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**DETERMINANTS OF DROPOUT OF TODA CHILDREN IN NILGIRIS DISTRICT-AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS****DR. R. ANNAPOORANI****PROFESSOR****DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS****AVINASHILINGAM INSTITUTE FOR HOME SCIENCE & HIGHER EDUCATION FOR WOMEN****COIMBATORE****K. KRITHIGA****RESEARCH SCHOLAR****DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS****AVINASHILINGAM INSTITUTE FOR HOME SCIENCE & HIGHER EDUCATION FOR WOMEN****COIMBATORE****ABSTRACT**

Education is the most important element in the development of tribal community. The dropout rate of girls (77.97 percent) was higher than that of dropout rate of boys (76.02 percent) from I-X. In this context, a research study on the "Determinants of dropout level of Toda children in Nilgiris district-An empirical analysis" was formulated with the following objectives of studying the socio- economic profile of the selected tribal population, dropout rate, analyse the gender disparity and identify the determinants of dropout of Todas children. The study was related to Toda mund in Ooty block which covers 100 households required data relating to family background, enrolment, dropout etc. The study used gender disparity index and logistic regression analysis. As per the study the total number of males was 161 and females were 186. The enrolment rate of boys (94.57 percent) was higher than that of girls (93.18 percent). The comparative analysis of dropout rate reveals that girls dropout rate (36.59 percent) was higher than that of boys dropout (20.69 percent). The study tried to identify the determinants of dropout was, for Toda boys, father's occupation, mother's occupation, property and distance to school/college were the significant factors. However, the dropout of girls is significantly affected by property and distance to school/college. The major reason for dropout was long distance to school/college and measures recommended were to establishment of secondary and higher secondary schools within easy accessibility.

**KEYWORDS**

children dropout, schooling.

**INTRODUCTION**

Education enables human beings to understand the interrelationship among the tangible phenomena surrounding them and gives skill to translate the knowledge into action. Acquisition of education helps workers to take advantage of technical changes, which increases their productivity and earnings (Asok Basu, 2002). The provision of education creates both private benefits and spillover benefits to society. As such, education emerged as a key form of investment in human beings (Duraisamy, 2002). Denison (1967) noted that the conventional inputs such as labour, capital etc would explain only 60 percent of the total growth of United State's real national income and remaining 40 percent growth in real national income would be attributed to improvement in human capital, specifically investment in education.

Realising the importance of education, the Government of India formulated various measures to promote education. Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State Policy emphasized the role of State to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14 years. The National policy on education in 1968 and 1986 also gave a stimulus for the expansion of education. To improve literacy rate, the Government of India has increased educational expenditure in various Five Year Plans of India. The outlay on education increased from Rupees 150 crores in First Five Year Plan to Rupees 2.70 lakh crores in Eleventh Five Year Plan. The expenditure on education as a proportion of Gross Domestic Product also rose from 0.7 percent in the First Five year plan to 6 percent in Eleventh Five year plan (Source: Eleventh Five year plan document).

Education is the most important element in the development of tribal community. It is a powerful instrument to change the values and attitudes of the people and to create in them the urge of the necessary motivation to achieve social mobility and social ascendancy. Sivaraman Committee (1981) noted that education must assume a key role during the phase of tribal development and education could be made more relevant to the felt needs of the tribal community.

In India there exists large variation in tribal literacy among States. Some of the States with higher tribal concentration in relation to their total population have done exceedingly well in terms of higher literacy rate. States in the north-eastern region of India like Mizoram, Nagaland and Meghalaya fall in this category. But in the States of Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh, which are inhabited by much larger number of tribals than the north-eastern states, tribal literacy continues to be very low ranging from 37.04 percent in Andhra Pradesh to 44.66 percent in Rajasthan.

At the State level, in Tamil Nadu there were 6,51,321 tribal people accounting for 1.05 percent of the country's tribal population. In Tamil Nadu, of the total tribal population 2,05,262 were in the age group of 5-19(i.e) those to be enrolled in schools or colleges. The corresponding figure for male population was 1,06,418 and female population was 98,844. However, not all the students were enrolled and completed the education.

