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**A STUDY OF CAUSES OF DROPOUT
AT KACHI STAGE AND MEASURES TO ATTRACT
THE CHILDREN BACK TO SCHOOL**

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INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of dropping out of school hampers the process of education for development in many different ways. On one hand it is a great hindrance in human resources development efforts of a society while on the other hand it causes wastage of human and material resources invested in the development of education. The children dropping out of school may be a prey to the society of evil doers and thus become a social menace. Even if they save themselves from bad company, there are chances that they will become unskilled unemployed youth leading only to social and economic dependency.

The problem of dropping out is among the major problems of education which are being faced by many developing countries. These problems are interlinked and may reinforce each other, for example, low literacy rate among parents has often been considered to be one of the causes of drop out. Similarly the lack of physical facilities and shortage of instructional material may also contribute to the in-effective performance of educational system, thereby causing low attrition.

It has been estimated that only about half of the children who enter the school complete the primary level. Drop out rates range from a low for male in Punjab (18 percent) to high for girls in Balochistan (93 Percent). Only about 4 percent of rural girls remain in school by the age of 12 (Rugh 1991).

This high drop out rate, when considered in the background of low nationwide participation rates (54 percent for boys and 29 percent for girls), further

aggravates the situation. In the province of Balochistan where education is least developed and where only one percent of rural girls get enrolled, the need for measures to control the dropping out of children from school becomes more pronounced.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to investigate the reasons of dropping out of children from the kachi class (the pre-primary grade). The study also aimed at finding the present engagements of dropped out children and the measures that can be taken to bring these children back to school.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

One of the general factors that limit access and participation in education is poverty. Poverty often goes hand-in-hand with limited educational attainment and low occupational status of parents. In all countries children of poorer families are less apt to attend or complete the school than the children of families who are better off (Robinson, et.al., 1985). Many studies have found that the necessity for children to perform economically important tasks that support house hold survival limit school participation. (CERID, 1984). Low educational attainment and poverty also often go together, since children from poorer less educated families do not receive parental encouragement for schooling (Bowman and Anderson, 1980). In all cases where

poverty and wealth influence who can enter and continue in school influence is a demand side influence. Families determine whether or not to send their children to school based on their perceptions of the relevance of and likely returns from education. For all of these reasons children from poorer families are more apt to drop out of the school than the children of better off families.

An other factor that limits access to and participation in education is remoteness. Data clearly show that in all systems, rural children's opportunity for schooling lags behind that of urban children. A study in Nepal found that for every kilometer of distance that a child had to walk to school, the possibility of that child's attending school dropped by 2.5 percent. Another study in Egypt showed that the critical distance that affected school participation was between one and 1.5 Km. If the school was one Km away 94 percent of the boys and 72 percent of girls enrolled; if a school was two Km away 90 percent of boys and 64% of girls enrolled (Robinson, et.al., 1986 P.A59). Other studies show that distance affects girls more than boys and younger children more than older children (CERID 1984).

The National Education Council in Pakistan (1986) identified a wide range of factors that contribute to the dropout problem. Those specifically related to the classroom include, the inadequate facilities, the disciplinary methods of teachers, the length of school day, grade repetition, beginning formal instructions on the first day, language problems, children's learning problems, over crowded classes, the difficulty and lack of relevance of the curriculum, the rigidity of examinations system, poor administration and supervision, untrained teachers, a lack of textbooks, high student-

teacher ratios and poorly motivated teachers.

Different studies of the problem of drop out have been conducted by various agencies but these are limited only to the opinions of education officials regarding the problems (see for example Khawaja, 1984). These studies have pointed towards various in-school and out of school factors which are considered to be the reasons for high drop out. A study in Punjab (Khawaja 1984 P.P35) Province refers to such factors as a lack of physical facilities in schools, incompetent teachers and defective teaching methods, low socio-economic status of parents and lack of supervision as the causes behind drop out problem.

