CHAPTER I
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Educational backwardness is a form of socio-economic under development of a low-income country like India. There are sets of historical and other contemporary factors, which have contributed to the educational backwardness of low-income countries. Poverty, social segregation and sub-division cultural and religious, taboos, transport, bottlenecks etc., have contributed enormously towards slow progress in primary and secondary educational sector in many parts of the developing world. This is also true India a developing low income; high population based multilingual, multi-religious, and socially divisive society.

THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The educational backwardness and the increasing regional, sub-regional disparities in educational facilities and increasing school dropout rates, in many Indian States is a consequence of many factors, they range from economic, socio-cultural to attitudinal problems. Undoubtedly India has made impressive progress in developing a vast network of primary and secondary schools.

The school education in urban India has flourished rapidly and developed into a modern educational system on account of public and private and voluntary sector participation. However, the progress of primary and secondary school education in rural and tribal areas is not only uneven but is also highly unsatisfactory.

The rural and tribal schools experience many problems like shortage of teachers, lack of teaching aids, lack of buildings and improper location causing problems of accessibility by children, low motivated untrained teachers etc. Therefore the experience of Indian states in developing and spreading primary and secondary education is diverse and has always not been quiet satisfactory. Some of the important problems of school education include chronic shortage of financial resources and teachers and centralized administration, the growing rural-urban and rural tribal dichotomy in the spread of school education. To this list of the problems
of increasing school dropouts may be added which is mostly a direct consequence of rural poverty.

The increasing school dropouts at stage one (Class I to IV) stage two and stage three has resulted in the increasing proliferation of child labour in India. The child labour is an important form of obstacle for developing educated highly skilled diversified labour force for a country, which intends to achieve a rapid high growth rate. The semi-literate and nominally literate and illiterate children are to some extent absorbed in agriculture and allied activities and other rural occupations. But fairly a large number of them are shifted to urban areas and construction sites where they work in construction and building activity, unorganized sectors, industry and business, unorganized service activities, hotels and restaurants, bars, retail shops, textile emporium, auto garages, beedi and agarbathi-making units, soap manufacturing, matchbox, stone cutting and polishing and crackers making units etc. So the increasing problem of school dropouts is the major source of child labour and street children in metropolitan cities of Modern India. So policies directed at reducing child labour would have to be complimented with policies directed at reduction of poverty and reduction of school dropout rates or increasing school enrolments rate of the children in the age group of five to fourteen (5 to 14 years).

There appears to be a direct relationship between the level of poverty and the level of school dropouts. In other words higher is the level of poverty, higher is the size of school dropouts and larger is the chunk of child labour.

The goal of universalization of elementary education has remained a distant possibility in India on account of many problems. This is recognized by Government of India itself;

“The Seventh Plan gave over-riding priority for the realization of the objective of UEE by 1990. It was estimated that for achieving the goal, over 5 crores of additional children would have to be enrolled. By 1991-92, however, about 2.53 crores were actually enrolled in the formal system and even after taking account of 0.72 crores in the non-formal system, the target could not be achieved. At the end of 1991-92, the gross enrolment at the primary
and upper-primary stages is likely to have reached 10.09 crores and 3.44 crores respectively. The latest data show that in 1990-91, the gross enrolment ratio (GER) had reached 101.03 percent at the primary stage and 60.4 percent at the upper primary stage. Considering that the number of overage and underage children in the GER data was in the range of 16-23 percent and the dropout rate for primary stage in 1987-88 was 46.97 percent and for elementary stage as a whole 62.29 percent, we are clearly far away form the goal of universal enrolment and retention, much less achievement”. (G.O.I. Eighth Five Year Plan, Vol.II, (1992), pp.283-284).

The problem of poverty is the major enemy of children’s education in backward economies. It not only increases the size of dropouts but is also a major cause for some group of children remaining never-enrolled or un-enrolled children in schools. The ninth (9th) five year plan focuses attention on these two aspects of wastages of school education and also the failure of school system. The Ninth Plan has observed in this regard as follows:

“In order to achieve Universalization of Primary Education (UPE), it had been estimated for the year 1993-94 that approximately 142 million children in the age-group 6-11 years, would have to be provided primary schooling, out of which 69 million would be girls .... The problems is further accentuated by high dropout rates. Among those who are enrolled, it is estimated that large number of children in classes I-V dropout in between, before completing their class V. The latest available date on dropout rates for classes I-V for the year 1996-97 reveal that the dropout rate for the country as a whole was 38.95 percent. It was 39.37 percent among boys and 38.35 percent among girls. Further there were wide interstate disparities. The major problems of dropouts as well as access to schooling is in the educationally backward states of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West-Bengal.” (G.O.I. Ninth Five Year Plan Vol.II (1997, pp 115.).

