
A STUDY ON GENDER AND SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC INEQUALITIES AMONG OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN IN NELLORE DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

Jonnalagadda Sudheer , Research Scholar (FT), Department of Social Work, Vikrama
Simhapuri University, Nellore-524324,& ICSSR Fellow, New Delhi.

Dr.K.Suneetha Associate Professor, Department of Social Work, Vikrama Simhapuri
University, Nellore-524324.

ABSTRACT

In recent decades, our educational system has made much noise about gender and socio-demographic inequalities. The cause of this inequality among out-of-school children is identified in this study. The paper focuses on the elements that have been found to make gender and socio-demographic inequality in education more prevalent. According to recent research and reports based on the literature, there are five elements that lead to gender and socio-demographic inequality in education. These include financial situation, accessibility, child labour, ignorance and gender discrimination. The study revealed that without basic education, none of these goals would be reached because our young students are our future heroes and innovators. The findings imply that the public education system should be improved, as should regionally specific solutions for children from different socio-economic backgrounds.

Keywords: Gender inequality, Socio-demographic disparity, OOSC, Child labour, Gender discrimination.

1. INTRODUCTION

The goal of education is to inspire and direct man as a conscious, reasoning, and an individual perceiving things in such a way that he becomes a flawless and pure embodiment of that inner divine rule by his own free will; education must demonstrate to him the significance and means of achieving that goal.¹ The foundational prerequisite for economic progress, social survival, and human development is education. Every generation passes on social inheritance to the following generation, which is a general characteristic of society.

¹ Froebel, F (1887) "The Education of Man". (Translated by Hailmann, W.N.) New York, London, D. Appleton Century.

One can accomplish overall development of the body, mind, and spirit through education. Education is essential for both personal growth and national advancement. The right to an education is a fundamental one. It is crucial to the nation's ability to maintain economic growth, improve the standard of living for its people, and compete in international markets.²

The problem of students dropping out of school is ubiquitous across the Indian education system. There are a variety of reasons why children are unable to continue their education when they begin attending school, and this is a problem that affects a large number of youngsters. Even before students join in school, they are already exposed to a number of circumstances that put them at increased risk. These factors include: poverty, poor educational level of parents, the weak family structure, pattern of schooling of sibling, and absence of preschool experiences. The environment that is created by one's family history and the challenges faced at home have a detrimental effect on the value of education.³ In addition, children may leave school for various reasons, including an unwelcoming environment, poor comprehension, absenteeism, the attitude and behaviour of the teachers, failure or repeat in the same grade, and other such reasons.

Because of the profound impact that it has both on people and on society as a whole, public education has long been referred to as the Great Equalizer.⁴ By functioning as a vehicle for redistribution, it can assist ensure that economic growth is shared more broadly, which in turn can lead to more equitable national economies.⁵ It can also contribute to the reduction of extreme income inequality and chronic poverty. Education of a high standard can be freeing for individuals, and it can also function as a leveller and equalizer within society, helping to close the gap between the wealthy and the less fortunate, as well as between women and men. On the other hand, the inverse can also be true: an education system that is very unequal can drive a deeper wedge between us. This is due to the fact that an education system that is already very uneven will contribute to the creation of even more unequal societies by further entrenching disparities that were already there and reducing opportunities for upward social mobility.

²Okumu, Ibrahim M., Nakajjo, Alex, &Isoke, Doreen (2008) "Socio-economic Determinants of Primary School Dropout: The Logistic Model Analysis, Economic Policy Research Center, Makerere University. Online at <http://mpira.ub.uni-muenchen.de/7851/> MPRA Paper No. 7851, posted 20. March 2008

³Chugh, S (2011) "Dropout in Secondary Education: A Study of Children Living in Slums of Delhi". NUEPA Occasional paper 37, pp 1-2

⁴Grove R and P. Montgomery. (2003). Educational Equity in America: Is Education the Great Equalizer? *Professional Educator*, 25(2) p23-29, 2003. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ842412>

⁵De Gregorio, J., and J-W Lee. (2003). Education and Income Inequality: New Evidence from Cross Country Data. *The Review of Income and Wealth*, Vol. 48, No. 3, pp. 395–416. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-4991.00060>

In fact, social power structures and socially constructed norms that specify the roles that boys/men and girls/women should play—such as the gender oriented labour in the home, where women/girls are assumed to bear responsibility for cooking, cleaning and raising children while boys/men are responsible for these tasks—often relate to why females (out of school) are more likely than males (or vice versa in some cases) to be out of school. These "gendered" positions have an impact on men and women's rights, obligations, opportunities, and talents, as well as how they are perceived and treated in schools. However, the Nellore district demonstrates that gender discrepancies in educational outcomes can be changed in a reasonably short amount of time.

2. BACK GROUND OF THE STUDY

A widespread problem in both underdeveloped and developing nations is that young female pupils getting out of school have become a typical occurrence in both regions. In the same way that literacy rates are higher in rural areas than in urban areas, dropout rates are also higher in rural locations. The family's economic and social situation is the single most important factor that determines whether or not a student drops out of school. Expulsion of girls from school can also be influenced by the ethnicity or social standing of their families. When women and girls receive less attention in a society, there is a corresponding decrease in the number of girls who attend school, and more girls than boys end up dropping out. The fundamental problem with such an occurrence is the question of how it should be viewed from a gendered perspective. The vast majority of households have an anti-woman bias. They are more interested in having sons than daughters. Therefore, parents and guardians do not encourage or support the education of their daughters. When it came to children who came from disadvantaged families, it was the girls rather than the males who were pulled out of school first. When parents are unable to pay the tuition for both their sons and daughters, it is evident that the daughter will be the one to miss out. In many regions of the developing world, cultural standards are also a barrier to a girl's ability to receive an education. It may be considered inappropriate for a girl to voice her thoughts, make decisions for herself, or participate in activities with boys of the same age if social traditions, deeply ingrained faiths, and cultural beliefs hold that this behaviour is improper. In addition, many families believe that a girl's education is a waste of money due of the lower earning potential she has and the similar expectation that she will be a housewife. This can apply to both the financial and the psychological aspects of school.