A similar study in Sindh pointed towards defective school surroundings, poverty, maltreatment by peers, corporal punishment, parents keeping their children at home for economic reasons, courses and syllabi being unrelated to the needs of children, shortage of teachers and teacher absenteeism and ineffective methods of teaching.

A N.W.F.P. study regarding the causes of drop out in this province mentioned difficulties of children having different home and school languages as one of the possible causes of drop out along with other factors such as lack of proper physical environment of schools and poor social and economic background of parents. A study carried out in Balochistan reported that drop out at primary level may be caused by a host of factors or problems being faced by the educational system. The causes reported in this study are:-

- i) A large number (about 70 percent) of primary teachers

untrained.

- ii) Single teacher, multi class schools.
- iii) Teacher absenteeism
- iv) Long distance a child has to walk to school
- v) Poverty of Parents.
- vi) Lack of Physical facilities at school
- vii) Seasonal migration of parents.

This study further pointed towards the non-availability of female teachers particularly for rural schools and negative attitude or lack of interest of parents/community towards the education of girls as particular factors causing drop out among girl student of primary stage.

With the above perspective in mind a small scale study was conceived to find out the reasons of children dropping out of kachi class from the parents of these children. The investigators were also interested in knowing what the dropout child does after being dropped out of school. Another aim of the study was to ask the parents about the measures they would like to be taken so that he will send his child back to school.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the present study are stated below.

- i) To find out the causes of drop out of children from the kachi classes.
- ii) To know the present status of the drop out children.

- iii) To find out what measures can be taken as expected by the parents of drop out children so that these children can be brought back to school.

The World Bank, in a recent Education Sector Strategy Report concluded that if literacy levels are to be increased further, measures to keep children in schools will be as important as measures to draw more children into school system.

PROCEDURE OF THE STUDY

The study was designed to investigate the causes of dropout at kachi level. The procedure was rather simplistic. The idea was to ask the parents in a simple straight forward manner about the reasons responsible for the dropout of their children. Usually the studies on dropout are based on opinion surveys of the teachers about the problem. This reflects the subjective feelings of these teachers about the problem. Only the parents of the dropped out children and the children themselves are supposed to be in a better position to give a better picture of the problem. So it was considered to be appropriate to base this study on the opinions of the parents about dropout.

Sample of the study comprised 72 parents drawn from the 3 districts of Balochistan i.e. Quetta, Sibi and Loralai. Selection of the sample was based on convenience rather than on randomization. The data was collected by 6 interviewers, 3 males and 3 females, 2 deputed in each district. The procedure was that our interviewers went to various primary schools or the primary sections of the high schools, selected at their will, and got the addresses of the children who dropped out

in kachi classes during the years 1989, 1990 and 1991. Then in the evening the interviewers approached the parents of children. Tracing of the houses was the most difficult task because the most of the parents of the dropped out children belonged to poor working class and lived in sub-standard houses where there were no name plates and no house numbers. Out of every ten trials of tracing these houses, only one, approximately, proved to be successful. Sometimes the houses were traced but these were either locked or parents were not available. Our interviewer, however, were able to contact and interview 72 parents/guardians in all the above mentioned three districts. Our sample included the parents of male/female as well as rural/urban children. Data collection started in the 2nd week of september, 1991 and was completed in a week's time in all the 3 districts.

The instrument for this study consisted of a interview schedule comprising 3 open ended questions asked from the parents/ guardians of the dropped out children. The questions were: (i) Why did their child leave the school? (ii) what was the child doing at that time? (ii) what measures could be taken so as to put the child back to school? The schedule also contained entries asking information about the income, education and occupation of the parents/guardians. Philosophy behind giving open-ended questions was that the investigators did not want to suggest anything, by giving structured question, which would have resulted in unreal responses rather than the true real responses of the parents.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data has been analyzed manually and is being presented in the following simple frequency-percentage tables. The main objective of the analysis is to know the causes of early dropout from parent's view point and suggest necessary measures to over come this problem.

