

Assessing the economic causes of children dropout from primary education in District Lower Dir of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa

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Abstract

Children dropping out of school is very common in Pakistan. In the present research study, the researchers aimed to investigate the economic reasons children drop out of primary schools in the study area. A community-based study has been conducted in Tehsil Timergara, District Lower Dir, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The researchers used a purposive sampling technique and 40 respondents were selected while a questionnaire was used for the primary data collection. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percent, mean, median mode, and cumulative percent using SPSS version (16) were used to test the study hypotheses. The study results indicated that family low income, poverty, and parental unemployment are the main economic factors that hinder children's education and the drop of already enrolled students in the study area. The present study suggested to reduce the high dropout of children government needs to start a cash incentive program for poor and unemployed parents. Further, it is suggested that government should fix some amount for children stationary they required throughout the year in schooling besides the free books. The civil society and government concern stakeholders start sensitization sessions in the community about the importance of children's education.

Keywords: Children, economic, causes, dropout, schools

Introduction

Education is the process of learning and changing the behavior of a person along with the enhancement of mental and technical skills. The earlier phase of education is of higher importance for the edifice of a career. The more this stage is important the more it is ignored in developing countries (Behrman, Foster, Rosenweig, & Vashishtha, 1999). Developing and underdeveloped

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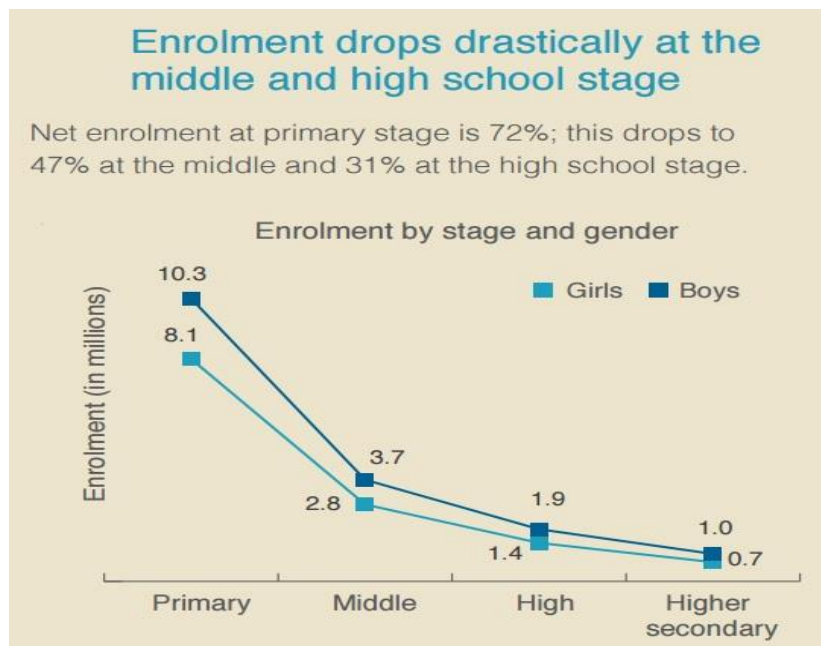
nations face this phenomenon very common. There are many factors which contributes to this problem alarmingly in Pakistan (Memon, 2007).

According to Chaudhry and Rahman (2009), at least 3.4 percent of children left school before October 2009. It has been studied that the most important factor which enhances the issue is poverty because students who belong to lower-class families left schools five times higher than students who belong to the elite class. The students' rate of dropout is high in higher schools which are termed dropout factories. In developed countries specifically the 15 states North, West, and South of the U.S are found with higher dropouts, where these are influenced by poverty and location. In national total, they are only 12 percent but they produce half of the country's dropouts (Balfanz, Legters & Jordan, 2004). The dropout ratio is also high in neighboring countries as the ministry of human resource development (MHRD) In India claims that 62.1 million children escaped from schooling. According to MHRD, the basic cause is veneration for traditional cultural practices. The practice of non-attending schools leads to low enrollment in schools which further leads to dropout (Yadav & Singh, 2020). The Campaign for popular education reports that there were socioeconomic reasons for children dropping out of school. In addition to this poverty is also one of the most important factors in the dropout of children in Bangladesh (de Freitas et al., 2017). The annual statistical report shows that the school dropout ratio is 44% and 40 % at primary and secondary schools. It has been shown in the reports that 685000 students got admission to preparatory classes in 2012-13 but the schools had 369163 students after six years. According to the reports by UNDP 76.9 % of Pakistani youth are leaving education school because of financial reasons (Arif & Khan, 2019).

