



RESEARCH PAPER

**Issue of Dropout Student: A Study of Primary Schools in Sindh,
Pakistan**

Aleena Qureshi*¹ Dr, Rizwana Muneer² and Dr. Amir Ali Shah^{3*}

1. M.Phil. Scholar , Department Of Sociology , University Of Sindh Jamshoro, Sindh Pakistan
2. Associate Professor, Department Of Education, University Of Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan
3. Assistant Professor, Department Of Sindhi, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University Benazirabad, Sindh, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

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***Corresponding
Author**

mphil.aleena.qureshi2020@gmail.com

The study aimed to identify factors leading to students' dropout and implement appropriate measures to address these issues. This study was conducted using both secondary and primary data, and the randomly District of Sindh was chosen for investigation. The case study research design was combined with a qualitative methodology. The study's participants comprised two male and female taluk education officers, as well as students, parents, and members of the community. The purposive sampling approach was used to choose participants. Thematic analysis was employed to examine the data. The study's findings revealed that poverty, illiteracy, political involvement, child labor, a lack of infrastructure, and informal institutions are the most common causes of student dropout. Furthermore, there is no system in place at the district administration level to resolve these issues. The study suggests a joint action plan at the district administration level for implementing poverty-relief programs in Sindh's primary schools. This plan should involve school coordination with all relevant parties and diffuse the threat of excessive political intervention to ensure transparency and sustainability.

Introduction

A school dropout is just a pupil who departs early from school. The pupils in this category do not have credentials since they left school before completing their education. School dropout is a global issue confronting education departments all over the world. The most noteworthy investigations on this issue were conducted in 2004-2005-2006-2008- by Mohsin, Aslam, Bashir De Cos, Bridgeland, Dilulio, Morison, and Oghuvbu(Alexander, 2008). This problem has been in Pakistan ever since it became independent. Pakistan has five distinct phases to its educational system: The Primary stage is made up of grades 1 through 5, the Middle stage is made up of grades 6 through 8, the Secondary stage is made up of grades 9 through 10, and it is focused on earning a secondary school certificate. The Intermediate stage is made up of grades 11 and 12, and it leads to a Higher Secondary School Certificate. Graduate and postgraduate degrees are obtained through higher education(Arif & us Saqib, 2003). The inherent disparities in Pakistan's educational system are its most amazing feature. A total of 57% of primary school-age children are enrolled, meaning that 7 million of them are not in school. Vision

2030 states that education is the main element of economic growth because it directly concerns women's empowerment, productivity, entrepreneurship, and employability (Farooq, Feroze, & Kai, 2017). Dropout rates are high in Pakistan's Sindh government primary schools. It has a detrimental influence on society's socioeconomic development. The issue of primary school dropouts may have a severe influence on Sindh's primary education system if the state government does not develop a timely comprehensive action plan to solve it (Zafar & Ali, 2018). This is solely because youngsters are raised with valuable values and life skills to ensure a bright and trouble-free future. The development of fundamental academic skills and moral principles is the major purpose of primary education in Pakistan; nevertheless, Pakistan has not yet succeeded in achieving these objectives in order to address the primary school dropout trend (Farooq & Kai, 2017). Since 1947, the Pakistani government has developed many five-year plans, policies, reform initiative programmers, seminars, and educational conferences in an effort to increase literacy rates in the country. Nonetheless, none of these projects have been effective. One example is the 1951 education policy, which designated the first five years for planning, employing instructors, raising literacy rates, and, most crucially, boosting primary school enrollment. Despite all of these efforts, the fulfilment of the aforementioned aims was hampered by a disconnected between theory and practice (Zarif, 2012).

