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GOVERNMENT OF KERALA

**A STUDY ON DROP-OUTS
IN
PRIMARY EDUCATION**

STATE PLANNING BOARD
TRIVANDRUM
MAY 1981

P R E F A C E

In a State like Kerala where the public expenditure on education accounts for as much as 38 percent of the State budget, it is quite appropriate to make a study on wastage in education. An attempt has been made in the study to highlight the percentage of drop-outs in Primary Education and to identify the socio-economic factors leading to drop-out. The study was conducted in the Social Services Division of the State Planning Board by Sarva Sree G. Viswanatha Pillai, J. Benjamin, and K. Radhakrishnan Nair.

Trivandrum,
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A study on drop-outs in Primary Education in Kerala:

I. Introduction:

Kerala State has attained a high level of development in educational facilities. The State spends a large share of its revenue for the maintenance and development of education. About 38 percent of the State's budget allocation is set apart for the maintenance and expansion of educational facilities while at the all India level the percentage is only 23. In the matter of proportion of public expenditure on education to State income, Kerala is on par with some of the most advanced countries of the world. Kerala spends 6% of the State income on education, as against the all India proportion of only 3 percent. Unlike other States, a major part of the public expenditure on education is shared by the private schools. Government pays the entire salary of the teaching and non-teaching staff in private aided schools, in addition to grants given for maintenance. In Kerala, the number of unaided schools is negligible (nearly 1 percent). The aided schools under private management account for nearly two-thirds of the total number of schools. The revenue receipt under school education is just nominal as education is free up to secondary level. What is levied from students is only a nominal special fee mainly for meeting the expenditure connected with games and other non-curricular activities. Education, therefore, figures prominently in the State budget.

The expenditure on education which was Rs. 18.55 crores in 1961-62, has risen to Rs. 163.82 crores in 1978-79, showing a nine-fold increase. No doubt, the expenditure on education is an investment in human resource development. Remittances from outside the State and the country are, to some extent, a return on investment in human capital. At the same time, unemployment among the educated is highest

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In Kerala. In view of the paucity of financial resources, wastages in public expenditure on education need careful appraisal. Though there are many dimensions of the problem of wastage, the present study focusses attention on wastage on account of children abandoning studies before the completion of the course (drop-out).

2. Objects of the study:

The objects of the study are:-

- 1. to estimate the rate of drop-out in primary education, and
- ii, to identify the socio-economic causes leading to drop-out

3. Method of study:

The study is based on a sample survey conducted by the State Planning Board. The sample consisted of 28 Lower Primary Schools and 28 Upper Primary Schools selected from 28 Educational sub-districts with due representation to highland, midland and coastal regions in the State. Standard class enrolment and the number of drop-outs in each class were collected from the selected schools. In the case of selected U.P. schools, data relating to Upper Primary section alone were collected. The details of enrolment and drop-outs collected from 56 schools for the year 1976 were utilized for estimating the percentage of drop-out. Two drop-outs from each class of the selected schools were chosen for detailed house-hold enquiry. The households of 479 selected drop-outs were contacted for filling the proforma designed for the purpose (Table 2 in Appendix). The field enquiry was conducted by the Investigators of the Bureau of Economics and Statistics (One in each Revenue District). One of the limitations of this study is that district wise percentages of drop-out could not be estimated owing to the small size of the sample selected for the survey.

4. Findings of the Survey:

1. Rate of Drop-out:

The enrolment of students in the selected 28 Lower Primary Schools within the purview of the analysis stood at 16480 (8675 boys and 7805 girls), out of which 1645 students discontinued their studies (878 boys and 767 girls). The percentage of drop-outs in the Lower primary section (std. I to IV) as a whole was 10 percent (10.1 percent in the case of boys and 9.8 percent in the case of girls).

The 28 Upper Primary Schools selected for the study had a total strength of 10652 (5569 boys and 5083 girls) of which 975 fell in the category of drop-outs. The drop-out percentage in the Upper Primary section works out to 9.2 (9.6 percent for boys and 8.8 percent for girls).

The percentage of drop-out is highest in Standard I (14.6 percent) and Standard VII (10.7 percent) and the lowest in Standard V (7.5 percent). Percentage of drop-outs in the different Standards is shown in the sub-joined table.

