

## **CHAPTER-2**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The issue of school dropout has been widely studied. Dropout is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by individual, household, and school-level factors. Research in India consistently identifies poverty and socioeconomic status as key drivers: children from low-income families are much more likely to leave school early. Financial hardship forces some children into work, depriving them of education. For instance, a longitudinal study in India found that economic engagement (paid work and substance use) significantly increased dropout risk, especially among boys. Similarly, national survey analysis (NSSO data) showed that students “not interested in studies” or burdened by family/domestic work were at highest risk of dropout; financial constraints, participation in economic activities, and inability to cope with studies also emerged as major factors. Early marriage and becoming a parent at a young age—especially for girls—are major reasons why many students in India end up leaving school.

#### **2.1 Individual Factors**

A common reason students drop out of school in India is that they lose interest in their studies. Surveys like the India Human Development Survey and the National Family Health Survey show that many children and teenagers say they simply aren't engaged or interested in education, which plays a big role in them leaving school. The NFHS-5 (2019–21) reports that over one-third of boys and one-fifth of girls who dropped out of school gave disinterest as the reason. Kumar et al. (2023) similarly found in their longitudinal India study that 43% of younger adolescent boys left school because they felt education was “not necessary,” by far the top reason; family problems (23%) and need to work (21%) were next. Studies of other regions in India corroborate these findings: Rani (2013) identified poor academic performance and lack of parental guidance as leading causes, while Nixon and Rao (2022) reported that low educational interest among girls was a key risk factor in rural Andhra Pradesh. Psychological factors like hopelessness or stigma (e.g. children feeling “out of place”) also appear in some research, though these are less quantified in large surveys. Influencing school dropout, individual factors like not interested in studies, ill health, lack of time for study, poor performance in study etc., lead to dropping out from school. Failure in examination was reported by Panda et al (1992) as one of the main reasons for dropping out of school.

<b>Individual factors</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Not interested in studies</li> <li>2. Got married</li> <li>3. Physically challenged</li> <li>4. Belief in Karma</li> <li>5. Lack of time for study</li> <li>6. Ill health</li> <li>7. Dis liking for teachers</li> <li>8. Regular absences</li> <li>9. Previous temporary withdrawals from school</li> <li>10. Over age enrolment</li> <li>11. Poor performance in studies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Low achievement</li> <li>-Grade repetition</li> <li>-Repeated failure</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
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## 2.2 Family and Socioeconomic Factors

Many experts point out that a student's chances of dropping out are closely linked to their family's background. When parents have less education or when there are many children in the family, the risk of leaving school early tends to be much higher. In MP, newspaper reports and NGO analyses highlight that families in rural and tribal areas, facing poverty, often deprioritize girls' education – a “tendency not to educate the girl child” is frequently mentioned. UNICEF data points out that over 50% of schools in MP's poorest districts have no sanitary facilities, disproportionately affecting girls' attendance. Financial burdens also drive dropouts: studies from Chhattisgarh and elsewhere have linked child labor and migration to dropout, e.g. children leaving school to support family income or because the family moves for work. Notably, a comprehensive NFHS-5 report emphasizes that poverty, not distance or cost, is the main precipitant: lack of interest as a reason often masks underlying financial pressures. The family related factors figured out in reviewed literature are scheduled below:

Factors leading to school drop out	
	<b>Demographic Characteristics</b>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parents' literacy</li> <li>2. Family size (Number of siblings)</li> <li>3. Sex of the household head</li> <li>4. Children required for care of siblings</li> <li>5. Parents' education (especially household head's)</li> </ol>
	<b>Economical Characteristics</b>

<b>Family Related</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Economic status</li> <li>2. Parents' occupation</li> <li>3. Children required for household work</li> <li>4. Children required for work on far/family business</li> <li>5. Required for outside work for payment in cash or kind</li> <li>6. Opportunity cost</li> </ol>
	<b>Social and Cultural characteristics</b>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parents don't have interest to educate their children</li> <li>2. Parents don't spend enough time with their children</li> <li>3. Caste, Religion</li> <li>4. Further education not considered necessary</li> <li>5. Value of education given by parents</li> <li>6. Cultural belief systems</li> <li>7. The perception on educating a girl</li> <li>8. Cultural beliefs about effective teaching and learning and educational practice</li> <li>9. Lack of parental guidelines in studies</li> <li>10. Decision-making relating to educational access</li> </ol>