TABLE-1
CAUSES OF DROPOUT IN KACHI CLASSES
(ALL DISTRICTS)

	CAUSE	F	%	
	<u>A. SCHOOL BASED CAUSES</u>			
1.	Shortage of class rooms or no class rooms	10	7.1	
2.	Insufficient desks or mats	5	3.5	
3.	No drinking water	8	5.6	
4.	No arrangements against severe weather conditions	8	5.6	38.7%
5.	School being far away from home	1	0.7	
6.	Physical punishment at school	9	6.4	
7.	School environment being unpleasant	7	4.9	
8.	Education not related to life	7	4.9	
	<u>B. ECONOMIC CAUSES</u>			
9.	Parents being very poor	25	17.6	
10.	Too many children to educate all	7	4.9	
11.	Parent interested to make their child learn some trade or skill.	4	2.8	23.1%
12.	Child's help to be availed in money-making matters	4	2.8	
	<u>C. HOME BASED AND SOCIAL CAUSES</u>			
13.	Parents negligence and disinterest	13	9.2	
14.	Child being disinterested in education	7	4.9	
15.	Parents being against girls education	3	2.1	
16.	Child feeling ashamed because of being old	2	1.4	33.0%
17.	Child's help needed to look after the family	3	2.1	
18.	Child's help needed in domestic matters	7	4.9	
19.	Seasonal migration, transfer, school change	3	2.1	
20.	Name being struck off due to absence	5	3.5	
21.	Other causes	4	2.8	
		142	100.0	

Table-1 gives overall analysis of causes of dropout for all districts. Table indicates that most prominent causes of dropout at kachi level as reported by parents are: poverty of the parents (17.6%); negligence and disinterest of the parents (9.6%); shortage of classrooms in school (7.1%); and physical punishment at school. Further classified analysis of data indicates that school based causes as a group are on top (38.7%) in hierarchy; next come home based and social causes (33.0%); and then come economic causes (28.1%).

TABLE-2
CAUSES OF DROPOUT IN KACHI CLASSES
(QUETTA DISTRICT)

	CAUSE	F	%	
	<u>A. SCHOOL BASED CAUSES</u>			
1.	Shortage of classroom or no classrooms	10	16.4	
2.	Insufficient desks or mats	5	8.2	
3.	No Drinking water	8	13.1	
4.	No arrangements against severe weather conditions	8	13.1	63.9 %
5.	School being far away from home	1	1.6	
6.	Physical punishment at school	3	4.9	
7.	School environment being unpleasant	4	6.6	
	<u>B. ECONOMIC CAUSES</u>			
8.	Parents being very poor	4	6.6	
9.	Too many children to educate all	2	3.3	9.9%
	<u>C. HOME BASED AND SOCIAL CAUSES</u>			
10.	Parents negligence and disinterest	5	8.2	
11.	Parents being against girls education	1	1.6	
12.	Children's feeling ashamed because of being old	2	3.3	26.2 %
13.	Name being struck off due to absence	5	8.2	
14.	Other causes	3	4.9	
		61	100.0	

TABLE-3
CAUSES OF DROPOUT IN KACHI CLASSES
(SIBI DISTRICT)

	CAUSES	F	%	
	<u>A. SCHOOL BASED CAUSES</u>			
1.	Physical punishment at school	5	7.9	
2.	School environment being unpleasant	2	3.2	17.4%
3.	Education not related to life	4	6.3	
	<u>B. ECONOMIC CAUSES</u>			
4.	Parents being very poor	17	27.0	
5.	Too many children to educate all	5	7.9	
6.	Parents interested to make their child learn some trade or skill	2	3.2	44.5%
7.	Child's help to be availed in money-making matters	4	6.4	
	<u>C. HOME BASED AND SOCIAL CAUSES</u>			
8.	Parents negligence and disinterest	6	9.5	
9.	Child being disinterest in education	6	9.5	
10.	Parents being against girls education	2	3.2	38.1%
11.	Child's help needed to look after the family	2	3.2	
12.	Child's help needed in domestic matters	7	11.1	
13.	Seasonal migration, transfers, school change	1	1.6	
		63	100.0	

