_1: The difference in attitude towards children's primary schooling between male and female parents of Muslim community of Malda district, West Bengal differs significantly. This hypothesis was rejected and the corresponding null hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis No. H_2: The difference in attitude towards children's primary schooling between BPL and APL parents of Muslim community of Malda district, West Bengal differs significantly. This hypothesis was accepted and the corresponding null hypothesis was rejected.

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