

# Teachers' Perception On The Factors Influencing College Dropouts Among The Rural Learners In Puducherry Region

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*Abstract: Kothari commission (1964-66) says "the destiny of India is being shaped in her class room", for teachers play a crucial role to mould the students. Due to the low enrolment and high dropout, the quality and the future development become a serious problem confronting the country's education system. However, the teacher believes they can make difference, change is possible and it is essential to develop an accurate understanding of the factors that influences the dropout of rural students at college level. Christenson & Thurlow (2004) and Dweck (1986) reveal that student dropout is an outcome derived from multiple factors that encompass student, institutional and socioeconomic aspects. Dweck (1986) also found that students perceive dropout as largely an outcome of student-related characteristics, institutional, family and socioeconomic status. This attempts to focus the teachers' perception on the personal, family, educational, institutional, financial, social and environmental factors that influence the college dropouts from rural areas. By adopting survey design, this study was conducted with the sample of 278 college teachers in Puducherry region. 'College Dropouts Identification Scale' (CDIS) developed by the investigator and validated by the experts was used for data collection. Descriptive and Differential statistics were used for the analysis of the data. Findings reveal that the college teachers are prepared to perceive the factors influencing college dropouts from rural areas in Puducherry region.*

**Keywords:** Teachers' Perception, College Dropouts, Rural learners

## I. INTRODUCTION

In India most of the people are living in rural areas, the national developments highly depend on with the developments of the rural community. Here, quantum of people are agrarian, illiterate and low socio and economic status. Most of the children are first generation learners at higher education level. However, during the course of study the rural students encounter many problems related to their personal, family, educational, financial, social and environmental issues. Due to these problems the rural learners are forced to dropout from their studies. The aim of the Indian higher education is to increase the gross enrolment ratio and to reduce the dropout level, especially they focus to develop the rural learners. A student drops out of the system of higher education due to external and internal circumstances, for instance with regard to financial difficulties or family related

personal problems or, perhaps, due to a favourable business cycle. Education commission (1966) stated that "no investment is likely to yield greater returns than investment in human resources, of which, the most important is education".

Education was regarded as a source of illumination and power, which transforms and ennobles our nature by the progressive and harmonious development of our physical, mental and intellectual faculties (Altekar, 1965). It not only helps in development of individuals but also plays an important role in socio-economic development of nation. However the opportunity to attend college is an important objective for students and an added value for society. While beginning college is usually a positive development in students' lives, the transition to college does not come without challenges and many students fail to complete their program of study (Boyras et al., 2013). Keen & Zimmerman (2007) elaborated that family factors contribute to the likelihood of

either dropping out of college or end up with school education. Ginsberg & Miller-Cribbs (2000) indicated that lack of parental involvement in an abusive home was found to be highly correlated to the likelihood of dropping out from college.

Mittal and Nand (1988) undertook a study of the problems of dropout in rural Hisar and concluded that on average 11.5% of the enrolled students discontinued their studies in between and more percentage of females than males are dropouts. Hence, dropout is a major issue and should be seen as a failure of the higher education system to create an outcome (graduates) after having invested a significant amount of resources, normally publicly funded (OECD, 2012). Ishitani (2003) and Ishitani and DesJardins (2002-03), found that even controlling for income, those with less educated parents have higher rates of attrition than those with college educated parents. There is also a possibility that first generation college students receive a lower return for their degree (Thomas and Zhang 2005). Kalawathi (1994) studied the educational status of the rural girls in Hariyana, the major causes for the drop out were marriage and excess load of household work and the parents of the girl students have the negative attitude towards their education.

According to the Tinto (1975) model, students' background characteristics determine how a student will relate to the academic system of an institution. The nature and quality of these interactions lead to varying degrees of integration into the college or university system, which ultimately influence the students' persistence, or leads to dropout. Muzenda (2014) found differential effects of student-related characteristics, institutional factors and socioeconomic status on dropouts of students from colleges.