Table-1
Percentage of Drop-outs 1975-76

Standard	Percentage of Drop-outs		
	Boys	Girls	Total
I	14.7	14.3	14.6
II	9.4	8.9	9.2
III	9.2	7.2	7.9
IV	8.2	8.8	8.5
	Lower Primary		
	10.1	9.8	10.0
V	6.7	6.2	7.5
VI	9.8	10.1	10.0
VII	10.3	11.0	10.7
	Upper Primary		
	9.5	8.8	9.2

It was also observed that 35 percent of the drop-outs discontinued their studies during the 1st term of the academic year, 21 percent during the second term and 43 percent during the third term. The conclusion emerging out of this is that it was during the close of the academic year that many students discontinued their studies.

ii. Age structure of the Drop-outs:

The study focussed attention on 479 drop-out students for house-hold enquiry. The age-groupwise analysis has revealed that 47 percent of the drop-outs belonged to the category of 5-10 years, 39 percent to the category of 10-14 years and 14 percent to the category of above 14 years.

iii. Drop-out by Communities:

An interesting point which has great significance from the social point of view thrown up by the analysis is that the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes constituted the majority among the drop-outs. Of the total 479 drop-outs selected for house-hold enumeration, 69 percent belonged to this category and only 31 percent to the category of forward communities.

iv. Reasons for Drop-outs

Among the many reasons stated to explain this phenomenon of drop-outs, the most frequent one was ill-health. As much as 32.8 percent of the drop-outs was attributed to ill-health. Another 16.1 percent of the drop-outs discontinued their studies in order to attend to household work, while poverty caused 15.4 percent to abandon schooling. Employment opportunities were reported to have lured away 1.2 percent of the drop-outs. Table 2 presents the classification of drop-outs according to various reasons:

Table 2

Classification of drop-outs according to various reasons

Reason	Number of drop-outs	Percentage
1. Ill-health	157	32.8
2. House-hold work	77	16.1
3. Employment	20	4.2
4. Distance to school	12	2.5
5. Inaccessibility	2	0.4
6. Poverty	74	15.4
7. Ill-treatment of teachers	2	0.4
8. Other reasons (unclassified)	135	28.2
Total	479	100.00

v. Drop-outs and Size of the Family:

The size of the family has a direct bearing on the problem of drop-outs. The drop-out rate seems to be low in the case of the members from small-sized families whereas it goes up as the size of the family becomes large. It was revealed that 70 percent of the drop-outs were hailing from families consisting of 6 members and above.

vi. Educational status of the Parents of Drop-outs:

Another point emerging out of the study which assumes great importance while formulating educational policies is the relation between the rate of drop-outs and the educational status of their parents. Only very small percentage of drop-outs were having educated (S.S.L.C and above) parents. The percentage was still less in the case of pupils whose parents possessed graduation or higher qualification. Out of the 479 drop-outs enumerated, 48 percent

had illiterate parents and 50 percent had literate parents. These findings show that while mere literacy of parents has little impact on drop-outs, the parents being educated (3.3.20 or above) exerts decisive influence in curbing drop-out.

vii. Occupation of parents of drop-outs:

The occupation of the parents of drop-outs also has its reflection on this phenomenon. It is significant that majority of the parents of the drop-outs are casual labourers. (243). Other categories like cultivators and permanent labourers among the parents of drop-outs are very much lower in percentage terms than their respective percentages in the total working population. The insecurity of employment and consequent low earnings associated with casual labour is, thus, found to be an important contributing factor to the tendency to drop-out of education on the part of their children.

viii. Occupation of the Drop outs:

The opportunities for employment exert visible influence on the tendency to drop-out. Out of the 479 drop-outs brought under detailed investigation, 109 (22.7 percent) were engaged in various occupations. More than 50 percent of them were attending to household work. Of the 89 persons so engaged 38 were girls and 51 boys. The category of Casual labourers absorbed 10 drop-outs while 14 were working as full time employees. In these two categories the number of boys stood high compared to that of girls.

5. Summary of Findings:

- i. The rate of drop-out in the Lower Primary stage is 10 percent and in the Upper Primary stage 0.8 percent.
- ii. The percentage of drop-out is higher among boys than among girls.

- III. The drop-out percentage is the highest in standard I and the lowest in standard V.
- IV. The percentage of drop-out is higher among the children in the age group 5-10 than in the age-group 10 and above.
- V. The students belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other Backward communities constitute the majority of the drop-out, (69 percent).
- VI. Main reasons for drop-out are ill-health, household work and poverty in that order.
- VII. Large size of the family is found to exert a notable influence on drop-out, since the rate of drop-out is very high (75 percent) in the case of children belonging to families with six or more members.
- VIII. Lack of education of the parents is a factor which increases the tendency to drop-out.
- IX. The majority of the drop-outs are children of casual labourers.
- X. Nearly a quarter of the drop-outs enumerated are engaged in some occupations such as house-hold work and casual labour.

