

Indian Journal of Multidisciplinary Academic Research

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Message



It gives me immense pleasure to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Research and Development Cell of Malda College on the publication of the *Indian Journal of Multi-Disciplinary Academic Research (IJMAR)*. This journal stands as a testimony to the Malda College's commitment to fostering academic excellence and promoting research across diverse disciplines.

In today's rapidly evolving academic landscape, interdisciplinary research plays a pivotal role in addressing complex challenges and broadening intellectual horizons. This journal serves as a vital platform for research scholars and academicians to share their insights, discoveries, and perspectives, thereby enriching knowledge ecosystem.

I praise the editorial team for their dedication in maintaining high standards and quality research. My sincere appreciation also goes to all the contributors whose rigorous work has made this publication possible.

As we move forward, I hope this journal continues to inspire meaningful academic discourse and contributes significantly to the advancement of knowledge. I wish *the Indian Journal of Multi-Disciplinary Academic Research* great success in its future endeavours.

With best wishes,

Prof. Sauren Bandyopadhyay

President, Governing Body
Malda College, Malda

Editorial

The Research and Development Cell of Malda College is delighted to announce the publication of The *Indian Journal of Multidisciplinary Academic Research (IJMAR)*, Volume 8, December 2024 (1st & 2nd Issues). As a platform dedicated to fostering original research and reviews across diverse disciplines, this edition presents 15 thought-provoking articles spanning Social Sciences Economics, Business & Management, and Literature. Each contribution reflects the intellectual rigor of esteemed academician and researchers, and we extend our deepest gratitude for their scholarly work.

Despite unavoidable delays caused by some unforeseen challenges, this issue has been brought to culmination through thorough peer review. We sincerely appreciate the experts who provided insightful feedback, ensuring the journal's academic integrity. My heartfelt thanks also go to the Editorial Board and Advisory Board for their unwavering guidance, as well as the IQAC of Malda College for their continued support.

As we move forward, we remain committed to promoting interdisciplinary research and academic excellence. We invite scholars to contribute to future editions, enriching the discourse in their respective fields.

Dr. Manas Kr. Baidya

Editor-in- Chief, IJMAR
Principal, Malda College, Malda

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Social Sciences

A Qualitative Study on Socio-Economic Problems of School Dropout Children special reference to Birgram Gram Panchayat, Baghmundi Block in Purulia District of West Bengal.

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
Article History	Education plays a vital role in driving socio-economic development, particularly within rural regions of India, where significant disparities in access and school retention continue to exist. Although multiple government programs have been introduced to tackle this issue, school dropout rates remain considerably high, especially among marginalized and underprivileged communities. This research aims to examine the socio-economic obstacles contributing to school dropouts in Birgram Gram Panchayat, located in the Baghmundi Block of Purulia district, West Bengal a region marked by poverty, a large tribal population, and inadequate educational infrastructure. The study's core objectives were to investigate the underlying socio-economic causes of school dropouts, assess the family backgrounds and living conditions of the affected children, evaluate the effectiveness of government schemes, and suggest practical solutions to address the dropout crisis. Adopting a descriptive qualitative research approach, the study surveyed 50 children aged between 6 and 16 years, chosen through purposive sampling. Data collection methods included structured and informal interviews with children, parents, teachers, and local community members, alongside personal observations. Collected data were processed using descriptive statistics like frequencies and percentages. Findings indicated that financial hardship (60%), low family earnings (62%), and parental illiteracy were the primary drivers of school dropouts. A clear gender disparity was noted, with 60% of the dropouts being female, often linked to early marriage and household duties. The majority of dropouts (70%) occurred in the 12–14 years age group and were predominantly from Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities. Migration and distance to schools contributed less significantly. The study highlights the urgent need for focused educational reforms, enhanced awareness campaigns, improved infrastructure, financial support schemes, and special programs for girl-child education to reduce dropout rates and ensure inclusive educational access in rural India.
Accepted: 13 June, 2025	
Keywords: educational reforms, inclusive, marginalized, Migration, socio-economic development, underprivileged	