However, tribal literacy rate was low -41.5 percent in 2001 and difference between the literacy rate of general population and that of scheduled tribes has been around 15 percent in 2001. While at the national level, literacy among males was estimated as 75.9 percent and for females as 54.2 percent, the corresponding figures with regard to tribal males and females were found to be 59.2 percent and 34.8 percent. Further there exists disparity in literacy in various tribal groups and also between males and females. On an average, the difference between the literacy rate of general population and that of scheduled tribes has been around 18.3 percent. The enrolment rate for I-VIII class for the scheduled tribe population (62.48 percent) was lower than that of general population (93.54 percent).

The dropout rate was higher for scheduled tribe students as compared to others. The dropout rate for I-V was 31.34 percent, for I-VIII was 62.48 percent and I-X was 76.85 percent. The dropout rate of girls (77.97 percent) was higher than that of dropout rate of boys (76.02 percent) from I-X. (Selected educational statistics-2010).

Of the different tribal groups in India, Todas are predominant and they are found only in the Nilgiris district. They follow pastoral life and live in 64 settlements called munds. The munds consist of a few half-barrel shaped living quarters, a temple for worship, cattle pen huts and grasslands for their buffaloes. The residential huts have a small living space and are provided with small doors supposedly to stop stray animals from entering them. Physically, the Todas are tall in stature and well proportioned. They are fairly coloured and thus a contrast from the general Tamil populace. They can be easily recognized by their traditional dress which has an impressive work of embroidery and their distinctive hairstyle. They are traditional lacto vegetarians, their main diet being milk and its products. They lag behind other tribal groups in literacy.

In India, few research studies-Ashuthosh Thakar (2001), RaghunathRath (2006), Kukreti (2004) etc have analysed the trend in tribal education and problems of tribal education based on national survey. But the national surveys should be supplemented by intensive studies on individual tribal groups, so as to gain a clear and comprehensive understanding of the problems and perspective on tribal education in different regions.

As such, a research study on the "Determinants of dropout level of Toda children in Nilgiris district-An empirical analysis" was formulated with the following objectives:

- To study socio- economic profile of the selected tribal population;
- To study the dropout rate of Todas;
- To analyse the gender disparity in dropout of Todas and
- To identify the determinants of dropout of Todas children.

## METHODOLOGY

The tribal group selected was Todas since they accounted for 46 percent of the total tribal population in Nilgiri's district (Source: Census of India, 2001). The study was related to Toda mund in Ooty block of Nilgiris District. The required data relating to general background, family background, enrolment, dropout etc were collected by administering the interview schedule to the head of households in the selected area and the study covered 100 households.

### Quantitative tools applied

(i) Gender disparity index:

The study calculated gender disparity index of dropout of Todas. The formula used was

$$\text{Gender Disparity Index} = \frac{M}{F} * 100$$

Where

M = Male dropout

F = Female dropout

(ii) Logistic regression analysis

In the current study logistic regression is used to identify the determinants of dropout of tribal children. The estimated model is of the form

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_7 + \beta_8 X_8$$

Here

Y = 1 if the child discontinues the school;

Y = 0 if the child does not discontinue the school;

X<sub>1</sub> = Father's education (1 if father is educated and 0 if the father is illiterate);

X<sub>2</sub> = Mother's education (1 if mother is educated and 0 if the mother is illiterate);

X<sub>3</sub> = Occupational status of father (1 if the father is employed and 0 if the father is unemployed);

X<sub>4</sub> = Occupational status of mother (1 if the mother is employed and 0 if the mother is unemployed);

X<sub>5</sub> = Cost of education (in rupees);

X<sub>6</sub> = Distance to school/college (in kilometers);

X<sub>7</sub> = Type of family (1 for joint family and 0 for nuclear family) and

X<sub>8</sub> = Property (in rupees)

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4, \beta_5, \beta_6, \beta_7$  and  $\beta_8$  = Estimated regression coefficients

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

### (A). SOCIO ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE FAMILIES

The literacy level is determined by size of the family, family income, type of family etc. Hence the current study tried to analyse socio economic profile of the families. Table I represents the socio economic profile of the selected families.