A large number of factors are associated with dropouts of the rural learners, for the figure -1 details the scenario.

present study. The identified components were used for tool construction. The items in the tool 'College Dropouts Identification Scale' reflect the sub components such as Personal factor, Family factor, Institutional Factor, Educational factor, Financial factor and Social and Environment factor. Since, college teachers play crucial role in education, they are expected to take cognizance the factors for dropouts of the students.

## II. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The causes of dropouts tented to focus on the factors outside (Family, Parents & Home environment) the teacher's control. But a strong student-teacher relationship contributes in reducing dropouts (Lund et.al., 2013) in students. At the same time, academic, social, emotional and societal factors are also responsible to influence dropouts of the learners (Mujab & Rais, 2010). Also, 80 % teachers agree that individual factors which includes individual attention, student encouragement, lack of self esteem, social skills and confidence, lack of concentration and self management skills( Gul, et al., 2013) are some of the other factors leading to drop outs. Therefore, teachers can help reduce the dropout rate when they are aware of the factors responsible and the remedial measures to avoid such dropouts.

This problem possesses severe threats to the future of the Indian higher education system and the development of the nation on the whole. However teachers are directly responsible for operating the educational system, who play a pivotal role in the system of education and produced the future architects of the nation. Thus, the whole process of education is shaped and moulded by the teacher.

Teachers' are expected to use the best practices and strategies to meet the challenging task of their carrier and they are the care taker, builders of the intellectuals in their students especially, the rural learners of the higher education institutions. They should realize and understand the problems of the rural learners in the class room situation. It is the need of the hour. The problems that lead to dropouts in the rural students, should be recognized by teachers, in advance. This prevents or helps reduce dropouts in higher learning institutions. Hence the present study has made an attempt to ascertain the teachers' perception on the factors influencing the college dropouts among the rural learners.

## III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ✓ To ascertain the perception of the college teachers in relation to the dropouts of the rural learners in Puducherry region.
- ✓ To identify the factors influencing the dropout of the rural learners in relation to the college teachers perception.
- ✓ To find out the predominant factors that influence dropouts in rural students at college level with reference to the perception of the college teachers

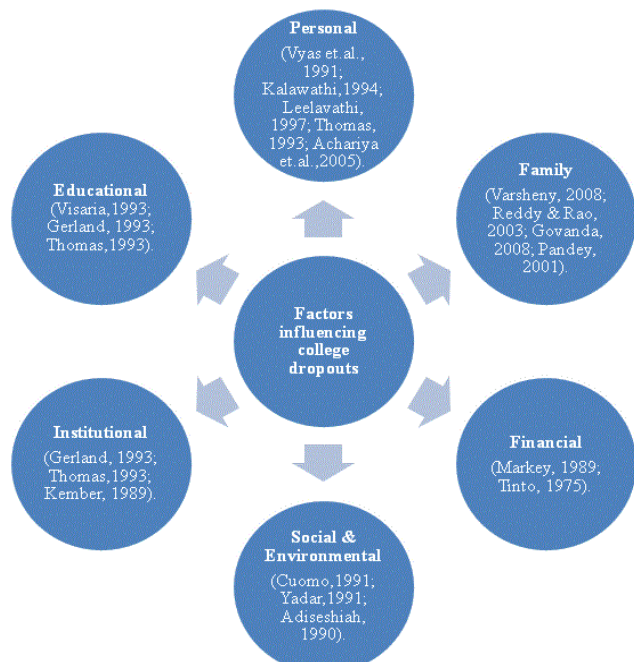


Figure 1: Factors influencing on college dropouts

The diagrammatic display exhibits the various factors influencing the college dropouts that were identified through literature and studies reviewed by the investigators of the

#### IV. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

To accomplish the objectives the following hypotheses were formulated for testing:

- ✓ There is no statistically significant difference between the male and female college teachers in relation to the perception on the dropout of the rural learners
- ✓ There is no statistically significant difference between the arts and science college teachers perception with respect to the dropout of the rural learners.
- ✓ There is no statistically significant difference between the urban and rural college teachers in their perception of the dropout of rural learners.
- ✓ There is no statistically significant difference between the government and private college teachers perception in relation to the dropout of rural learners.
- ✓ There is no statistically significant difference in the perception of teachers in relation to factors influencing the dropout of the rural learners in Puducherry region.

