



Why drop out? Students of Mirjapur and Kankutia villages of Birbhum, West Bengal

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ABSTRACT: This paper attempts to examine the causes of drop out of the students of Mirjapur and Kankutia villages of Birbhum, West Bengal. The field study was conducted among the boys and girls having age range (16-20) years of the two villages for more than two years. The Scheduled Tribes (Santal and Kora) are the largest population of the area with 463(48.07 %) families out of 963 families and population 2126(49.58 %) out of population 4288. Next is the category Hindu Scheduled Caste (S.C.) with 302 (31.36%) families and 1350(31.48%) population. Muslim population is also found in the villages. Scheduled Tribe, Scheduled Caste and the Muslims jointly form the 88.28% population of the study area. The area is a backward area where drop out students are very common mainly at secondary level. 72.52% young boys and girls having age range (16-20) years are found drop out students. Among the S.T.s the rate of drop out is 86.57% and among the S.C.s it is 66.01%. There are various causes behind this like the infrastructural problems at schools, poverty, lack of educational awareness on the part of the guardians, early marriage of girls etc.

KEY- WORDS: causes of drop out of students of villages of Birbhum, drop out students of villages of Birbhum, school infrastructure, Scheduled Tribe, Scheduled Caste and Muslim students.

INTRODUCTION

Birbhum district is one of the typical backward districts of West Bengal in terms of human development indicators such as healthcare, education, access to amenities etc. (Ghosh and Saha, 2013). The population composition of the district is proportionately heterogeneous. A large proportion of the population belongs to socio-economic marginalised sections such as SCs and STs. According to Census of India (2011), 29.5% were SCs and 6.9% were STs. A considerable proportion of population (27%) belong to the Muslim minority community. More than 90% population of this district lives in the rural areas and earn their livelihood through agriculture, mining and quarrying and related activities (Gosh, 2016). The literacy rate and educational level of this district is also poor in respect of the literacy rate of the state West Bengal. The table below shows the literacy rate of the people of Birbhum and West Bengal respectively.



Table 1: The literacy rate of the people of Birbhum and West Bengal respectively

Literacy	Birbhum	West Bengal
Male Literacy (%)	77.4	82.7
Female Literacy (%)	64.1	74.6

Source: Census, 2011

The problem of drop out is very acute in the rural schools of West Bengal. Though the rate of drop out has been lessened there are still students who have a tendency to become drop out. The factors behind becoming dropping out are separate for boy and girl students. The boys of the poor families become engaged in various types of works to bring some money to their families at an early age and become drop out and the girls generally become engaged in household chores, sometimes get married at an early age like 15 or 16 and become drop out. Children are the most important factors in school. Worse, that children who drop out of school not only have more adversity in their search for a meaningful employment, they have a more difficult time retaining skills learned earlier in school, such as basic maths than students who stay in school ,furthermore dropping out of school has wide ranging of negative effects on the society including a loss of national income, a loss of government tax revenues, an increased demand for government service, more crime, less political participation, reduced intergenerational mobility and poor health(Rumberger, 1987). Instances of drop-out in rural areas in alarming, after enrolment due to social and economic pressure many discontinue their study (Borkotoky and Unisa, 2013). In the selected villages, the drop out students mostly belong to the population having age range (16-20) years. Among this category very few students continue their studies. Among the ST and SC students the rate of drop –out is more than the Hindu (General) and Muslim students. Multiple factors are responsible for the dropping out of the students at Secondary and Higher Secondary level. But the main factor is that the students and guardians are not very conscious about the benefit of taking education. When the male students reach at the age of fifteen or sixteen the guardians think that they should earn some extra wages to the family and regarding the female students they and sometimes the students also think that they are mature enough to take the preparation for marriage. Taking education and attending classes in schools become secondary matter for them. Large family size and poverty play their roles behind this type of thinking. The quantitative interpretations of the Gross Domestic Products (GDP) of the country which does not have any contribution of the "have nots" and is an indicator of the achievements of the "haves" of the possessors of wealth has a lopsided indication of the development taking place in the country, which does not reveal the conditions of the rural folk and their earnings, employment, living conditions and the multiple deprivations they are suffering from the policies, planning and administration of the country (Dreze & Sen, 1995).



