



## INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMPUTER APPLICATION AND MANAGEMENT

### CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER MANAGEMENT <i>ARMIN MAHMOUDI</i>	1
2.	DETERMINANTS OF MARKET ENTRY STRATEGY CHOICE OF INDIAN FIRMS ON GCC SOIL <i>DR. RUCHI AGARWAL &amp; BABEET GUPTA</i>	4
3.	STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC STAFF SERVICE QUALITY IN ETHIOPIA: A CASE STUDY OF COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS, MEKELLE UNIVERSITY <i>DR. TEFATSION SAHLU DESTA</i>	11
4.	MANPOWER REQUIREMENT OF MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES: INPUT TO CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT <i>MA. TEODORA E. GUTIERREZ</i>	22
5.	A STUDY ON 3G & USB MODEM INTERNET SERVICES USERS IN CHENNAI <i>DR. GEETA KESAVARAJ, V. PADMINI &amp; V. S. JAYARAJ</i>	27
6.	A RISK RETURN PERCEPTION OF SENSEX AND NIFTY STOCKS <i>C. RADHAPRIYA, R. ANITHA &amp; R. VIJAYAKUMAR</i>	33
7.	PUBLIC-PRIVATE KEY PAIR MANAGED BY CENTRALIZED OFFLINE SERVER IN MISSION-CRITICAL NETWORKS <i>DR. S. R. SURESH, P. SATHISH SARAVANAN, D. B. SHANMUGAM &amp; T. KARTHIKEYAN</i>	42
8.	CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN INDIAN TEXTILE INDUSTRY <i>M. GURUSAMY &amp; DR. N. RAJASEKAR</i>	48
9.	A STUDY ON EXCEPTIONAL AND OUTSTANDING HR PRACTICES IN AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY <i>DR. N. SHANI &amp; P. DIVYAPRIYA</i>	51
10.	A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT FACTORS <i>P. NA. KANCHANA &amp; DR. N. PANCHANATHAM</i>	56
11.	WOMEN'S SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH SHGs-BANK LINKAGE PROGRAMME - A STUDY OF CHITTOOR DISTRICT IN ANDHRA PRADESH <i>DR. K. SUDARSAN, DR. M. NARASAMMA, DR. V. MURALI KRISHNA &amp; DR. D. HIMACHALAM</i>	60
12.	EMOTIONS: A TACTICAL DEVICE IN NEGOTIATION STRATEGY <i>SHANWAL, V.K. &amp; SINGHAL, N.</i>	70
13.	JUDICIAL CONSUMER DISPUTES REDRESSAL AGENCIES UNDER THE CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT, 1986 <i>DR. N. SUNDARAM &amp; DR. G. VELMURUGAN</i>	74
14.	VIRTUALIZATION- UNLOCKING HIDDEN CLOUD CAPABILITIES <i>NITIN SARASWAT</i>	78
15.	THE APPLICATION OF REVISED BLOOM'S TAXONOMY FOR JAVA PROGRAMMING ASSESSMENT <i>M. SIVASAKTHI &amp; DR. R. RAJENDRAN</i>	84
16.	A STUDY ON THE EFFECTS OF MERGER & ACQUISITIONS IN THE INDIAN BANKING INDUSTRY <i>DR. JASKIRAN ARORA &amp; SHILKA ABRAHAM</i>	88
17.	A STUDY OF CREATION OF INNOVATION AND INCREASING SERVICE QUALITY IN COURIER INDUSTRY OF INDIA BY APPLYING MCRM TOOLS AND APPLICATIONS <i>DR. M. P. THAPLIYAL &amp; SANDEEP KAUTISH</i>	97
18.	RELATIONSHIP OF FII INFLOWS WITH SPREAD OF STOCK MARKET INDICES IN INDIA <i>SILKY JANGLANI, DEEPAK AGRAWAL &amp; DHEERAJ NIM</i>	103
19.	ROLE OF PANCHAYATS IN RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION: A CASE STUDY OF WEST BENGAL <i>DR. NIRANJAN MANDAL</i>	108
20.	MULTIPROGRAMMING AND REAL TIME SYSTEMS: FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS <i>DEVENDRA KUMAR TIWARY</i>	116
21.	A JOURNEY FROM CONSUMER SATISFACTION TO CONSUMER DELIGHT: CASE STUDY OF AN INDIAN PRIVATE SECTOR BANK <i>SMITA SHARMA, RASHMI BANSAL &amp; SHWETA SHARMA</i>	121
22.	MODELING NIFTY VOLATILITY USING GARCH <i>SANTANU DUTTA</i>	125
23.	BANKING IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR: AN OVERVIEW <i>DR. DARAKHSHAN ANJUM</i>	129
24.	SELF HELP GROUPS: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH OF EMPOWERMENT FOR SHE ENTREPRENEURS <i>V. V. DESAI</i>	133
25.	MULTILEVEL DETERMINANTS OF DROP OUT AT ELEMENTARY LEVEL IN INDIA <i>ARIJIT DAS</i>	137
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK	144