TABLE No. I

Estimates of drop-outs in Lower Primary Stage

Standard	Total strength in selected schools			No. of drop-outs in selected schools			Percentage of drop-outs		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I	2142	1950	4092	315	371	594	14.7	14.3	14.5
II	2150	1975	4025	203	167	370	9.4	8.9	9.2
III	2095	1920	4015	172	139	311	8.2	7.2	7.8
IV	2288	2060	4348	188	122	370	8.2	8.8	8.5
Total I to IV	8675	7805	16480	878	767	1645	10.1	9.8	10.0

TABLE -20, 2

Estimates of drop-outs in Upper Primary Stage

Standard	Total strength in selected schools			No. of drop-out in selected schools			Percentage of drop-outs		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
V	2261	2179	4440	205	136	341	3.7	5.2	7.5
VI	1732	1627	3359	170	165	335	9.9	10.1	10.0
VII	1476	1277	2752	152	147	322 351	10.3	11.5	10.7
Total V to VII	5469	5083	10552	527	448	575	9.5	8.8	9.2

TABLE No. 3

NUMBER OF DROPOUTS UNDER DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS:

Sl. No.	Districts	Number of Dropouts			Total
		Below 10 years	Between 10 & 14 years	Above 14 years	
1	2	3	4	5	6
I.	ADAMNAD	18	20	2	40
II.	CHITLED	11	18	9	38
III.	KOTTAYAM	11	14	8	33
IV.	ALAPPUZHA	22	10	1	33
V.	IDUKKI	20	9	6	35
VI.	ERNAKULAM	27	34	3	64
VII.	TRICHUR	21	9	6	36
VIII.	PALNADU	28	11	4	43
IX.	MAHABLI	21	26	4	51
X.	KOZHIKOD	22	23	12	57
XI.	CANNANUR	25	15	8	48
	TOTAL	227	189	63	479

Table No. 4
Number of Drop-outs under different communities

Sl. No.	District	S.C./S.T.			No. of Dropouts J.B.C.			Others			Total		
		Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	Spivadiyur	7	4	11	8	5	13	10	6	16	25	15	40
2	Thalpet	..	2	2	9	9	17	19	9	19	13	19	32
3	Kottavur	1	-	1	7	4	11	13	8	21	21	12	33
4	Alleppey	2	6	10	8	7	16	7	4	7	16	17	33
5	Idukki	6	7	13	4	5	9	9	8	13	18	17	35
6	Thiruvananthapuram	3	5	8	20	15	35	14	9	21	39	25	64
7	Trichur	-	1	1	7	19	26	3	8	9	11	26	36
8	Palakkad	0	4	4	18	14	29	1	2	3	21	22	43
9	Malappuram	2	1	3	28	17	45	-	4	4	29	23	51
10	Kozhikode	8	4	12	11	17	28	14	13	27	30	27	57
11	Cannore	0	1	1	18	9	27	6	2	8	37	12	49
Total		37	35	72	146	113	259	83	66	148	266	213	479

Drop-outs classified according to various reasons

Sl. No.	District	Due to ill health	Household work	Employment	Lack of schooling facilities	Poverty	Other reasons	Total
1		3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Privandaram	16	3	3	1	11	6	40
2	Quilbo	15	2	-	-	6	16	38
3	Pattayon	10	5	-	2	1	15	33
4	Alleppey	18	9	-	-	3	3	33
5	Talassery	8	19	1	-	3	10	36
6	Changanassery	78	8	1	3	13	16	64
7	Trichur	18	1	-	2	8	7	36
8	Palnattur	13	3	11	2	-	8	43
9	Chalantassery	10	19	1	3	16	12	51
10	Kochi	16	20	1	1	11	18	57
11	Cannanore	3	3	2	2	2	25	40
Total:		157	77	20	14	74	137	479