1.Introduction

Education is widely regarded as a powerful instrument for individual empowerment, social advancement, and national development. In the Indian context, where a majority of the population resides in rural areas, the significance of education extends beyond literacy. It becomes a critical means of fostering social equity, reducing poverty, and enhancing community well-being. In rural India, education not only equips individuals with essential knowledge and skills but also transforms social structures by breaking long-standing cycles of deprivation, inequality, and economic dependence. An educated rural populace contributes actively to employment generation, social awareness, civic participation, and overall rural progress. However, the rural education system in India continues to face a range of challenges, with the problem of school dropouts being one of its most serious issues. A school dropout refers to a child discontinuing formal education before completing the minimum mandatory levels, typically due to intertwined social, economic, cultural, and institutional factors. In rural settings, issues such as poverty, lack of parental education and awareness, early marriages, household responsibilities, long distances to schools, poor infrastructure, and substandard teaching facilities often result in high dropout rates. These dropouts deny children their right to education and hinder both personal and community development by limiting access to opportunities for social and economic mobility. The consequences of school dropout extend beyond the individual, creating long-term socio-economic repercussions. Children who leave school early are more likely to be engaged in child labor, face exploitation, and remain confined to low-income, marginalized positions within society. The absence of an educated workforce stalls local economic development and reduces the community's overall socio-economic resilience. Moreover, persistently high dropout rates undermine national programs and policies aimed at promoting universal education, widening existing disparities between urban and rural regions, and impeding efforts to achieve inclusive growth. Given these concerns, this study seeks to examine the socio-economic problems associated with school dropout children in a specific rural setting 'Birgram Gram Panchayat under Baghmundi Block in Purulia District, West Bengal'. The rationale behind selecting this location lies in its predominantly tribal, economically disadvantaged population, persistent poverty, and ongoing educational challenges. Purulia is well known for its geographically difficult terrain, poor infrastructure, and socio-cultural barriers that impede consistent school attendance and retention. Focusing on Birgram Gram Panchayat provides an opportunity to explore the specific challenges faced by dropout children and their families in one of the state's most marginalized rural communities.

The primary objectives of this research are to explore the socio-economic factors contributing to school dropouts within this area, to analyze the living conditions and family backgrounds of the affected children, to assess the implementation and impact of existing government programs and community efforts, and to propose practical and policy-oriented strategies to curb dropout rates and improve educational outcomes for vulnerable groups. To achieve these aims, the study employs a qualitative research methodology, incorporating case studies, personal interviews, and focus group discussions. Purposive sampling is used to select dropout children aged between 6 and 16 years, along with their parents, school teachers, and community members. The qualitative data, collected through direct narratives, field observations, and group interactions, offers valuable insights into the socio-economic hardships, cultural practices, and institutional challenges contributing to the dropout problem in this context. The anticipated outcomes of the study include identifying the dominant socio-economic and infrastructural factors influencing school dropout trends in the area, evaluating the roles of governmental and local educational initiatives, and developing localized, actionable recommendations aimed at reducing dropout rates. The findings are expected to serve as

a meaningful resource for policymakers, educators, and social workers seeking to design more effective and inclusive education strategies for rural and tribal communities.

1.1 Background of the study

At the time of India's independence, there were around 192,000 primary schools with over 10.2 million students enrolled, approximately 13,000 middle and secondary schools enrolling nearly 2.3 million students, and 16 universities with numerous affiliated colleges accommodating about 126,000 students. The issue of adult illiteracy had started gaining attention even before independence, leading to the establishment of many night schools aimed at working adults, most of which were run by voluntary, non-governmental efforts. Inspired by Gandhi's vision to reform the education system and align it with the needs and environment of the people, the "Wardha Scheme of Basic Education" was developed.