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**MULTILEVEL DETERMINANTS OF DROP OUT AT ELEMENTARY LEVEL IN INDIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Education has been used as a powerful means to exclude certain group of population from participating in the mainstream trajectory development. Thus Inequality in access to education emerges as one of well-known dimensions of social exclusion in India. In spite of strong government commitment incidence of drop out is the major deterrent in Universal retention and thus makes the goal of universal elementary education an elusive one. The present study attempts to explore the patterns and determinants of drop out at Elementary Level in India. This paper tries to address some specific questions such as: What is the level of drop outs and its extent among various social groups (S.C, S.T and Gender)? What is the pattern of regional variations in drop outs and its incidence across various social groups? What are the various household and institutional factors responsible behind drop outs? The incidence of drop out is not an isolated event rather a process embedded within the socio-economic condition of the household and the institutional set up where a particular child belongs to. Social exclusion thus is related to lack of access to services and goods offered by society. Although State entails to provide services to all without any discrimination yet many are left without access to and utilisation of resources on account of the fact that social and religious groups appear to accentuate social exclusion by denying certain opportunities pertaining to social and religious practices and access to educational services. While explaining determinants of drop out, this study instead of taking account the off-repeated frame work of child labour-poverty debate gives more emphasis on others institutional factors (provision of various component of educational infrastructure) which gel along with household factors to explain drop out and its extent. Hence the present study brings most of the household level and institutional determinants of drop out in a single frame. It uses data from MHRD (2007-08) and District Information System for Education (2007-08). The study explores that the incidence of drop out is still widespread in India and the States having incidence of drop out more than national average, such as, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Orissa and some of the North-Eastern States reflects a characteristic pattern forming a contiguous belt. States with high dropouts do reflects poor performance across various parameters of human development. Thus inequality in access stands to be the most important mechanism explaining the dynamics of social exclusion in India.*

**KEYWORDS**

Social Exclusion, Drop out, Elementary education, Household Determinants parental education, household economic condition.

**INTRODUCTION**

Normative schools of thought believe that arrangement of the social order in a society is based on freedom, equity and justice. Theory of Social justice put forward by John Rowels, states that 'State should ensure universal access to social primary goods'. Education is perhaps the most important social primary good. Moreover it assumes primary significance in perspectives of human capital, human development and human right. The educational deprivation among certain social groups in India makes the goal of inclusive growth an elusive one.

Several policy measures have been taken towards educational development in general and child schooling in particular. Universal elementary education (UEE) where by all children of age 6 to 14 years irrespective class, caste, gender affiliations must complete eight years schooling i.e. elementary level has become national project in India. Several schemes have been launched with times specific target to reach the goal of UEE. But the achievement till date suggests that the goal of UEE in India still is a distant dream.

Incidence of drop out which is popularly termed as wastage of school going stock of child is one of the major burden behind UEE in India. According to MHRD Report (2007-08), more than 13 million children, comprising 6.94% of the child population under the age of 6-14, remain out of school. Moreover this phenomenon is prominent in terms of region, location, caste, gender and poverty in India.

In this context the present study attempts to explore the patterns and determinants of drop out at Elementary Level in India. This paper tries to address some specific questions such as: What is the level of drop outs and its extent among various social groups (S.C, S.T and Gender)? What is the pattern of regional variations in drop outs and its incidence across various social groups? What are the various household and institutional factors responsible behind drop outs?

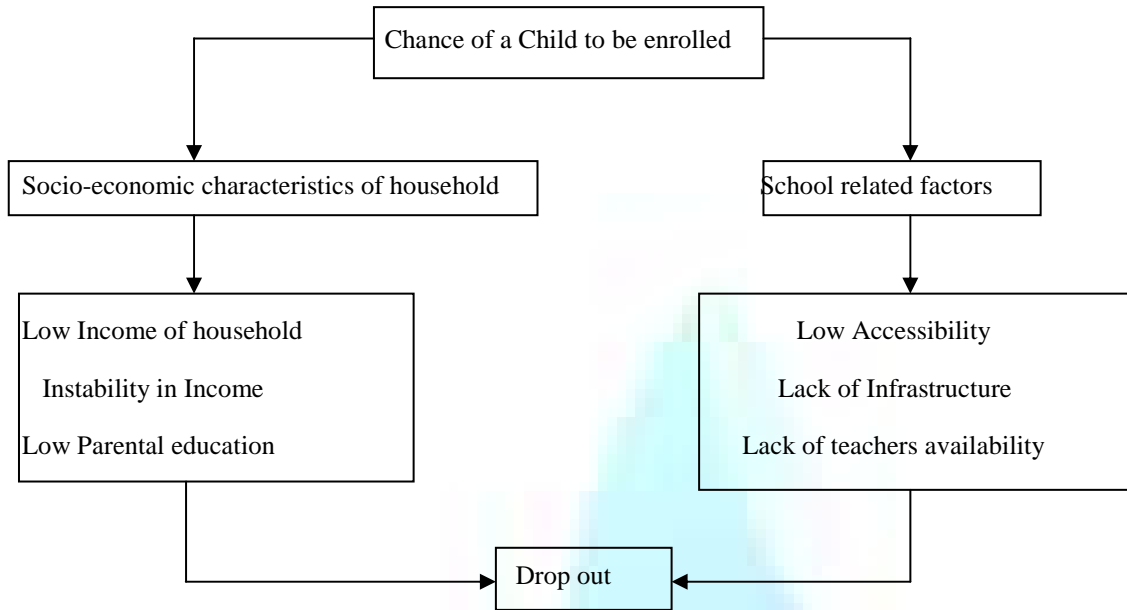
**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY**

Where there is no literature available which covers the subject of drop outs, where if drop out is dealt as central theme. More frequently drop out as very phenomenon is embedded with in studies which massages around drop outs set alongside others on access more generally. Few studies account for access and interactive, dynamic nature of factors which may contribute to dropping out. Rather much of available literature identifies one factor or possibly more leading to drop outs which is identified as final push or pull out of schools, which is less seen in literature are the processes around dropping outs.