According to UNICEF (2011), the issue is quite worsening for girls than boys as 38.9% of the girls are leaving school after their primary education. Children from poor families are more out of school than the richest families. A total of 570 million primary-age children are enrolled in schools while 72 million are still out of school. The family elders in Pakistani families are mostly interested to earn more and more and only to build houses and buy more lands while on other hand they are less attentive to their children schooling and education (Alam, Tang and Tu, 2004).

According to data from the World Bank (2022), approximately 44% of children in Pakistan are not enrolled in primary school. This is one of the highest rates of out-of-school children in the world, and it is particularly pronounced for girls, as only 39% of girls in Pakistan are enrolled in primary

school compared to 49% of boys (UNESCO, 2020). Poverty is a major factor contributing to these low enrollment rates, as many families living in poverty cannot afford the direct or indirect costs associated with education, such as school fees, uniforms, and transportation. In fact, a survey by the Pakistan Ministry of Education (2017) found that the most common reason for children not attending school was the lack of financial resources to cover the costs of education.



Source; Pakistan Ministry of Education

Literature Review

Education is the basic right of every human being. It has been guaranteed by international as well as national documents (Thompson, 1977). The convention on the rights of children has made education compulsory for every child. Education is not only to realize and know oneself it is the knowing others (Covell & Howe, 2001). Regarding this, the world conference on education for all in Thailand marked a new goal for the world inhabitants to achieve and to wipe out illiteracy from the universe. In the same way, MDGs also pledged to fad away illiteracy and to make education possible for every individual in the world (Haddad, 1990).

Education functions as a kind of cure-all for all societal ills (Ghafoor, 1990). It serves as the cornerstone for all aspects of social interaction. Unfortunately, Pakistan's education system is suffering from a high rate of school dropout (Nabeela, & Hafeez, 2012). Primary school dropout is a big issue in Pakistan since more kids lack access to education due to financial constraints. There are 27 million individuals in Pakistan that live in poverty (O'hare, & Southall, 2007). Many pupils leave school extremely early due to a lack of financial support, and most of the students are poor and engage in child labor (Bruneforth, 2006). Every year, 35,000 high school students in Pakistan leave the educational system. The issue of child dropouts is made worse by economic factors, which will affect society's future generations the poor economic signs (Hunt, 2008).

To address the economic factors that contribute to kid dropout from school, the current study was done (Obunga, 2011). The study's main goal is to increase access to education for all children in the nation by concentrating on the issue of school dropouts (Tilak, 2002). In the future, these children will increase the number of young people who are illiterate and eventually become adult illiterates, aggravating the vicious cycle of poverty and illiteracy if the issue of out-of-school children is not addressed urgently (Drewry, 2007).

Definition of children dropout from primary education

Children dropout from primary education refers to the phenomenon of children leaving school before completing their primary education (UNESCO, 2018). This can occur for a variety of reasons, including economic, social, and cultural factors. Dropout rates from primary education can have significant implications for the development and future prosperity of individuals and societies, as primary education is an important foundation for further education and employment (World Bank, 2019). According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the definition of children dropout from primary education varies across countries and contexts (2018). In some cases, children dropout is defined as children who leave school before completing a certain number of years of primary education, while in other cases it is defined as children who do not transition to secondary education after completing primary education. In general, however, children dropout from primary education is considered to be a major barrier to achieving universal primary education and to improving the quality of education for all children (UNESCO, 2018).

Importance of addressing the economic causes of children dropout from primary education

According to a review of the literature by UNESCO (2013), children from disadvantaged households are more likely to drop out of school due to poverty-related constraints, such as the need to work or contribute to the family income. These children may also face barriers to education, such as lack of access to quality schools or materials. Dropout rates are also higher for children who are marginalized or disadvantaged due to their gender, ethnicity, or disability. Addressing the economic causes of child dropout can have numerous benefits for individuals and society as a whole. Education is associated with a range of positive outcomes, including increased employability, higher wages, and improved health and well-being. Investing in education can also lead to economic growth and development at the national level (World Bank, 2015).