## 2.3 School and Community Factors

The quality of a school and its environment really matter. When schools lack basic things like proper classrooms, libraries, or clean toilets, it becomes hard for students to feel motivated. On top of that, if there aren't enough teachers, students often lose interest and stop attending regularly. For example, a 2024 news article noted that MP has 1,200 schools with no teachers or only a single multi-subject teacher, leading to very low instructional quality. Such deficits in school facilities and staffing have been linked by researchers to higher dropout. In India-wide surveys, distance to school is sometimes a barrier, but the NFHS notes it is cited less often than lack of interest or cost. However, especially in rural Bhopal outskirts, long commutes can become an issue. Social environment factors – such as harassment, discrimination, or the burden of sibling care – have also been documented. Anecdotal evidence from Bhopal activists suggests many dropouts are from marginalized communities, who often face multiple disadvantages (poverty, unsafe travel, social bias). The factors related to school, teachers, and their administration and environment are tabulated as follows:

<b>School related factors</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. High cost of study</li> <li>2. School is too far</li> <li>3. Transportation is not available</li> <li>4. No safety to send girls</li> <li>5. No female teacher</li> <li>6. Teachers' absenteeism</li> <li>7. Poor quality of education</li> <li>8. Availability of options to access secondary and beyond (after primary education)</li> <li>9. Inappropriate language of instruction</li> <li>10. Teacher characteristics and behavior <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-way of punishing students</li> <li>-Perception of teachers</li> </ul> </li> <li>11. Poor infrastructure and facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-overcrowded classrooms</li> <li>-lack of buildings</li> <li>-lack of toilets</li> <li>-lack of playground</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>External factors</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The nature and role of the state</li> <li>2. Priorities in educational policies and their implementation</li> </ol>

## 2.4 Policy Context

India has enacted policies like the Right to Education (RTE) Act and midday meal schemes to retain children in school. Some literature (e.g. Jain, 2021) credits such programs with gradually reducing dropout at primary levels. However, studies imply gaps in implementation, especially in secondary schools. The Times of India highlights that despite initiatives (free uniforms, rations), many families in MP still don't send older children to higher secondary classes. At the national level, data show that dropout is particularly steep around grades 9–10 (secondary transition), where UDISE reported a dropout rate of 14.6% in 2020–21 (roughly 1 in 7 students).

School dropout has been examined in numerous studies as a multifaceted problem. Globally, educational monitoring reports note that underinvestment and socio-economic disparities keep millions out of school. For example, UNESCO (2024) found that despite overall improvements, the out-of-school population fell by only 1% in a decade, leaving 251 million children not in school. This stagnation is closely tied to poverty and lack of educational infrastructure in low-income regions.

In the Indian context, research and surveys consistently point to financial hardship and social factors as leading causes of dropout. Satyan (2025) reports that many Indian children drop out due to child labor and early marriage, especially among girls. (In India, about 34% of women are married before age 18, often ending their schooling.) Economic necessity forces some children to leave school and work, while

traditional norms keep others, particularly girls, at home. Quality of education is another commonly cited factor: disinterested students who find schoolwork irrelevant or poorly taught are more likely to quit. In many government schools, absenteeism of teachers, rote teaching, and lack of engagement have undermined student motivation.

Regional studies of Madhya Pradesh echo these national trends. MP has numerous schools but lags in retention. A recent report highlights that inadequate school infrastructure and teacher shortages contribute to student attrition in MP. For instance, many schools lack basic amenities such as drinking water, toilets, and furniture, making the learning environment difficult. Such conditions disproportionately affect girls and rural students. The ASER 2024 findings further underscore that by age 15–16 a large share of MP students leave school (14.3%), with girls more affected. These analyses suggest that both socioeconomic and institutional factors operate.

Other research also identifies gender disparities: girls often drop out due to household responsibilities or safety concerns, whereas boys may leave due to labor demands or low interest. Health issues (malnutrition, chronic illness) and parental education levels also influence dropout risk. Government programs like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the Right to Education Act aim to reduce dropouts by improving access, but studies note mixed results and call for better implementation.

Overall, the literature indicates that school dropout is a complex, context-specific phenomenon. In India, poverty, child labor, gender norms, and school quality are consistently implicated. However, there is a gap in localized case studies. By focusing on Bhopal, this study contributes to the literature by exploring how these factors play out at the city level.

## **2.5 Summary of Literature**

In sum, the literature indicates that school dropout in India is most often attributed to economic hardship, lack of interest/engagement in school, and family obligations – with distinct patterns for boys (labor, disinterest) and girls (marriage, gender bias). Studies also emphasize that improving parental education, providing financial support, and enhancing school quality can mitigate dropout risks. There is, however, a relative paucity of research focused specifically on urban districts like Bhopal. This study fills that gap by using primary survey data to analyze dropout causes in Bhopal and relate them to national trends.