

School Dropouts: A Societal Analysis of Kanchipuram Taluk

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Abstract

Even though female attendance in schools has increased dramatically since independence, universal primary education and complete literacy are still unattainable in India. Despite a steady increase in public education investment near 4 to 4.5% of GDP, a sizable portion of the adult population is nonetheless illiterate. School administration is likewise changing; private, unassisted schools are becoming more common, although government monitoring still predominates. In the end, the study highlights how important it is to continue subsidising basic education in order to give citizens the skills necessary for contemporary global industry.

Purpose: This study highlights human resources as an essential national investment by investigating how education-based labour development directly propels economic growth. It looks into governmental investment, institutional expansion, and enrolment patterns at all levels of education in India. In comparison to national and international standards, it concludes by analysing the difficulties in attaining universal basic education and skill development. Approach: The reasons and consequences of school dropouts in Kanchipuram taluk are methodically investigated in this organised study project. Data analysis and interpretation come after a review of the literature and a regional profile. In the end, the study summarises these results to offer well-informed policy recommendations derived from the viewpoints of direct respondents. Upcoming Studies: While Kanchipuram Taluk's school dropout factors are thoroughly examined in this study, next research should look at a number of other areas. While comparisons between urban and rural areas may reveal particular institutional difficulties, longitudinal studies could monitor dropouts enrolling in vocational training. Future studies should include evaluate community mentoring, digital interventions, mental health effects, and government activities following the pandemic.

Keywords: School dropouts, Educational Attrition, Socio-economic Status, Poverty Index, School Infrastructure, Pupil-Teacher Ratio, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Single-Teacher Schools



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Introduction

Manpower is an essential tool for transforming resources for the good of humanity, but if it is not developed and used appropriately, it can become a burden. The effectiveness of a country's use of human skills, which necessitates a workforce that is adequately literate, educated, and trained to adjust to new manufacturing methods, determines that country's level of development. Therefore, a key component of contemporary development policy should be the appropriate development of labour. Formal education, ranging from basic to higher education, as well as technical training, adult education, and advancements in public health and nutrition, all contribute to the development of human resources. A Chinese proverb emphasises that while preparing for ten years entails planting trees, planning for life necessitates teaching and training men. In a similar vein, Marshall believed that "the most valuable of all capital is that investment in human beings" and that education was an essential national investment. According to the "growth-mediated" social progress concept, public education both contributes to and benefits from economic expansion because it creates additional funding for educational infrastructure. The "residual" void left by physical capital accumulation in old neo-classical models is filled by direct human agency surrounding labour, education, and experience, according to modern economic growth theory. Widespread basic education is vital for success in contemporary businesses that require critical literacy and secondary education abilities, as evidenced by the "East Asian Miracle" (which includes South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan). While on-the-job training is useful, preceding basic education

greatly improves one's capacity to learn and train.

The Educational Context in India

With 325 widely spoken languages and a great cultural diversity, India is home to 17 per cent of the world's population on just 2.4 per cent of its land area. The nation's educational system has advanced remarkably since independence, both in terms of quantity and quality. The national objectives of universal basic education and the complete eradication of illiteracy remain unattainable despite these advancements and determined government efforts to boost budgetary allocations. Approximately 44 per cent of India's adult population was illiterate in 2001–2002, despite the country spending 4.02 per cent of its GDP on education. According to comparative data, India's rate of illiteracy is lower than that of Bangladesh and Afghanistan, but it is higher than that of numerous nearby nations, including Thailand, Indonesia, and China.

Although public education spending in India has historically varied, from less than 1 per cent of GDP in 1951–52 to 4.02 per cent in 2001–02, recent data from the 2023–24 Economic Survey indicates that overall education spending has stabilised at roughly 2.9 per cent of GDP, with the government striving to meet the 6 per cent target set forth in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Growth of Institutions and Enrolment

India's educational system has had a significant structural expansion from the middle of the 20th century. Although schools increased dramatically during the early development period between 1950 and 2001, the current situation has hit a saturation plateau with over 14.89 lakh schools nationwide. The rise of

private stakeholders is now a defining feature of modern institutional growth. While the government still oversees most primary schools, private unmanaged and aided sectors have grown to account for nearly 46% of all secondary and higher secondary schools, reflecting a shift from the historic 58:42 ratio toward a more privatised model.