Furthermore, ensuring that all children have access to quality education can help to reduce poverty and inequality, as it provides a foundation for individuals to improve their socio-economic status over the long-term (UNESCO, 2013).

Assessing the economic causes of children dropout from primary education in District Lower Dir of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa is an important issue, as it has significant implications for the development and future prosperity of the region. Dropout rates from primary education can be influenced by a variety of factors, including economic, social, and cultural factors.

One of the main economic causes of children dropout from primary education in District Lower Dir is poverty. Many families in the region are unable to afford the costs associated with sending their children to school, including uniforms, books, and transportation (Ahmad & Ali, 2018). This can be particularly problematic in rural areas, where access to education is often limited and the costs of attending school are higher (Akhtar et al., 2019). In addition to poverty, other economic factors that can contribute to children dropout from primary education in District Lower Dir include lack of employment opportunities, lack of access to credit, and lack of access to markets (Haq et al., 2016). These factors can all contribute to a cycle of poverty and limited educational opportunities for children in the region. To address the economic causes of children dropout from primary education in District Lower Dir, a number of interventions have been suggested. These

include providing financial assistance to families to help cover the costs of education, increasing access to credit and other financial resources, and improving access to employment opportunities (Ahmad & Ali, 2018). Other interventions that have been suggested include increasing access to education through the construction of new schools and the improvement of existing facilities, as well as providing teacher training and support to improve the quality of education (Akhtar et al., 2019).

Therefore, the economic causes of children dropout from primary education in District Lower Dir of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa are complex and multifaceted. To effectively address these issues, it will be necessary to implement a range of interventions that address poverty, employment, access to credit and markets, and other economic factors that contribute to children dropout from primary education in the region.

Assessing the economic causes of children dropout from primary education is an important issue, as it has significant implications for the development and future prosperity of individuals and societies. Dropout rates from primary education can be influenced by a variety of factors, including economic, social, and cultural factors. One of the main economic causes of children dropout from primary education is poverty. Many families are unable to afford the costs associated with sending their children to school, including uniforms, books, and transportation (Ahmad & Ali, 2018; Akhtar et al., 2019; Haq et al., 2016). This can be particularly problematic in rural areas, where access to education is often limited and the costs of attending school are higher (Akhtar et al., 2019).

In addition to poverty, other economic factors that can contribute to children dropout from primary education include lack of employment opportunities, lack of access to credit, and lack of access to markets (Haq et al., 2016). These factors can all contribute to a cycle of poverty and limited educational opportunities for children. To address the economic causes of children dropout from primary education, a number of interventions have been suggested. These include providing financial assistance to families to help cover the costs of education, increasing access to credit and other financial resources, and improving access to employment opportunities (Ahmad & Ali, 2018).

Other interventions that have been suggested include increasing access to education through the construction of new schools and the improvement of

existing facilities, as well as providing teacher training and support to improve the quality of education (Akhtar et al., 2019). Research has also shown that the effectiveness of interventions to address the economic causes of children dropout from primary education can be influenced by a variety of contextual factors, such as the socio-economic and cultural context of the community (Bhaskar & Rose, 2015). It is therefore important to consider the specific needs and challenges of a community when designing and implementing interventions to address children dropout from primary education.

According to data from the World Bank (2019), approximately one in four children living in low-income countries are not in school. This represents a significant proportion of the global population, as low-income countries are home to approximately 75% of the world's children (UNICEF, 2018).