Girls face a pro-male bias within the household when it comes to the allocation of educational expenditures through two channels: a) enrolling sons and not daughters in the secondary school age group, and b) sending sons to private schools and daughters to the fee-free government schools. Both of these practices are discriminatory against girls. Discrimination based on gender manifests itself in a variety of ways, including barriers to learning resources and opportunities, barriers to free time that can be devoted to educational pursuits, and cultural attitudes. These barriers ultimately lead to gender inequality in the outcomes of educational pursuits. Because of all of these factors, there are more girls who are out of school than there are boys. There is a further connection between gender discrimination and features of households, such as caste, the educational background of parents, the wealth of the household, and opinions. In addition, it was discovered that the gender bias in favour of males was larger in the more economically underdeveloped districts of India when it came to expenditures on educational opportunities. In light of this historical context, the goals of the current research are to investigate gender and socio-demographic disparities among children who are not enrolled in school in the Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh.

3. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES AS A DETERMINANT OF GIRLS DROPPING OUT-OF-SCHOOL

Females are more likely than boys to be out of school across the globe (although this is not the case in all countries). Furthermore, the poorest girls and women from the most disadvantaged rural areas tend to have the lowest educational achievement levels of all social categories. For instance, the percentage of out-of-school primary school-aged girls who will likely never enrol in school is 48%, whereas the percentage of out-of-school boys is just 37% around the globe.⁶ The lack of education will significantly limit the options that are open to both groups, but the effects are likely to have a greater impact on females given the several levels of inequality that cause them to have a lower educational attainment rate than boys. It is standard practice in developing nations to utilize urban/rural residence as an indicator of socio-economic level. This is due to the fact that people who have paid job and a stable income are more likely to live in urban areas. The kind of school that students attend can also be an indication of their family's socioeconomic standing. Students whose families have a socioeconomic standing that is substantially higher are in a position to pay for their education

⁶ UNESCO Institute for Statistics and UNICEF (2015) Fixing the Broken Promise of Education for All – Findings from the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children (Montreal: UIS)

and attend private schools, whereas students who attend public schools, particularly at the elementary school level, are associated with an inability to pay for their education. One of the primary reasons that the vast majority of young women do not complete their education or never start is because they do not have sufficient financial resources to cover the costs of attending school, such as tuition and other associated charges.

4. EDUCATION OF GIRL CHILDREN – AN OVERVIEW

Education has the value of being an end in itself, or its intrinsic worth, and the value of being an instrumental tool in reaching other goals in life, or its instrumental value. In addition to this, there are broader societal advantages to educating girls. The benefits of educating girls extend far beyond the individual girl; rather, the entire community as well as the nation as a whole reap the rewards. The education of girls contributes to economic growth in a number of ways, including an increase in production, a decrease in the gender wage gap, and an expansion of the tax base.⁷ It also results in a number of positive social outcomes, such as a decline in population growth as a consequence of people having fewer children and making better use of reproductive health practices. Other positive outcomes include a lower incidence of child marriage as well as infant and maternal mortality.⁸ In addition to this, educated girls have a greater chance of getting involved in political activities and effecting real change in their communities, in comparison to illiterate girls.⁹ Because of this, investing in the education of girls is thought to be one of the best investments a nation can make in order to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty. Nevertheless, despite the many advantages of educating girls, fewer educational options are available for girls in some regions of the world, and a significant proportion of girls do not attend any form of formal schooling (OOS).

It is well-known that a population's socioeconomic progress is closely tied to the level of educational attainment in that population. It is projected that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of low-income nations might increase by 28% if every child had access to education and the necessary skills.¹⁰ A higher degree of education for women not only boosts the productivity of women in the home but also has the potential to improve family health, child survival rates, and financial investments in the human capital of children. About one sixth of

⁷ Schultz TP. Why governments should invest more to educate girls. *World Development*. 2002;30(2):207–225. doi: 10.1016/S0305-750X(01)00107-3.

⁸ Jensen R (2012) Do labour market opportunities affect young women's work and family decisions? *Experimental evidence from India*. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*. 2012;127(2):753–792.

⁹ Bertini, C., & Ceretti, A. (2020). Women and girls as change agents: the global mandate for girls' education. Retrieved from: https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/sites/default/files/womengirlschangeagents_report.pdf

¹⁰ B. Brende (2018) Why education is key to economic development.

the world's population of children and adolescents of school-going age are not enrolled in any form of education during the school year that will end in 2018. This equates to approximately 258 million children and adolescents.¹¹ According to the findings of the survey, gender equality in terms of OOS rates is experiencing a little drop around the globe; nonetheless, discrepancies continue to exist on the regional and national levels. The majority of out-of-school girls can be found in more remote locations. India is the country that is home to the highest proportion of out-of-school girls in South Asia due to the sheer size of the country.

Both factors at the household level, known as demand-side factors, and supply-side factors, known as supply-side factors, contribute to high numbers of children who are not in school. Demand-side factors include things like poverty, gender disparity, social exclusion, disability, conflict, displacement, or other emergencies. Supply-side factors include things like the location of schools being too far away, a lack of qualified teachers, drinking water, latrines, and other facilities, or teaching in a language that is not the same as the Children who do not attend school are typically not accounted for in school records.¹² As a result, these children become "invisible" and are frequently disregarded in the process of policy formation and decision-making. According to the findings of the survey, the absence of data and information on the children who are the most marginalized makes it much more challenging to engage with them. Children with disabilities, children working in hazardous conditions, children from low-income families in rural or urban slums, children living in emergency situations, and the majority of these children are female in a country like India.¹³

5. OUT-OF-SCHOOL-CHILDREN

There is no universally accepted definition of "out-of-school children." Children who do not have access to a school in their community; children who do not enrol in school despite the existence of a school; children who enrol in school but do not attend school; and children who drop out of the education system are all included under this umbrella phrase. The profiles of children who are currently enrolled in school but have the highest probability of not completing their education have also been taken into consideration as part of the worldwide project on out-of-school children that is being led by UNICEF. This is due to the

¹¹ UIS (2019). New Methodology Shows that 258 Million Children, Adolescents and Youth Are Out of School. Fact Sheet no. 56. (September 2019). UIS/2019/ED/FS/56

¹² Sarkar A. Out of the school children and their participation in economic and other domestic activities in India: A study based on recent NSS data. *Journal of Social and Economic Development*. 2018;20(1):75–109. doi: 10.1007/s40847-018-0058-2.