OBJECTIVE

Objective of this paper is to examine and analyse the causes of drop out of students of Mirjapur and Kankutia villages at secondary level.

STUDY AREA

The two villages Mirjapur, and Kankutia of Birbhum, West Bengal are selected for field study. The two villages have the Santals as the largest population. Village Kankutia has the Santals as the largest social category and side by side there are Scheduled Caste, Muslims, Hindu (General) and an another Scheduled Tribe i.e. the Koras. The Santals are the only tribe who reside at Mirjapur. The Santals and the Koras jointly form the Scheduled Tribe population of the study area. Both the villages are adjacent to and well connected with Bolpur (the nearest town) by bus and situated in the Raipur-Supur village panchayat area under Bolpur-Sriniketan Block of Birbhum, West Bengal.

Mirjapur

Mirjapur is situated at 8 K.M. South of Bolpur, on Kabi Joydeb Road connecting Illambazar(the nearest sub town) with Bolpur (the nearest town). At the North side of Mirjapur there is Illambazar Main road and North RadhanagarMouja, at the South the river Ajay is running, at the East there are two villages namely, Hut –Rasulganj and Supur and at the West village Raipur is situated. The village covers 932.84 acre land area.

Kankutia

Kankutia is situated at 14 K.M. South – West from Bolpur. At the East of Kankutia there is the village Raipur, at the Western side of Kankutia there is village Gopalnagar, at the Northern side of the village there is an empty field and the main road connecting Illambazar and at the Southern side there is Deuli village. Total area of the village is 1192.60 acre.

DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERN OF STUDY AREA

Study Area consists of four types of population i.e. Scheduled Tribe (S.T.) like Santal and Kora, Hindu (Scheduled Caste i.e. S.C.), Hindu (General), and Muslim. The S.T.s are the largest population of the area with 463(48.07 %) families out of 963 families and population 2126(49.58 %) out of population 4288. Next is the category Hindu Scheduled Caste (S.C.) with 302 (31.36%) families and 1350(31.48%) population. Third category is Hindu Upper Caste (General) with 131(13.60%) families with population 502(11.70%). Fourth category is the Muslims with 67 (6.95%) families and population 310 (7.22%). There are 963 families with 4288 population in total. So, in study area near about 50% population are the STs and 32% population are SCs. The STs and the SCs jointly forms more than 80% population of the study area. The two villages consist of mainly poor people except some people who belong to Hindu (General) and Muslim category. The table below shows the demographic pattern of the study area.

**Table 2. Demographic pattern of the study area**

	Social Category									
	Santal and Kora(S.T.)		Schedule Caste		Hindu (General)		Muslim		Total	
Name of the villages	No. Of Family (%)	No. Of Population (%)	No. Of Family (%)	No. Of Population (%)	No. Of Family (%)	No. Of Population	No. Of Family (%)	No. Of Population	No. Of Family (%)	No. Of Population (%)
Mirjapur	161(only Santal) (16.71)	829(only Santal) (19.33)	107 (11.11)	472 (11)	100 (10.38)	375 (8.74)	00	00	368 (38.21)	1676 (39.08)
Kankutia	302(Santal and Kora(31.36))	1297(Santal and Kora(30.24))	195 (20.24)	878 (20.47)	31 (3.21)	127 (2.96)	67 (6.95)	310 (7.22)	595 (61.78)	2612 (60.91)
Total	463 (48.07)	2126 (49.58)	302 (31.36)	1350 (31.48)	131 (13.60)	502 (11.70)	67 (6.95)	310 (7.22)	963 (100)	4288 (100)

Source: own survey

LITERACY AND PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VILLAGERS

The villages are mainly poverty stricken. Majority of the villagers are daily wage paid labourers attached to agricultural works. They also work as a daily wage paid labours under masons when agricultural works are unavailable. 73% families earn Rs. (30,000- 1, 00000) annually. Only 63.36% men and 58.00% women (population from 7yr.onwards) are literate. The rate of literacy is also below the percentage of the district (shown in table 1). The table below shows the characteristics of the villagers regarding literacy and annual income.