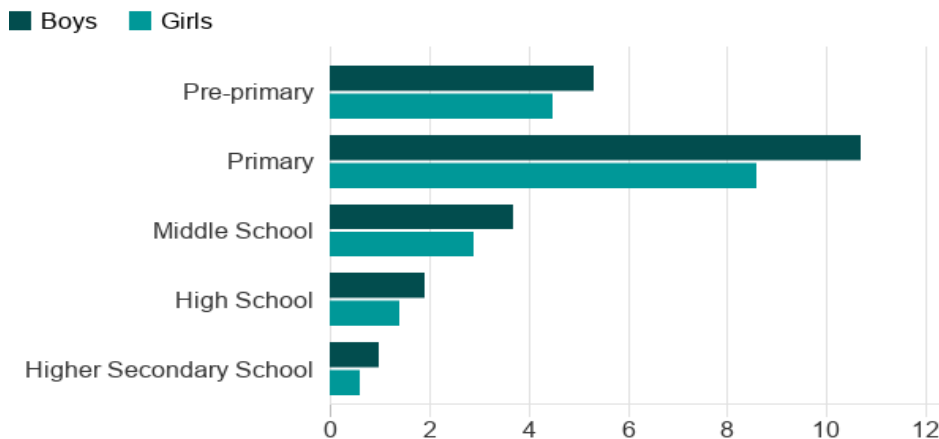
Poverty is a major factor contributing to this situation, as many families living in poverty cannot afford the direct or indirect costs associated with education, such as school fees, uniforms, and transportation. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, poverty is the primary reason for low enrollment and high dropout rates (UNESCO, 2013). Research has also shown that addressing the economic causes of child dropout can be effective in improving enrollment and retention rates. A study by Glewwe and Kim (2002) found that providing scholarships to primary school students in Ghana and Peru led to an increase in enrollment and a decrease in dropout rates. Similarly, a review of the literature by Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2004) found that interventions aimed at reducing the economic barriers to education, such as fee waivers or cash transfers, can have a positive impact on enrollment and retention.

According to (UNESCO, 2011) hundreds of millions of children are leaving school each passing year end to drop out of school each school passing

year.

Access to education in Pakistan by gender

Students aged 5-17, numbers in millions



Source: Pakistan Ministry of Education

BBC

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is a set of concepts and ideas that provides a structure for understanding a particular phenomenon. In the context of assessing the economic causes of children dropout from primary education, a theoretical framework can help to identify the key factors that contribute to children dropout from school and to understand the relationships between these factors. Therefore, human capital theory was applied to the issue of children dropout from primary education. According to this theory, education is an investment in an individual's future productivity and earnings potential (Becker, 1964). Children dropout from school when the costs of education, such as the opportunity cost of lost wages and the financial costs of tuition and other expenses, outweigh the expected benefits of education (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2004). Similarly, the issue of children dropout from primary education is the economic theory of the household. This theory suggests that households make decisions about education based on their economic resources and constraints, as well as their beliefs and values (Behrman & Deolalikar, 1988). Children dropout from school when their families are unable to afford the costs of education, or when the returns to education are perceived to be low (Lopez-Acevedo, 2017). Furthermore, the issue of children dropout from primary education is the capability approach. According to this theory,

individuals' capabilities to function and to achieve their desired outcomes are influenced by their economic, social, and cultural contexts (Sen, 1999). Children dropout from school when they lack the capabilities or resources to access or succeed in education, such as when they face economic barriers or social and cultural barriers that limit their opportunities (Bali moune-Lutz, 2013).

Objective

1. To find out the economic causes of children drop out of primary education

Research Question

1. What are the economic causes of children dropout of primary education?

Hypothesis

1. Lowest the wealth quintile of the family higher would be the children's dropout in education
2. The higher the parental unemployment higher would be the children drop out of education

Methodology

The present research study investigates the economic reasons children drop out of schools. A community-based, study has been conducted in Tehsil Timergara, Lower Dir Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan.

Since the study is mainly concerned with children, the population of children especially those working in various working places belonging to poor families has been taken into consideration. However, the primary data was collected from the teachers of the dropout students. This research study was conducted through the quantitative research method under the positivist research philosophy (Babbie, & Mouton, 2010; Sandelowski, 2000). The total number of teachers was not known as the researchers used the purposive sampling technique of non-probability sampling (Rubin and Rubin, 2012). Further, the researchers collected empirical data from 40 respondents because the saturation point came out in the data collection process (Sapsford, & Jupp, 2006). For the collection of the primary data questionnaire was used as a tool of data collection because the respondents were educated (Remenyi, & Williams, 1996). The analysis of the primary information has been framed under statistical implication including descriptive statistics (frequency,

percent, mean, median mode, and commutative percent using the SPSS version (16).