#### V. METHODOLOGY

The investigator adopted descriptive method with a survey technique to collect the data from the sample. SPSS Package was used to analyses the data. Survey technique is generally used for the type of research that attempts to find out the normal or typical condition or practice at the present time. It is most commonly used approach to solve educational problems. The type of information the survey technique procedure is in wide demand and is capable of rendering important service because it determines the present trends and solve current problems (Fink, 1995). A stratified random sampling technique was adopted. Data collected from 278 college teachers in Puducherry region formed the sample. The reason why stratified random sampling is preferred over simple random sampling is that it assures that the researcher will be able to represent not only the overall population, but also key subgroups of the population.

#### TOOL

The 'College Dropouts Identification Scale' (CDIS) was developed by the investigators and validated by the experts. The tool was administered to the sample. The statements were based on the following six factors;

- ✓ Personal
- ✓ Family
- ✓ Educational
- ✓ Institutional
- ✓ Financial
- ✓ Social and environmental.

Likert type scale was developed with level of agreement options included. They are Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. For establishing face validity and content validity, the tool was subjected to the advice of a panel of experts. Based on their expertise, the tool was fine – tuned with necessary modification. Cronbach's Alpha test was adopted to measure the reliability of the tool because Cronbach's Alpha test determines, how closely related s set of

items are as a group or the internal consistency or average correlation of items in a survey instrument to establish its reliability (Reynaldo and Santos, 1999 and Bruin, 2006). It is considered to be a measure of scale reliability. The reliability coefficient for the tool is 0.949.

#### SCORING PROCEDURE

A score of 5 was given for Strongly agree, 4 for Agree, 3 for Neutral, 2 Disagree, and 1 for Strongly disagree. Since there were no negative items, all the items were scored in the same manner as stated above.

#### VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis and interpretation of the results are the most important steps after the data collection. The collected data were analyzed by use of appropriate statistical techniques for the present study.

#### DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive analysis summarize the data meaningfully. It is use to measure the central tendency and the variability of the research data.

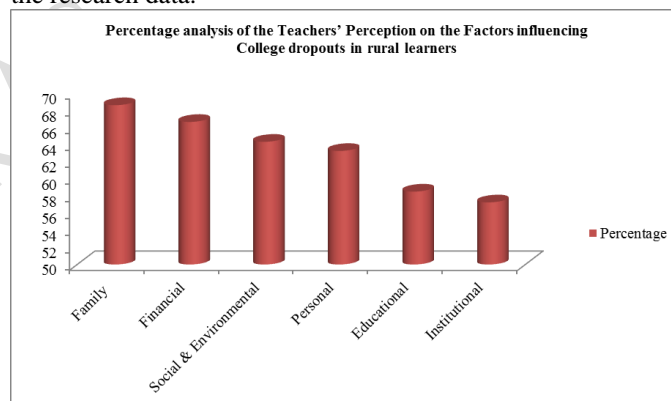


Figure 2

Figure 2, clearly indicates that the perceptions of the college teachers on factors influencing the college dropout in rural learners. Among the factors the perception of the college teachers' in family related factor (68.59) play a predominant role in the dropout of the rural students, followed by financial factor(66.64),social and environmental factor (64.32), personal factor (63.25) and the institutional factor 57.25 respectively.

The above obtained result supports the previous findings of study conducted by Varsheny (2008), Reddy and Rao (2003), Garg and Bharti( 2005), Yadav and Pandey (2001) , Wells, Keen & Zimmerman (2007) the study confirm the key role of family factors in determining the continuation of studies by the rural dropouts of rural learners in higher education.

