

Drop-outs and classroom teaching

HARE KRISHNA MANDAL

Department of Economics, Government College of Education, BANIPUR (W.B.) INDIA

ABSTRACT : Learning is science of behaviour . Learning is the modification of behavior through experience and training. But without literacy learning becomes difficult. Literacy is the basis for lifelong learning . It empowers individuals , communities and improves the quality of life. Literacy helps to reduce infant mortality , curbe population growth , eradicate poverty, reduce gender disparity and ensure sustainable development, peace and harmony. In addition to the Constitutional provision (Article 21A) to provide free and compulsory education to all children till the age of 14 years , the Govt. enacted a law in 2009. The RTE ACT-2009 has made a historic moment for the children of India But the target of Education For All is beyond reach. Still today one in five children leaves school before reaching grade 5 and almost one-third before reaching grade 8. The ILO has recently estimated that some 217.7 million children ages 5 to 17 are engaged in child labour around the world. Of these, some 126.3 million are caught in the worst forms of child labour. These are the children who have or have not enrolled their names in the primary school. The children enrolled their names have definitely not completed their elementary education. In India if you take the children up to 14, according to Census-2010, the total number of children in the workforce is 1,26,26,505 - almost the same as previous census failed to reach this disadvantaged section of the society with the formal primary education system? What are the main causes behind the severe problems of illiteracy together with the problem of child labour ? Is there any way-out to solve the problem of illiteracy among these children? Perhaps a partial solution may be available in the classroom teaching.

KEY WORDS : Drop-outs, Classroom teaching

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INTRODUCTION

Unlike many other countries of the world today, India is increasingly growing young as reflected in the population profile of the country. According to Census Bureau of India, 40 per cent of population is below the age of 18 and by 2015 it is expected that 55 per cent will be under the age of 20. With a sufficiently large proportion of population in the very young age, it is expected that in 2020, the average Indian will be only 29 years old, compared with the average age of 37 years in China and the US, 45 in west Europe and 48 in Japan. This demographic process will create a large and growing labour force, which is expected to deliver spin-offs in terms of growth

and prosperity through a number of routes¹. People of this young age group are considered to be the most productive class of human resources. Therefore, sustainability of economic development of the country will depend on how this section of people is built up and utilized.

Number of school dropouts in India is not small. In a study in 2010, Reddy and Sinha (2010) stated that of the more than 27 million children in India, who joined in Class I in 1993, only 10 million of them reached Class X, which is only about 37 per cent of those who entered the school system and in more than half the states, only 30 per cent of children reached Class X³. With the implementation of RTE, of course, there has been a gradual decline in the annual average dropout rate

from 9.1 in 2009- 2010 to 6.9 in 2010-11 but there have been more children dropout in 2010-11 as compared to 2009-2010 in 10 out of the 30 states where RTE has been notified, including progressive states like Tamil Nadu and Gujarat that had increased dropout ratio from 0.1 per cent to 1.2 per cent and 3.9 per cent to 4.3 per cent, respectively in 2009-10 and 2010-115.

Providing right type of education to the right people at right time is the key to human resource formation. Unleashing the power of these youths, given its other endowments, builds the necessary condition, although not sufficient one, for the success history of a nation like India. This urges for need for high rate of school retention and more educational participation, not to cite the need for research and innovation in the field.

Reasons for school dropout :

Various reasons for school dropouts are there. In a study, Sikdar and Mukherjee (2012) specified 20 reasons for school dropouts and categorized them into eight groups. More generally, reasons of school dropouts can be classified in to some broad categories like *school-centric*, *school-centric* and *parent-centric*.

School institutions remain a preparatory ground to empower and certify the requirement for human development. The teacher is faced with the challenges of educating, socializing, empowering and certifying students, but with the help of good teaching atmosphere (Fafunwa, 2004; Farant, 2004 and Wasagu, 2009). By implication, the task of a teacher, which includes sustaining education system, do not rest on his or her professional competency alone, but on the entire features of the school climate (Loukas, 2007). But, public schools which are owned by government and are predominantly occupied by citizens of lower socio-economic status in Nigerian society and are facing challenges of educational sub-standard, lack of adequate resources, leading to poor teaching, students poor academic performance and dropping out. Research has shown the relationship of school climate as a factors influencing success or failure of education to teachers and students (Adesina 2001; Anderson *et al.*, 2004).

The objective of the present study was to study the extent of drop-outs, to study the reasons behind the non-enrolment and drop-outs, to find out the class (standard) after which drop out rate goes on increasing, to study the conditions of the children dropped out of the school and to suggest some measures for improving classroom teaching and thereby reducing drop-outs.