Dimension of School Dropout Trend

A state's economic prosperity is typically related to its educational level. Education is a prominent metric for measuring a country's success. Pakistan's tremendous poverty needs rapid action from both the government and the business sector to enhance educational standards. A study regarding education arose, stimulating the interest of global education specialists and other stakeholders. It documented the poor circumstances in primary schools, which resulted to 31.2 million students dropping out in 2010 for a variety of causes (Agha, Rind, & Issani, 2021). The United States continues to have a high dropout rate, especially in Mississippi, where a 38% dropout rate was documented in 2011. In Africa, female dropout rates have been a major issue. From 1992 to 2002, there was a reported sharp rise in the number of dropouts, measured in millions. Furthermore, the survey said that 83% of female student dropouts worldwide were from Asia, the Pacific, and Sub-Saharan Africa (Kalhor, Ahmed, & Mughal, 2020). In Pakistan, 83% of pupils enrolled in school, with 48% completing their education. The astonishing fact that dropout rates in Pakistan have been reported at about 35% is troubling. In comparison, the United States had a dropout rate of around 25%. In Canada, it plummeted by over 16%. It is problematic in several Canadian provinces, as well as in third-world countries (Nayyar, Jariko, & Mughal, 2017). If the current approaches for preventing dropouts are not altered, all efforts in this direction will be fruitless and ineffective. Students' unhappiness with our testing system stems from the decline of educational quality.

Literature Review

The literature evaluation indicates that attaining universal primary education depends on lowering the high primary school dropout rate. Consequently, it is imperative to look into the causes of the high dropout rate, poor retention, and low engagement at the elementary level. To address this issue, an inclusive analysis of the causes of the problem must be done, and data-driven corrective action must be implemented.

The Government of Pakistan's 2017 Economic Survey states that a child's basic education is an important phase of their education. Pakistanis are striving to improve elementary education in order to meet the goals of fairness and universal access (Tabassum, Afzal, & Tabassum, 2021). Article 25(A) of the Pakistani Constitution, which says, "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," was inserted in 1973 by the passing of the 18th amendment. Most provinces have now introduced laws to enforce Article 25-A (Zarif, Haider, Ahmed, & Bano, 2014). The goal of achieving a high literacy rate is still a distant dream that will never come true. Poverty has been identified as one of the leading factors of Pakistan's primary school dropout rate. The student dropout rate during 2001–2002 and 2007–2008 was quite concerning. It was 43% in 2001–2002, dropped to 31% in 2005–06, and then increased sharply to 41% in 2007–2008 (Ali, Yaseen, Makhdom, Quddoos, & Sardar, 2021). UNESCO (2010) reports that Sindh has the worst educational conditions in the country, with 46% (2.8 million) of students between the ages of 5 and 9 experiencing severe dropouts, while 38% of students leave school before completing their primary education (Hassan et al., 2020). Based on the Wilson report. In Pakistan, a lot of pupils are still leaving schools, especially in Sindh and Baluchistan. While Sindh has performed poorly, with a 1% increase in dropout rates at the government primary school level, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has achieved a 7% decrease in the dropout rate. Furthermore, teacher leadership is virtually ever discussed in classrooms (Mughal, 2020). Following the ratification of the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, provincial governments took control of education, promoting interprovincial competition across the nation. Unfortunately, though, Sindh has lagged behind Pakistan's other provinces. The majority of the province's schools are devoid of essential amenities including functional science laboratories, libraries, playgrounds, restrooms, and water sources (Shah, Haider, & Taj, 2019).

In Sindh, dropout rates are a severe issue that have an impact on both elementary and general education levels. In Sindh province, one of the main reasons of illiteracy is student dropout rates. Because kids are enrolled in schools but leave for a variety of reasons without finishing their education, the primary school dropout rate has a significant impact on the literacy rate.

Method and Material

The study used a survey design known as "Descriptive type research," with an emphasis on the most common factors leading to dropouts. Three different types of questionnaires were created specifically for this research and distributed to dropout students, their parents—particularly the mother—and the teachers at the respective schools.

Teachers, parents, and kids from the rural Sindh community made up the study's population. In different District, there are around sixty-three government high schools, twenty-five of which are located in rural regions. Ten government-run higher education institutions were chosen at random to serve as sample schools.