The trends in enrolment have been considerably more striking. All levels of student enrolment have increased dramatically from 1950–51, and as of right now, there are more over 26.5 crore (265 million) pupils enrolled in school. Gender parity has undergone the most revolutionary change. The most recent Gender Parity Index (GPI) has reached 1.0 or greater at all educational levels, despite historically low female participation. In particular, girls' enrolment has now surpassed the critical 48 per cent level in both primary and secondary education. According to recent data, girls make up roughly 48.5 per cent of overall enrolment, almost nearing the 50% figure that was elusive in earlier decades.

The road to universal literacy is still a work in progress, notwithstanding India's impressive educational achievements. A sizable portion of the populace still lacks formal literacy nearly eight decades after independence. India's overall literacy rate has increased steadily from 74.04 per cent in the 2011 Census to 80.9 per cent, according to the PLFS 2023-24 studies. Even with this percentage increase, the sheer number of illiterate people is still a structural problem. According to current estimates, there are between 250 and 280 million people who are seven years of age or older who are illiterate; this number eerily resembles the entire population of India at the time of its independence.

In the national educational profile, gender inequality is still a major concern. Female literacy is still below the national average of 73.4 per cent, whereas male literacy has increased to about 88.3 per cent. The PLFS 2023–2024 found an even worse "gender gap" in rural areas. This gap is especially noticeable in regions like Bihar, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh, where socioeconomic obstacles frequently prevent women from pursuing higher education, partially undermining the goal of an equitable, literate society.

Social Equity in Education

Historically disadvantaged groups, particularly Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST), continue to navigate structural educational obstacles, though the parity gap is steadily closing. The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2023–2024 annual report states that the literacy rate for Scheduled Tribes has increased dramatically to 73.4 per cent from 47.1 per cent in 2001 and 59 per cent in 2011. In a same vein, roughly 75.2 per cent of Scheduled Castes are literate. Deep-rooted internal inequities continue to be a defining feature of the tribal educational profile notwithstanding these overall improvements. Localised "dark spots" still exist even if the national average for ST women has risen to over 65% (a significant improvement from the 18% observed in the early 1990s). Tribal female literacy is still critically low in some districts of Madhya Pradesh and Odisha (like Koraput and Malkangiri), frequently falling below 40% in isolated forest margins. Gender, geography, and ethnicity all intersect in this state of "multiple deprivation," which shows that even though the school system's reach has increased thanks to programs like Eklavya Model Residential Schools, the quality of engagement and retention for the most

vulnerable girls still requires more focused, culturally sensitive interventions.

Enrollment and Entry

The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at the basic level (Classes 1–5) is still high at 103.4%, indicating that almost everyone in the nation has access to basic education. Even at the Upper Primary level (Classes 6–8), the GER is high at 94.9%. This indicates that the vast majority of children are successfully enrolling in formal school.

The Retention and Transition Challenge

Retention is still a major problem when pupils advance to higher grades, even with high starting enrolment. At the secondary level (Classes 9–10), the average annual dropout rate is at 12.6%. This suggests a large "transition gap" when students leave the system before earning their basic secondary certification, especially those from marginalised or rural areas.

Geography and Literacy

India's national literacy rate of 79.7 per cent, according to the most recent Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2022–2023 data, reflects a persistent structural challenge in educational outcomes, marked by a notable disparity between urban literacy at 86.0 per cent and rural literacy at 76.7 per cent.

Trend in Attendance

Due in major part to the Right to Education (RTE) Act's mandated nature, school attendance in the 6–14 age groups has achieved an all-time high of roughly 96–98 per cent in most states. But as kids become older, the gap changes. The attendance rate starts to decline in the 15–16 age group (Secondary level), which reflects the

social and economic constraints that result in the previously noted 12.6 per cent dropout rate.

Infrastructure and Quality Constraints

The quality of learning is still impacted by high pupil-teacher ratios (PTR) and inadequate school infrastructure.

Teacher Availability: "Single-teacher schools" still exist in rural areas notwithstanding a decrease brought about by the Right to Education (RTE) Act. Even Nevertheless, the average student-teacher ratio in Indian primary schools has improved to almost 26:1.

Basic Facilities: Considerable progress has been made in providing basic amenities, with over 97 per cent of schools having bathrooms and nearly 99 per cent having working drinking water. Only 57.2 per cent of schools have working computers, and only 53.9 per cent have internet connectivity, indicating a lack of sophisticated infrastructure.

Physical Environment: Although the days of "open-air" schools are mostly finished, there are still 1.52 lakh schools without working electricity, and many government buildings need urgent structural repairs in order to be deemed "all-weather" facilities.