TABLE VIII
 Drop-outs classified according to the size of the family

Sl. No.	District	Family size					Family size 7	Total
		and below 4	5	6	6	7		
1.	Trivandrum	3	6	10	5	12	40	
2.	Quilon	2	4	5	4	10	30	
3.	Kottayam	4	7	5	5	6	33	
4.	Alleppey	5	3	3	4	6	30	
5.	Idukki	10	10	12	5	7	46	
6.	Kannur	11	10	12	9	10	60	
7.	Trichur	4	6	8	4	11	34	
8.	Palghat	3	10	7	6	11	40	
9.	Kozhikode	11	20	9	6	10	60	
10.	Malappuram	6	3	3	11	20	50	
11.	Cochin	6	8	6	6	22	50	
Total		84	82	92	79	104	479	

Table showing the educational status of parents of draft-outs

Districts	Total no. of draft-outs	Educational status of Father				Educational status of mother			
		Illiterate	Below S.S.L.C.	S.S.L.C.	Graduation and above	Illiterate	Below S.S.L.C.	S.S.L.C.	Graduation and above
		6	7	8	9	10	11		
Trivandram	40	1	-	26	11	2	-		
Quilon	37	2	-	3	31	2	-		
Kottayam	20	1	-	11	20	-	1		
Alleppey	30	2	-	12	21	-	-		
Idukki	28	7	12	2	11	23	-		
Eranthula	64	15	35	-	2	27	33	2	1
Trichur	36	20	14	-	-	21	15	-	-
Palghat	43	12	26	2	-	35	7	-	-
Elappara	51	1	15	1	-	35	7	-	-
Kozhikode	57	14	30	-	1	23	28	-	-
Cannur	49	5	28	1	-	15	31	2	-
Total	479	118	275	10	2	220	227	4	2

TABLE NO. 8

Table showing the occupation of parents of drop-outs.

Sl. No.	District	Father's/Other					Unemployed
		Casual labourers	Permanent labourers	Technical labourers	Other employees		
1.	Trivandrum	1	30	-	1	7	1
2.	Kollam	30	12	2	2	11	-
3.	Kottayam	3	36	-	1	3	-
4.	Alappuzha	4	25	2	1	1	-
5.	Idukki	2	14	4	1	12	2
6.	Ermakulam	1	39	3	3	11	1
7.	Krishnanthapuram	-	19	1	-	16	-
8.	Kozhikode	7	23	2	1	10	-
9.	Kannur	6	22	6	5	4	-
10.	Kasaragod	2	22	15	1	8	1
11.	Malappuram	15	19	4	6	10	3
		53	243	40	32	94	11

Table No. 9
 Households classified according to their present occupation

District	Number of Households			Employed								Total		
				Household work		Casual labour		Full time servant		Other occupations				
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Total		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Telangana	75	19	94	-	2	-	-	3	-	4	3	6	5	11
2. Andhra	13	19	32	3	2	2	1	-	-	2	-	5	3	8
3. Madhya Pradesh	21	12	33	4	5	1	1	-	-	2	-	4	6	10
4. Bihar	16	27	43	4	2	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	2	2
5. West Bengal	15	17	32	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2	1	3
6. Orissa	10	16	26	1	1	-	-	1	-	1	1	2	2	4
7. Uttar Pradesh	21	25	46	-	6	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	9	11
8. Punjab	21	12	33	-	3	-	1	7	2	2	-	4	3	7
9. Jammu and Kashmir	20	32	52	2	2	2	-	1	-	-	-	6	4	10
10. Himachal Pradesh	10	21	31	1	5	-	-	1	-	1	-	3	6	9
11. Jharkhand	17	12	29	7	2	-	-	-	-	5	-	12	2	14
Total	280	315	595	17	32	7	3	12	3	22	-	62	17	79

Study on Drop-outs in Primary Education

Schedule - 2

Name and address of the Dropout.

1 Household Particulars

2 Household No.

3 Whether the parents alive? Both alive/Father alive/
Mother alive/Both deceased

4 Size of the family

5 Educational Status of family members

Father
Mother
Brothers
Sisters

6 Occupation of family members

Father
Mother
Brothers
Sisters

7 Details of the Dropout

Age Sex Religion (State T/B/D/S/Other)

8 School/Schools attended with period in each

Name of School	Class	Period				
		I	II	III	IV	V

Continued

Date on which discontinued

f. Reason for discontinuance

iii Health/household work/
Paid work/distance to
school/inaccessibility of
the school/Poverty/iii
treatment by teachers/
suspension or dismissal
others, specify.

Present occupation of the
student

i. No. of working days in a week

ii. Wages

Daily Rs / monthly Rs

h. Performance in the class

i. Rank in the class-good/average/bad

ii. Conduct

good/bad

iii. Extra curricular activities



