



## RESEARCH PAPER

### School Dropout Issue in Education: A Study on Jacobabad District, Sindh, Pakistan

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## ABSTRACT

This research paper explores the issue of school dropouts in Jacobabad district, Sindh, which has become a significant concern. This study aims to identify the root causes of students leaving school, negatively affecting both students and society. This study evaluates the impact of primary school dropouts in Jacobabad's rural areas. It explains students' challenges, such as poor education outcomes due to closed schools and inadequate infrastructure. The study was conducted in rural areas of Jacobabad, and participants included teachers, parents, and students from ten randomly selected schools. The study's findings indicate that the current education system fails to meet societal demands due to poverty, illiteracy, parental unawareness, and unemployment among educated individuals, leading to high dropout rates. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews and then tabulated and analyzed. The results were presented in percentage form.

**KEYWORDS** Illiteracy, Poverty, Primary Education, Rural Areas, School Dropout

## Introduction

Dropping out of primary school means leaving school before completing primary education, resulting in no certification. Student dropout rates are a significant concern for education departments in all provinces of Pakistan. Several studies have investigated the issue of school dropouts. The dropout process generally occurs in five stages, which are Primary stage grades 1-5, Middle stage grades 6-8, Secondary stage grades 9-10 leading to a secondary school, Intermediate stage grades 11-12 leading to a Higher Secondary School, and higher education leading to graduate and post-graduate degrees Education is crucial in driving economic growth and equipping young people with the necessary skills to adapt to rapidly changing global trends. (Jan, Khan, & Tariq, 2022). Unfortunately, Pakistan currently has the lowest literacy rate in South Asia, with only 10% of the population completing 12 years of schooling. (Zarif, 2012). It is important to note that many children drop out of school because of inadequate facilities and unfavorable environments surrounding school buildings. As such, school officials must prioritize the needs of rural schools and ensure that students have access to a conducive learning environment. Providing such an environment increases the likelihood of children succeeding academically (Farooq, 1948). Dropout rates in schools are influenced by multiple factors, such as families' inability to pay tuition fees and other essential charges required to provide for their children's education. Other factors include the distance of schools from students' homes, poor quality of education, inadequate facilities, overcrowded classrooms, unsuitable language of instruction, irregular teacher attendance, and security issues in girls' schools. All of these factors contribute to an increase in school dropout rates (Bibi &

Ahmad, 2019). Poverty is a significant cause of high dropout rates among vulnerable children, including orphans, migrants, tribal children, and linguistic minorities. These children are more likely to drop out of school if they are older than the recommended age for enrollment or have repeated a grade (Afzal, Tabassum, & Tabassum, 2022). This study aimed to identify the causes of dropout in government primary schools. In summary, the social cost of the dropout problem includes a lack of skilled workforce, lower productivity, and increased public assistance and crime rates.

### **Literature Review**

According to the literature review, reducing the high dropout rate in primary education is crucial for achieving universal primary education. Therefore, it is essential to investigate the reasons behind low participation, retention, and high dropout at the primary level. Policymakers, planners, education managers, and head teachers should examine this issue and engage in a meaningful dialogue to find a solution. Conducting inclusive research to explore the causes of this situation and taking remedial measures based on evidence is necessary for solving this problem.

According to the 2017 Economic Survey by the Government of Pakistan, primary education is a crucial stage in a child's education (Ali, Yaseen, Makhdum, Quddoos, & Sardar, 2021). And Pakistan is working towards achieving universal access and equity goals by improving primary education. In 1973, the Constitution of Pakistan underwent the 18th amendment, which introduced Article 25(A), stating, "The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of five and sixteen years in such a manner as may be determined by law". Since then, most provinces have enacted laws to enforce Article 25-A (Jafar et al., 2021). And the National Institute of Population Studies (NIPS), in 2015, there were approximately 51.53 million children aged between 5 and 16 in Pakistan. However, only 28.84 million of them attend educational institutions, be it public or private schools. It means that around 22.8 million children aged between 5 and 16 are currently out of school, of which 5.06 million are primary-age children, i.e., between 5 and 9 years old (Ullah, Das, & Ghunio, 2022). In this regard that there is a significant disparity in enrolment rates across provinces/areas and gender (Quresh & Niazi, 2011). For that reason Pakistan has signed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 4, which focuses on quality education and lifelong learning. The aim is to integrate the unfinished Education for All (EFA) business into the new agenda. Achieving 100% of SDG 4 is only possible if all children of primary age have access to quality education and the survival rate is 100%. While all National Education Policies and Development Plans prioritize access, equity, and quality of education, the current situation could be improved (Bibi & Ahmad, 2019).