¹³ UNICEF (2014). South Asia regional study covering Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children. UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Kathmandu, Nepal

fact that even if they are expelled from the educational system for the most insignificant of reasons, they are likely to become out-of-school children in the future. If these children who are at risk of dropping out of school can be identified and prevented from doing so, the number of students who are excluded from school could gradually decrease over time.

6. GENDER DISCRIMINATION

The unequal or unfavourable treatment of an individual or group of people based on their gender is what we mean when we talk about gender discrimination. Illegal gender discrimination can take the form of sexual harassment at times. In the context of academia or extracurricular activities, academic programs, discipline, class assignments given in a classroom, class enrolment, physical education, grading, and/or athletics, gender discrimination can be defined as treating a person differently based on his or her gender. It is widely acknowledged that the pervasiveness of gender disparity in educational settings is the most significant impediment to the development of the educational system as a whole. The conditions of poverty, the prevalence of traditional viewpoints, the school infrastructure, discriminatory treatment among girls, the occurrence of criminal and violent acts, child marriage, and education of the parents, occupation of the parents, management of household responsibilities, and a lack of interest in studies are the primary contributors to gender inequality in education. Other contributors include: conditions of extreme poverty, the prevalence of traditional viewpoints, the school infrastructure, discriminatory treatment among girls, the occurrence of criminal and violent acts, the child marriage when girls and women are subjected to one or more of these elements, it is typical for the situation to have a bearing not only on their mental but also on their physical well-being.

Inequality between the sexes in terms of access to education is a recurrent concern in Indian society, particularly for the girls who come from economically disadvantaged segments of that community. Inequalities between the genders are a significant problem in many areas, including education, health care, employment, and wages, to name a few. Over the course of the last few decades, there have been significant strides made toward the goal of achieving universal enrolment of students in educational institutions. In addition, there have been rules and processes put into place to deal with the issue of gender imbalance in the educational system. However, even in the present day, there are still educational disparities that exist. The socio-economic conditions, the accessibility to learning materials and resources, the time given towards formal learning activities, and the cultural opinions and perspectives among

individuals and groups regarding the education of girls are the primary contributors to education gaps.

7. FACTORS INFLUENCING GENDER DISCRIMINATION ON OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN

In India, the numbers of children living outside of their families that are reported by the various official sources show significant diversity. According to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in 2014, there were approximately 6.64 million children living outside of their families who were between the ages of 6 and 13 years old. According to the findings of the 71st round of the NSS (2014), there were 15.52 million children between the ages of 6 and 14 who were not living with their biological parents. The extremely broad range of questions that were asked was a significant contributor to this result. For example, the question that was asked in the survey conducted by NSS was "how many children are not currently attending school," whereas the question that was asked in the survey conducted by MHRD (SRI-IMRB) was "how many children are not enrolled in any school." Unfortunately, in India, there is a significant gap between enrolling in school and actually going to class every day.¹⁴

In such a huge country like India, the socioeconomic and spatial differences of OOS children can be attributed to a number of different factors. Frequently, these variables exacerbate the gender gap that already exists in the educational system. In spite of recent efforts by modernization and globalization to eliminate it, gender discrimination in education has persisted in India for more than a thousand years. However, these trends have been somewhat mitigated in recent decades.¹⁵ The deeply ingrained norm in Indian society is to not expect support from daughters (particularly the married ones), which leads to less investment in the education of girls. Researchers discovered that gender bias increases with age, in the entire school-going age bracket. This resulted in less investment in the education of girls. Regarding secondary education, despite the fact that it is particularly important for the formation of gender differences in life trajectories, sadly, it is frequently compromised in India for the sake of finding a suitable marriage partner for young women.¹⁶ As a result of the gendered division of labour within households, girls are frequently required to take on domestic

¹⁴ SRI-IMRB Report (2014). National Sample Survey of Estimation of Out-of-School Children in the Age 6–13 in India. Social and Rural Research Institute and IMRB - International

¹⁵ Munshi K, Rosenzweig M (2006). Traditional institutions meet the modern world: Caste, gender, and schooling choice in a globalizing economy. *American Economic Review*; 96(4):1225–1252.

¹⁶ Marphatia AA, Reid AM, Yajnik CS. Developmental origins of secondary school dropout in rural India and its differential consequences by sex: A biosocial life-course analysis. *International Journal of Educational Development*. 2019;66:8–23. doi: 10.1016/j.ijedudev.2018.12.001

responsibilities as well as the care of younger siblings, which frequently prevents them from attending school.

8. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INEQUALITIES

Poverty is unquestionably one of the main obstacles to education, especially when attending school comes with a number of expenses, including transportation costs, uniform prices, and school fees.¹⁷ This is particularly true because education incurs a variety of costs like sending a child to school incurs a variety of costs. Another important issue is the poor children's participation in the workforce or child labours, whether or not they are compensated. In India, girls are typically responsible for domestic and household-related responsibilities, whereas boys are more likely to be engaged in agricultural labour, either on their own farms or on the farms of others. The primary motivation for boys to stop going to school is the need to find work to contribute to the financial support of their families, while the primary motivation for girls is the obligation to assist with domestic responsibilities. The disruptions or an absence in educational continuity caused by seasonal relocation of parents along with their children is detrimental to the children's academic development. On the other hand, if parents relocate permanently to locations that provide superior educational resources, there is a greater chance that their children will attend such facilities. The differences between rural and urban environments also have an effect on the number of years that children spend in school.

