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INEQUALITY IN PERCEPTION LEVEL AMONG PARENTS OF DOOARS REGION OF WEST BENGAL

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ABSTRACT

To achieve the highest literacy as well as success in primary education government has taken several drives to enroll students in primary and upper primary schools from the time of independence. Some of these drive-phases are operation black board (1986), District Primary Education Programme (1994), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (2002) etc. First phase drive for Primary level education launched in 2002 as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan throughout the country. This aims to realize Universalization of Elementary Education, by development of quantity in enrolment number and development in quality of primary education and reduce the dropout. For the purpose of the present study, the information/data collected from the sample households based on the parents of dropout children and their opinion towards the present day system of education. This study conducted in two block (Nagrakata and Malbazar) of Jalpaiguri, a Sarva Shiksha Mission (SSM) district of West Bengal since 2002 to evaluate and assess the reasons behind Dropout Children. To identify the effects, we use structured schedule containing sixteen independent variables viz. Age of Father (X_1), Age of Mother (X_2), Father's Education (X_3), Mother's Education (X_4), Father's Occupation (X_5), Mother's Occupation (X_6), Family Size (X_7), Monthly Family Income (X_8), Home Environment (X_9), Climatic Factor (X_{10}), Monthly Expenditure on Education (X_{11}), Attitude towards Education (X_{12}), Financial Condition (X_{13}), Social Interaction (X_{14}), Role of forest/tea garden in controlling financial hardship (X_{15}) and Use of Mass media(X_{16}) were found to bear substantial impact against dependent variable Reasons behind the Dropout (Y) of the guardians of students. This study is to construct a scientific, effective and very operational statistical model to analyses the roles, responsibilities and functions of parents in the educational process of their children with the Correlation Coefficient, Multiple and Step down Regression Analysis. This study confirms that the assessment model would be one of the good diagnostic prescriptions.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is lifelong and continuous process of learning and empowerment and is also the basis of development and change. Every developing nation should believe that education is the heart of the development process. Development in any country will mean the improvement in the quality of life of the people as a whole as also of the individual. A nation's development is determined by its economic, social and technological development. Underlying all these parameters is the human resource development. The role parents in any society are a significant indicator to the level of culture and social justice and economic and social development. Therefore, education for parents has become a necessity for achieving developmental goals. A study on ―Determinants of reasons of school dropouts amongst dwellers of an urban slum of Delhi‖ was conducted by Khokhar et al. (2005). He found that the parents wish to discontinue the child's education was

cited as the most important reason (29.03%). Higher proportion of females (42.85%) was pulled out of schools by their parents' was as compared to males (15.10%) for looking after their siblings. It was the perception of the parents that too much of education could lead to problems at the time of marriage (33.33%), also completion of education was not thought to be essential by some 13.33%. This study was conducted amongst the dwellers of household of slum located at Dhobi Ghat, behind Rouse Avenue Road, Delhi.

Another important factor that is often related to drop out is parental education level (Chowdhury et al, 2002; Nath et al, 2008). Parents with low levels of education are more likely to have children who do not attend school. If they do, they tend to drop out in greater numbers (Blick and Sahn, 2000; Brown and Park, 2002) and engage in more income generating activities than children of parents with high levels of education (Duryea, 2003; Ersado, 2005). A recent case study of a rural village in Ghana showed parental illiteracy wasassociated with low household income as two important factors likely to cause girls to drop out (Pryor and Ampiah, 2003). Furthermore, there may be some gendered dimensions to the links between parental education and children's drop out with differential effects for boys and girls (Connelly and Zheng, 2003). For girls, the risk of becoming pregnant, and hence potentially dropping out of school, declines significantly as the educational attainment of the household head increases (Grant and Hallman, 2006).

Should we expect differences in the relationship between parental involvement and academic performance in different educational contexts? Public Education Network (2007) gives a positive answer, insisting that parental involvement varies considerably across the country in both type and level. The research field of school effectiveness (and improvement) emphasizes the importance of school context. One of the key school contextual characteristics is school location (e.g., Teddlie and Reynolds, 2000). Lall (2009) investigates the shift of educational dynamics in different ethnic groups in Pakistan. As a part of her study, she interviewed the parents of enrolled girls and acquired data regarding their preferences for boys or girls" education from different areas of the country. There is a need to get understanding of perceptions and attitudes of the parents of both enrolled and out of school girls regarding their daughters" education which was the major thirst of the study.

The 2011 census of India revealed that 74.04 percent of the people (82.14 percent among men and 65.46 percent among women) are now literate, and that for the first time the absolute number of illiterate has actually gone down. The census also revealed a decadal jump of 6.84 percent (82.14% -75.30%) in the literacy rate among men and 11.76 percent (65.46% - 53.70%) among women. And the state West Bengal jump of 5.65 percent (82.67% - 77.02%) in the literacy rate among men and 11.55 percent (71.16 % - 59.61%) among women and the district Jalpaiguri jump of 7.78 percent (80.61% - 72.83%) in male and 14.44 percent (66.65% - 52.21%) in female.