- According to the author Asha Bajpai of the book "Child Right in India"-It is reviewed that children constitute over 400 million of the one billion plus population of India. It is indeed an important factor in shaping the future of the nation if childhood can be endowed with the minimum requisites for healthy growth and development. Unfortunately, it is not happening today despite some of the key initiatives of the govt and a number of significant interventions of the judiciary and international as well as civil society organizations. Is the problem with the numbers, or with the institutions, or with the policies themselves? Or is it the lack of adequate social/political will and low priority in the scheme of governance? We do not have any specific answer. In the beginning of the republic one could blame it all on poverty and illiteracy, but today the country is registering 8 to 10% growth and is claiming to become a world economic power by 2020.^[1]
- There have been a number of important legislative initiatives in the recent past, which deserve to be looked into, to assess policy goals and prospects. Has the constitutional amendment making the right to education a fundamental right made any difference to the child in the matter of access to education at the ground level? Is the establishment of the child rights commission as structured in the proposed bill going to improve the quality of life for the neglected children? These are important issues waiting to be addressed by the government and civil society organizations working in the field of child welfare and child rights. In preparing them to undertake the challenges ahead, Bajpai's book will be of immense value.^[1,2]
- According to Diana Kendall, author of the book "Sociology in our time – The Essentials" talks about, Education is powerful and essential to the social reproduction of individual personalities and entire culture. {BOURDIEU and PASSERON, 1990} Education is the social institution for the systematic transmission of formally organized structure. Education contributes to the maintenance of society and provides people with an opportunity for self-enhancement and upward social mobility.^[3]
- [Asian Age 12/1/09]- 'Employ panchayats to check school dropouts' With varying statistics on the number of children in child labour [between 6 to 100 million], the minister of panchayati Raj believes the government needs to follow the Kerala model and use panchayats to track down the status of every child dropout. Mr. A.N.P. Sinha, secretary of the minister of panchayati Raj, as recommended that such an out-of-school survey must be undertaken

by panchayats and municipal corporations in order to arrive at a correct understanding of the magnitude of this problem.

- New Kerala 13/1/09]-“slum children stage a protest in patna against exploitation” .Scores of slum children in patna took to the streets on January 12, 2009 protesting against child labour demanding right to education . children under the aegis of ‘prayas Bharti Trust’, a voluntary group , raised slogans against those who engage child labour . the main purpose behind organizing such protest is to spread awareness regarding child education.
- Times of India -26/3/09/]”court shows concern over child exploitation” The Delhi High court expressed serious concern over the condition of children exploited by the placement agencies or as child laborers. Advocating strict regulation and punishment of current placement agencies in the capital, HC said it was receiving a rising number of complaints of trafficking and exploitation against such agencies .A division bench of H. C observed the regulations was but the first step to reign in the division bench of H.C. Observing the regulations was but the first step to reign in agencies indulging in exploitation of minors , adding that there must be a specific scheme to punish the guilty ones . The judges made it clear that only was not enough . The responsibility of the state also included educating the rescued children and rehabilitating them.
- [Times of India – 5/7/09] –“Bank for child workers helps put them back in school”The Child Development Khazana (CDK) is a bank in Chennai run by an NGO to help working children above the age of 14, CDK was formed five years back by jeeva jyoti , an NGO that works to rehabilitate child laborers . CDK is a bank for children between the age of 9 and 17 years and managed by the children themselves. Child loans either for education or to start their own businesses . over 951 children ,200 of whom are child labourers are being benefited by this bank . Till date, close to 50 child laborers have quit work and are pursuing their education.
- [Indian express – 2/ 12/ 09] – “ survey to identify slum kids away from school “ . Taking the newly passed Right to Education Act a step further , the department of the sarva shiksha Abhiyan [SSA] under the state education department is in the process of identifying children not receiving education before they can be enrolled in the new academic session . For the project , over 3,500 slum pockets within the city limits across. Gujarat have been targets .Door to door surveys will be undertaken to identify the children who are in the age group of 6to 14 and have been away from schools. The survey will cover children of all the categories including child labour, children, migrant labourers, Below poverty Line (B P L) families , scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and other minority categories.
- [The Times of India ,Kolkata, and December 16,2010] –“ send kids to school for BPL rice, says Orissa administration” .The district administration has adopted a carrot and – stick approach to create awareness among parents about their responsibility towards ensuring the education of their children. The administration has decided to withhold the RS . 2/ - kg . rice meant for people below poverty line [BPL] from families that do not send their children to school . According to the programme , an absentee list will be collected from the school of the panchayat and teachers and pupils of the respective schools will visit the homes of the students who remain perpetually absent and impress upon their parents the importance of education . “It's A timely step taken by the administration and importantly , the PRI members and village heads are supporting the new move , " said patnaik, a koraput based social activist.