The Gap between Supply and Demand

It is important to understand that parents' lack of interest is not the reason for the failure to get universal attendance. According to recent studies, there is almost universal "demand" for education, which is consistent with the earlier PROBE findings. The majority of parents from all socioeconomic groups think that education is important for both boys and girls. The "supply side" of school quality continues to be the key obstacle. Children are frequently removed out of schools that lack regular teachers, power, or safe surroundings, demonstrating that enhancing the

institutional quality of the public school system—rather than just promoting enrollment—is the answer.

Literature Reviews

Increased enrolment counts are effectively offset by high rates of student attrition and grade repetition, which are the main indicators of educational waste (Sangamithra Buddhapriya 1995). The overall enrolment at a particular educational level, expressed as a percentage of the population inside the official age group for that level, regardless of student age (Govinda, R., & Bandyopadhyay, M. 2021). Despite attempts, we still don't fully comprehend the obstacles to education and the ensuing socioeconomic and health effects. The term "increase in partner violence" usually refers to an increase in incidents of intimate partner violence (IPV), which includes physical, emotional, psychological, or sexual abuse by a current or former partner or spouse (Ackerson, Kawachi, Barbeau, and Subramanian 2008), as well as additional effects of earing capacity (Hoddinott et al.2011 ; Maluccio et al.2009). Numerous studies have specifically highlighted how dropping out of school widens the gap of gender inequality (Kugler and Kumar2017; Marphatia et al.2019; Prakash et al.2017; Gouda and Sekher 2014). However, gender inequality continues to be a problem for women in marginalised areas in developing nations like India, overcoming caste, religious, socioeconomic, and geographic barriers (Shah 2011; Varughese and Bairagya 2020).

Students from low-income households, rural areas, and marginalised communities such as Muslim families and those from lower castes have disproportionately high attrition rates (Varughese and Bairagya 2020). A number of health indicators, such as the health of mothers and their offspring, are frequently linked to

school dropout (Arthur, Bangha, Sankoh and Health 2013; Chowdhury, Garg, and Kanchan Sk 2021). Fertility rates (Arthur et al. 2013; Prakash et al. 2017), early pregnancy rates among young people who have dropped out early (Baird, Garfein; Duflo et al. 2015), mortality rates among school-age children who have dropped out (Ghosh 2012), and the desire to have children (Chowdhury et al. 2021). Despite their strong desire to study, children's forced attrition from school is associated with their social and socioeconomic standing. (Gouda and Sekher 2014; Prakash et al. 2017; Kishore and Shaji 2012).

Statement of the Problem: Even with the implementation of flagship programs like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and the constitutional mandate for universal education, school attrition continues to be a structural problem in Indian education. Even though elementary Gross Enrolment Ratios (GER) are almost ubiquitous, there is still a sizable "transition gap" as students advance to higher secondary and higher education. This implies that a complex interaction of internal and external factors compromises the system's ability to retain students once they reach the formal school system.

In the particular setting of Kanchipuram Taluk, the occurrence of school dropouts is a major waste of national labour resources as well as a loss of personal potential. The issue is deeply ingrained in the socioeconomic structure of the area and goes beyond a simple lack of scholarly interest. Families from marginalised groups, especially those in low-income households and rural clusters, frequently experience "multiple deprivation" when financial obligations force children to participate in household or labour tasks, putting short-term survival ahead of long-term educational attainment.

Additionally, student disengagement is influenced by institutional issues such as the student-teacher ratio, school infrastructure, and the perceived lack of vocational relevance in official curricula. Traditional gender norms and safety concerns frequently exacerbate these difficulties for female students, resulting in greater secondary retention rates.

Although official data and existing literature offer broad national and state-level trends, a localised, primary-data-driven research is desperately needed to "unearth" the precise factors that contribute to attrition in Kanchipuram Taluk. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating: In order to close this gap, this study looks into:

- The particular socioeconomic factors that push children to drop out of school.
- The institutional flaws that prevent students from being engaged and staying in school.
- The long-term effects of this attrition on the socioeconomic growth of the area and the earning potential of the individual.

In the absence of a precise comprehension of these localised "causes and consequences," policy actions may not be able to meet the particular challenges that the student population in this particular Taluk faces. Therefore, the goal of this research is to offer an empirical foundation for more focused, successful measures to guarantee educational continuity and efficient manpower development.