METHODOLOGY

Door to door survey:

This survey technique has been applied to study the extent of and reasons behind the non enrollment and drop-out of the children in the district of 24 Pgs (N). Only some underdeveloped blocks have been considered to be taken up

for this study. For this survey some schools from typical areas have been selected like slum areas around Banipur, Habra Muslim minority areas, some remote areas in Basirhat and Bongaon sub-division. During this survey work extent and proportion of non school going children, present conditions of the non-school going children, poor attending children and conditions of the drop-outs could also be known.

Classroom observations:

Two hundred class-teaching in fifteen high and higher secondary schools and one hundred thirty class room teaching in three primary schools are observed for more than ten days continuously. Those classes both in the primary and high schools include almost all the subjects commonly taught in West Bengal. So the behaviour of the students in Bengali, English, Mathematics, History, Geography, Sanskrit, Physical Science and Life Science classes are observed in high school. In case of primary school mainly Bengali, English and Mathematics classes are observed. Mainly their activities, attention and motivational levels are observed in different classes.

Collection of data:

After the survey of two thousand families, with one questionnaire, it was found that 91 children are there who are actually engaged in different types of works instead of going to the school regularly. Most of them are the members of BPL families. Only 27 are from APL families. Among them 18 girls and 73 boys were found who were working for earning something for their families. Why they were not going to the schools? They answered differently to this question.

On the other hand data from classroom teaching are based on the students' participation in class-work, their responsiveness, performance in classwork and behaviour of the teachers etc.

OBSERVATION AND ASSESSMENT

It was noticed that majority of the children between 6 to 14 yrs. of age were going to primary schools. But the portions of the children not going to school is the matter of concern. Almost all of them are engaged in different types of work instead of going to the school regularly. As 30 per cent of all children were engaged as child labour in the least developed countries, it is not new in case of our country also. Most of them are engaged in their own locality. Activities like cottage industry worker, brickfield worker, motor garage worker, restaurant worker, rail hawker, van rickshaw pulling etc. (Fig.1).

From Fig. 1, it is clear that out of 91 children 27 per cent were engaged in the field where their parents worked. They acted as helping hands of their parents. These parents mainly worked in the agriculture field and allied sectors. Mothers were engaged in cooking and other household works to other's houses and mainly the girls helped their mothers

instead of going to the schools.

About 26 per cent of the child labour were working in different small factories viz., garments, comb factory, wool, crackers, brick fields etc. This child labours were worked at a nominal wage. About 12 per cent of the child labours are daily labours who are mainly working in the agricultural field. Around 12 per cent of non-school going children are engaged in tailoring activities. 11 per cent of the child labours are working as servants to other houses. Around 2 per cent of them are hawking in the market, door to door, on the street, railway platform and even in the running train. The nature of the job of the child labours varies from locality to locality.

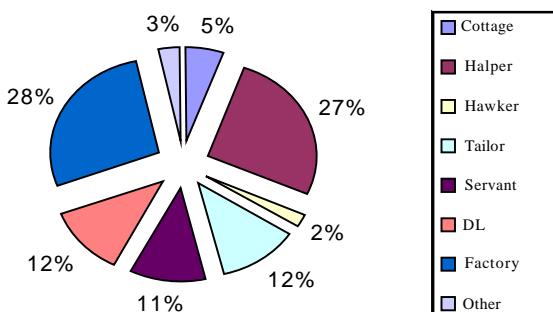


Fig. 1: Child labour in different forms

A major part of them are engaged as helper of their parents. Among these non-school going children, most of them are dropped out, very few of them are identified to be non-enrolled at the school. They were enrolled at the primary school but did not continue up to class VIII. Both Hindu and Muslim are there in the group of child labour. Male and female both are engaged in different activities in their locality at Habra, Bongaon and Basirhat block. There are some other reasons also. Among those non-school going children, majority of them (48) could not continue their study due to poor economic condition. They are forced to go to work for earning. They have no way but contributing to the family income and thereby maintaining their families. So these children are forced to leave the schools because of poor economic conditions of their families.

A moderate number of them (34) discontinued their study due to the discomfortable environment of the classroom and school. Simply they do not go to school as they don't prefer that. They can not explain clearly why they do not like to go to schools. They do not prefer to go to school as they do not love their schools. After critical observation of the classroom teaching this may be said that probable causes are:

- Non-attractive monotonous classroom teaching,
- Misbehavior of the teachers,
- Mishandling of the students by teachers
- Lack of activity based class room teaching
- Teachers failure to read the psychology of the student
- Children are afraid of their teachers
- May be something else. Only a few of the children (09)

left their schools due to other reasons like bad relationship between father and mother, parental attitude, bad companion etc.