All the responsible processes such as the personal attributes of children, household conditions and more specifically socio economic context which are interacting in a different way to drop out or bring in a single frame. In this context social milieu has a profound role on schooling of a child mainly because educational decision of a child in family are largely govern by it in India.

To quote John Dreze "literacy achievement in India depends crucially on social context: The Gender, division of labour, kinship system, and caste related norms economic entitlements and so on". It is very much evident that socio cultural religious economic, demographic factors play a vital role in enhancing or diminishing educational chances of a child. Based on the theoretical understanding chance of schooling or drop out of a child in India can be put it in as under:

**SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY**



**DATA SOURCE AND METHODOLOGY**

The present study is based on secondary data collected from two different sources, namely, MHRD report on drop out (2007-08) and DISE State Report Card (2007-08).

Several statistical tools like mean and standard deviation have been used to show trends and resulting variations in drop outs.

**ISSUES AND HYPOTHESIS**

In spite of the strong and persistent efforts of the Government ever since independence has seen drop out as serious constrains behind UEE in India. There is a range of literature which deals with the issues and problem of access, addresses drop out as one of the factors. Looking at the interplay of demand and supply factors and how they inter relate to the issues of drop outs, factor stated as under throw light on the dynamics governing drop outs and child labour argument. The review is organized around the research questions, with the first sections looking at demand and supply-side factors influencing drop out. Categories in this section emerged from the literature and have been grouped for purposes of convenience. They include issues such as financial constraints on households with regard to schooling, motivations behind schooling, socio-political contexts and school related supply-side factors.

**POVERTY AND INCOME CONSTRAINS**

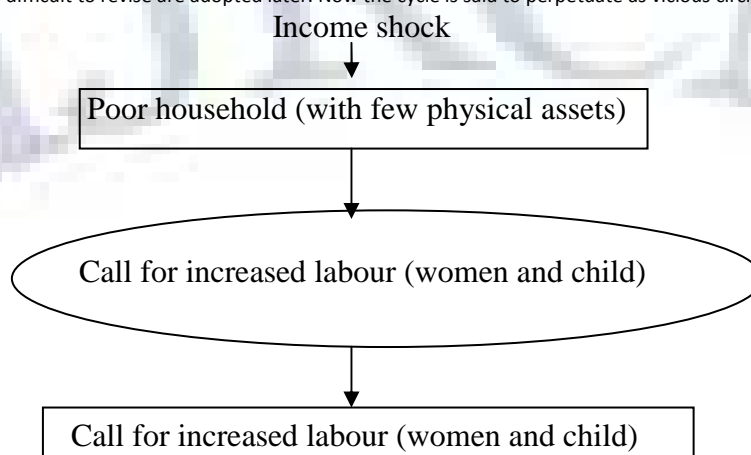
Household income is the most often cited reason determining access to education. Cost involved can be broadly classified into direct cost along with wide array of indirect costs such as cost of uniform, travel, equipment and the opportunity cost of sending a child to school. Opportunity cost being the cost foregone in terms of the next best alternative, which becomes high along with the time horizon, stands in conflict with the retention issues. Income thus has a profound influence on the factor influencing when the child starts going school, how often they attend, their temporary withdrawal and when if they drop out. In an economy thus being characterised as agrarian, under developed economy, difficulties in paying the indirect cost in times of poor harvest or times prior to harvest along with the cost denting the pocket of households to buy exercise book, pens and necessary clothing also influence whether child could enrol or were withdrawn from first grade.

Even if schooling is rendered free of cost in terms of fee, study has illustrated that additional cost in terms of registration process (gaining birth certificate etc.) are taxing.

Thus schooling cost being linked with

- Gendered pattern of access, parents less willing to pay fee for girl child's education.
- Child labour and resulting drop outs

Thus income shocks indicating further vulnerable household to withdraw their children from school as a part of coping strategy to deal with such shocks. Often in order to work, save costs or free other household members up to work. This vulnerability becomes more pronouncing in context of poor or rural communities. Such income shocks coping mechanism often adopted pertains to first resorting to strategies which have little long term cost, are adopted first, while strategies with long term costs that are difficult to revise are adopted later. Now the cycle is said to perpetuate as vicious circle of poverty in a manner as under:



This continues over generations as temporary withdrawal which leads to more permanent drop outs. Relationship between child labour and poverty: the type of work a child does, household structure, education access and work as to whether child work hinders or helps access to schooling inducing retentions, gendered and location aspects of work are broad areas where by nature of child labour has been extensively examined by various researches. Thus it's a case where factors interact severely with each other to such a great extent that it is difficult of precisely talk about causal determinants around complex and household specific decisions and attributes.