Caste, along with other types of social discrimination, plays a significant role in the culture of India. Discrimination against disadvantaged social groups leads to children being expelled from school rather than being allowed to drop out. Children of indigenous communities are frequently unaccounted for a variety of reasons, including those pertaining to their culture. When a child's native language is not used as the language of instruction at school, particularly in the earliest years of schooling, this can be a process that leads to social marginalization. Disabled children face discrimination in many forms, including the perception that having a disability is a social taboo.¹⁸ Schools often do not have the proper facilities to accommodate students with disabilities.

Children with disabilities are frequently prevented from attending school as a result of this. The education of the parents, particularly the mothers' education, plays a significant role in

¹⁷Tilak, J. B. (2002). Determinants of household expenditure on education in rural India (No. 88). New Delhi: National Council of Applied Economic Research.

¹⁸Thurlow, M. L., Sinclair, M. F., & Johnson, D. R. (2002). Students with disabilities who drop out of school: Implications for policy and practice. issue brief: Examining current challenges in secondary education and transition

the education of the children. Parents who have completed some level of education understand the significance of receiving one, and as a result, they are typically more eager to enrol their children in classes. The educational opportunities available to children are impacted when mothers are in the workforce. When there is no one else in the household to provide financial assistance, it is common for the older children to be responsible for the care of their younger siblings as well as the household tasks.¹⁹ The loss of a parent or both parents has a detrimental effect on a child's education, especially if the child comes from a poor family. The death of a mother tends to result in an increase in the amount of work that needs to be done around the house, whereas the death of a single father is frequently associated with an increased risk of poverty and the employment of children.²⁰

Common economic influences, such as gross state domestic product and state-level investment in education, have frequently been found to be significant aspects at the macro-level studies and village development variables at the micro-level researches.²¹ This is the case for a number of the spatial factors as well. Other spatial determinants include the accessibility of school-level infrastructure and resources, such as the number of rooms and boundary walls, the availability of drinking water and restrooms, and so on, which varies greatly between states and districts.²² The absence of adequate facilities has a significant and detrimental effect on young women. The violation of girls' right to privacy in public schools is the primary contributor to the phenomenon of girls leaving school. UNICEF (1998) notes that when girls' and boys' restrooms are located in close proximity to one another or are shared by both genders, a large percentage of female students drop out of school as a result of harassment and a lack of privacy.

There is a connection between the dropout problem and how teachers treat their female students. Both male and female educators held the belief that boys were more intelligent than their female counterparts academically. The vast majority of educators have a propensity to devote more attention to boys in the classroom than they do to girls. In terms of academic performance and achievement, teachers have a tendency to favour boys over girls, which has led to an increase in the number of female pupils dropping out of school. For female students,

¹⁹Jayachandran, U. (2002). Socio-economic determinants of school attendance in India (No. 103, Centre for Development Economics)

²⁰ Hunt, F. (2008). Dropping out from school: A cross country review of literature. Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions, and Equity (CREATE) Research Monograph No 16

²¹Mitra, S. (2020). Socio-Economic Determinants of Secondary Education in India. In Tilak, J.B.G (Ed.) Universal Secondary Education in India (pp. 245–262). Springer, Singapore

²² Kumar V, Kumar N, Narula S (2011) Mapping of elementary educational infrastructure in India: A state and district level analysis. IAMURE International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research. 2011;1(1):1–1

the distance between their home and their school is a crucial factor in the decision to drop out of school.

Young women have a greater propensity to drop out of school due to the increased risk of being subjected to sexual harassment if their schools are located a significant distance from their homes. When children have to drive more to get to school, their parents have increased levels of anxiety about their well-being. One more is the worry that mothers and fathers have regarding the sexual well-being of their daughters. People were dropping out of school for a variety of reasons, including the absence of free education, migration, and the inaccessibility of schools. One of the many ways in which girls are socialized to view themselves as lower-status individuals is through the practice of tolerating and even encouraging sexual harassment. The other reason that lady students drop out of school is because of the miscreants' pursuit of their own selfish interests.

Children's education is also significantly impacted by socio-political conflicts and other types of calamities that occur in various places of India. Children who are caught up in situations of conflict, political instability, or emergency frequently have a difficult time continuing their education.²³ It is important to note that the definition of "dropped out" children, in which their names are removed from the school records because they have been absent for an extended period of time without explanation, differs greatly from one state to the next. This has an effect on the estimation of youngsters who have fallen out.²⁴ The practice of early and forced marriage has been and continues to be a prevalent factor in the educational discontinuation of female students. This is a typical behaviour and occurrence in India, including Nellore, which is located in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Because of all of these factors, the vast majority of female students withdraw from their educational programs.

9. AN OBSERVATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

An analysis of the provisions of the NEP 2020 to promote gender equality through education identifies action areas for the state government and higher education institutions in the state to increase the number of women and girls who enroll in those programs. Among these are the following: Increase the amount of financial support and scholarship opportunities available to SEDGs² at public and private HEIs Reduce the amount of lost opportunity as

²³ Pankaj, A., & Mitra, S. (2019). Out of School Children in India: A Baseline Survey of Patna (Bihar) and Hamirpur (Uttar Pradesh) Districts. Project Report published by Council for Social Development. ISBN:978-81-940733-3-8

²⁴ Bhatta, K., Saraf, R., & Gupta, V. (2017). Out-of-school children. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 52(49).

well as financial burden associated with seeking higher education. SEDGs should be targeted via outreach programs that provide information on options for higher education and scholarships. All students in this category should be offered appropriate counselling and mentoring programs in order to get social and emotional support, as well as academic guidance.

10. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

AkoijamBrajamani Singh (2021)²⁵ reported that educational dropouts are the principal problems that are encountered in both the basic and secondary education systems of the Indian education system. If there are still problems with students dropping out of school, there is no way to improve either the quantity or the quality of the education that is provided. In order to enhance both the quality and quantity of secondary education available in Manipur, this study investigated the characteristics of and factors contributing to the high rate of dropouts among female students in that state. The research attempted to identify some of the corrective actions that could be taken to enhance the quality of the educational system in the state of Manipur.

LanaChikhungu et al. (2020)²⁶ investigated the relationship between school bursaries and a girl's socioeconomic status and their decision to drop out of school using primary data collected from rural primary schools in Malawi and administrative data obtained from the Malawi Education Management Information System. One of the primary factors contributing to the high school girls' decision to leave school was their inability to afford the necessary fees. It appears that school bursaries helped retain more females in school, and it was shown that girls from households with a higher socioeconomic position had a lower likelihood of dropping out of school. According to the findings of this study, the Government of Malawi and its development partners should provide financial assistance to needy female students enrolled in secondary institutions. In rural regions, the promotion of programs that strengthen the socio-economic status of households should make it possible for households to have the financial means necessary to send their children to school.

²⁵AkoijamBrajamani Singh (2021) A study on the drop-out rate of girl students of schools within MayangImphal constituency, Manipur, International Journal Of Multidisciplinary Educational Research, ISSN:2277-7881; volume:10, Issue:4(5)

²⁶LanaChikhungu, EsmeKadzamira, Lizzie Chiwaula, ElizabethMeke (2020) Tackling girls dropping out of school in Malawi: Is improving household socio-economic status the solution?, International Journal of Educational Research, Volume 103, 2020, 101578

TankaDahal et al. (2019)²⁷ conducted a qualitative study to investigate the effect of educational parameters on the proportion of Nepali female students who remained enrolled in high schools after their first year. The areas from which to collect data were selected according to the consolidated report of the Ministry of Education's statistics (2011) on the number of female pupils who withdraw from school. Interviews in person were carried out with each of the 96 participants. According to the findings, ineffective policy implementation led to low levels of motivation among teachers and students, as well as poor levels of academic accomplishment and dropout rates among students. The participants identified a number of flaws in the program, including inadequate scholarship quotas and quantities for female students, unrealistic scholarship criteria, ineffective instruction, and unproven methods of evaluation.

Research Gap

There have been many studies in about socio-demographic factors and gender inequality among men and women for various reasons covering educational, occupational, food insecurities and economic opportunities. However, there have been no studies that are associated with gender inequality and socio-demographic disparity, that focus on out-of-school children. This context has been identified as the research gap and the present study aims to fulfil this gap by analysing the gender and socio-demographic inequalities among out-of-school children in Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh.

11. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In addition to treating men and women unequally, gender inequality and socio-demographic difference in education deprives young boys and girls of their access to and opportunity for a basic education. In this study, gender inequality and socio-demographic parameters will be assessed to indicate societal inequities, unjust resource and opportunity distribution among children who are out-of-school. It is frequently believed that the most important aspect determining gender-based education is equal access to all forms of education. Additionally, factors including parental ignorance, lack of access to education, child labour, and financial hardship contribute to gender discrimination, which raises the percentage of illiteracy among children. While this segment of educational inequalities has persisted, this study, from the

²⁷TankaDahal, KeithTopping, SusanLevy (2019) Educational factors influencing female students' dropout from high schools in Nepal, International Journal of Educational Research Volume 98, 2019, Pages 67-76

perspective of a systematic review among OOSC in Nellore, establishes the existence of the factors that influence gender inequality and socio-demographic disparity in education.

12. STUDY OBJECTIVES

- To study the factors that influence gender discrimination on OOSC in Nellore district
- To study the impact of socio-demographic inequalities on OOSC in Nellore district
- To provide suitable suggestions to prevent children from getting out-of-school due to gender and socio-demographic inequalities

13. NEED FOR THE STUDY

Previous researches have focused on a variety of issues, including poverty, remoteness from other people, armed conflict, a lack of school infrastructure, and poor educational quality, that contribute to gender inequality and socio-demographic disparity in education. Although the sustainable development goals place a strong emphasis on education quality, it is also likely that equality already exists because of the reasons that have been identified as impeding gender equality in education. In the context of the OOSC of Nellore, this study has therefore sought to uncover potential relationships between socio-demographic factors and gender inequity.

14. NULL HYPOTHESIS FORMULATED

H₀₁: Financial Situation of the respondents has no significant association on child labour (being out of school steered child labour)

H₀₂: Accessibility of educational facility has no significant association on Ignorance of parent

H₀₃: Financial Situation of the respondents has no significant association on gender discrimination among children

H₀₄: Financial situation, Accessibility to educational facility and Child labour (being out of school steered child labour) are not significantly associated with the ignorance of parent.

H₀₅: There is no significant difference between the gender groups and Gender Discrimination among children

15. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The process of identifying, selecting and analyzing information pertaining to a research study is referred to as the research technique. The methodology of research refers to a process that

consists of several parts. Key qualities are problem description, research planning, sample plan, instrument or questionnaire designing, data collection plan and data analysis strategy.

Research design:The research utilizes a descriptive research design, which was chosen for this study. The features of the relevant group are outlined in detail by the descriptive research design. In descriptive research, the information is precisely specified as it is characterized by the preceding formulation of certain hypotheses.

Study area:The location of the study was confined to the Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh due to the fact that the researcher lacked sufficient time and financial resources to conduct the investigation elsewhere.

Sample Population:Children who are not enrolled in school, parents and teachers from the schools they attend in selected mandals (Atmakur, Kavali, and Nellore) of the Sri PottiSriramulu Nellore District in the state of Andhra Pradesh make up the study's sample population.

Method of Sampling:As there are only a few hundred people in the population, the procedure of sample that was used for this study was a simple random sampling method. The term "simple random sample" refers to another name for "probability sampling." Every component has an equal probability of being included in the sample if the sampling design is set up in this manner.