TABLE-4
CAUSES OF DROPOUT IN KACHI CLASSES
(LORALAI DISTRICT)

	CAUSES	F	%	
	<u>A. SCHOOL BASED CAUSES</u>			
1.	Physical punishment at school	1	5.5	
2.	School environment being unpleasant	1	5.5	27.7%
3.	Education not related to life	3	16.7	
	<u>B. ECONOMIC CAUSES</u>			
4.	Parents being very poor	4	22.2	
5.	Parents interested to make their child learn some trade or skill	2	11.1	33.3%
	<u>C. HOME BASED AND SOCIAL CAUSES</u>			
6.	Parents negligence and disinterest	2	11.1	
7.	Child being disinterested in education	1	5.5	
8.	Child's help needed to look after their family	1	5.5	38.7%
9.	Seasonal migrations, transfers, school change	2	11.1	
10.	Other causes	1	5.5	
		18	100.0	

Tables 2,3 and 4 give district wise analyses of causes of dropout. In Quetta district shortage of classrooms; non- availability of drinking water; and no arrangement against severe weather conditions are reported to be the most important reasons of dropout. In Sibi district poverty of the parents; child's help being availed at home; and parents negligence and disinterest are some of the important reasons of dropout. In Loralai district poverty of the parents; and education not being related to

life are the important reasons. Classified analyses shows that in different districts nature of causes are little bit different. For example, school based causes in Quetta district, economic causes in Sibi district, and home based and social causes in Loralai district are reported to be the top most reasons of dropout in kachi class.

TABLE-5
PRESENT STATUS OF THE CHILD
(ALL DISTRICTS)

	PRESENTS STATUS	F	%
1.	Doing nothing	27	32.5
2.	Helps the parents in domestic matters	20	24.1
3.	Helps the parents in earning livelihood	5	6.0
4.	Works on daily wages	6	7.2
5.	Learning some trade or skill	3	3.6
6.	Studying at home	10	12.0
7.	Studying some religious institutions	4	4.8
8.	Studying in some other school	4	4.8
9.	Parents are unaware of their child being droppedout	2	2.4
10.	Engaged in cattle grazing	2	2.4
		83	100.0

Table-5 gives the present status of the droppedout children. Table shows that majority of the children (32.5%) are doing nothing; 24.1% of them help their pants in domestic matters; some (12.0%) are studying at home; and a small proportion (7.2%) work on daily wages.

TABLE-6
MEASURES TO BE TAKEN TO PUT THE CHILD BACK TO SCHOOL
(ALL DISTRICTS)

	MEASURES	F	%
1.	Better physical facilities at school (Sufficient Rooms, desks, mats, water, heating-cooling arrangements etc)	8	7.6
2.	Better physical environment (cleanliness lawns,entertainment)	8	7.6
3.	Improved methods of teaching, better psychological treatment	9	8.6
4.	Individual attention from the teachers	4	3.8
5.	Physical punishment to be avoided	6	5.7
6.	Financial assistance in the forms of books, uniforms, scholarship, zakat etc.	19	18.1
7.	School to be opened in the nearby locality	2	1.9
8.	Parents not interested in re-admission	12	11.4
9.	Parents being interested in re-admission on their own	12	11.4
10.	Child being already admitted in some other school	5	4.8
11.	Better job opportunities to be provided to the parents	11	10.5
12.	Religious education to be provided at school	2	1.9
13.	Technical education to be provided at school	4	3.8
14.	Other measures	3	2.8
		105	100.0

Table-6 gives an analysis of measures as desired by the parents of dropped out

children, as a prerequisite, to put their child back to school. Table indicates that most (18.1 %) of the parents has expressed the desire to provide some sort of financial assistance in the form of books, uniform, scholarships and zakat. Some of parents (10.5 %) are interested in better job opportunities for themselves so as to meet the educational expenses of their children. Other(8.6 %) has demanded for improved methods of teaching and better psychological treatment at school.