This is a case where poverty, gender, location, household educational levels, household income and season combine to interact with the child labour and influence access to education. As illustrated in many cases girls have more duties than boys and particularly in rural household children in particular and girls in specific, have to combine work with school and in case of urban areas, its either or. But defining child labour becomes important while studying the problem of poverty-child labour retention. According to PROBE Team 1999, the most prevalent types of child labour of that being domestic and household related duties (girls) and agricultural labour (boy), most stands to be unpaid, under recognised, time taking. Labour of such sort does not impede much with educational access. But further studies have shown children combining work with school, can result into erratic school attendance, regular school absences, with children frequently combining household/agricultural duties with some schooling.

Temporary withdrawals such in case of seasonal employment requirements and along with on-going education access, low attendance are seen as leading to more permanent withdrawals from schools and resulting drop outs. Reason was being, children falling behind due to regular absences, temporary withdrawals and heavy pending school load, if ignored than those who attend, fail to engage in effective learning processes.

It is interesting to note that while poverty is stated as the prime reason or perhaps the driving force behind child labour and resulting drop out, there are reasons which go beyond poverty-child labour debate.

- *Pull factors of the job markets v/s push factor of poverty*

PROBE Report 1999 suggests children work because they are unable to go school, as opposed to dropping out of school in order to work. Many researchers conclude that it is the buoyant job market and ability to earn good money a motivating force behind decisions to leave school. Highlights pull of the labour market as opposed to the push of the poverty is main factor behind decision to leave school. The more vibrant the local job markets the more vibrant drop out figures.

- *Household work pattern/structure: a case for gendered access*

If the mother associated with the formal wage economy, it is often associated with the suppressed educational access at the disposal of their daughters on account of more household chores to a girls credit and resultant less time to go school. Studies also go to the extent indicating that the girl child usually drops out of the school to look after their siblings at home. Moreover presence of siblings less than six years has shown increased probability of the older siblings to work and not go to school. It is seen that each additional younger sibling certainly reduces that chances of elder girl child to go school. Thus the educational access and child labour gendered, frequently girl child is the most affected. In such a process rural girls are relatively worse than their urban counterparts.

- *Migration*

On account of the nature of the poor and deprived groups catering to the informal sector of the economy, migration is one such factor linked with reduced access to education. Children living in urban squatter settlements, rural urban migration, job search, seasonal employment deter access to schooling. Research on the rural urban migration and household migration indicates that three time more migrants children are out of schools that the non-migrant children. According to the parents of the migrant drop outs, it is the often over crowded urban schools which are reluctant to entertain rural influx on account of infrastructural and quality issues.

- *Dynamism of decision maker around dropping outs*

The decision making activities is actually amalgam of social cultural and economic factors working through power relation of the households. Stronger the bargaining power of the family member, the stronger the influence it will have on the allocation of the allocate resources of the household. Now the bargaining power of the household if often lopsided, favouring the males in the family. Liu (2004) categorised parents on the basis as under- Supportive of children dropping out, Indifferent of children dropping out, Opposed to the children dropping out. The parents falling in the first classification are those in many cases, lack hope both on part of parents and the child to see school as a potential avenue.

Moreover the decisions are also governed by rational choices on the part of the parents who see rational decision on part of them by not sending their children school as not being economically and socially not profitable.

- *Gender explaining drop outs*

Boyle et al demonstrated in their study of households reveal that boys are seen to bring future stream of income out their parents whereas girls are not invested in terms of educational investment, are not wanted as the returns occurring to them will be realised to their in laws.

## NATIONAL SNAP SHOT OF DROP OUT

This section focuses on tracing the incidence of the drop outs in India. An attempt has been made to capture the group inequalities across various sub population groups in India. Given the importance of gender (boys/girls), caste (S.C, S.T and others), children's are categorised into nine mutually exclusive sub population groups. From the table as under, it can be inferred that 45.9%of the out of schools are actually discontinued their schooling in India. When the same is seen in terms of gender, girls are actually more deprived as compared to their boy counterparts. Incidence of drop outs is 45.44% for boys as compared to 46.22% for girls.

**TABLE 1: NATIONAL SNAP SHOT OF DROP OUTS**

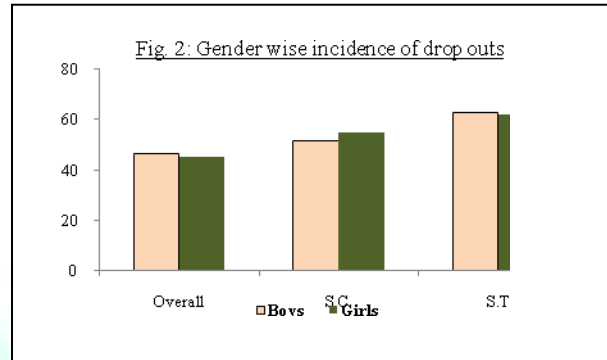
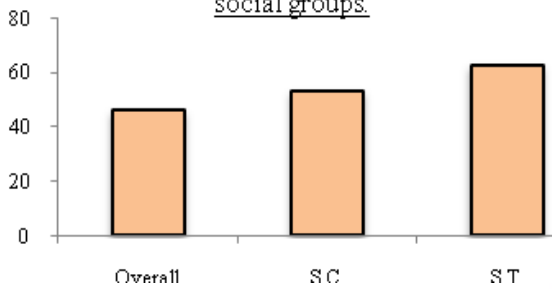
Level	Boys	Girls	Total
Overall	45.44	46.22	45.9
S.C	51.56	54.98	53.05
S.T	62.22	62.78	62.54

Source: Selected Educational Statistics, MHRD, 2007-08

The further classification on the basis of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe presents a fairly grim picture with drop outs of the S.T being much higher than the national average (62.54% as compared to 45.9%). The state of S.C's (53.05%) though being less than the national average is slightly better than that of S.T's. girls belonging to S.C's and S.T's do face the double fold jeopardy of being girls and belonging to historically deprived community of India. As evident from 54.98% drop out for S.C girls against 51.56% for boys and 62.78% for S.T girls as compared to 62.22% in case of S.T boys.