TABLE I: SOCIO ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE SELECTED FAMILIES

S.No	Items	Number
1.	<b>Age Structure</b>	
	0-5	5
	6-10	55
	11-14	40
	15-16	27
	17-18	30
	19-24	28
	25-30	43
	31-40	25
	41-50	13
	51-60	
	Above 60	
2.	<b>Sex</b>	
	Male	161
	Female	186
3.	<b>Occupations</b>	
	Farming	31
	Business	18
	Workers	25
	Coolies	26
4.	<b>Family Income</b>	
	Below Rs 5000	27
	Rs5000-10,000	30
	Rs10,000-20,000	23
	Above Rs 20,000	20
5.	<b>Type of Family</b>	
	Small	60
	Large	40
6.	<b>Education of the Head of the Family</b>	
	Illiterate	35
	Primary	38
	Secondary	15
	Higher Secondary	12

Source: Field survey

Table I reveals that, there were 347 members in the selected households. Of total members, 5 were representing the age of 0-5, while 55 belonged to the age group of 6-10, 40 belonged to the age of 15-16 and 152 members belonged to the age group of 6-24 years.

The total number of males was 161 and females were 186. The analysis of occupation indicated that majority of family members were doing the work of farming. Table I also implies that 30 percent of the families were getting the family income of Rs 10,000 to Rs 20,000. Of the total families covered 60 percent belonged to small family and 40 percent represents large family.

It is also clear that 35 percent of the head of the selected tribal households were illiterates and 38 percent have completed primary education.

#### (B) STAGE WISE ENROLMENT OF TODA CHILDREN IN NILGIRIS DISTRICT

The Toda children were enrolled at primary level, secondary level, higher secondary level and college given in the Table II.

TABLE II: STAGE WISE ENROLMENT OF SELECTED TODAS IN NILGIRIS DISTRICT

S.No	Level of education	Boys	Girls	Both sex
1.	Primary	24 (96)	29 (96.67)	53 (96.36)
2	Secondary	38 (95)	27 (100)	65 (97.01)
3	Higher Secondary	10 (83.33)	17(94.44)	27(90)
4	College	15 (100)	9(69.23)	24(85.71)
	Total	87(94.57)	82(93.18)	169(93.89)

Source: Field survey

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate enrolment rate.

Of the total children to be enrolled in the primary school, only 96.36 percent were enrolled. The enrolment rate at the collegiate level (85.71 percent) was lower than that of higher secondary level (90 percent) and secondary level (97.01 percent). The enrolment rate of boys (94.57 percent) was higher than that of girls (93.18 percent).

#### (C). STAGE WISE DROPOUT OF TODA CHILDREN IN NILGIRIS DISTRICT

When the students enrolled are not able to complete their study, they drop out from studies and this implies wastage of human resources. Table-III represents the details about the stage wise drop out of selected Todas.

TABLE III: STAGE WISE DROPOUT OF SELECTED TODAS IN NILGIRIS DISTRICT

S.No	Level of education	Boys	Girls	Both sex
1	Primary	2 (8.33)	4(13.79)	6(11.32)
2	Secondary	7(18.42)	16(59.26)	23(35..38)
3	Higher Secondary	6(60)	8(47.06)	14(51.85)
4	College	3(20)	2(22.22)	5(20.83)
	Total	18(20.69)	30(36.59)	48(28.40)

Source: Field survey

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate dropout rate.

Table III indicates that of the students enrolled, 48 were dropped out and dropout rate was calculated as 28.40 percent. The dropout at the secondary level is high as compared to other levels. This might be due to the compulsion of the parents to look after the young siblings or go for work.

The comparative analysis of dropout rate of boys and girls reveals that girls dropout rate (36.59 percent) was higher than that of boys dropout (20.69 percent). This might be due to the fact that female children are retained by the parents to look after their siblings.

**(D) IDENTIFICATION OF THE FACTORS DETERMINING DROPOUT OF TODA CHILDREN**

The study tried to identify the determinants of dropout of Todas with the help of logistic regression analysis. The estimated logistic regression coefficients of dropout as related to father’s education, mother’s education, father’s occupation, mother’s occupation, cost of education, distance to school/college family size, type of family, income and land ownership are given in Table IV.