TABLE-7

QUALIFICATIONS OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF DROPPED OUT CHILDREN
(ALL DISTRICTS)

Qualifications	F	%
Illiterate	45	62.6
Primary	11	15.3
Middle	4	5.5
Matric	8	11.1
F.A.	4	5.5
	72	100.0

Table-7 shows that majority (62.6 %) of the parents of dropped out children, in our sample, are illiterate. 15.3 % of them are low qualified (primary pass). Only about 22 % the parents have qualifications above primary. None of them is a graduate. This indicates that illiteracy and dropout are closely related to each other i.e. There are greater chances of dropout in illiterate families than in literate families.

TABLE-8
MONTHLY INCOME OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF DROPPED OUT CHILDREN
(ALL DISTRICTS)

Monthly income	F	%
Upto 1000 rupees	7	9.1
1000-2000 rupees	52	72.2
Above 2000 rupees	13	18.1
	72	100.0

Table-8 indicates that a large majority(81.3 %) of the parents of dropped out children have a monthly income of 2000/- rupees or below. Only 18.1 % of the parents have a monthly income above 2000/- rupees. This shows that most of the parents in our sample are poor which suggests that there is greater possibility of dropout in poor families than in rich families.

TABLE-9
OCCUPATIONS OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF DROPPED OUT CHILDREN
(ALL DISTRICTS)

Occupation	F	%
Unskilled labourers	41	56.9
Skilled labourers	10	13.9
Clerks	7	9.7
Shopkeepers	14	19.5
	72	100.0

Table-9 indicates that majority of the parents (70.8 %) are the unskilled or skilled laborers and belong to poor working class. Only 29.2 % of the parents are either clerks or small shopkeepers. This supports the hypothesis that lower the socio-economic status of the parents, the greater is the possibility of dropout of their children.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

CAUSES OF DROPOUT

1. Most important causes of dropout, in all the districts, were: poverty of the parents ; negligence and disinterest of the parents ; insufficient classrooms ; and physical punishments at school.

2. Overall analysis of all the three districts indicated that school based causes, as a group, were on top (38.7 %) in hierarchy ; next came home based and social causes (33.0 %) ; and then came economic causes (28.1 %).

3. In Quetta district most important reasons of dropout were: insufficient classrooms; non-availability of drinking water; and lack of arrangements against severe weather conditions.

4. In Sibi district poverty of the parents ; child's help being availed at home ; and parent's negligence and disinterest were reported to be some of the main causes

of dropout.

5. In Loralai district poverty of the parents and education not being related to life were the important causes of dropout.

6. Nature of causes of dropout in different districts were found to be different. For instance, school based causes in Quetta district, economic causes in Sibi district, and home based and social causes in Loralai district were found to be the topmost causes of dropout.

7. A large number of dropped out children (32.5%) did nothing; 24.1% of them helped their parents at home; some (12.00%) were studying at home; and a small number were also reported to be working on daily wages.

MEASURES TO BE TAKEN

8. Many parents (18.1) stated that they would put their child back to school if they were provided some financial assistance in the form of books, uniform, scholarships and zakat.

9. Some of the parents (10.5%) expressed the desire to be provided with better job opportunities so as to enable them to meet the educational expenses of their children.

10. Some parents demanded for improved methods of teaching and better psychological environment at school.

PARENT CHARACTERISTICS

11. Majority (62.6%) of the parents of dropped out children were found to be illiterate. Only about 22% of the parents had qualifications above primary.

