



Impact of Frequent Disasters on Drop-out Rate of Students in India

Rohit Gautam, Professor Maukam Singh

¹Research Scholar, Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Agra , ²Professor, A.K.P.G.College, Shikohabad, Firozabad
Department of Geography,
Agra, India

Abstract : Drop-out of Students from school have become a growing concern of the global community due to frequent disasters like flood, drought, landslide, wildfire, etc. A drop-out is a “ever-enrolled person” who did not complete the last level of education for which he or she enrolled and is no longer enrolled in any educational institutions. Drop out of students at primary school stage is very serious problem in the field of education, because it effects the very foundation of the future of the pupil concerned, nation and society as a whole. Destruction of School Infrastructure, deteriorating road condition, poor transport system, etc. due to flood in plain areas and landslide in hilly areas leading to absenteeism and possible withdrawl of children from school. More than 90 percent of schools in many areas were destroyed due to frequent disasters. The flood-hit areas of Wayanad are facing alarmingly high student dropout rate and absenteeism, especially among students from tribal communities. This paper highlights the drop-out rate of girls due to frequent disasters.

IndexTerms - Drop-out, absenteeism, Literacy, frequent disasters, girls

Introduction

Literacy in India is a key for socio-economic progress. Literacy of females is vital not only on grounds of social justice but also because it accelerates social transformation. Drop out amongst girl students is common phenomenon in under develop and in developing countries like India.

The main concern of such phenomenon is the destruction of School Infrastructure, deteriorating road condition, poor transport system, etc. due to flood in plain areas and landslide in hilly areas leading to absenteeism and possible withdrawl of children from school. Extreme weather events reduce the availability of safe drinking water, compromise sanitation and increase the incidence of weather-related diseases such as dengue, malaria, typhoid, diarrhoea, leading to absenteeism and possible withdrawl of girls from school.

he calamitous Wayanad landslide forces communities to evacuate and migrate. This leads to drop-out of students from schools. Natural disasters may majorly impact education systems and teachers' working conditions. When a disaster strikes, teachers may face many personal and professional challenges. Disasters may have a direct impact on the living conditions of teachers themselves. In a disaster, teachers, like other members of society, may lose their homes or relatives, experience family concerns, or cope with personal traumatization and emotional exhaustion (O'Toole, 2018). This can affect teachers' professional performance and lead to interruptions in their work due to the difficulties they face in their own lives (Seyle et al., 2013). Problems such as anxiety, depression, worry, fear, and panic are often observed among teachers in the aftermath of natural disasters. With the absence of proper teaching staff, the education system of a place crumbles and does not support the children of the area. When everything is destroyed by natural disasters, the first instinct of the leaders shall be not to rebuild schools, but focus on basic needs like shelter, food and compensation. Therefore, the children of affected areas are kept away from school education for years. More than 90 percent of schools in many areas were destroyed in the wake of the disasters.

In India, almost 85% of its geographical area is vulnerable to one or more multiple disasters. When a disaster strikes, children are not able to cope up with the academics leading to exclusion from the school system.

How Frequent Disasters Impacts Drop-out?

Natural disasters devastate the education system, especially students, teachers, and educational institutions. Students and teachers can lose their lives, be disabled, or be traumatized by a disaster. This is a barrier to creating a quality educational environment. Following a natural disaster, many adverse effects often occur, including dropping out of school, absenteeism, decreased academic performance, loss of motivation, and post-traumatic stress disorder. This is particularly true in developing countries like India. Natural disasters can severely damage schools and facilities, especially infrastructure. This can lead to temporary or permanent disruption of education.

For example, if there is a natural disaster like flood, drought, or cyclone in an area, it might cut the area off from the outer world. When it is cut off, the teachers who travel to that place to teach the students can no longer reach the place. With the absence of proper teaching staff, the education system of a place crumbles and does not support the children of the area.

Climate change and migration can also have long-lasting consequences for children's present and future education, employment, and standards of living. For example, in 2021 there were several climate-related events such as lightning and thunderstorms (787); floods, heavy rain, and landslides (759); cyclone storms (172); and others (32). All these climate-related events highly impact the educational attainment of school children, particularly in the 5–14 years age group. Migrants, due to climate change, are not able to access housing and health care; children, specifically, lack access to quality education due to language barriers. Frequent droughts and floods in India impact school attendance, especially at the primary level. In addition, parental death has triggered severe psychological issues among the children.

Floods in India have a significant impact on dropout rates, particularly in rural and flood-prone areas.

Disruption of Education

Financial constraints

Migration

Loss of Documents

Trauma and Stress

According to a study by the National Institute of Disaster Management, floods in India lead to an estimated 20-30% increase in school dropouts.

Droughts in India also have a significant impact on dropout rates, particularly in rural and drought-prone areas.

Water scarcity

Agricultural Labour

Migration

Economic Hardship

Malnutrition

According to a study by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), droughts in India lead to:

10-15% increase in school dropouts in rural areas

20-25% increase in child labour in agricultural sectors

30-40% increase in migration of families to urban areas.

Cyclones in India also have a significant impact on dropout rates, particularly in coastal and cyclone-prone areas.

Infrastructure Damage

Displacement

Trauma and Stress

Economic Hardship

Loss of Documents

According to a study by the National Institute of Disaster Management, cyclones in India lead to:

15-20% increase in school dropouts in coastal areas

25-30% increase in displacement of families

30-40% increase in psychological trauma among children

Some specific examples include:

Cyclone Phailin (2013): 10,000 schools damaged, 1.2 million children affected

Cyclone Hudhud (2014): 3,000 schools damaged, 50,000 children affected

Cyclone Fani (2019): 15,000 schools damaged, 1.5 million children affected

Conclusion-

Drop-out from school is really an important issue. No doubt the government of India has done marvellous work in the field of education but still in order to make this work even fruitful we need to work on school drop-outs. India has taken several steps to prevent and mitigate frequent disasters: (i) Disaster Management Act (2005), (ii) National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), (iii) National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), etc. These acts and initiatives aim to reduce the impacts of disasters in India general and also reduce drop-out rates of students in school particular.

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