Reasons for school leaving	No. of children
Poor economic condition	48
Non-comfortable school and classroom environment	34
Other reasons	09
Total	91

Table 1 and Fig. 2 shows the number of children dropped-out with the reasons.

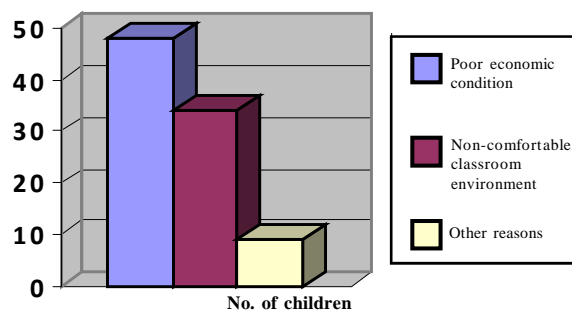


Fig. 2: Number of children dropped-out for which reason

Formal schooling (inclusion) may not be suitable for education of child labour. (Fig. 3) shows the number of children dropped-out after which class of study.

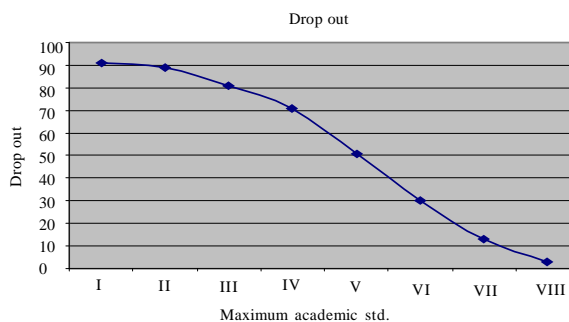


Fig. 3: Drop out

Among these 91 children who are presently working as child labour, almost all completed (except 5) their standard 1 academic curriculum. Only 5 enrolled their names but could not complete standard 1 education. Number of students completed class 2 education is almost same to that of standard 1. The noticeable thing is that the number of drop-outs goes on increasing after class 2. Fifty children out of 91 completed fifth standard education. The rate of drop-out is maximum between class V to class VII. Ultimately very a few of them reached eighth standard.

Significance:

- A moderate number of the children leave school as they

do not feel comfortable in the class-room and school as well.

- Number of drop-outs goes on increasing after the study of class 2.
- Teachers' love and affection for their students are essential for effective class-room teaching.
- It is the teacher who can take the responsibility of reducing this problem of illiteracy.
- Parental attitude is negative towards the formal school system in case of most of the non-school going children.
- There is opposite relationship between economic backwardness and educational achievements of the children.
- Huge number of poor and marginal people do not consider "education" as investment.

Concluding remarks:

Inclusion of the children, who were enrolled and presently not attending schools regularly, may not be easy task. Arrangements may be made in such a way that those children may feel interest and attraction to their teachers, classroom and school as well.

To create comfortable classroom environment the requirements are :

- Parity between teacher' language and student's language used in the classroom.
- Simplicity in teacher's behaviour.
- Filial love of the teacher to the students.
- Playing the role of co-actor by the teacher.
- Flexibility in any kind of examination system.
- Individual difference should be taken care of.
- Use of simple examples from real life situation.
- More use of information and communication technology.
- Presentation of subject matter in an entertaining manner.
- Holding patience throughout the class hour even for the naughty students.
- Caring attitude for the students.

More over, teaching methodology should also be modified. *Collaborative method* allows students to actively participate in the learning process by talking with each other and listening to other points of view. Collaboration establishes a personal connection between students and the topic of study. Group projects and group discussions are the examples of this teaching method. Individualized Instruction Method to take care of individual differences among the students. Supervised Study Method may be utilized to inspire the weak students in the class so that they do not leave the school. Use of constructivist approach may be more effective way of making the students a joyful belonging in the classroom. Students will construct their own knowledge through active participation in the classroom. Teachers will remain present

there just as facilitator. If this approach is introduced at the classroom students will feel free and become interested at being in the comfortable classroom. They may get self confidence from the classroom. This classroom may be helpful to inspire the students and thereby reduce the tendency to leave the school before the completion of elementary education.

Above all, it can be said that it is the teacher who can shoulder the responsibility for solving the problem of drop – out . The teacher can do it if he realizes the situation from his heart and really tries to contribute to the solution of the problem of illiteracy in the means of reducing drop- outs.

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