- According to the Author or [social welfare the developmental monthly: vol . 56 sept . 2009], Education is broadly considered as one of the basic human rights of every human being . The author draws the reader's attention towards the significance of girls' education . He gave some global evidence to clarify the discrimination exists regarding the availability of girls education .He showed the reasons which are responsible for not attending school for adolescent girls . The author also discussed the lack of consciousness about the importance of education among the female population . The author also highlighted with proper statistics the dropout rate at different stages of school education .^[4]
- According to the book “ Encyclopaedia of social work in India” : vol: 1:Education being a vital instrument for all various kinds of changes , it plays a significant role in the process of development . It discussed the major difference that exists in narrating the objectives of education . It talks about various development schemes of the government regarding the development of the education sector in the country. It talked about the constitutional prerequisites available for educational development . The book also highlighted the critical problems in education in the present stage of development . It highlighted the problems of dropout and ensured the issues relating to the problems of dropout . It also talked about the importance of elementary and non- formal education . This book is encouraging durably toward analyzing the problems of dropout causes.^[5]

1.2 Objective of the study

- To explore the socio-economic factors contributing to school dropout cases in Birgram Gram Panchayat.
- To study the family environments and living standards of children who have discontinued their schooling.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of government programs and community-driven initiatives in addressing dropout issues.
- To propose practical, actionable strategies aimed at minimizing school dropout rates in the study area.

1.3.Research questions of the study

- What socio-economic conditions contribute to the problem of school dropouts in Birgram Gram Panchayat?
- What personal and family-related difficulties do dropout children commonly experience?
- How successful are existing government programs and initiatives in tackling the dropout issue?
- How does the local community perceive education and the factors leading to school dropouts?

1.4.Delimitation of the Study :

- The research is limited to the geographical area of Birgram Gram Panchayat within Baghmundi Block of Purulia district.
- The study will include only school dropout children between the ages of 6 and 16 years.

- It will primarily address socio-economic issues, without involving an analysis of educational policy frameworks.
- The investigation will be conducted using qualitative research techniques, with no application of quantitative data methods.

2.Review of literature related to the study

Hati et al. (2012) conducted a study aimed at identifying the immediate factors responsible for school dropouts and offering potential solutions to address the issue. The researchers first analyzed the patterns of school enrolment and dropout rates at both national and state levels using macro-level data. Subsequently, a logistic regression technique was applied to micro-level data gathered through a primary survey to determine the factors influencing school attendance. The study further highlighted notable gender-based disparities in dropout tendencies and identified differences in the contributing factors for boys and girls. Based on the estimation results, the authors proposed several policy recommendations intended to enhance the likelihood of achieving universal education by addressing the specific socio-economic and cultural factors affecting school attendance and retention.

Roy (2013) discussed the implications and challenges surrounding the implementation of the Right to Education (RTE) Act, which came into effect on April 1, 2010. The Act mandates free and compulsory education for all children between the ages of 6 and 14 years. Under this provision, “free education” implies that no child enrolled in a government-supported institution is required to pay any fee or charges, while “compulsory education” places the responsibility on the government and local authorities to ensure that every child within the specified age group is admitted, regularly attends, and successfully completes elementary education. Despite this legal assurance, the study highlighted the significant challenge India faces, with an estimated 8.1 million children either having dropped out or never having enrolled in school. Roy emphasized that reintegrating these out-of-school children into the education system remains a critical hurdle in fully realizing the objectives of the RTE Act, particularly in rural and socio-economically disadvantaged areas.