12. A large majority of the parents (81.3%) had a monthly income of Rs. 2000/- or below.

13. Average monthly income of the parents were found to be Rs. 1760/-.

14. Majority of the parents (70.8%) belonged to poor working class and were reported to be skilled or unskilled labourers. Only a small proportion (29.2%) were reported to be the clerks and small shopkeepers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

BETTER FACILITIES AT SCHOOL

Our study revealed that a greater proportion of causes of dropout at kachi level was school based. It is generally stated that better facilities at school have the power to attract to and retain the child in school. It is, therefore, recommended that:

i) Minimum standards of physical facilities (rooms, play-grounds, toilets, drinking water, fans, heaters etc.) should be set for urban as well rural schools and the same should be provided to them, Number of children in a school should be kept in mind while deciding for these facilities. Community help in this regard should be

sought where possible.

ii) It is observed that a large amount of recurring educational budget is spent on staff salaries. It is proposed that 5% of the recurring budget (without affecting the salaries) should be reserved for the improvement of physical facilities at school. This will help in improving the situation a lot.

iii) Cleanliness does not cost too much. Only thing it needs is a little bit of initiative on the part of the teachers. The big army of children can extend any possible help in this regard. Every school should present a neat and clean view with at least a small piece of grassy land. The objective is to present the school before the child as an attractive place, even more attractive than his/her own house, where he or she should feel at ease.

iv) Use of modern teaching techniques, friendly attitude of the teacher, avoidance of physical punishment and warm and home-like atmosphere at school have the great holding power and can minimize the risks of dropout. Special emphasis should be given on the development of these skills and attitudes in teacher education programmes.

v) If a child is absent continuously for a long period, the teachers should be required to contact his parents. This will not only establish good parent-teacher relationship but also will be helpful in reducing the dropout.

ECONOMIC INCENTIVES FOR CHILDREN AND PARENTS

According to the findings of the study, the economic factor was the second most important factor contributing towards dropout. For a poverty stricken parent it becomes meaning less whether his child is receiving education or not. Our study also suggests that possibility of dropout in children of poor parents is greater than those of better off parents. Therefore, any programme resulting in the economic uplift of the poor people and providing them financial incentives can enhance literacy and can be helpful in reducing dropout. Following recommendations are made in this regard.

i) Children of the poor parents, the potential dropouts, should be provided with text books and other supplies like takhtis, slates, ink etc. This facility already exists but due to leakages and misuses, the needy children are often deprived of it. Present distribution system of these supplies needs to be re-examined so as to ensure that these supplies reach in the hands of those who really need them.

ii) Every poor child in the school should be paid a handsome monthly stipend from the zakat fund. This facility also exists already but zakat money is being misused and is being distributed to those who do not deserve it at all We believe that if this single source of zakat is utilized properly, not a single child in allover Balochistan will leave the school just because of his/her poverty.

iii) Uniform should be provided to those children who cannot afford it. This can be done through zakat fund or with the help of the community.

iv) Poor parents should be given generous grants from the zakat fund, along with technical advice, to start income generating projects of their own

v) It should be proposed to the government that all employees of the federal and provincial governments, working in lower grades, should be paid education allowance from the benevolent fund @ Rs. 10/- P.M. for every school going child with a maximum of Rs. 50/- P.M. Private organizations should be encouraged to do the same. This will provide an incentive to poor parents to send and retain their children in school.

vi) Merit scholarships should be awarded to talented children. Only consideration for the award of these scholarships should be the merit and ability. Some objective system of evaluation should be devised so as to ensure that these scholarships will go to the most able children only.

ADULT EDUCATION FOR PARENTS

Our study suggests that parent illiteracy and child dropout are closely related to each other. It means that possibility of dropout of children of illiterate parents is greater than those of literate parents. Therefore, any effort to promote literacy or to check dropout will prove to be fruitless if it is not supported by an adult literacy programme. The following measures are suggested in this regard.

i) Apart from the existing programmes of adult literacy, which cover only a small proportion of illiterates, the government should launch a new massive programme of adult literacy requiring every big office, institution, organization, factory etc, government as well as private, to provide half an hour's compulsory daily education to their illiterate employees. All this can be done without any additional cost

ii) All employees successfully completing their adult education should be given a nominal literacy allowance.

iii) The literate employees should also be given preference in their promotions and in the award of other benefits.

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