The study of Das and Deb (2016) conducted in Uttar Dinajpur and Kolkata District of West Bengal among 400 parents of Secondary students and found that out of the 18 variables considered only Additional boost up given by RMSA (31.14 %), Achievement of UEE (31.03 %), Role of Mid-day meal (14.30 %), Sizes of family (8.34 %), Age of the respondents

(5.94 %), and Reasons behind private tuition (5.35 %) in a cluster contributed more towards the total discrimination. Hence, Additional boost up given by RMSA, Achievement of UEE, Role of Mid-day meal, Sizes of family, Age of the respondents, and Reasons behind private tuition have been found to be key discriminators and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan should pay attention on these factors in dealing with the problem of high or low perceptional level among guardians.

RESEARCH METHODS

The present study is based on intensive School survey conducted during January – June 2014, in one block of the district of Jalpaiguri of the State of West Bengal. The block (Panchayat Samiti), namely Nagrakata was selected at random, out of 13 blocks in the district (Now 07 Block in Jalpaiguri and another newly setup 06 Block in Alipurduar District). With the help of random sampling method 100 parents of dropout students were selected from 5 Gram Panchayat (GP) viz. Sulkapara, Champaguri, Looksan, Angrabhasa-I, Angrabhasa-II of the Nagrakata block.

Similar study is based on intensive individual survey in another blocks namely Malbazar (North Circle) was selected at random, out of 07 blocks in the district. With the help of random sampling method 100 parents of dropout students were selected from 6 Gram Panchayat (GP) viz. Rungamuttee, Oodlabari, Damdim, Kumlai, Tesimla, Bagracote of the Malbazar (North Circle) Block. The sample size of this study is 200 among parents of primary students. During selection of parents, those guardians were selected whose children were dropped either occasionally, seasonally, or permanently. 05 dropout students were selected from each school on random basis whose parents are the respondents. A structured schedule containing 32 different questions / statements / views / opinion were placed before each respondent parent separately to measure educational standard of parents, their occupation, Family size, Monthly Family Income, Monthly expenditure for education, attitude towards education, use of mass media and to assess the reasons behind the dropout. These set of 32 questions were ultimately formed 16 consequent variables and 01 predictor variable. Here, in order to explore the problem, different statistical methods like correlation, mean, and Mahalanabis D-square analysis method are used to understand the *Reasons behind the Dropout.*

Objective of the Study

- To assess the level of perception on *Dropout* (Y) of guardian.
- To examine the role of parents' socio-economic and educational background on the Educational process of their children.
- To assess the socio-personal and attitudinal casual variable viz. *Age of Father (X_1), Age of Mother (X_2), Father's Education (X_3), Mother's Education (X_4), Father's Occupation (X_5), Mother's Occupation (X_6), Family Size (X_7), Monthly Family Income (X_8), Home Environment (X_9), Climatic Factor (X_{10}), Monthly Expenditure on Education (X_{11}), Attitude towards Education (X_{12}), Financial Condition (X_{13}), Social Interaction (X_{14}), Role of forest/tea garden in controlling financial hardship (X_{15}) and Use of Mass media (X_{16})*

- To estimate the nature of interdependency between and among the causal and consequent variable as postulated in the above segment.
- To isolate the causal variable's substantial effect on the *Reasons behind the Dropout (Y)* out of these 16 causal variables for formulating a strategy of intervening Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE).
- To assess the level of perception among parents of Nagrakata Block of West Bengal from some socio-economic, socio-cultural, and other factors associated with primary school education system.
- To assess the level of perception among parents of Malbazar Block of West Bengal from some socio-economic, socio-cultural, and other factors associated with primary school education system;
- To identify the factors responsible for the high and low level of perception.

Statistical Analysis

To assess the nature and extent of causal factors viz. *Age of Father (X₁), Age of Mother (X₂), Father's Education (X₃), Mother's Education (X₄), Father's Occupation (X₅), Mother's Occupation (X₆), Family Size (X₇), Monthly Family Income (X₈), Home Environment (X₉), Climatic Factor (X₁₀), Monthly Expenditure on Education (X₁₁), Attitude towards Education (X₁₂), Financial Condition (X₁₃), Social Interaction (X₁₄), Role of forest/tea garden in controlling financial hardship (X₁₅) and Use of Mass media(X₁₆) were found to bear substantial impact against dependent variable Reasons behind the Dropout (Y),* the data as collected through structured schedules were quantified and subsequently statistically analyzed by adopting Mean, Correlation, Discriminatory analysis method and ranking method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Values of linear discriminate coefficient against 16 causal variables