Mondal et al. (2013) explored how both external and internal factors influence school education, particularly in rural areas. While internal factors such as parental education play a significant role, the study emphasized the impact of external influences like government policies, financial support, and notably, displacement caused by development projects. The researchers pointed out that when peasant families lose their agricultural land due to such development-induced displacement, it often leads to landlessness and economic hardship. This situation adversely affects the education of children from these families, frequently resulting in increased school dropout rates. The study underlined the critical connection between socio-economic instability and school attendance among rural children.

Jana et al. (2014) carried out a study in two primary schools under the Gopiballavpur Circle (West) of Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal, focusing on dropout patterns in rural and underdeveloped areas. The schools were selected using a circular systematic sampling technique, with priority given to those situated in more remote and backward regions within the circle. Data for the study were gathered from daily attendance records covering seven consecutive academic years, from 2003-04 to 2009-10, ensuring a continuous and complete data set. The researchers applied the Reconstructed Cohort Method and calculated the Coefficient of Internal Efficiency to estimate annual dropout and promotion rates, while also identifying key reasons behind school dropout cases.

The findings indicated that in these rural, disadvantaged areas, school dropouts were largely driven by parental indifference towards education, especially for girls, and the involvement of children in domestic chores. Financial hardship emerged as another significant factor influencing dropout rates. Additionally, the study noted that parents, with generally low educational attainment, prioritized their sons' education over that of their daughters, believing that sons would provide financial and emotional support in their old age.

Sarkar (2015) emphasized the role of education in achieving the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) and reducing school dropout rates, particularly highlighting the potential contribution of the nursing community in advocating for quality education. The study, designed as a descriptive survey, aimed to determine the prevalence of school dropouts, explore the factors responsible, and examine their association with various socio-economic and educational elements.

Following ethical approval, the study employed a non-probability sampling method to select the research setting and a random sampling technique to choose the participants. A total of 147 children aged between 6 and 19 years, along with 95 parents who met the inclusion criteria, were interviewed. The findings revealed that 14.28% of the children had dropped out of school, with the highest dropout rates observed among those aged 12–13 years. The primary reason identified for dropping out was the considerable distance between home and school. Additionally, a chi-square test demonstrated a highly significant association between school dropout rates and factors such as family socio-economic conditions, accessibility to schools, the child's interest in education, and parental attitudes toward equal education opportunities — all at the 0.05 level of significance.

Baskey (2019) highlighted the socio-economic and educational marginalization of Scheduled Tribe communities in India, describing them as the original inhabitants of the country with a rich cultural and linguistic heritage, much of which has been gradually eroded over time. Despite various efforts by the Government of India since independence — including the introduction of special educational provisions and recommendations by different education commissions — tribal communities have continued to face significant barriers in accessing and completing formal education.

In the context of West Bengal, where several distinct tribal groups reside, initiatives like the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan were launched to improve enrolment, retention, and educational outcomes for all children, including those from Scheduled Tribes. However, Baskey's study observed that, despite these interventions, the dropout rates among Scheduled Tribe children remain alarmingly high, particularly at the elementary and secondary levels of schooling.

Majumder et al. (2020) conducted a comprehensive study examining the dropout behaviour of students below the 10th standard (up to 16 years of age) in West Bengal, India. The research approached the issue from two perspectives. Firstly, through the lens of parents, it identified key household characteristics that influence school dropout decisions using Probit analysis. Secondly, from the children's viewpoint, the study analyzed reasons for dropping out in relation to their household background and the school infrastructure available to them, applying a multinomial logit model. The research utilized data from the 71st round of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) on education expenditure, collected between January and June 2014. The findings highlighted the crucial role of parental education and economic conditions in shaping dropout tendencies, consistent with earlier studies. Additionally, the study contributed valuable insights by comparing dropout reasons across genders and socio-economic classes from the children's own perspectives.