Size of the Sample: This particular study consists of a sample of 115 out of school children. For the purpose of the current study, 130 respondents were contacted from four mandals in the Nellore district. Of those 130 respondents, 115 provided responses that were deemed to be satisfactory; hence, 115 respondents were chosen as the sample size for the final study.

Table – 1: Sample size estimation

SL. No.	Selected mandals in SPSR Nellore	Number of respondents approached	Number of populations responded with complete data
1	Atmakur	40	35
2	Kavali	40	36

3	Nellore	50	44
Total		130	115

Source: Primary data

Variables in the study: Financial Situation, Accessibility, Child Labour, Ignorance of Parents and Gender Discrimination

Financial Situation: Parents typically send boys to school and keep girls at home to take care of household duties if they are unable to send both boys and girls to school because of poverty or low family income.²⁸ Therefore, financial situation of parents becomes a primary factor for gender discrimination.

Accessibility: The fact that schools are sometimes located far from their homes, especially in rural areas, becomes one of the obstacles to their education. Children require access to a reliable transportation system in order to attend school.²⁹ Unable to afford transport fees, parents choose to retain their children at home or send only boys to school. Hence, accessibility becomes one of the factors of gender inequality with respect to education.

Child Labour(being out of school steered child labour): Family decisions influenced by poverty lead to educational deprivation (being out of school)/disparity ended with child labour. The demand for labour expanded as households engaged in more varied activities, and children especially boys often fill this gap, with girls frequently substituting in for their mothers.³⁰ Hence, child labour is considered as a parameter for gender inequality and socio-demographic disparity.

Ignorance of Parents: Most of the parents feel insecure in sending their girl children to school in fear of abduction and other social crimes. Being illiterate, they do not value the importance of education and they carry forward the ignorance to the next generation.³¹

Gender Discrimination: Thus, the above mentioned factors lead to discrimination of children based on gender and socio-demographic factors, resulting in out-of-school situation.

²⁸ Ambreen, Mamonah & Mohyuddin, Dr. Anwaar. (2013). Gender Biased Parental Attitudes Towards Education: A Case Study Of Village Dasuha, District Faisalabad. *Academic Research International*. 4. 140-147.

²⁹ Nowak, J. K. (2021). Gender inequality in Education. *Human, Technologies and Quality of Education, 2021*.

³⁰ Woldehanna, T., Tefera, B., Jones, N., & Bayrau, A. (2005). In *Child labour, gender inequality and rural/urban disparities: How can Ethiopia's National Development Strategies be revised to address negative spill-over impacts on child education and wellbeing?* London; Young Lives, Save the Children UK.

³¹ Gul, S. and Khan, Z. (2014) "Assessment And Understanding Of Gender Equity In Education In Jammu And Kashmir," *Reviews of Literature*, 1(6), pp. 1-11.

Data collection: Both primary and secondary data have been collected for the study.

Primary data: Through the use of a structured questionnaire, a survey was carried out among the out-of-school children, their parents who lived in the designated mandals of the Nellore district in Andhra Pradesh, and the teachers of the public and private schools there in order to collect the main data. On a 5-point Likert scale, where 5 equals Strongly Agree and 1 Strongly Disagree, respondents were asked to rate several items. Inequalities in gender and socio-demographic characteristics among out-of-school children were covered by the questionnaire. All research ethics regulations were followed by the researcher. Using Cronbach's Alpha, the questionnaire's reliability was evaluated, and an estimate of 0.7 or higher was found to indicate that the data was reliable enough to move forward with further study.

Secondary data: Secondary data was gathered from journals, books, reports, newspapers, research papers, magazines, working papers, websites, yearly state government reports, school records, manuals and booklets.

16. DATA ANALYSIS AND STATISTICAL TOOLS

Correlation, Independent T-test and SEM are just a few of the statistical methods used to analyse the primary data that was gathered through a questionnaire. Various statistical and mathematical techniques are used to process and analyse the acquired data. IBM SPSS 20 was utilized in the study to evaluate the data. AMOS -20 Software is used to test the models.

Correlation between Financial Situation and Child Labour

H₀₁: Financial Situation of the respondents has no significant association on child labour (being out of school steered child labour)

Table – 2: Financial Situation and Child Labour

		Financial Situation	Child Labour
Financial Situation	Correlation(Pearson)	1	0.414**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	115	115
Child Labour	Correlation (Pearson)	0.414**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

	N	115	115
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****Correlation @ 0.01 level**

Analysis and Interpretation

The value of the coefficient of connection between financial situation of the respondents and child labour is 0.414, as shown in table 1. It denotes a positive relationship between two variables. The resulting correlation coefficient is determined to be significant at the 1% level of significance. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is reasonable to conclude that financial circumstances of the respondents and child labour are connected. It means that there is a strong connection between these two groups of data. Thus, it can be interpreted that financial state of parents force their children to choose employment over education and thus resulting in out-of-school children transforming into poor child labourers.

Correlation between Accessibility and Ignorance of parent

H₀₂: Accessibility of educational facility has no significant association on Ignorance of parent

Table – 3: Accessibility of the educational facility and Ignorance of parent

		Accessibility	Ignorance of parent
Accessibility	Correlation(Pearson)	1	0.969**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	115	115
Ignorance of parents	Correlation (Pearson)	0.969**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	115	115

****Correlation @ 0.01 level**

Analysis and Interpretation

According to Table – 2, the coefficient of connection between accessibility of facilities and ignorance of parent has a value of 0.969. It indicates that there is a significant correlation between two variables. The obtained correlation coefficient is significant at the 1% level of significance. The null hypothesis is thus rejected. It appears reasonable to conclude that accessibility of the educational facilities and ignorance of the parents are connected. It suggests that there is a substantial link between these two groups of data. The results point out that parents being ignorant about the value of education due to illiteracy hesitate to send their children to school which are far off from their place. This socio-demographic disparity leads to increase in the count of out-of-school children.