Need for the Study

Agricultural loan is crucial for managing the delay between buying inputs and harvesting the product, as well as for augmenting a farmer's meagre self-finance. Despite the inherent uncertainties of farming, it serves as a financial bridge that keeps production stable.

- **Liquidity vs. Production:** In an ideal world, farmers would be able to decide on production without regard to their own needs for consumption if there was an endless supply of liquidity.
- **The Effect of Credit Rationing:** Liquidity becomes a legally binding restriction when credit is "rationed," which means farmers cannot obtain the entire amount they require even by offering higher interest.
- **Operational Trade-offs:** Due to these limitations, households are compelled to make less-than-ideal decisions about which investments to prioritise or which inputs to purchase, which frequently results in poorer yields and less efficiency.

Scope of the Study

This study's main focus is on the multifaceted causes and effects of school discontinuation among Kanchipuram Taluk students, with an emphasis on identifying the institutional and socioeconomic elements that contribute to dropout rates. Geographically, the study is limited to ten randomly chosen educational institutions in the Taluk's urban, semi-urban, and rural clusters. These institutions include middle, high, and upper secondary schools that are both public and privately funded. Due to the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan's (SSA) localised success, primary schools are excluded from the analytical scope, which focuses on a representative sample of one-fourth of the identified dropout universe. The study intends to give a diagnostic analysis of how individual, family, school, and societal determinants intersect to influence educational discontinuation by collecting primary data directly from the impacted persons. In the end, policy recommendations for regional educational development will be provided.

Objectives of the Study

- To understand the socio-economic status of the school dropouts included in the study.
- To determine the root causes and problems associated with dropping out of school.
- To offer strategic insights and practical suggestions for educational authorities, informed by the key outcomes of the research.

Hypotheses of the Study

- The respondents' age and gender do not significantly correlate with the several factors that contribute to school discontinuation.
- The reasons for school discontinuation do not significantly correlate with the respondents' demographic profile (community and family income).

Research Methodology

A thorough survey was carried out in Kanchipuram Taluk, Kanchipuram District, to examine the reasons and effects of school dropouts, as this study is mostly based on field-level data. A pre-tested structured questionnaire was used during the data gathering phase, which ran from June 2024 to April 2025. A pilot survey was conducted at several academic levels prior to the main study in order to verify the research instrument and guarantee the feasibility of the data gathering procedure.

Using a simple random sampling (lottery) technique, ten schools were chosen for the main survey out of all the educational establishments in Kanchipuram Taluk. The decision was made to reflect the region's varied educational landscape, which includes:

- Two middle schools in Kanchipuram's urban and semi-urban areas;

- One high school located in the Taluk's rural area;
- Seven Higher Secondary Schools, five of which serve the nearby local panchayats and two of which operate within Kanchipuram Corporation.

Eight of the ten schools that were chosen are government schools, and the other two are private-aided establishments.

A final sample of 136 respondents was selected from a universe of 546 dropouts to determine the sample size for the Kanchipuram Taluk study. The study guarantees a mathematically accurate 25% representation of the entire population by choosing every fourth person. These 136 respondents completed a standardised questionnaire that was divided into three separate modules:

Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Respondents

1. Factors and underlying reasons for school attrition;
2. The multifaceted effects of dropping out.

The information about the reasons and consequences of dropping out was obtained directly from the respondents, capturing viewpoints about the individual, the school setting, family dynamics, and larger societal effects.

The data was methodically coded and examined after the data collection stage. The study used ANOVA, Chi square testing, and percentage analysis, all of which were performed using SPSS statistical software. The study's conclusions are intended to give a clear explanation of the dropout patterns in the research region.

Result and Discussion

Particulars	Classification	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	59	43.4
	Female	77	56.6
Age	Less than 10 years	10	7.4
	10- 15 years	85	62.5
	Above 15 years	41	30.1
Extent of Education	Primary School	25	18.4
	Middle School	54	39.7
	High School	46	33.8
	Higher Secondary School	11	8.1
No. of Family Members	Up to 3 Members	18	13.2
	4- 8 Members	52	38.2
	Above 8 Members	66	48.5
Average Monthly Income of the Family	Less than 5000	49	36.0
	5001-10000	67	49.3
	Above 10000	20	14.7
Community	OC	5	3.7
	BC	17	12.5
	MBC	40	29.4
	SC	68	50.0
	ST	6	4.5
Reasons for dropouts	Lack of Transport Facility	21	15.4
	School-related reasons	15	11.1
	Personal Reasons	22	16.2
	Family and Society Reasons	78	57.3

Source: Primary Data

Of the 136 responders, 56.6 percent are female and 43.4 per cent are male. Thirty of the respondents, or 62.5 per cent of the total, are between the ages of ten and fifteen. Just 7.4 per cent of respondents are under the age of ten, while 1 per cent of respondents are over the age of fifteen.