### **Material and Methods**

A methodology aligned with the research question has been developed for exploratory research through participatory observation. A mixed-method research approach has gathered structured numerical data, presenting an overall picture of the issue. This enables to draw general conclusions from the collected statistical information. This research aims to identify the primary reasons for school dropout in District Jacobabad, Sindh, Pakistan. The study was conducted as a survey to identify the most common factors leading to student dropout through descriptive research. Three questionnaires were created for the research and given to three group participants: the students who dropped out, their parents, and their respective school teachers. The study population included teachers, parents, and students in a rural area of District Jacobabad. Ten government primary schools were randomly selected as the sample.

## Factor for Analysis

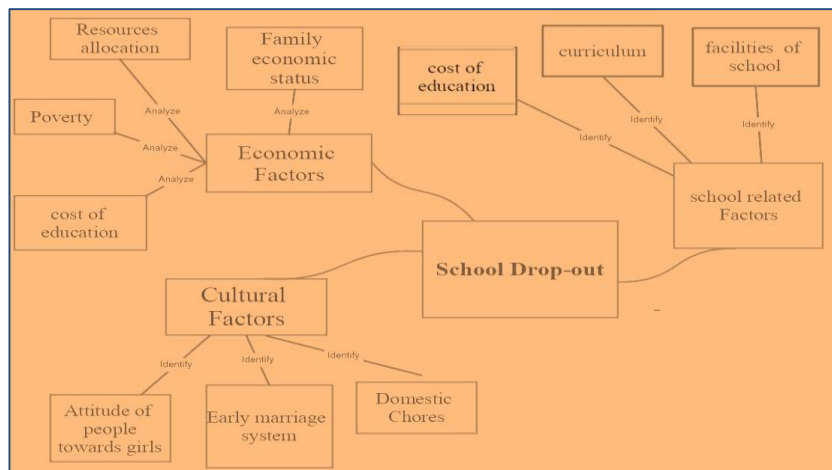


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study

## Results and Discussion

As part of this study, three questionnaires were created to collect data, each with various questions. The first questionnaire, containing 24 questions, was given to the selected school teachers. The second questionnaire, consisting of 25 questions, was administered to the students who had dropped out through an interview. The researcher filled in the third type of questionnaire, which had 15 questions, by interviewing the parents of the dropout students. The result was described

### Parents Response

The dropout rate among students is concerning for our educational system. According to a recent survey, all parents believed that the use of harsh attitudes and corporal punishment by teachers was the primary reason for such dropouts. The second significant cause of school dropout is parents involving their children in household responsibilities instead of focusing on their studies. This accounts for 60% of the cases. Additionally, 40% of parents believe that their low income makes providing a happy and conducive environment for their children's education challenging. Such circumstances negatively impact school attendance, and students skip school irregularly (as reported by 60% of parents). Another 40% of parents feel that the current curriculum needs to meet the demands of society, contributing to the high dropout rates. 40% of parents believe that the primary reason for students dropping out of school is the increase in unemployment of educated individuals. Additionally, 60% of parents think that students face several problems adjusting to school, including disciplinary issues, lack of promotion, disagreements with teachers and classmates, and excessive homework that compels them to leave school before completing their secondary education. About 20% of parents believe that detention and exam failure also cause students to drop out. Finally, 80% of parents suggest that students should be free to choose their elective subjects based on their interests; lack of choice can lead to dropout.

