

Rupantaran : A Multidisciplinary Journal
 Vol. VII : pp 39-45, February, 2023
 ISSN (Print) : 2091-0061, ISSN (Electronic) : 2738-9960
<https://doi.org/10.3126/rupantaran.v7i1.52203>
 Research Management Cell (RMC)
 Dhankuta Multiple Campus, Dhankuta
 Tribhuvan University, Nepal

School Dropout of Dalit Students at Basic Level in Nepal

Jiwan Kumar Mishra¹

Email: jiwanmishra@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper examines the situation of school dropout students at basic level in Nepal. The term dropout refers to a person who has abandoned a course of study. The focus of the analysis has covered one of the most privileged groups of Nepalese society in a community schools of Nepal, which is known as Dalit. In this paper the dropout refers to Dalit students who dropout of school before completing a course of instruction. . For this purpose, quantitative research design was applied to collect data. Both primary and secondary data were used and questionnaire method was applied to collect primary data. Secondary data were collected from the official records of schools. The finding shows that Dalit students are facing the dropout problem before completing basic level. The finding also indicates that Dalits are considered one of the disadvantaged group of Nepalese society as well as backwards in terms of socio-economic status and education. The caste and gender discrimination has also played a significant role to increase dropout of Dalit students. The government of Nepal has declared various laws, policies and program to increase students' participation and to ensure equal access in education of Dalit students. However, the rate of dropout Dalit students are higher than other groups of people. As a result, at the basic level continues to grow, yet its high dropout rates remain a pressing and complex problem in Dalit community.

Keywords: Dalit students, community school, dropout, basic schools

Introduction

The dictionary meaning of dropout refers to a person who has abandoned a course of study or a student who drops out of school before completing a course of instruction. The dropout student refers to the children who leave school or college before they complete their studies. MoES (2003) mentions that, the students, who leave the school system without completing a grade or level, are called dropouts (cited in Devkota & Bagale, 2015, p. 153). Similarly, Asharaf (1999) define the dropout that a child who abandons a course of study on which he or she has embarked before its

¹ Mr. Mishra is a Lecturer of Education Planning and Management at Tribhuvan University, Dhankuta Multiple Campus, Dhankuta, Nepal.

completion is called a dropout. Similarly, in the eye of Bhatt (2015), dropout means, the child who enrolls in school but fails to complete the relevant level of the educational cycle. It simply refers to the children who leave the school before completion of school level (Bhat, 2015). In line with this idea, Chugh (2011) defines that the children who enroll in school and leave school before completing the grade without transferring to another school apart from the reason death of students.

In the global landscape, the dropout has defined as someone who does not complete a high school diploma or the equivalent in USA. Similarly, the dropout is defined as someone who leaves school before year 12 (the final year of secondary school) or begins year 12 but leaves without obtaining an upper secondary qualification in Australia (Lamb et al, 2011). Another country Canada defines the dropout as someone who has not successfully completed high school and is not enrolled in education or in a work study program (ibid). Someone who left upper secondary education before the final year or who remained to the end, but failed to fulfill the graduation requirements is dropout in Norway (ibid). In Nepal, it has not been defined differently and defined as; someone who has not completed +2 level educations (11th and 12th grade) and has left school is known as dropout (Wagle, 2012). Thus, dropout refers to those children who are enrolled in school but who fail to complete the relevant level of the educational cycle dropouts (cited in Devkota & Bagale, 2015, p. 153). However, Meneses, et al. (2020) revealed that dropout-related phenomena are complex and thus require clear definitions. They summarized the defined concepts such as attrition, persistence, and success employing other related concepts, sometimes without defining the latter (e.g., retention and persistence as completion; success as retention; etc.). They concluded that the definitions of dropout varied wildly but centered upon dropping out from either institution, program or course, during a certain time period.

Economic disadvantages of socially-disadvantaged groups regarding children's household family are the major reasons behind the higher dropout of children (Sedwal & Kamat, 2008). It is common among children whose family is poor, have less income, social status, migration of family etc. It is difficult for the poor, marginalized, socially excluded families to continue and support children's schooling where parent's income is even not sufficient to fulfill the basic needs such as food and clothing (Devkota & Bagale, 2015). The rate of dropout and repetition is high especially Dalit students in primary schools of Nepal. Similarly, the economically and socially underprivileged children and their ill-fate are also discussed widely (Acharya, 2007). It is clear that the dropout is a burning problem that has created the unequal access in education. It has a bigger problem in developing countries like Nepal where children are not completing the basic level of education. Devkota and Bagale (2015) argue that dropout has been one of the problems in primary level. Primary education is a catalyst of social change and empowerment for Dalit students. They are further deprived from inequalities, discrimination based on gender, caste and class continuing their education to achieve the sustainable development of education. The existing literature shows two recurring factors encouraged to students' dropout of school. The first is directly related to 'the material dimension' of education, such as financial difficulties, educational status of family and poverty. And, 'subjective dimension' of the educational experience is the second. For example, students that attend school in remote communities have a higher chance of not completing year 12 as compared to students that come from a wealthy background (Lamb et al, 2011). Thus, it requires further clarification in the case of Dalit students in Buddhashanti rural municipality of Jhapa district of Nepal. It is clear that the children are facing the unequal opportunities in education. They are deprived from the educational access due to the socio-cultural circumstances. The Dalit students' dropout is one of the incomparable situations with the other ruling class people's children.