According to the distribution of respondents according to their level of education, the Middle School level had the highest number of dropouts (54), followed by the High School level (46). In contrast, the Primary School level had a significantly lower number of dropouts (25).

The Higher Secondary level had the lowest attrition rate (11 responders).

Over half of the participants (48.5%) come from large homes with more than eight people, making up the largest portion of the sample. On the other hand, just 13.2 per cent of the respondents come from smaller households with three or fewer members, and 38.3 per cent come from medium-sized families with four to eight members.

According to the data, about half of the participants (49.3 per cent) have monthly incomes between Rs. 5,001 and Rs. 10,000. Just

14.7% of the sample's households make more than Rs. 10,000 per month, compared to a significant 36% of lower-income households making less than Rs. 5,000.

With Scheduled Castes making up precisely half of the research group at 50 per cent, it shows a significant concentration of responders from marginalised populations. At 29.4 per cent and 12.5 per cent, respectively, the Most Backward Classes and Backward Classes make up the next largest sectors. On the other hand, the Open Category and Scheduled Tribes make up the smallest percentages of participants—just 3.7 per cent and 4.4 per cent, respectively. The most common causes of school attrition are family and social factors, which account for a significant 57.3 per cent of all surveyed cases. These factors include severe domestic instabilities such as parental substance abuse, chronic illness, broken family structures, and a lack of academic support at home. 16.2 per cent of attrition is due to personal reasons, which are frequently caused by a lack of interest in the curriculum, difficulties understanding the material, or financial pressure to find work as soon as possible. Additionally, 15.4 per cent of the respondents are impacted by logistical obstacles including poor transportation options, particularly in remote locations with restricted access to schools. Lastly, institutional factors such as discriminatory treatment and staff safety concerns reveal serious systemic vulnerabilities within the school environment, while making up the smallest share at 11.1 per cent.

Test 1

The following hypothesis has been developed in order to investigate the differences between gender and different factors that contribute to school discontinuation.

Null Hypothesis (H₀): The respondents' gender does not significantly correlate with the several factors that contribute to school discontinuation.

The following calculated findings and hypotheses have been examined using the Chi-Square test:

Chi-Square Tests

Particulars	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	41.710a	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	50.932	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	25.913	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	136		

The p value for the significance test mentioned above is less than 0.05. As a result, the null hypothesis was disproved, and it was determined that gender and other factors that contribute to school dropout differ significantly.

Test-2

The following hypotheses are developed in order to investigate the relationship between the respondents' age and the different causes that caused them to stop attending school.

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant correlation between the age of the respondents and the various reasons that lead to school dropout.

The following table displays the computed results of the F-test, which was used to test the hypothesis at the 5 per cent significant level.

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Reasons for	Between Groups	4.054	2	2.027	1.500	.227

Dropout	Within Groups	179.762	133	1.352		
	Total	183.816	135			

The null hypothesis is accepted since the significant p value is greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no significant correlation between the respondents' age and the various reasons that cause them to school dropouts.

Test-3

The following hypotheses are developed in order to investigate the relationship between the respondents' community and the many circumstances that caused them to stop attending school.

Null Hypothesis (H₀): The community of respondents and the many circumstances that caused the respondents to stop attending school do not significantly correlate.

The following table displays the computed results of the F-test, which was used to test the hypothesis at the five percent significant level.

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Reasons for Dropout	Between Groups	10.649	4	2.662	2.014	.096
	Within Groups	173.168	131	1.322		
	Total	183.816	135			

The null hypothesis is accepted since the significant p value is greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no meaningful connection between the respondents' community and the many variables that cause them to stop attending school.

Test-4

The following hypotheses are developed in order to investigate the relationship between the respondents' monthly family income and the

different causes that cause them to stop attending school.

Null Hypothesis (H₀): The respondents' monthly family income and the different reasons that cause them to stop attending school do not significantly correlate.

The following table displays the computed results of the F-test, which was used to test the hypothesis at the 5 per cent significant level.

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Reasons for Dropout	Between Groups	10.960	2	5.480	4.217	.017
	Within Groups	172.856	133	1.300		
	Total	183.816	135			

The null hypothesis is rejected because the significant p value is less than 0.05, and it is determined that there is a significant correlation between the respondents' monthly family income and the many variables that cause them to stop attending school.