Fig 1: Incidence of drop outs among various social groups



**BASED ON THE DISCUSSION ABOVE IT CAN BE SUMMARISED AS FOLLOWS:**

- The incidence of drop outs varies across various social groups where by highest incidence is observed for the most deprived community i.e. S.T followed by S.C.
- Girls are found to be educationally more deprived than boys as the incidence of drop out is high among girls than in boys. The trend is consistent or become even worse across sub population group.

**REGIONAL VARIATIONS IN DROP OUTS**

**OVERALL**

The incidence of drop outs is not homogenous in India. There exist wide spatial variations in the incidence of drop outs across various states in India. This section makes an attempt to capture the regional variations in drop outs. For this purpose the states are classified into five categories (see table). It's interesting to note that maximum of states belong to very low (25.71%) and very high category (22.86%) followed by moderate and low (20% for each) 11.43% in high incidence category. The concentration of the state in the two extremes of the incidence category clearly indicates the existence of wide spread disparities in educational achievements across various states in India. States like Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, West Bengal, Rajasthan and North Eastern states like Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur belong to high incidence category and educationally developed sates like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Goa register very low incidence of drop outs.

**TABLE 2: REGIONAL VARIATION IN DROP OUT (OVERALL)**

Levels of Drop Out	No. of states	Percentage of States
Very High (More than 60%)	8	22.86
High (50-60 %)	4	11.43
Moderate/ National Average (40-50 %)	7	20.00
Low (10-40 %)	7	20.00
Very Low (Less than 10%)	9	25.71

Source: Author's own calculation from Selected Educational Statistics, MHRD, 2007-08

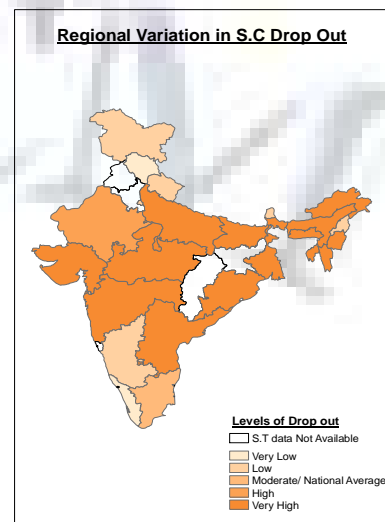
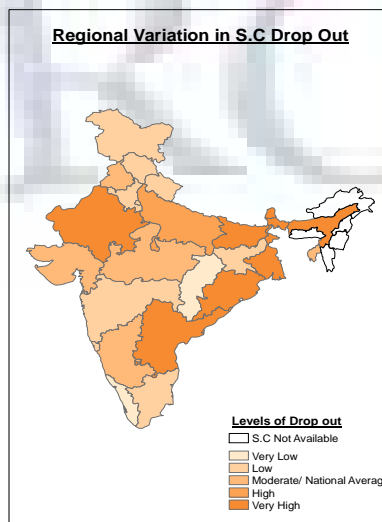
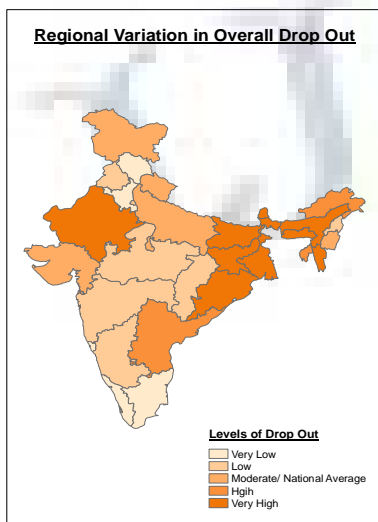
**ACROSS VARIOUS SOCIAL GROUPS**

The incidence of drop out for eight states in India under the category , very high (with 25.00% states ) and high(with 3.57% ) report if taken together drop outs higher than the national average of (40-50% drop outs) for 21.43% of states. Though states falling in the category of low (35.7% states) and very low (14.29% states) drop outs accounts for total 14 states which represents drop outs lower than the national average.

**TABLE 3: REGIONAL VARIATION IN DROP OUT (S.C)**

Levels of Drop Out	No. of states	Percentage of States
Very High (More than 60%)	7	25.00
High (50-60 %)	1	3.57
Moderate/ National Average (40-50 %)	6	21.43
Low (10-40 %)	10	35.71
Very Low (Less than 10%)	4	14.29
N.A	7	-

Source: Author's own calculation from Selected Educational Statistics, MHRD, 2007-08



The traced incidence for drop out falling under the very high category (with 42.86% states) and also in high category (with 7.14% states) represents together drop outs fairly high than the national average (10.71%). States under the category of low and very low (28.57% & 10.71%) drop outs represents drop out fairly low as compared than the national average (10.71%).