Considering these circumstances, this paper will explore the dropout situation of Dalit students in basic level school education in Nepal.

Methods and Materials

The present study used the quantitative research methodology to explore the single reality (Creswell, 2012). Within the quantitative research methodology, the present study is based on primary data/information acquired through a field survey (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). A field survey was conducted using the survey questionnaire and school records in BuddhShanti rural municipality of Nepal. The survey questionnaires were administered to the selected twenty six school teachers and observe the schools records. In this study, the sample was taken from the Dalit students of BuddhaShanti rural municaplity through the use of simple random sampling strategies. In this study, thirteen schools were selected out of 27 schools. The researcher used the lottery method to select the schools within the simple random strategy. In addition, data/information were gathered from varieties of published and unpublished sources. The information regarding different characteristics of population and livelihood options was acquired from the rural municipality profile, and official records. Likewise, statistics on dropout situation at basic level were acquired from both questionnaire and school records. After collecting the data, through the school records, the raw data were coded, edit and categories manually. Similarly, these data were tabulated and analyzed through the statistical tools like frequency distribution table and percentage.

Results and Discussion

This study aims at exploring the status of dropout at basic level education of community schools in Nepal. This paper has examined the dropout situation of Dalit students from the school records. For this, the four themes viz. dropout of Dalit students in basic level, gender wise dropout of Dalit student in basic level, trends of dropout of Dalit students at basic level and factors associated with students' dropout of Dalit student at basic level.

Dropout of Dalit Students in Basic School

The exact situation of dropout provides the insight about the education wastage in basic level of community schools. It clears the education status of Dalit community in school education. The number of dropout of Dalit students at basic level of schools have presented the following table.

Table 1. *Number of dropout of Dalit students*

Grade	Number of students enrolled			Number of students appeared in exam			Number of students dropout in schools		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
1-3	22	24	28	16	20	26	5	4	2
4-5	21	18	27	17	12	25	4	5	2
6-8	19	21	31	10	22	20	7	8	8
Total	62	63	86	43	54	71	16	17	12

Source: School record, 2019

The table 1 depicts that the number of dropout of Dalit student have been increased in grade six to eight and decreased in grade one to five since the 2016 to 2018. It also indicates that the dropout situation is remaining the problem in Dalit community that is the main huddle for ensuring equal right to education at basic level. It needs the plan intervention for removing the dropout in school for Dalit community.

Gender wise Dropout of Dalit Students in Basic School

The gender is as socio cultural construct and social phenomena. It divides the society in terms of role, characteristics and involvement for boys and girls. The education status of people in terms of gender can be seen different. The situation of dropout of Dalit students in terms of gender helps to understand the education status of male and female students. The dropout status in terms of gender have presented the following table.

Table 2. Gender wise dropout situation

Grade	Gender wise distribution of dropout percentage					
	2016		2017		2018	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1-3	20	80	25	75	0	100
4-5	50	50	40	60	0	100
6-8	16.66	83.33	37.5	62.5	25	75

Source: School record, 2019

The table 3 shows that there is huge gap of dropout of Dalit students between the boys and girls. It indicates that the girls' dropout continuously increased since 2016 to 2018 and boys vice versa. The ratio between boys and girls has also vast difference from grade one to eight. In 2018, the hundred percent girl has dropout from one to three and four to eight grade and 25 percent boys and 27 percent from grade six to eight. This picture clears that the girls are much more victim from deprivation of education opportunity.

Trends of Dropout of Dalit Students in Basic School

The trend analysis of dropout helps to predict the future situation of dropout. It also helps to estimate the future trend of dropout and also made the plan to reduce in systematic pattern. This study has analyzed the trend of dropout during the past three years of three basic community school in Buddha Santi rural municipality. The past three years' trends of dropout of Dalit students have presented the following tables.

The table 3 shows the dropout trend since the year of 2016-2018. The result indicates that the trend of dropout was decreased in 2018 in up to grade five and it was increased up to grade 6-8. It clears that it needs more intervention for minimizing the dropout situation of Dalit students at basic level. To cope with the dropout, there should be prepare the plan in regularity of students, scholarship program, financial supports and awareness program for the Dalit students and their community.