Variables		Linear Discriminant Coefficient (D2)
X_1	Age of Father	0.3772251
X_2	Age of Mother	1.2247606
X_3	Father's Education	-.1480498
X_4	Mother's Education	1.2118176
X_5	Father's Occupation	9.7020376
X_6	Mother's Occupation	-1.9110250
X_7	Family Size	1.5883629
X_8	Monthly Family Incomes	-.0032008
X_9	Home environment	2.0651636
X_{10}	Climatic Factor	48.6865982
X_{11}	Monthly Expenditure on Education	0.0772543
X_{12}	Attitude towards Education	0.9697347
X_{13}	Financial Condition	0.5872555
X_{14}	Social Interactions	-.2423399
X_{15}	Role of forest/tea garden in controlling financial hardship	8.0792679
X_{16}	Use of Mass media	1.4450364

The Table 1 shows the D^2 based statistics and its corresponding Linear Discriminant Coefficient of the eighteen variable viz. *Age of Father (X₁), Age of Mother (X₂), Father's Education (X₃), Mother's Education (X₄), Father's Occupation (X₅), Mother's Occupation (X₆), Family Size (X₇), Monthly Family Income (X₈), Home Environment (X₉), Climatic Factor (X₁₀), Monthly Expenditure on Education (X₁₁), Attitude towards Education (X₁₂), Financial Condition (X₁₃), Social Interaction (X₁₄), Role of forest/tea garden in controlling financial hardship (X₁₅) and Use of Mass media(X₁₆).*

Table 2. Means, their differences and 'r' values of variables with respect to perceptional levels

Variables	High Level N1= 200 Mean Value (Nagrakata)	Low Level N2= 200 Mean Value (Malbazar)	Mean Difference (MD)	'r' Value
Age of Father (X₁)	40.54	41.21	0.67	-.0760
Age of Mother (X₂)	35.91	32.78	3.13	-.041
Father's Education (X₃)	3.26	2.76	0.5	.2175**
Mother's Education (X₄)	2.28	2.14	0.14	.1003
Father's Occupation (X₅)	1.27	1.19	0.08	-.0300
Mother's Occupation (X₆)	1.66	0.74	0.92	-.0228
Family Size (X₇)	4.76	4.13	0.63	-.0679
Monthly Family Income (X₈)	4633	4063.5	569.5	-.1229
Home Environment (X₉)	3.01	2.19	0.82	.0283
Climatic Factor (X₁₀)	4.89	4.97	0.08	-.0847
Monthly Expenditure on Education (X₁₁)	73.3	107.75	34.45	.1832*
Attitude towards Education (X₁₂)	4.97	4.03	0.94	-.0493
Financial Condition (X₁₃)	1.12	1.43	0.31	.0532
Social Interaction (X₁₄)	2.2	1.95	0.25	.1197
Role of forest/tea garden in controlling financial hardship (X₁₅)	0.1	0.19	0.09	.1698*
Mass media(X₁₆)	1.61	1.59	0.02	-.0743

Critical value 0.05 level one tail + or - 0.125 *Significant at 5% level
Critical value 0.01 level two tail + or - 0.194 ** Significant at 1% level

Table 2 shows the results as above give the mean values and their differences with significance of 16 variables for high and low level of retentively among guardians of Nagrakata block and Malbazar block of the district of Jalpaiguri of West Bengal respectively. The high perceptional level means the higher involvement and higher understanding about the overall activities of Sarba Shiksha Abhiyan and on the other hand low perceptional level means the lower involvement and superficial understanding about the activities of Sarba Shiksha Abhiyan. Here, in this table, high level of perception always does not necessarily to carry the high value and the same is true for the low level perception also and it does not always carry the low value. Out of these sixteen variables, 03 variables viz. Father's Education (X₃), Monthly Expenditure on Education (X₁₁), Role of forest/tea garden in controlling financial hardship (X₁₅) show their significant level of impact in differentiating the high and low level of perception among the guardians of dropout students of elementary level of Nagrakata and Malbazar Block of Jalpaiguri district.

The mean value of the variable like *Father's Education (X₃),* of two blocks Nagrakata and Malbazar are 3.26 and 2.76 respectively. It is not alone sufficient in explaining differences between high and low level of perception. Guardians of Nagrakata block have the higher mean value of their educational qualifications than their counterparts of Malbazar block. Higher educational qualifications mean the higher educational achievements which enable them in understanding the problems of Primary education system. The coefficient of correlation between the level of perception and the variables **X₃** shows the strong significance. The mean value of *Expenditure on Education (X₁₁)* in Nagrakata block is 73.03 whereas that in Malbazar block is 107.75 which indicate the thinking of guardians that the children of Classes primary section of Malbazar block are high income group. It means guardian of Malbazar block more conscious about importance of primary education. It indicates that guardian of Malbazar block engaged in helping their children to batter education. The positive correlation value of the variable indicates that the high mean value of need of *Monthly Expenditure on Education(X₁₁),* in Malbazar block would contribute the high level of perception in realizing the operational area of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The variables like *Role of forest/tea garden in controlling financial hardship (X₁₅)* shows significant result in this point of view and the mean value for Malbazar block is