Results and Discussions

Poverty	F	P	C.P	M	Median	Mode
I don't agree	3	7.5	7.5			
The poverty compel the children to earn money	11	27.5	35.0	2.1 2	2.00	1
Their parents don't allow them, because of their limited resources	10	25.0	60.0			
They perceive that education is not our destiny	10	25.0	85.0			
They observe that education facilitate only the rich	6	15.0	100.0			
Total	40	100.0				

Denotation: F (Frequency) P (Percent) C.P (Cumulative Percent).

The Table above shows an aggregate of 40 (100%) 3 of (7.5%) conveyed that poverty is not responsible for children dropout. Then 11 of (27.5%) expressed that poverty compels the children to leave school. Further, 10 of (25%) expressed that children of poor families perceive that education is not our destiny therefore they startsimitating their parents directly. In the last 6 of (15.0%) explained that children leave school because of the development of their schemas that education only benefit the cream peoples of society while for us it is the wastage of time. The statistical analysis was conducted in addition to providing descriptions of frequency and percentage in order to validate univariate analysis. To verify the numbers, the cumulative percent has been created. Similar to this, the central tendency measure has been compared to the normal distribution. The proposed hypotheses are

verified and the univariate analysis is valid when the mean, median, and mode values fall within the acceptability range.

To get proper and required outcomes from education, poverty is one of the most hurdling factors in the provision of other facilities in UPE. According to Tilak, (2002), one-third of the global population is suffering from poverty which is further accelerated in 2004 to 23.10 % in rural areas compared to Urban areas of Pakistan. According to a survey by the Government of Pakistan (2008), 40 % of people in Pakistan live under the poverty line. However, a recent survey shows that about 40% of the population in Pakistan lives below the poverty children line. Previously various research studies have shown that poverty is one of the important

indicators in creating obstacles to children's education. A research study by Thompson (1977) shows that 79% of dropout occurs in low-income families. In most poor families these children are the earning hands for supporting their families' finance. They are restricted to assist their families otherwise the families would not back them in their education (Ghafoor, 1990). A research study by obunga (2011) in the same way found that poverty is one of the main obstacles to education it rarely allows a child to continue his education. According to Ghafoor (1990) that those institutes having second shifts programs were very efficient in tackling the issue because the prior time the students' children were earning which was their primary need.

Table 2: Parents, Unemployment and Students' Dropout						
Parents Unemployment	F	P	C.P	Mean	Median	Mode
I don't agree	5	12.5	12.5			
They cannot support their children education	7	17.5	30.0			
The basic needs of children remain unfulfilled	12	30.0	60.0	2.18	2.00	2
Their parents stop them from schools and direct them to workplace	8	20.0	80.0			
They earn money in order to help their parents difficulties	8	20.0	100.0			
Total	40	100.0				

Denotation: F (Frequency), P (Percent), C.P (Cumulative Percent).

The aforesaid Table below explains the relationship between parents' unemployment and children's dropout. In a total of 40(100%), 5 (12.5%) stated their disagreement with the dilemma of unemployment to dropout, Then 7 (17.5 %) narrated that parents could not support their family and therefore coerce them to leave school. Then 12 (30%) express that the basic needs of children remain Unfulfilled therefore they leave school. Further 8 (20%) view that their parents stop them from going to school. Their parents direct them to workplaces to fulfill their economic needs. Similarly, 8 (20%) expressed that poverty and unemployment exploit people in every aspect. Such peoples have no importance for an education they earn money to bring out their parents of the quagmire of unemployment. The arithmetic analysis has been conducted independently of the explanation of frequency and percentage to validate univariate analysis. To verify the numbers, the cumulative percent has been created. Similar to this, the central tendency measure has been compared to the normal distribution. The proposed hypotheses are verified and the univariate analysis is valid when the mean, median, and mode values fall within the acceptability range.

Unemployment means the rising number of laborers and loss of job opportunities in job markets. This phenomenon has a great impact on the family of a person because they could not avail of the primary needs. It compels the parents to stop their children from school in order to earn money for the running household (Bruneforth, 2006).