Table 3. Trends of dropout in basic school

Grade	Trend of dropout in percentage (year wise)		
	2016	2017	2018
1-3	22.72	16.66	7.14
4-5	19.04	27.77	7.40
6-8	36.84	38.09	25.80

Source: School record, 2019

Factors Associated with Student Dropout of Dalit students in Basic School

The dropout of students from school has been a serious problem in developing countries like Nepal. There are several efforts have done to overcome the problems dropout in Nepal. The government and non-government organizations have done several efforts to ensure equal opportunities in education for Dalit students' in Nepal. Hunt (2008) stated that dropout of children from schools is often a process rather than the result of one single event, and therefore has more than one proximate reason. Both demand (individual) and supply driven factors (school), are rooted in cultural and contextual realities, which make each situations different (Sabates et al., 2010). Due to these facts that there are several driving forces which play the major role in students' dropout form schools. There were various factors responsible for dropout the Dalit students at basic schools of Nepal. The factors associated with dropout of Dalit students and its situation are presented the following table.

Table 4. Factors associated with dropout of Dalit students in basic schools

S.N.	Major Causes	No. of students who dropout from schools	Percentage of Dalit students
1	Economic status and poverty	12	26.67
2	Engagement in child labor	8	17.77
3	Early marriage	7	15.55
4	Gender discrimination	3	6.67
5	Punishment in school	1	2.22
6	School environment and facilities	2	4.44
7	Broken home/Separation of parents	6	13.33
8	Fail in exam	4	8.89
9	Help in household chores	2	4.44
	Total	45	100

Sources: Field Study, 2019

The table 4 shows that the nine factors were more responsible to promote the dropout of Dalit students in the community schools. These factors were the main causes of dropout of Dalit students' viz. economic status and poverty, child labor, early marriage, gender discrimination, punishment, school facilities, separation of parents, fail in exam and household chores. Among these, the economic status and poverty have more responsible than others cause where as 26.67 percent dropout students. Similarly, the less responsible cause is the punishment in school where only 2.22 percent Dalit students. But each cause has responsible to promote dropout in the school in basic level.

Conclusion

The dropout is a major problem of Dalit students to ensure the equal access in education. The situation of dropout is not satisfactory in community schools where the Dalits students are facing the discrimination of equal opportunity in education. The trend of dropout situation is decreasing in the past years but remaining the large number of Dalit students out of schools. In order to reduce the problem of dropout of children from school, major focus was to increase the amount of scholarship which has been currently provided. Both children and teacher informants stated that the money which is given in the form of scholarship is negligible and not enough to cover every cost of schooling. Making tuition fee free and providing free books to some extent is not only enough to minimize the problem. To eradicate the dropout, the scholarship and financial incentives need to provide the Dalits students in school education.

References

- Acharya, S. (2007). *Social inclusion: gender and equity in education SWAPS in South Asia* (Nepal Case Study). UNICEF
- Asharaf, N. (1999). *Dictionary of Primary Education*. A.P.H. Publishing Corporation.
- Best, J. W. & Kahn, J. V. (2006). *Research in education*. PHI learning.
- Bhat, A. (2015) Design and method in research writing. *Question Pro*, 43.
- Centre Bureau of Statistics. (2011). *Caste, ethnicity population of Nepal*. Author
- Chugh, S. (2011). Dropout in Secondary Education: A study of Children living in Slums in Delhi. *National University of educational planning and administration*. NUEPA Occasional Paper 37.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Pearson Publication.
- Devkota, S. P. & Bagale, S. (2015). Primary education and dropout in Nepal. *Journal of Education and Practices*, 6 (4).
- Hunt, F. (2008). Dropping Out from school: A cross-country review of literature. *CREATE Pathways to Access Series*, (16). CREATE & University of Sussex.
- Lamb, S. Markussen, E., Sandberg, N. Polesel, J. (Eds.) (2011). *School dropout and completion: international comparative studies in theory and policy*. Springer. doi: 10.1007/978-90-481-9763-7
- Meneses, J., & Marlon, X. (2020). Dropout in online higher education: A scoping review from 2014 to 2018.
- Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization. (2013). *Dalits in Nepal, annual report-2011/2012*. Authors. Retrieved form www.nndsw.org.np
- Sabates, R. Akyeampong, K. Westbrook, J. & Hunt, F. (2010). *School dropout: patterns, causes, changes and policies*. University of Sussex.
- Sedwal, M. & Kamat, S. (2008). Education and Social Equity: With a Special Focus on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Elementary Education. *CREATE Pathways to Access*, (19). CREATE and NUEPA.
- Wagle, D. (2012). Dropout of children from schools in Nepal (Master's thesis, Norwegian University of Sciences and Technology, Norway). Retrieved on Nov 5, 2014, from <http://www.divaportal.org/smash/get/diva2:560762/FULLTEXT01.pdf>. Wiersma, W. & Jurs, S. G. (2009). *Research methods in education: an introduction*. Dorling Kindersley.
- Xavier, M. & Meneses, J (2020). A literature review on the definitions of dropout in online higher education. *Human and Artificial Intelligence for the Society of the Future European Distance and E-Learning Network (EDEN) Proceedings*. doi: 10.38069/edenconf-2020-ac0004 73