The Government of India and State Government are aware of the serious socio-economic, politico-cultural consequences of large size of children remaining outside the school
system in India. Therefore, both the goals of reducing school dropout and un-enrolled or never enrolled children and thereby increasing the school enrollment of children have received greater attention and priority in the Ninth Five Year Plan period (1997-2002). The Ninth Plan document outlines the current strategy of further expansion and development of school education system in India as under;

"The strategy of educational development during the next decade of planning takes into account various emerging factors like

(i) The national goal of providing primary education as a universal basic service,
(ii) The Supreme Court Judgment declaring education to be fundamental right for children up to 14 years of age,
(iii) The need to operationalise programmes through Panchayathi Raj Institutions (PRls) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs),
(iv) The legal embargo on child-labour,
(v) The provisions of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995, and
(vi) Heightened awareness of human rights violations in respect of women, children and persons from disadvantaged sections of society.

It is also realized that a large number of out-of-school children, who figure neither in school enrolments nor in the calculations of identifiable child-labour are to be provided access to schooling.” [G.O.I.(1997) Ninth Five Year Plan, Vol. II, pp.101].

Further, the extent of poverty, school dropouts and never-enrolled children differ between various Indian States. The states with low school enrollment are also the states with high school dropout rates and high percentage of unschooled children to the total children population. These states are highly backward regions. They are Rajasthan, Uttara Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Uttaranchal and Orissa, etc., so the school dropouts and unenrolled students and proliferation of child labour is higher in highly populated backward areas.
A similar relationship between poverty, school dropouts, never-enrolled children and child labour may also be found in small backward districts or cluster of the districts with in States. For instance the districts of North Karnataka, the dry land districts of North-Western part of Andra Pradesh and Vidarbha regions of Maharashtra etc., are also known for high rate of school dropouts, large concentration of unschooled children and child labour.

It is also important to note that on account of sub-regional disparities in agricultural growth, irrigation development, transport and communications etc., there is also regionally uneven progress in school education. Therefore, inter taluk differentials in school enrollment, dropout rates and never-enrolled children as well as poverty levels. This trend may be seen in almost all districts of Karnataka State. Some of the important problems of school education in Karnataka are enumerated below:

- 10 districts have a female literacy rate below the national average of 39 per cent. The rural female literacy rate of Raichur is only 16.48 percent.
- 2.5 million Persons in the 15.35 age group are illiterate.
- 1 million children in the 6-12 age groups are still out-of-school (1996-97).
- 43.7 percent of children who enroll in class 1st do not complete Class VII.
- Most out-of-school children are engaged in some form or the other of child labour.
- The high GER masks the fact of a large number of underage and overage children.
- In the 13-15 age group the number of out of school children is 1.5 million.
- In Raichur district the GER (Class VIII to X) is only 13.71.
- Only 49 percent of high schools have toilets and only 37 percent have laboratories.

A BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review would indicate the form and level of research conducted in a subject till date. It would also give information about the methods of investigation, instruments
of measurement used, the nature of analysis of the problems and the policy recommendations formulated. Therefore, the literature review would provide useful insights into a problem chosen for research study.

The literature review may be broadly grouped into (1) theoretical studies, (2) empirical and descriptive studies.

The economic theorization of the growth and performance of primary and secondary school system, the household and Government decision about education of the children the investment and expenditure patterns etc., are not adequately theorized so far. Thus serious and comprehensive empirical studies about the economic and social value of school education system as remained under researched till the end of 1970’s. It was from early 1980’s on account of the efforts of the World Bank, UNICEF and economists and sociologists, associated with the research in economics of primary and secondary school education had received serious attention.