TABLE 4: REGIONAL VARIATION IN DROP OUT (S.T)

Levels of Drop Out	No. of states	Percentage of States
Very High (More than 60%)	12	42.86
High (50-60 %)	2	7.14
Moderate/ National Average (40-50 %)	3	10.71
Low (10-40 %)	8	28.57
Very Low (Less than 10%)	3	10.71
N.A	7	-

Source: Author's own calculation from Selected Educational Statistics, MHRD, 2007-08

**SPECIAL FOCUS ON INCIDENCE OF GENDER DISPARITIES IN DROP OUTS**

Overall

Though India has been successful in its effort to address the issue of gender disparity largely where by 62.86% states reporting no gender disparities (0.01-0.90), still startling disparities exists and continue to perpetuate with only three states(8.57%) reporting a case for male deprivation as compared to six states(17.14) stating a case for female deprivation.

TABLE 5: GENDER DISPARITY OVERALL DROP OUT

F/M Ratio	No. of States	% of States
No Out of Schools	4	11.43
More Male Derived ( 0.01-0.90)	3	8.57
No Gender Disparity (0.90-1.10)	22	62.86
More Female Deprived (More than1.10)	6	17.14

Source: Author's own calculation Selected Educational Statistics, MHRD, 2007-08

**GENDER DISPARITY IN DROP OUTS ACROSS SOCIAL GROUPS**

Largely the case for gender equality in case of S.C is as low as 48.39% at the national level. The incidence of drop for S.C girls is more glaring (with 25.81% of the states) as compared to S.C boys (with 16.13% of the states). Traces of drop outs are virtually absent for 9.68% states in India.

TABLE 6: GENDER DISPARITY S.C DROP OUT

F/M Ratio	No. of States	% of States
No Out of Schools	3	9.68
More Male Derived ( 0.01-0.90)	5	16.13
No Gender Disparity (0.90-1.10)	15	48.39
More Female Deprived (More than1.10)	8	25.81
Not Available	4	-

Source: Author's own calculation Selected Educational Statistics, MHRD, 2007-08

The incidence of drop out for the S.T at the national level stands high (57.14%) with girls drop out accounting for 28.57% in contrast to boys drop out being 10.71% only. The figure for the no out of school children is also as low as only 3.57%.

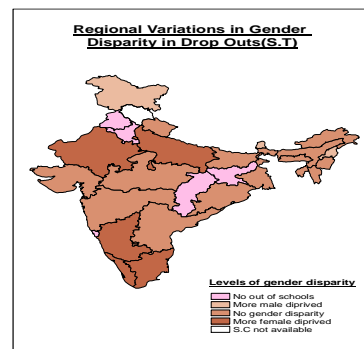
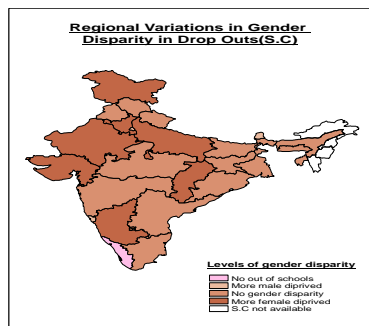
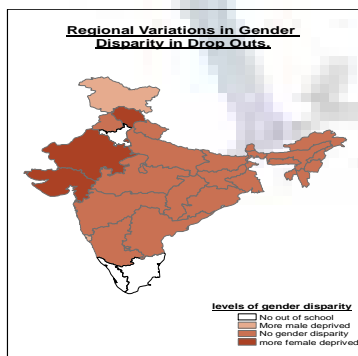
TABLE 7: GENDER DISPARITY S.T DROP OUT

F/M Ratio	No. of States	% of States
No Out of Schools	1	3.57
More Male Derived ( 0.01-0.90)	3	10.71
No Gender Disparity (0.90-1.10)	16	57.14
More Female Deprived (More than1.10)	8	28.57
ot Available	7	-

Source: Author's own calculation Selected Educational Statistics, MHRD, 2007-08

Based on the discussion above it can be summarised as follows:

- As compared with the national average of 62.86% states reporting gender equality, the case for S.C (48.3% of the states) and S.T (57.14% of states) is significantly low than national average.
- At the national level (17.4%) and for S.C (25.8%) and S.T (28.57%) in specific, girls are more deprived as compared to the boys.



**DETERMINANTS OF OUT-OF-SCHOOLS**

Research into the factors which are responsible for dropping out of children from school considered both demand and supply factors. Most of the available literature highlighted amalgam of household level constrains and that at institutional level such as, income of the household, parental motivations, educational level of the parents especially, mothers education as a major demand side and availability of school, availability of adequate classroom, presence of female teacher, toilet facilities within the school etc. as a prime supply side determinants of schooling of children in India.

**HOUSEHOLD LEVEL DETERMINANTS**

Household is the basic decision making unit for schooling of children. Therefore, household characteristics are of prime relevance in determining the schooling opportunities of children. In this study income of the household and parental education of the head of the household considered as the influential household factor behind drop out.