Table 3: Characteristics of the villagers regarding literacy and annual income

<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Percentage (%)</u>
Male Literacy	63.36
Female Literacy	58.00
Family Income Range	73.00
	Rs. (30,000- 1, 00000)

Source: own survey

METHODOLOGY

Field study method is applied to collect the required data. 535 girls and boys (263 boys and 272 girls) are selected who belong to age range 16-20. Purposive sampling method is applied to select them as it is found that at this age range maximum youths are drop out. Among them, 388 students (72.52%) were drop out. 5 Focused Group Discussions were arranged to collect the required data. Each group were consisted of 107 girls and boys. Each group members were interviewed with the help of semi- structured questionnaires and it was continued for 2-3hours and the interviews were recorded. Finally, 10 boys and 10 girls were selected from them for in depth interview. These interviews were also continued for 2 hours and more. Secondary sources like books and journals related to dropout students were also explored.

RESULTS

The table below shows the number and percentage of the students who become drop outs and now belong to the age range (16-20) years.

Table 4. Drop out students and other youths belong to the age range (16-20) year

Drop out at class	Santal and Kora			Scheduled Caste			Muslim			Hindu			General			Total Drop out		
	Male	Female	total	Male	Female	total	Male	Female	total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total			



X	IX	VIII	VII	VI	V	IV	III	II	I
10 (7.69)	36 (27.69)	20 (13.38)	15 (11.53)	10 (7.69)	06 (4.61)	04 (3.07)	01 (0.76)	02 (1.53)	00(0)
06 (4.68)	38 (29.68)	23 (17.96)	12 (9.37)	10 (7.81)	10 (7.81)	03 (2.34)	01 (0.78)	01 (0.78)	02 (1.56)
16 (6.20)	74 (28.68)	43 (16.66)	27 (10.46)	20 (7.75)	16 (6.26)	07 (2.71)	02 (1.77)	03 (1.16)	02 (0.77)
05 (10.20)	10 (20.40)	04 (8.16)	02 (4.08)	01 (2.04)	01 (2.04)	02 (4.08)	01 (2.04)	01 (2.04)	01 (2.04)
06 (11.53)	11()	05 (9.61)	02 (3.84)	02(3.84)	01 (1.92)	03()	01 (1.92)	02 (3.84)	01 (1.92)
11 (20.79)	21 (20.79)	09 (8.91)	04 (3.96)	03 (2.97)	02 (1.98)	05 (4.95)	02 (1.98)	03 (2.97)	02 (1.98)
00(0)	02 (33.33)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)
01 (10)	02 (20)	03 (30)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)	01 (10)	00(0)
01 (6.25)	04(25)	03 (18.75)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)	01 (6.25)	00(0)
00(0)	01 (16.66)	01 (16.66)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)
00(0)	01 (14.28)	01 (14.28)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)
00(0)	02 (15.38)	02 (15.38)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)	00(0)
15 (7.85)	49 (25.64)	25 (13.08)	17 (8.90)	11 (5.75)	07 (3.66)	06 (3.14)	02 (1.04)	03 (1.57)	01 (0.52)
13 (6.59)	52 (26.39)	32 (16.24)	14 (7.10)	12 (6.09)	11 (5.58)	06 (3.04)	02 (1.01)	04 (2.03)	03 (1.52)
28 (7.21)	101 (26.03)	57 (14.69)	31 (7.98)	23 (5.92)	18 (4.63)	12 (3.09)	04 (1.03)	07 (1.80)	04 (1.03)