Correlation between Financial Situation and Gender Discrimination

H₀₃: Financial Situation of the respondents has no significant association on gender discrimination among children

Table – 4: Financial Situation and Gender Discrimination

		Financial Situation	Gender Discrimination
Financial Situation	Correlation(Pearson)	1	0.424**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	115	115
Gender Discrimination	Correlation (Pearson)	0.424**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	115	115

**Correlation @ 0.01 level

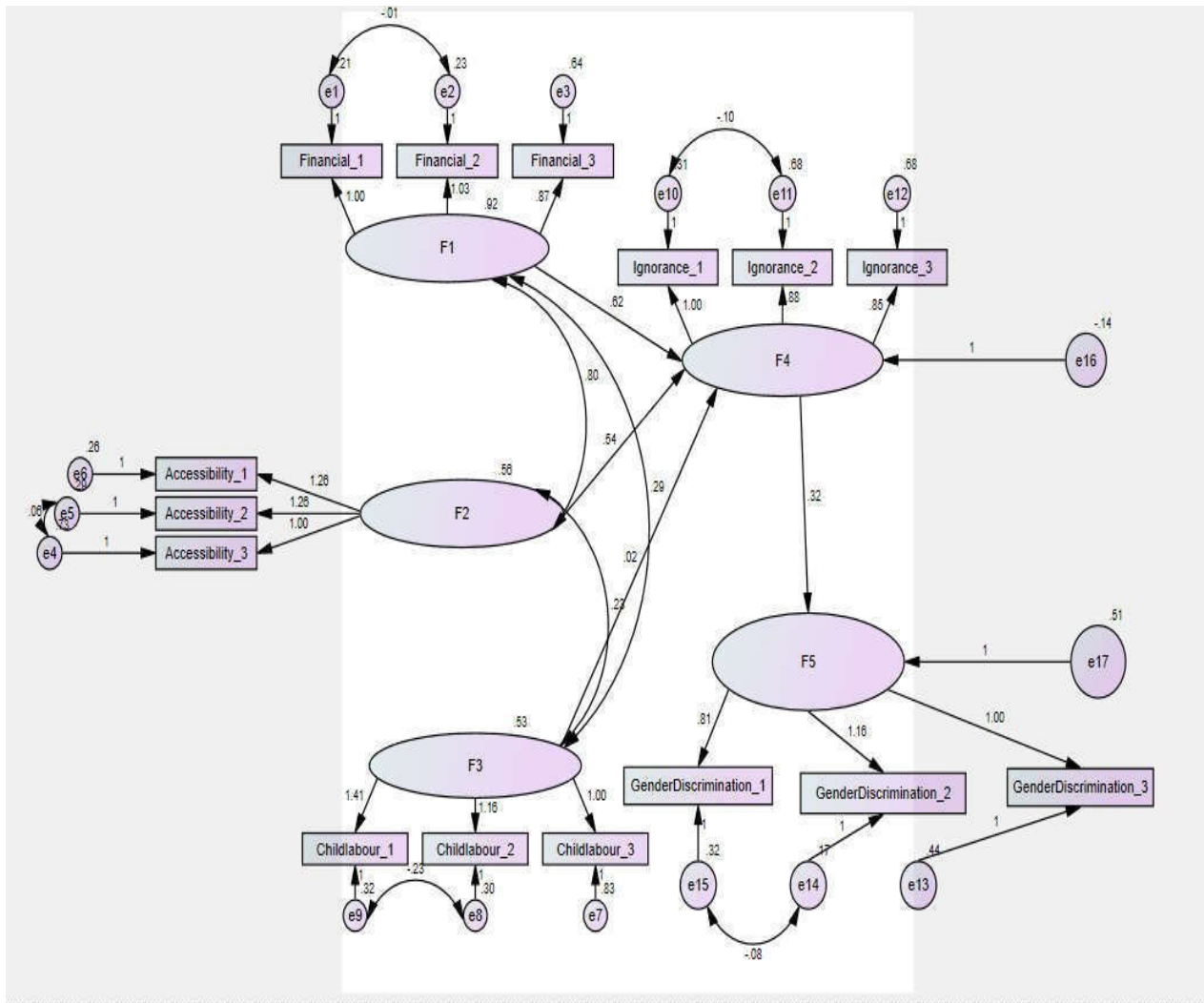
Analysis and Interpretation

The data shown in table 3 suggests that the value of the coefficient of correlation between financial situation and gender discrimination is 0.424. At a level of significance of 1%, the resulting coefficient of correlation is determined to be statistically significant, which indicates that there is a strong relationship between the two variables. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is reasonable to conclude that the gender discrimination among children and financial situation of parents are connected to one another. It is a strong indication that there is a high correlation link between these two groups of data. It can be inferred that families with low income cannot afford to educate both their children and hence choose boys over girls to send for schooling. This leads to gender discrimination with amplified rate of out-of-school children.

SEM Path Analysis

F1 – Financial Situation, F2 – Accessibility, F3 – Child Labour, F4 – Ignorance of parent, F5 – Gender Discrimination

Fig – 1: Structural Equation Model on gender and socio demographic inequalities among OOSC



Source – Amos Output

Table - 5: Standardized regression weights and significance levels

	Std. Estimate	Std. Error	C.R (Critical Ratio)	P-value
F4<---F1	0.616	0.070	8.848	0.000
F4 <---F2	0.545	0.095	5.727	0.000
F4 <---F3	0.018	0.040	0.451	0.652
F5 <---F4	0.317	0.089	3.565	0.000

Table - 6: Goodness of Fit statistics for SEM

Index	Shorthand	Criteria	Model
Root mean Square error of Approximation	RMSEA	0.05 < value ≤ 0.08; acceptable ≤ 0.05; good	0.047
RMSEA associated with p	PCLOSE	≥ 0.05	0.211
Tuker-Lewis Index	TLI	0.90 ≤ value < 0.95; acceptable ≥ 0.95 ; good	0.911
Goodness of fit	GFI	0.90 ≤ value < 0.95; acceptable ≥ 0.95 ; good	0.923
Comparative Fit Index	CFI	0.90 ≤ value < 0.95; acceptable ≥ 0.95 ; good	0.922
Hoelter's Critical N	Hoelter Index	75 ≤ value < 200; acceptable ≥ 200 ; good	219

The structural equation model fits the data well, according to the goodness-of-fit tests. The RMSEA and TLI values in the modified model were decreased to 0.047 and 0.911, respectively, achieving the satisfactory model fit requirement. The SEM model reveals connections between measurement errors and statistically significant critical ratios for all indicators at p 0.05. Both latent structure indices are greater than the cutoff point of 0.50.