**TABLE 8: LINKING VARIOUS LEVELS OF DROPOUTS WITH ITS DETERMINANTS**

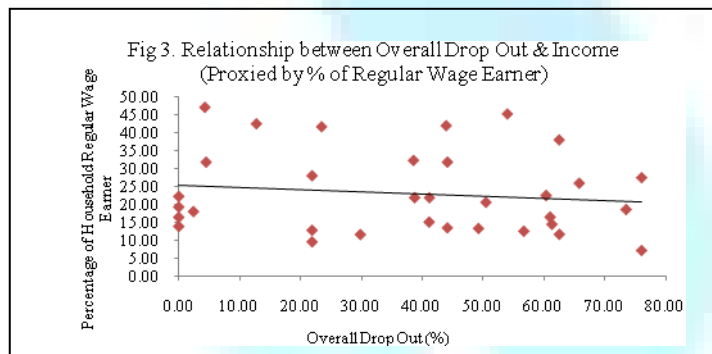
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Very High (More than 60%)	66.63	20.22	54.17	34.02	18.52	73.20	34.33	41.78
High (50-60 %)	53.77	26.15	55.93	33.47	23.40	73.47	23.33	30.00
Moderate/ National Average (40-50 %)	44.01	22.92	56.85	43.10	35.08	81.25	30.17	29.33
Low (10-40 %)	26.16	25.06	61.41	48.79	43.53	83.55	30.88	36.25
Very Low (Less than 10%)	1.60	24.11	69.11	58.47	55.61	90.60	26.71	25.57

Source: Author's own calculation Selected Educational Statistics, MHRD, 2007-08 and DISE, 2007-08

**INCOME OF THE HOUSEHOLD**

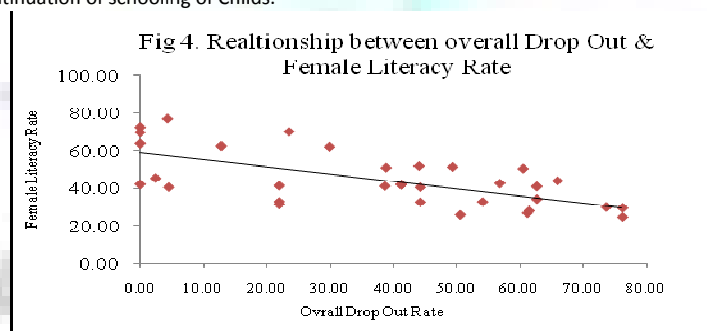
Household income is found to be an important factor in determining access to education as schooling potentially incurs a range of costs, both upfront and hidden. Upfront costs include schools fees, while, more hidden costs include costs of uniforms, travelling, equipment's and opportunity costs of sending a child into schools. Hence, low income particularly poverty act as burden to send child into the schools. A number of studies highlighted the direct links between the poverty and children out-of -schools. Porteus et al while discussing exclusions pointed poverty as the "most common primary and contributory reason for student to be out-of-schools."

The present study used percentage of household heads who are regular wage earner as a proxy to levels of income of the household. It has been found that directionality of association between these two variables is negative. The average dropout rate in the Very High incidence group is 63.63% against 20.22% household heads are regular wage earner where as it is only 1.60% drop out for 24.11% of the household heads are regular wage earner. But the association between income and the drop out is negative and significant but not as strong as it is thought to be. Some aspects of this weakness is very clear, for example, percentage of household head who are regular wage in High incidence group is 26.15% where as it is 20.22% in Very High incidence group.