Results and Discussion

Data was gathered using a qualitative research methodology. From the data, themes, codes, and categories were produced using thematic analysis. A gathering of like-minded individuals was convened to deliberate on the issue of dropout rates in the different district's elementary schools. The researcher acted as a conduit to get data.

Together with the participation of both male and female members, two FGDs were held to increase the value of this paper. Everyone took an active role in the conversation. Below is a presentation of the qualitative data analysis.

When asked what part district education administration plays in lowering school dropout rates, most participants responded that the district does not take any action to address the political, economic, cultural, and social variables that contribute to dropout rates (FGD2: February 22, 2021). Pathetic condition of schools, lack of toilet facilities, broken boundary walls, and lack of basic amenities are also the factors, especially in rural areas," one participant said. The primary school building at village, next to Moen Jo daro, is run-down and in poor condition, making it unusable. The majority of the teaching and learning process occurs while children are seated close by under a tree's shade. February 12, 2021 is FGD1 day. In summary, the absence of fundamental facilities in schools meant that the education department's administrative function failed to show any commitment towards eliminating dropout rates. The parent was unable to enroll their children in school in such a circumstance. The majority of interviewees said that political and bureaucratic factors mostly govern public educational institutions in Sindh. Due to excessive political meddling, the selection of teachers is not conducted on the basis of merit. Furthermore, teacher leadership is not practiced in any schools. "Unfair political meddling in their teachers' posting at the station of their choice," said one of the participants. As a result, there are no teachers available to work at Sindh's remote, outlying schools (FGD2: February 22, 2021). Based on the responses, the researcher discovered that one of the leading causes of student dropout in Sindh's government elementary schools is also excessive political meddling.

When questioned, the majority of participants said that low socioeconomic status was a factor in school dropout, particularly in rural Sindh, where parents would send their kids to work in fields or shops to help them sustain themselves financially. "Economic circumstances are also one of the primary factors in student dropout," stated one participant. If a child's household is financially unstable, he or she is unable to attend school. Parents want to send their children to any store in order to provide for the family. They even bring their children out into the fields to help in agriculture. (FGD1, February 12, 2021). According to the research, economic circumstances were also recognized as a cause of dropout. The overwhelming majority of respondents stated that inadequate teacher motivation is the cause of primary school student dropout. A participant commented: "The motivational level of teachers has a significant influence on the development of the school learning environment." If a teacher is uninspired, neither the school nor the kids belong to him. Students who drop out of school leave no learning environment. The study came to conclusion that one of the reasons for primary school students dropout is teacher motivation based on the responses (February 22, 2021 FGD2). The majority of participants believed that student dropout is a serious issue, with illiteracy being a key contributing factor. One participant responded, saying, "Parents who lack education do not actively participate in forming partnerships with educators and educational institutions to ensure their children receive a quality education because they do not understand the value of education." Their education is less important to them. As a result, parents are unable to educate their children. One interview was conducted to collect data on a certain issue. The interviews helped shape the questionnaire. The majority of the interviews were conducted in headmaster's offices, school staff rooms, and meeting halls. The interviews were conducted in English as well as a combination of Sindhi and English. The researcher also documented the interviews and made notes. Following the interview, the data was examined and presented below. In Pakistan, over 52% of the populace is impoverished. It is not easy

to accomplish such basic necessities as arranging butter and bread for daily use. This explains why most primary school students have financial difficulties covering their tuition. Increasing rates are yet another troublesome concern. The dropout problem is exacerbated by these circumstances. The aforementioned data suggests that increased dropout rates are a result of financial hardships.

