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Parental opinion regarding female dropouts in district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh

Ruchita Sharma, Shubhangna Sharma and Raj Pathania
Department of Human Development, College of Home Science
CSK Himachal Pradesh Krishi Vishavavidyalya, Palampur-176 062.

Abstract

The present study has been conducted in Bhawarna block of Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh. Total sample 150 respondents were selected through stratified random sampling technique, from the randomly selected three local Government Senior Secondary Schools of Bhawarna Block. The data were collected from respondents and their parents through direct interview method. In the opinion of parents: teacher's behavior, inappropriate teaching methods, and unsuitable curriculum, lack of child's interest in studies, poor grade in class, financial strain and girl's requirement in household work / care of siblings were important factors for low enrollment and dropout of girls in the school. To crub this menace the girls should be motivated to go to school and to continue the schooling. Special structured programmes / advertisements in the television and print media can play an effective role for improving female education.

Introduction

Education is the basic requirement for human development and survival of the society. The development of an individual and the progress of a nation depend on education. Educationists, philosophers and thinkers have defined education according to their own point of view. Despite professed. equality of opportunity to all citizens, glaring disparities exist between men and women in respect of education and India has failed to provide the girls an equal access to education. The educational levels of Indian women in general, continue to remain disappointing. The problem of women's education is relatively more serious in rural areas. According to census, 1991, the rate of wastage and stagnation at the elementary level is 65.3 per cent and at middle level it is 22 per cent. So, the problem of dropouts and failure exists at all levels of education. The all India dropout rates of primary and middle level are about 60 per cent and 70 per cent, respectively. The dropout rate of girls is higher than that of boys. Most of the institutions offering co education at primary level and economic conditions preclude the poor and scheduled castes /tribes parents from sending their daughters to school. India being a conservative society gives more importance to boys. They are considered as future bread earners of the family, as a result girl's education is neglected. They are not sent to schools because they are girls. Thus, the present study aims at judging the factors responsible for the low enrollment and dropouts of girls in the school.

Material and Methods

The study was conducted in Bhawarna Block of district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh. The sample of 150 female respondents in the age group of 10 – 18 years was randomly selected from local Govt. Sen. Sec. schools of Bhawarna Block. Sample was evenly distributed (n=50) to form three equal strata i.e. primary middle (n=50), Middle – High (n=50) and High Secondary (n=50). The extent from female school dropouts from 5th to 12th class was seen through their attendance register, which was obtained from school Principals. The reasons for the female school dropouts were judged by interviewing the girl dropout and their parent's through home visits. A rapport was established by convincing the selected dropouts and their parents to collect necessary information. The girls who had dropped their studies at different levels and their parents were interviewed personally in their homes in natural setting.

Results and Discussion

Opinion of the parents have been presented under different factors in Table 1.

Personal factors

Parents were of the opinion that main reason of dropout is girl's disinterest in studies (60.00%), girls low grade in school was also one

Table 1. Opinion of parents about causes of dropouts

Factors	Parents of respondents (n=150)		
	Response categories		
	Agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree
Personal Factors			
Lack of girls interest	90(60.0)	44(29.33)	16(10.66)
Teasing by classmates	35(23.33)	49(32.66)	66(44.0)
Child shows low grade in school	58(38.66)	52(32.66)	40(32.66)
Child addicted to bad company	10(6.66)	22(14.66)	118(98.66)
No separate room for studying	20(13.33)	41(27.33)	89(59.33)
Social Factors			
Trends of not educating girls in community	30(20.00)	37(24.66)	83(55.33)
System of early marriage	63(42.00)	28(18.66)	59(39.33)
Training in household work is sufficient	36(24.00)	51(34.00)	63(42.00)
Problem of adjustment	62(41.33)	45 (30.00)	43(28.67)
Familial Factors			
Involvement in household chores /care of siblings	87(58.00)	38(26.00)	75(50.00)
Prolonged illness in family	15(10.00)	-	135(90.00)
Conflicts at home	41(27.33)	48(32.00)	61(40.66)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

of the striking factor for female school dropouts. Similar results were reported by Visaria (1993) in their study as majority of female students dropped their studies due to lack of interest.

Familial Factors

Most of the parents were of the opinion that involvement in household chores / care of siblings and conflicts at home were the main factors (58.0% and 27.3% respectively) responsible for female school dropouts. Desetty *et al.* (1998) had also reported the involvement of girls in the household chores as one of the factor responsible for their dropping out of school.

Societal factors

The opinion of parents regarding societal factors highlights that system of early marriages, problem of adjustment after marriage (42.0% and 41.23 %) were the main factors of female school dropouts. Pant and Pal(1995) studied the causes of female school dropouts. According to them obstacles to female education stemmed up from cultural factors like system of early marriage, restriction on physical mobility of girls etc.

Table 2 shows the reasons cited by the respondents for dropping of their studies. Majority of respondents i.e. 30% had dropped their studies due to parental pressure and only 12% due to household work. Nanda and Gulati (1986) conducted a study on 150 female adolescent and revealed that the parents of these girls did not encourage them to study; they had inadequate time for self-study because of household responsibilities.

Table 2. Reasons for dropout

Reasons for dropout	No. of respondents n=150
Poverty	20(13.33)
Large family	15(10.00)
More household work	18(12.00)
Parental Pressure	45(30.00)
Unsuitable School timing	10(6.67)
Lack of interest	27(18.00)
Any other	15(10.00)
Total	**150** (100.00)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage.

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