Gender							
Sub Variab le	N	Mean	SD	df	t- value	p- value	Signifi cant at 0.05 level

Male	106	2.4612	46.48	276	0.994	0.321	Not Significant
Female	172	2.5101	35.13				
Faculty							
Arts	160	2.3564	37.66	235	2.168	0.031	Significant
Science	118	2.4306	41.99				
Locality of Institution							
Urban	210	2.4692	38.83	105	1.570	0.119	Not Significant
Rural	068	2.5601	42.33				
Types of Institution							
Govt.	170	2.4643	42.94	276	1.430	0.154	Not Significant
Private	108	2.5343	34.14				

Table 1: Differential analysis of the Teachers Perception on the Factors influencing college dropouts in rural learners

It can be seen from the table -1 that there is no significant difference between the male and female college teachers in their perception on the dropouts of the rural learners ( $p = 0.321$ ,  $t = .994$ ,  $df = 276$ ). The  $p$  value 0.321 for the variable gender is not found significant at 0.05 level hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, no difference exist between the male and female college teachers in relation to their perception of the dropout of rural learners in Puducherry region.

From the above table -1 it is inferred that there is a significant difference in the perception of dropout of the arts and science college teachers in Puducherry region, ( $p=0.031$ ,  $t=2.168$ ,  $df=235$ ) the ' $p$ ' value 0.031 is less than at 0.05 level. Hence, the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there exist a significant difference in the arts and science college teachers in relation to the perception of the factor influencing dropout of rural learners in Puducherry region.

Though, science faculty mean score is slightly higher than that of Arts faculty, the deviation is more for science faculty, which might have contributed to the significant ' $p$ ' value. Hence science teachers out perceive the teachers from faculty of arts of the dropouts among rural learners.

The above table -1 indicates that there is no significant difference in the locality of the institution ( $p=0.119$ ,  $t=1.570$ ,  $df= 105$ ) the ' $p$ ' value 0.119 is greater at 0.05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, locale did not have its influence in the perception of teachers on the college dropouts

It is inferred from the table -1 that there is no significant difference in the types of the institution ( $p=0.154$ ,  $t=1.430$ ,  $df= 276$ ) the ' $p$ ' value 0.119 is greater than the 0.05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence both Government and private college teachers perceive the problems of dropouts among rural college students.

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Teachers can be trained on the identified factors related to dropouts and practice in their classrooms to reduce the rate of dropouts, for a teacher plays a key role in education. Apart from teaching, teachers involvement with the students in understanding the students family background, and a kind of personal involvement of the teachers with students helps to

identify the problems of students and reduce the dropouts rate by proper guidance and counseling. At this instance, individual case studies by teachers taken as action research, facilitates the research of dropouts and gives better understanding.

Teacher- student and teacher-parents interaction programme may be organized frequently, to overcome this issue of dropouts. Government may conduct dropout intervention programmes for college teachers periodically to prepare and introduce the new strategies that help the teachers to prevent the dropout rate of the students at higher education level. The early identification of college dropouts and those who are at risk of dropouts can be easily identified by teachers, hence periodical conduction of special awareness programmes, can lessen the dropout rates. Thus, this study stresses the need for the sensitization of college teachers on dropouts of rural learners, through the sensitization programme at tertiary educational level to prevent and reduce the dropouts at higher education level.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

Keen & Zimmerman (2007) elaborated that family factors contribute to the likelihood of either dropping out of college or end up with school education. Present study also supports their findings. In this way the present study reveal that the family related factor(68.59%) highly contribute to the dropouts of the rural learners followed by financial factor(66.64),social and environmental factor (64.32), personal factor (63.25), Educational factor (58.51) and the institutional factor (57.25) respectively. It is heartening to note that the college teachers in Puducherry region perceive positively to identify and realize the factors which are responsible for the dropouts of rural learners. They have the prior knowledge about the dropouts. Though the presence of awareness among teachers on the causes of dropouts is convincing, vibrant steps should be taken by the administrators to cull out the inhibitions in continuing their education in the rural learners. Consequently, increase in the Gross Enrollment Ratio in higher education institutions can be witnessed. The efforts taken in the present study would throw a light to comprehend the dropouts at college level.

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