Furthermore, a primary school education administrator from Taluka stated that "teachers primarily receive the posting of their choice due to excessive political influence." Nobody likes to be allocated to a faraway place. As Taluka's education officer, she maintains she has no authority to prohibit any teacher from being relocated. Schools in outlying regions were closed due to a teacher shortage. Most participants stated that parents often prioritize Madarsa education over formal education. Parents want their children to get religious teaching rather than attend a conventional school. "The parent declined to send the child to school when asked," disclosed a teacher. He declared that the Madarsa education his youngster received was adequate. The aforementioned data suggests that the Madarasah education system has an effect on the dropout rate. "The majority of parents prefer that their daughters stay inside their four walls. Most girls are occupied with household chores. In addition, girls are married off at a young age, especially in the rural parts. Parents forbid their daughters from attending colleges as a result. The aforementioned data indicates that the informal institutional structure of Sindhi society has an impact on the primary school dropout rates of girls. According to the findings, qualitative studies showed that excessive political meddling in the education sector is the root cause of student dropout in elementary schools. The survey also found that excessive political influence in schools has remained one of the leading reasons of student dropouts. Undue political influence is exercised in the appointment of instructors, and even the posting of teachers at the stations of their choosing, which eventually leads in the lack of teachers in schools. Tribal disputes have also been linked to student dropout, obstructing the education of kids in rural Sindh's primary schools. Most schools have been closed for years due to tribal conflicts, leaving students in those regions without access to even a basic education. The report also indicates that one of the reasons elementary school dropout rates are high in Pakistan is local tribal conflicts in different parts of the country. These villages do not have a high literacy rate, and the children do not attend school. According to the report, Pakistan's literacy rate in 2013 was 54.9%, its primary school dropout rate was 34.8%, and female pupils attended school at a lower rate than male students did. However, the government ignores these challenges, despite the fact that it spends 2.4% of GDP on education. The research also revealed that a lack of electricity facilities, a lack of separate restrooms for females, and bad infrastructure were all reasons for parents not to send their children to school. Furthermore, research shows that while 55% of schools lack power, 45% have it; 63% have restrooms; and 61% have boundary walls.

Conclusion

The findings led to the conclusion that dropout is a severe problem in Sindh's government elementary schools. Poverty, ignorance, and excessive political. The main causes of dropout in primary schools in Sindh were interference, local tribal disputes, and informal institutional structures of Sindhi society, lack of utilities (electrical energy, bad infrastructure, and toilet), impractical administration, school climate, and child work. The issue of school dropout is exceedingly complex and dangerous since it happens much too often. Just one of the above mentioned factors has to exist for the kid to struggle academically and ultimately give up on learning. Families who struggle with poverty and marginalization are far more likely to have a child drop out of school. To

identify potential causes, the perspectives of parents, teachers, and students were examined and all of the respondents cited poverty, hiring their children to help with household chores, parents' ignorance of the purpose and goals of school, and their own illiteracy as contributing factors. Government disregard for the issues that educators, students, and schools face in terms of infrastructure, playgrounds, and a calm atmosphere. Dropout rates are a result of a number of factors, including a lack of professional and vocational education, a lack of practical skills in the curriculum, poor facilities, and extracurricular activities offered by the school. Low student performance, an increase in the unemployment rate among educated people, Overloading students with schoolwork and an educational system that fails to meet community standards are both problems. It is also found that student's insufficient mathematical background prevent them from further education.

Recommendations

The study's conclusions According to the present study, dropout rates are a result of excessive political meddling in school management. Law-abiding authorities should take note of this and tackle the issue by operating their departments in accordance with the law. Furthermore, the government must make sure to use social forums to win over the local community's political will in order to coordinate efforts to lessen excessive political meddling in the educational system. Furthermore, one of the main reasons Sindh's low literacy rate exists is poverty. The government should start technical education, cottage industries, or poverty alleviation programs to end poverty, similar to the Bolsa program that was started in Brazil. The high rate of illiteracy is another factor contributing to the poor dropout rate in elementary schools. However, there are other elements as well, such poor facilities, a lack of gender-specific lavatories in mixed schools, and a lack of power, that deter parents from sending their kids to school. School leadership should use the school community forum to inspire and secure the political will of community leaders to help in timely release of funds for the sustainability of the change process, as the proposed change will not happen overnight but rather be a gradual and persistent process.

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