Suggestions

Based on the empirical findings of the study in Kanchipuram Taluk, the following strategic interventions are suggested to mitigate school attrition:

- **Targeted Financial Support for Middle-Income and Low-Income Groups:** Since over 85% of dropouts belong to families earning less than Rs. 10,000 per month, the government should expand scholarship schemes specifically for the "transition years" (Middle to High School) to offset the economic pressure of early employment.
- **Improving Rural Logistics:** Dedicated school bus services or bicycles for children in outlying clusters are needed to improve the 'last-mile' connectivity to schools in

rural village panchayats, as 15.4 per cent of respondents cited transportation as a barrier.

- **Community-Based Counselling for Large families:** Localised counselling is required to address marital instability, parental substance misuse, and to create a supportive academic environment at home, as 48.5 per cent of dropouts come from families with more than eight people.
- **Infrastructure and Quality Upgrades:** In order to move from "enrolment" to "retention," public schools must make immediate investments in cutting-edge infrastructure, including working computers, electricity, and internet connectivity, in order to make the curriculum more interesting and pertinent.
- **Gender-Sensitive Interventions:** Particular safety precautions and sociocultural outreach initiatives should be put in place to assist female students, especially in underprivileged areas where female literacy still lags, given the strong correlation between gender and dropout causes.
- **Emphasis on the "Middle School Gap":** Educational authorities should establish a "Early Warning System" to detect at-risk pupils in Grades 6–8 before they leave the system, as the Middle School level has the highest number of dropouts (54 respondents).

Conclusion

Even though Tamil Nadu, and more especially Kanchipuram Taluk, has made significant progress in Universal Primary Enrolment (GER of 103.4 per cent), the problem has moved from "entry" to "retention." The study identifies a crucial "transition gap" between the middle and secondary school levels, where institutional and socioeconomic forces combine to push pupils

out of the formal system. According to statistical analysis, the main factors influencing attrition are family dynamics (57.3 per cent) and financial limitations (family income), which greatly surpass personal disinterest. The fact that the null hypothesis about gender and income was rejected indicates that school dropout is a systematic problem with deep roots in a student's socioeconomic profile rather than a chance event. In the end, governmental interventions must go beyond universal enrolment drives if India is to turn its enormous workforce into a national asset rather than a problem. The secret to success is a "supply-side" revolution that enhances school accessibility, safety, and quality while providing the poorest households in marginalised communities with a financial safety net.

Limitations of the Study

Although this study offers a diagnostic examination of school attrition in Kanchipuram Taluk, it is important to recognise a number of inherent limitations. The study is geographically limited to a particular taluk, which might not accurately reflect the varied socioeconomic or educational dynamics of other parts of Tamil Nadu or India. In terms of methodology, the study concentrated on a sample of 136 respondents from just ten chosen institutions, which represents 25% of the identified dropout universe. Although this offers a fair glimpse, it does not fully capture the range of outlier situations. Additionally, because of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan's (SSA) localised success, the scope was limited to middle, high, and higher secondary schools, purposefully avoiding primary levels. Additionally, the study makes extensive use of primary field-level data gathered through questionnaires, which are

prone to respondents' subjective recollection and self-reporting biases.

Future Research Scope

- Examine the differences and similarities between sub-district (taluk), district, and state jurisdictions in order to conduct a thorough spatial study of dropout statistics and determine how geographic location and regional government affect student retention.
- Examine the complex socio-economic effects of early school dropout, paying particular attention to the institutional load on schools, the emotional and financial strain on families, and the long-term developmental implications for society as a whole.
- Conduct a gender-disaggregated analysis of student attrition rates to identify the specific socio-cultural and systemic obstacles that disproportionately impact the academic success of male and female students.
- Evaluate if present policy frameworks are effectively reducing the root causes of high dropout rates by critically analysing the effectiveness and scope of current state and federal educational interventions.
- Extend the study's longitudinal reach beyond primary and upper-primary education (Grade VIII) to encompass the crucial shift into Higher Secondary education, gathering information on the unique difficulties encountered by older teenagers.
- Examine how non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can develop community outreach programs, alternate learning routes, and grassroots solutions to reduce school abandonment.

- Examine the localised socio-economic effects of educational attrition in various topographical contexts, contrasting the particular infrastructure and accessibility problems in steep areas with the resource distribution problems in valley areas.

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