**TABLE IV: ESTIMATED LOGISTIC REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS OF DROPOUT OF TODA CHILDREN AS RELATED TO SELECTED VARIABLES**

Variable	Boys				Girls				Both sex			
	$\hat{\beta}$	Odd ratio	Wald	Level of Significance	$\hat{B}$	Odd ratio	Wald	Level of Significance	$\hat{\beta}$	Odd ratio	Wald	Level of Significance
Constant	-1.04	0.36	0.16	0.68	-0.34	0.72	0.02	0.88	2.19	8.90	0.80	0.37
Father’s education	-0.02	0.82	0.13	0.72	-0.14	0.87	0.13	0.72	-0.28	0.75	0.27	0.60
Mother’s education	-0.45	0.64	0.60	0.44	-0.20	0.82	0.16	0.69	-0.31	0.74	0.26	0.61
Father’s occupation	1.70	5.47	4.38	0.04	0.02	1.00	0.12	0.99	-0.28	0.74	0.17	0.68
Mother’s occupation	-1.71	0.18	5.26	0.02	0.04	1.04	0.01	0.94	-0.45	0.64	0.35	0.56
Cost of education	0.02	1.00	0.02	0.98	0.03	1.00	1.32	0.25	-0.04	0.99	0.12	0.72
Distance to school/ college	2.44	0.09	16.97	0.04	0.68	1.98	4.53	0.03	0.96	0.05	19.76	0.04
Type of family	0.37	1.45	0.67	0.41	0.39	1.48	1.07	0.30	-0.18	0.84	0.17	0.69
Property	3.43	0.83	6.25	0.01	-3.33	0.04	7.57	0.01	5.07	15.87	8.86	0.02
-2loglikelihood					99.68				120.80			
Cox and Snell R square					.64				.67			
Nagelkerke R Square					.72				.74			
Overall percentage					63				65			
Chi-square					36.98				15.25			
Degrees of freedom					8				8			
Number of observations					18				30			
									96.28			
									.72			
									.97			
									73			
									35.50			

Source: Field survey

Table IV indicates that for Toda boys, father’s occupation, mother’s occupation, property and distance to school/college were the significant factors influencing dropout. Mother’s occupation has a negative impact in dropout.

However, the dropout of girls is significantly affected by property and distance to school/college. Distance to school/college has a positive impact and the odd ratio of distance to school/college (1.98) indicates that an increase in distance to school/college increases the dropout rate by 1.98 percent. However, against the theoretical proposition, property has a negative coefficient and the odd ratio of .04 indicates that an increase in property reduces the dropout by .04 percent.

For Toda boys and girls, as a whole as theoretically expected, father’s education, mother’s education, father’s occupation and mother’s occupation have a negative impact on dropout though they are not statistically significant. Distance to school/college has the positive and significant impact on dropout. The odd ratio of dropout in relation to distance indicated that for one unit of increase in distance, dropout rate increases by 0.05 units.

The Cox and Snell R square and Nagelkerke R square values gives an approximation about how much variance in the dependent variable can be explained with the hypothesised model. For the overall tribal group, the selected variables can explain between 72 percent to 97 percent of variance in dropout. The estimated model predicts 73 percent of the dropout cases correctly.

**(D) REASONS FOR DROPOUT AMONG TODA CHILDREN**

The tribal student’s dropout due to household work, illness, tough syllabus etc. Table V shows the various reasons for dropout as stated by the respondents.

**TABLE V: REASONS FOR DROPOUT**

S.No	Item	Boys	Girls
1.	Non-availability of school	2(11)	4(13)
2.	Long Distance to school/college	5(28)	7(23)
3.	Harsh attitude of teachers	4(22)	1(3)
4.	Inadequate facilities	4(22)	3(10)
5.	Lack of awareness	1(6)	2(7)
6.	Tough syllabus	-	1(3)
7.	Difficult language and script	2(11)	2(7)
8.	Early marriage	-	4(13)
9.	Puberty	-	2(7)
10.	Poverty	-	3(10)
11.	Taking care of siblings	-	1(3)
	Total	18	30

Source: Field survey

Note: Figures in parenthesis indicates percentage to total number of dropouts.

Table V implies that for boys, the major reasons for dropout were long distance to school/college, harsh attitude of teachers and inadequate facilities in school. However for girls, besides by distance, early marriage, poverty and puberty were the reasons for dropout.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, the following measures were recommended to improve the educational status of Todas in Nilgiris district.

1. Establishment of secondary and higher secondary schools within easy accessibility;
2. Providing regular transport facilities;
3. Motivating all the parents to send the children to school and not to work
4. Creating awareness to the tribal families about the education facilities provided by the Government ;
5. By providing cash awards to the children who are regular to school and
6. Modifying the syllabus to avail the vocational needs of tribal children.

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