H₀₄: Financial situation, Accessibility of educational facility and Child labour (being out of school steered child labour) are not significantly associated with the ignorance of parent.

Since the values are at the desired level and the discovered p-value for financial situation and accessibility of facility is at a significant level (0.01), the null hypothesis is rejected. The null hypothesis is accepted for child labour since the variables have a greater p-value, which is not significant. Based on the findings, it is evident that child labour has little bearing on ignorance of parent which leads to out-of-school situation; however financial situations and accessibility of educational facilities have a considerable effect.

INDEPENDENT T-TEST

H₀₅: There is no significant difference between the gender groups and Gender Discrimination among children

Table – 7: Group Statistics for Independent T-Test

Gender Discrimination	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. error mean
	Male	77	9.3896	2.75851	0.31436
	Female	38	8.8947	3.15191	0.51131

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	f	Sig	T	df	Sig(2 tailed)	Mean diff	Std error(Diff)	Lower	Upper
Equal Variances Assumed	0.206	0.651	0.863	113	0.000	0.4948	0.57358	-0.64149	1.63124
Equal Variances not Assumed			0.824	65.689	0.002	0.4948	0.60022	-0.70360	1.69335

The table above shows a substantial difference between the significant values of the two categories, particularly male and female. Additionally, the significant difference was less than at 0.000 and 0.002, respectively (significant level). As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected and it has been shown that there is a significant difference between the respondents' gender and gender discrimination among children when the significant value is smaller than

It can be interpreted that parents showing disparity between their girl child and boy child not only affects the educational opportunity, but are also made to remain as out-of-school children due to gender discrimination.

17. FINDINGS

- Correlation test between the variables like accessibility vs. ignorance, financial situation vs. gender discrimination, financial situation vs. child labour denotes a positive relationship between two variables. The resulting correlation coefficient is determined to be significant at the 1% level of significance. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is reasonable to conclude that there is a strong connection between these two groups of data which signify that financial situation of parents leads to out-of-school children who are forced into child labours.
- The structural equation model fits the data well, according to the goodness-of-fit tests. The RMSEA and TLI values in the modified model were decreased to 0.047 and 0.911, respectively, achieving the satisfactory model fit requirement. The SEM model reveals connections between measurement errors and statistically significant critical ratios for all indicators at $p < 0.05$. Both latent structure indices are greater than the cutoff point of 0.50. Based on the findings, it is evident that child labour has little bearing on ignorance of parent which leads to out-of-school situation; however financial situations and accessibility of educational facilities have a considerable effect.
- The independent t-test between the gender factor and the gender discrimination shows that the significant values of the two categories, especially male and female, are very different. It is possible to take this to mean that due to gender discrimination, parents who display inequality between their boy and girl children's educational opportunities also force their children to stay out of school.

18. SUGGESTIONS

To ensure that there are schools close to where children live, school locations should be distributed based on population and geography. There won't be any gender bias at home or in the classroom if parents raise their daughters and boys equally. Parents, teachers, and society as a whole should take extra care to ensure the safety of the girl children. In order for girls to have the motivation to study independently, parents must have a favourable attitude toward their daughters. Making allowances for bursaries appears to keep more girls in school. The government of Andhra Pradesh, in collaboration with donors and NGOs, could develop some

unique policies to enhance the education of women, such as providing special stipends for female students and making education free for them. This can help in reducing the burden of parents in sending their children to school.

Additionally, government must spend more funds on creating a safe and sensitive environment for females. Governments should also supply enough school materials in accordance with what pupils need. To increase the number of women and girls enrolling in higher education, the Government of Andhra Pradesh may want to consider creating a comprehensive scholarship strategy that focuses on: providing exclusive scholarships for female students enrolling in higher education, especially in fields where they are underrepresented. By collaborating with companies and CSR foundations, particularly those that currently offer scholarships for higher education, research, and technology, and building a "public-private partnership" (PPP) model of scholarships will reduce socio-demographic inequalities among the children. In this way the rate of out-of-school children can be reduced and also stop children working as child labours.

19. CONCLUSION

Up to the age of 14, both boys and girls are entitled to free primary school education in India under the constitution. Although this objective has been reiterated time and time again, basic education is still not universal in India. According to the study's findings, girls drop out at a higher rate than boys. In the research location, the Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh, a large percentage of girls are out-of-school due to poverty, illiteracy, and a callous attitude toward their education. The main factors influencing the rising number of children dropping out of school include the academic achievement of the parents, large families, and low-paying employment. Among the out-of-school children, boys move in as child labour and girls are forced to take care of households. Since gaining its independence, the Indian government has introduced numerous programs aimed at reducing poverty, but they haven't really had much of an impact. The findings of the study reveal that, children in Nellore may continue and complete their basic education if the problem of children being out-of-school is addressed at this nodal location. According to the research, substantial consideration should be given to reintegrating the enormous number of OOS children, particularly females, in the study region of Nellore into the school grounds in order to attain SDGs 4 and 5 by the year 2030. Thus, the study proposes enhancing the public education system and localized solutions for children from various socioeconomic backgrounds in various locations based on the findings.

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