Demands labor from their children they turn away from their studies. Unemployment makes the children's burden on their parents they are not taking interest in their children. It affects their socialization, education, and behavior. The children of unemployed parents get disturbed by the miseries of their families. They are anxious about the economic condition of their families. As they have low income have less economic competency they are lagging behind other children who belong to an aristocratic family. They are discouraged and suffer from an inferiority complex. They feel that education is not our destiny and leaves the school forever (Bruneforth,2006).

Low per-capita income and Dropout

Table 3 Low per-capita income and dropout						
Low per-capita income	F	P	C.P	M	Median	Mode
I don't agree	6	15.0	15.0			
the expenses of domestic chores don't allow a children to get education	8	20.0	35.0			
the child stand by their parents to live auspicious life	7	17.5	52.5	2.10	2.00	3
they indulge in child labor	14	35.0	87.5			
they are in pursuit to fulfill their basic needs	5	12.5	100.0			
Total	40	100.0				

Denotation: F (Frequency), P (Percent), C.P (Cumulative Percent).

The table above shows the relationship between low income and dropout of children. In a collective of 40(100%), 6 out of 9(15.0%) noted their disagreement with the effect of low per capita income on the family. Then 8

out of (20%) expressed that the unbearable expenses of domestic chores do not allow children to get an education. Further, 7 (17.5%) narrated that children work along with their parents to assess the family economically. In addition, 14 (35%) of the children have no other properly learned skills they directly start child labor which not only keeps them out of school but has prolonged effects on their personalities. Laterally 5 (12.5%) poor peoples are in pursuit to fulfill their basic needs above all which is vital for them. The statistical analysis was conducted after the frequency and percentage descriptions to validate the univariate analysis. To verify the numbers, the cumulative percent has been created. Comparable measurements have been made of central tendency about the normal distribution. The mean, median, and mode values are within the acceptable range, which verifies the proposed hypotheses and supports the validity of the univariate analysis.

Alam, Tang and Tu (2004) express that other factors contributes to dropping students from schools. It includes the insufficiency and low income of parents to fulfill the demands of children. It has been noted that low-income parents are taking loans for managing the increased needs of the family. They could not bear the expenses for books and uniforms, shoes, pocket money, and other costs.

Conclusions

An unpleasant result is that economic reasons like child labor, Low per capita income, poverty, Unemployment, and subsistence farming are the major causes of children dropout from school. The study's findings showed that a large majority of respondents agreed that one of the main reasons for the high dropout rate is the nation's underdeveloped economy and the people's low per capita income.

They also think that poverty is the main obstacle standing in the way of achieving the goal at hand. They believed that rather than their families being unable to pay to send them to school, youngsters must work to assist their families. According to the respondents, the major issue preventing children from low-income households from enrolling in or continuing their education is poverty. A large number of respondents viewed that weak economic conditions affect the education of children in Direct or indirect ways. Narrated children have no other properly learned skills they directly start child labor which not only keeps them out of school but has prolonged effects on their personalities as well as on their careers.

Recommendations

The present research study suggested to reduce dropout among children; government should start a cash incentive program for their parents. The government schools are required to provide free stationery throughout the year for poor children to reduce parental financial burden due to children's education. The civil society and government school teachers sensitized the community about the importance of children's education for their personality development and family support in the future.

Education is a panacea therefore it is the responsibility of every stakeholder to come forward and combat the alarming rate of children dropout from school. It is of utmost necessity to support poor families so that they bear their household expenses. The standard Government school and every private school have to give scholarships to talented and poor students for their motivation. The government or other business-related sectors have to start such schemes which deliver skills to unemployed laborers.

The parents have to analyze their kids before admission that which kind of school will suit them most. They have to share their experiences with teachers and visit them properly to check the performance of their kids in school. As it is the need of the hour to educate the students about the current day technologies in school.

Unemployment is a menacing problem of the state, this problem must be tackled to reduce its impacts on the education carrier of the students. The students with economic stress from their families divert their attention to the outside environment. In these conditions, the unemployed parents could no more tolerate their children alone with themselves in the state of unemployment.

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