Appear at H.S.	H.S. students	Mere literate	Doing graduatio	Total drop out	At graduatio	After Higher	XII	XI	After Madhya
04 (2.72)	08 (5.44)	02 (1.36)	02 (1.36)	130 (100)	01 (0.76)	07 (5.38)	04 (3.07)	05 (3.84)	09 (6.92)
05 (3.31)	09 (5.96)	02 (1.32)	04 (2.64)	128 (100)	00(0)	03(2.34)	05 (3.90)	06 (4.68)	08 (6.25)
09 (3.02)	17 (5.70)	04 (1.34)	06 (2.01)	258 (100)	01 (0.38)	10 (3.87)	09 (3.48)	11 (4.26)	17 (6.58)
04 (5.55)	10 (13.88)	02 (2.77)	02 (2.77)	49 (100) (48.51)	00 (0)	06 (12.24)	02 (4.08)	06 (12.24)	07 (14.28)
05 (6.17)	08 (9.87)	02 (2.46)	02 (2.46)	52 (100) (51.48)	00(0)	06 (11.53)	02 (3.84)	05 (9.61)	05 (9.61)
09 (5.88)	18 (11.76)	04 (2.61)	04 (2.61)	101 (100)	00(0)	12 (11.88)	04 (3.96)	11 (20.79)	12 (11.88)
02 (10.52)	02 (10.52)	05 (26.31)	02 (10.52)	06 (100)	00(0)	01 (16.66)	00(0)	01 (16.66)	02 (33.33)
01 (5.55)	02 (11.11)	00(0)	03 (16.66)	10 (100)	00(0)	01 (10)	00(0)	01 (10)	01 (10)
03 (8.10)	04 (10.81)	05 (13.51)	05 (13.51)	16 (100)	00(0)	02 (12.50)	00(0)	02 (12.50)	03 (18.75)
02(8)	04(16)	10(40)	02(8)	06 (100)	00(0)	02 (33.33)	00(0)	00(0)	02 (33.33)
02 (9.09)	03 (13.63)	06 (27.27)	02 (9.09)	07 (100)	00(0)	02 (28.57)	01 (14.28)	01 (14.28)	01 (14.28)
04 (8.51)	07 (14.89)	16 (34.04)	04 (8.51)	13 (100)	00(0)	04 (30.76)	01 (7.69)	01 (7.69)	03 (23.07)
12 (4.56)	24 (9.12)	19 (7.22)	08 (3.04)	191 (100)	01 (0.52)	16 (8.37)	06 (3.14)	12 (6.28)	20 (10.47)
13 (4.77)	22 (8.08)	10 (3.67)	11 (4.04)	197 (100)	00(0)	12 (6.09)	08(4.06)	13 (6.59)	15 (7.61)
25 (4.67)	46 (8.59)	29 (5.42)	19 (3.55)	388 (100)	01 (0.25)	28 (7.21)	14 (3.60)	25 (6.44)	35 (9.02)



Total population	147 (100)	151 (100)	298 (100)	72 (100)	81 (100)	153 (100)	19 (100)	18 (100)	37 (100)	25 (100)	22 (100)	47 (100)	263 (100)	272 (100)	535 (100)
illiterate	01 (0.68)	03 (1.98)	04 (1.34)	05 (6.94)	12 (14.81)	17 (11.11)	02 (10.52)	02 (11.11)	04 (10.81)	01(4)	02 (9.09)	03 (6.38)	09 (3.42)	19 (6.98)	28 (5.23)

Source: own survey

The table 4 clearly shows that maximum number of students becomes drop out at the age of 14-15 when they read in class IX. Two reasons are functioning behind this activity and psychology of the students. Firstly, the system of not to get promotion to the higher classes if the students fail to get pass- marks in the examination has been started and the system of serving the mid day meal to the students at school has been stopped from class VIII. When the performances of the students become poor in the classes and they fail in the examination they do not feel any interest in continuing their studies. The apathy towards education and negligence about study is found mostly among the backward communities of the area. 14.69% students have been dropped out at class VIII and 26.03% students have been dropped out at class IX.

Causes of Drop out

Table 5. Causes of drop out

Wards of Widow/s eparated	Causes of Drop out	
10 (7.69)	Male (1)	Santal and Konra
08 (6.25)	Female (2)	
18 (6.97)	Total (1+2)	
09 (18.36)	Male (3)	Scheduled Caste
06 (11.53)	Female (4)	
15 (14.85)	Total (3+4)	
01 (16.66)	Male (5)	Muslim
00(0)	Female (6)	
01 (6.25)	Total (5+6)	
01 (16.66)	Male (7)	Hindu General
00	Female (8)	
01 (7.69)	Total (7+8)	
21 (10.99)	Total male	
14 (7.10)	Total female	
35 (9.02)	Total	