### Teachers Response

According to data 80% of students drop out of school for various reasons, including perceiving the school curriculum as irrelevant, the school environment, teacher attitudes, and lack of interest in student problems. Society's perception of the unemployment status

of educated people is considered one of the primary reasons behind students dropping out of school. According to a survey, 70% of teachers believe that increased unemployment among educated people is a leading cause of dropout. As a result, parents often withdraw their children from school and have them engage in their family's occupation. Most teachers cited individual factors, including lack of attention, encouragement, self-esteem, social skills, confidence, concentration, and self-management skills, as significant reasons for student dropout.

### **Dropout student Response**

According to data, 80% of students believe that a harsh attitude and corporal punishment from teachers lead to student dropout. Additionally, 78% of students need more transportation facilities. Lack of guidance, weak memory, challenging courses, and failure in class, along with the school's long distance, were cited as reasons for discontinuing studies by 60% of the students. In rural areas, travel is often challenging due to underdeveloped roads and public transport. Safety concerns also make it difficult for students to travel long distances outside the village. Lack of interest in school, low motivation, poor learning abilities, attention deficiency, and memory problems were cited as the most common factors leading to dropout. Furthermore, 20% of students left their schools due to the subject of mathematics, non-promotion was correlated with discipline problems, detention exams, or failure in the exam (as 60% of respondents). Many students have been forced to abandon school due to complex living conditions and low incomes. About 60% of students have been greatly affected by this situation. Their parents are often compelled to take them out of school and put them to work or have them help raise their younger siblings. The poor economic conditions of the parents frequently force them to withdraw their boys from school and connect them to earning activities. In conclusion, the most common reasons for dropping out of school are related to the student's family and personal background, which also affects their educational environment.

### **Conclusion**

School dropout is a complex issue that can happen too quickly. Even one of various factors can lead to a student failing and leaving school. Families with low standards of living who deal with poverty and marginalization are at a higher risk of experiencing school dropout. To identify possible reasons, a study included the perceptions of parents, teachers, and students. Poverty, children being employed for domestic duties, parents' lack of awareness regarding education's aims and goals, and their illiteracy were all cited as reasons by all respondents. The government should focus more on improving facilities, providing playgrounds, and creating a peaceful environment for teachers and students. Frequent teacher transfers, harsh treatment of students, and the use of corporal punishment all contribute to high dropout rates. Schools must also take responsibility for dropouts due to a lack of professional and vocational education, valuable skills in the curriculum, and basic facilities and co-curricular activities. Poor student performance, the increased unemployment of educated individuals, excessive homework, and a need for a more valuable education system that meets society's demands are all contributing factors. It has been determined that the cultural background of students serves as an obstacle for pursuing further studies.

### **Recommendations**

The study identified reasons for primary-level dropouts in Jacobabad, Sindh, Pakistan. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made.

1. A large number of parents living in this district are struggling to make ends meet and are categorized as being below the poverty line. The government must provide more scholarships to students from low-income households. Additionally, the government should regulate the prices and quality of essential school supplies such as stationery, school uniforms, and shoes so that parents can afford to purchase these necessities for their children without any financial burden.
2. It is essential to encourage affluent and influential people to extend financial support to underprivileged students for their education. Moreover, the community must communicate with schools to address any issues and challenges they may face.
3. It is recommended that the government investigate the parents to ensure that they give proper attention to their children. It is also the primary duty of the government to inform parents about the value and importance of education through mass media such as TV, radio, newspapers, and magazines.
4. It is suggested that the government should prioritize providing basic facilities like drinking water, electricity, toilets, sitting mats, furniture, and blackboards to schools. Educational awareness programs should also be introduced for adults. To engage students, co-curricular activities must be started on a large scale. The government should initiate religious education programs at the secondary school level to promote spiritual development. The curriculum should be designed based on the actual needs of society. There should be a vigorous change in the curriculum and teaching methods. Children from agricultural backgrounds should be given practical opportunities for gardening and farming in school.

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