**PARENTAL EDUCATION**

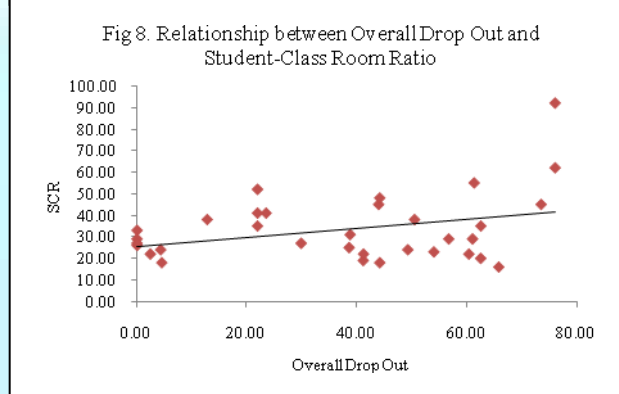
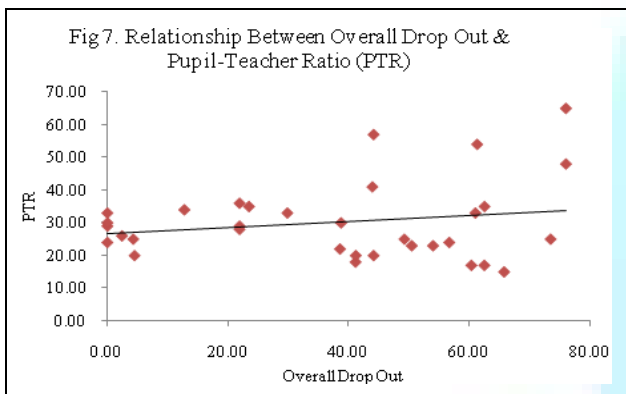
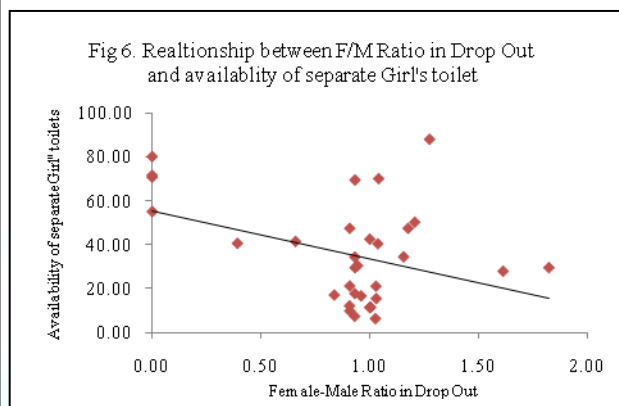
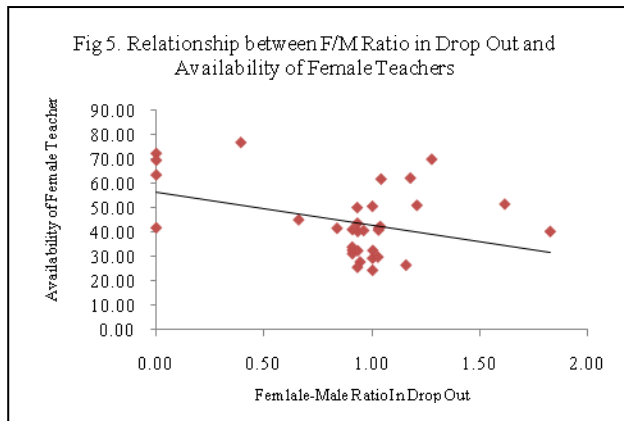
Schooling of children largely dependent on how parents perceive education and hence research indicates that educational level of the household member is particularly influential in determining whether and how long children access to schooling. Higher parental education is associated with the increased access to schooling and lower dropout rates. In the present study the impact of parental education on drop out has been tested on the basis of the correlating drop out with the percentage of female literacy. The average female literacy rate in the Very high incidence of drop out category is 54.17% and increases continuously towards the low magnitude of drop out groups and is 69.11 in the Very Low incidence of drop out category. Hence, it is clear that education particularly female education has profound impact on continuation of schooling of Children.



**SUPPLY SIDE DETERMINANTS OR SCHOOLS RELATED FACTORS**

Accessibility of schools, physical resources and the human resource availability of schools are also important determining factor behind child schooling. Educational access can be restricted by inadequate supply of schools. The lacks of schools availability not only affect the initial access but also the retention of child in the schools. Distance to schools being an important determining factors for educational access, particularly for girl children in India. Availability of adequate teacher, adequate class rooms and toilets are other important determinants of child's retention.

Here, the impact of the supply side aspects has been tested by associating percentage of female teacher's availability, percentage of schools having separate girl's toilets, Pupil-Teacher ratio and Student-class Room ratio with the dropout rates. It has been found that availability of female teachers and the percentage of schools with having separate girl's toilets, percentage of schools having drinking water facility are negatively associated with drop outs while availability of teacher and the availability of classroom are positively associated with out-of-schools. The availability of female teachers and the percentage of schools having separate girl's toilets, percentage of schools having drinking water facility are keep on increasing trend as the incidence of drop out decreases whereas the availability of teacher and the availability of classroom are maintained decreasing trend with increasing drop out.



**CONCLUSION**

The persistence of drop out makes the goal of Universal Elementary Education least inclusive. The observation above reveals that there is a wide range of factors at both household level and at the institutional levels which determine the dynamics of retention and explains resulting drop outs. There exists a need versus right debate towards the right to education being availed in context of economic or basic need of such households. Factors such as poverty, child labour, migration, rational decision making process, gender along with socio religious factors gel together to explain the extent of drop outs. As explained by Naila kabeer in her argument of the intergenerational contract, the decision to educate a child represent a significant shift in the intergenerational contracts for reasons such as it requires parents to make a substantial investment of limited resources and to postpone perhaps by several age the age at which child could behave as earning member of the family. For a family thus surviving on margins find it difficult to engage in such postponement. Institutional factors demonstrate that there exists a vast social and cultural distance between the world of school which is largely run by members of the privileged section of the society and children of lower cast/tribe or minority. Besides universalization of elementary education, access is deterred by the problems of selective exclusion and inclusion. Exclusion is thus partly a sheer case of poverty, partly of the unresponsiveness of the schooling system on offer, partly one of the social discrimination on the basis of cast, and gender and partly one of the cultural factor of that being tribe and religion. Along with such attitudinal factors, infrastructural constrains such as lack of class rooms, female toilets, female teachers, distance from home to school are significant factors explaining the drop outs, its extent and trends.

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**APPENDIX**

**APPENDIX 1**

I. Overall Drop out II. Regular Wage Earner III. female literacy IV. % of female teachers V. Percentage of schools with girl's toilets VI. Percentage of schools with drinking water facility VII. PTR (Pupil-Teacher Ratio) VIII. SCR (Student-Class Ratio)

**APPENDIX 2**

To understand the interstate variation in proportion of male-female disparity in Drop Out *Ratio Method* has been used. It is as followed,

$$G.D = \frac{T_f}{T_m}$$

$T_m$  = Total male Drop Out

$T_f$  = Total female Drop Out

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