Total	Early marriage	Lack of mid day meal	Earn livelihood	Do not have private	Do household works	Do not feel interest
130 (50.38)(1)	01 (0.76)	10 (7.69)	49 (37.69)	40 (30.76)	00(0)	20 (15.38)
128 (49.61)	20 (15.62)	10 (7.81)	05 (3.90)	50 (39.06)	10 (7.81)	25 (19.53)
258 (66.49)	21 (8.13)	20 (7.75)	54 (20.93)	90 (34.88)	10 (3.87)	45 (17.44)
49 (48.51)	00(0)	05 (10.20)	10 (20.40)	15 (30.61)	00(0)	10 (20.40)
52 (51.48)	12 (23.07)	02 (3.84)	00(0)	20 (38.46)	07 (13.46)	05 (9.61)
101 (26.03)	12 (11.88)	07 (6.93)	10 (9.90)	35 (34.65)	07 (6.93)	15 (14.85)
06 (37.5)	00 (0)	00(0)	00(0)	04 (66.66)	00(0)	01 (16.66)
10 (62.5)	02 (20)	00(0)	00(0)	01 (10)	07 (70)	00(0)
16 (4.12)	02 (12.5)	00(0)	00(0)	05 (31.25)	07 (43.75)	01 (6.25)
06 (46.15)	00 (0)	00(0)	00(0)	04 (66.66)	00	01 (16.66)
07 (53.84)(1)	00 (0)	00(0)	00(0)	01 (14.28)	04 (57.14)	02 (28.57)
13 (3.35)	00 (0)	00(0)	00(0)	05 (38.46)	04 (30.76)	03 (23.07)
191 (49.22)(1)	01 (0.52)	15 (7.85)	59 (30.89)	63 (32.98)	00 (0)	32 (16.75)
197 (50.77)	34 (17.25)	12 (6.09)	05 (2.53)	72 (36.54)	28 (14.21)	32 (16.24)
388 (100)	35 (9.02)	27 (6.95)	64 (16.49)	135 (34.79)	28 (7.21)	64 (16.49)

Source: own survey

The table 5 shows that 9.02% students become drop out as their mothers are widows. These mothers cannot take care of their children regarding their education. For the lack of proper guidance the children become out of track and prefer to become drop out. In most cases, it is found that none takes the responsibility of bringing up these kinds of children. They have to earn livelihood to survive. 16.49% students have conveyed that they do not feel any interest to go to school. Among 20% of such cases their best friends become drop out and they follow them. They do not like the infrastructural facilities at school. The toilets of school are not clean, the classrooms are dirty, the benches and walls of the classrooms are full of bad writings, and for dearth of water it is impossible to use the toilets (the girl students feel embarrassed during menstruation). The



lack of cordial relationship with the teachers also is a factor. Often, the teachers cannot communicate with the Santal, Kora and Muslim children for the different cultural background. The lack of parental involvement is a problem that often leads to higher dropout rates, especially with high school students. Parents play an important role when it comes to high school attendance. It is found that high school dropouts often have parents who weren't engaged or concerned with their academic success. If a parent doesn't encourage her child to stay in school, show interest in classes and teachers, communicate with administration, or pay attention to homework assignments, the child might not see any reason to follow through with the coursework. When parents don't prioritize their child's high school education, the child may choose to drop out. In study area, the parents belong to groups of lower educational achievement. As a result they feel no interest in educational upliftment of their children. They have no capability to guide their children that how to cope up with the school environment. In this situation the students lack interest towards school or education and want to earn wages as soon as possible. Study reveals that 16.49% students leave the school to earn livelihood.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In rural areas of Birbhum drop out is a big problem. The students remain at school up to standard VIII due to Mid Day Meal scheme and as no pass fail system are introduced there. It is found that majority of the students become drop out at the end of class VIII or at the middle of class IX. At standard IX the weak students begin to fail and become drop out. To prevent drop out the education at the school should be more interesting and fruitful for the students of the rural areas. The spread of fruitful education can only change the mental set up of the village people and prevent drop out. The infrastructure of the schools should be proper and clean. The toilets should be cleaned regularly as the girl students should not hesitate to use it during her menstruation. It is found that dearth of water is a big problem at the rural schools. Though there is tap water connection at high schools the supply of water is insufficient. The parents also do not pay proper attention to the study of their children. For acute poverty the parents cannot provide money for private tuition. These are also the causes of drop out. The teachers should also pay more attention to the backward students like Muslims S.C.s and S.T.s.

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