high (0.19) than mean value of parents of Nagrakata block (0.1). This mean value shows the parents of Malbazar block is more use of forest/tea garden than the parents of Nagrakata block. So the parents of Malbazar block who ultimately controlling their financial hardship with the help of tea garden and forest are.   Hence, the variable (X_{15}) has positive impact on the level of perception about dropout to discriminate between its high and low value. Analysis of variables like lack of present primary education system shows significant result in this point of view and the mean value for Nagrakata block is high than mean value of parents of Malbazar block. This mean value shows the parents of Nagrakata block more aware than the parents of Malbazar block on the point of shortfall of present primary education system.

Table 3. Percentage Contribution of Individual Character to the Total Distance Measurement

Code No.	Variables Coefficient	Mean Difference	Coefficient X Mean Difference	Coefficient X Percentage Contribution	Rank
X_1	.3772251	0.67	0.252741	1.27	XI
X_2	1.2247606	3.13	3.833501	19.31	II
X_3	-.1480498	0.5	0.07402	0.37	
X_4	1.2118176	0.14	0.169654	0.85	
X_5	9.7020376	0.08	0.776163	3.91	IX
X_6	-1.9110250	0.92	1.75814	8.85	V
X_7	1.5883629	0.63	1.000669	5.04	VII
X_8	-.0032008	569.5	1.82286	9.18	IV
X_9	2.0651636	0.82	1.693434	8.53	VI
X_{10}	48.6865982	0.08	3.894928	19.61	I
X_{11}	.0772543	34.45	2.661411	13.4	III
X_{12}	.9697347	0.94	0.921052	4.64	VIII
X_{13}	.5872555	0.31	0.182049	0.91	
X_{14}	-.2423399	0.25	0.06058	0.31	
X_{15}	8.0792679	0.09	0.727134	3.66	X
X_{16}	1.4450364	0.02	0.028901	0.15	

Table 3 showed the percentage contribution of each variable to the total discrimination. Out of the 16 variables considered only Climatic Factor (19.61%), Age of Mother (19.31%), Monthly Expenditure on Education (13.4%), Monthly Family Income (9.18%), Mother's Occupation (8.85%), Home Environment (8.53%), Family Size (5.04 %), Attitude towards Education (4.64 %), Father's Occupation (3.91%), Role of forest/tea garden in controlling financial hardship (3.66%), Age of Father (1.27%) in a cluster contributed more towards the total discrimination. Hence, Climatic Factor, Age of Mother, Monthly Expenditure on Education, Monthly Family Income, Mother's Occupation, Home Environment, Family Size, Attitude towards Education, Father's Occupation, Role of forest/tea garden in controlling financial hardship, Age of Father have been found to be key discriminators and Sarba Shiksha Abhiyan should pay attention on these factors in dealing with the problem of high or low perceptional level among guardians.

Conclusion

Education has a very wide connotation as it concerns every individual in the society. The process of learning is the vehicle by which the individual is changed from a bundle of potentialities to an active organism with ideas, habits, skills, preferences and other distinguishing personality characters. The research problem of the present study was to isolate the factors which are largely responsible between High and Low Level of opinion among Parents of West Bengal about Sarba Shiksha Abhiyan. In an attempt to search the socio-economic, cultural, and environmental factors resulting the perceptional level among the guardians at the operational stage of Sarba Shiksha Abhiyan some prominent factors such as

Age of Father (X_1), Age of Mother (X_2), Father's Education (X_3), Mother's Education (X_4), Father's Occupation (X_5), Mother's Occupation (X_6), Family Size (X_7), Monthly Family Income (X_8), Home Environment (X_9), Climatic Factor (X_{10}), Monthly Expenditure on Education (X_{11}), Attitude towards Education (X_{12}), Financial Condition (X_{13}), Social Interaction (X_{14}), Role of forest/tea garden in controlling financial hardship (X_{15}) and Use of Mass media(X_{16}) have been identified.

It indicates while low level perception is the flamboyant consequence, observable in the micro-school environment, many more causes are enrooted into the subsystem Climatic Factor, Attitude towards Education, Role of forest/tea garden in controlling financial hardship, Monthly Family Income, Financial Condition, Age of Mother, Father's Occupation, Mass media, Mother's Education, Monthly Expenditure on Education and even attitudinal behavior of the parents. To deeply understand positively inter-related subsystems and system of primary education, the perceptional level of the guardians and the fulfillment of the objectives as laid down in SSA, many more factors could have been emerged as path finder in such type of studies.

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