As far as India is concerned probably three phases in research in primary and secondary school education may be identified which may be stated as follows:

(1) During 1951-1969, the research in school education was mostly confined to explain the need and significance, teachers role, curricula development, medium of instruction, etc.,

(2) The phase of 1969 to 1986 may be termed as the second phase in the history of growth of primary and secondary school education in India. The central and state governments have began to realize the enormity of the process of bringing a very large number of children running into several millions into school has been a very stupendous task. In this period the government also realized that there is the problem of school dropouts and un-enrolled children. Thus, they have started the adult education programme throughout the country.

(3) The period 1986 to 2001 may be termed as the third phase in evolution and growth of school education in India with some major departures from the past
opening up of opportunities and implementation of certain new policy initiatives under the New Education Policy 1986 (NEP). It has been revised from time to time by Government of India to address the major problems of Universalization of Elementary Education. It was during the third phase (1986 to 2001) serious attention was paid by researchers to examine the problems of school dropouts, unsuccessful students and their repeated continuation in schools. During the Eighth (8th) and Ninth (9th) Five Year Plans (1992-97, 1997-2002), and the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007) the Government also taken a serious view of the growing number of school dropouts, never-enrolled students and proliferation of child labour. Therefore, financial allocations for primary and secondary school education were stepped up, new programmes like Universalization Elementary Education (UEE), District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), revised adult education and non-formal education and neo-literacy campaign programmes were also implemented to impart literacy and basic education to the illiterate and semi-literate.

Therefore, the problems of growing school dropouts and never enrolled or un-school student in the age group of 5 to 14 years as received greater attention from the government during 1990’s. The above analysis would briefly outline an attempt to review school education policies and their limitations.

Many Indian sociologists and economists have analyzed from time to time the problems of school education system in India. J.B.Tilak, S.E.Goel, Bhagavan Dayal, Dandekar. V.M., J.P.Naik, V.E.Reddy and K.S.Bhatt, Odeyar ‘D’ Heggade, John Kurien, Balajit Singh, A.S.Sitharamu and many others have analyzed the different aspects of the growth and development of school education system from socio-economic perspectives in India. Lack of proper physical infrastructure, facility, inadequacy of teachers, teacher tyranny, poor administration, low quality of teachers and gross disinterest in the activities of the school are among many reasons cited in research literature for the low quality of primary education. Absence of interest among students, poverty, parents apathy towards their children, social
backwardness, student-absenteeism during agriculture season or otherwise, household work, sibling care, the highly de-contextualized social and cultural milieu of the school curriculum are a few more reasons commonly attributed for the low quality of primary education from time to time (Naik 1975; Premi 1993; Odeyar D Heggade (1992) Acharya 1994; Dreze and Sen 1995; Ahmed 1997; Mujumdar 1998; Banerju 1999; Rao and Kulkarni 1999; Probe 1999; Filmer and Prichett 1999; Tilak 1999; Deetal 2000; Chaudhuri 2000; N. Mythili 2002.;). The major findings of these studies include:

(a) The expansion and growth of primary and secondary school education system in India is constrained by shortage of financial resources on the part of the state governments;

(b) Till very recently the Union Government of India was indifferent and negligent towards the goal of universalization of elementary education and it was adamant in saying that school education is the responsibility of the state governments;

(c) The problems of lack of buildings, improper location of the school, lack of transport, widespread poverty, shortage of teachers, uninspiring curricula, lack of toilets, sports facilities etc., in primary and secondary schools was also responsible for slow progress in enrollment of students in primary and secondary schools;

(d) The efforts of government in reducing poverty although is substantial. on account of increasing population growth, its achievements have became blur. In other words, the benefits under poverty reduction programmes and the planned economic growth process have been eaten away by ever increasing population growth. This is also manifested in the form of increasing number of school dropouts and never-enrolled students;

(e) The primary and secondary school education also suffers from the chronic controversies relating to medium of instructions, nature and composition of curriculum development, and teacher recruitment, transfer and wage revision etc.,
In fact there are many studies explaining the nature and magnitude, the causes and consequences of school dropouts and un-enrolled or never-enrolled children in India. In this sense the linkage between poverty (rural as well as urban), and child labour and other correlates of these problems are considerably unexplored. In this sense the problem of poverty, school dropout and child labour is under-researched in India. On this basis a rationale is derived for the present study.

Pravin Visaria, Anil Gumber, Leela Visaria, (1993) in their study of the progress and problems of literacy and primary education in India for the period 1980-81 to 1991 with reference to Gujarat and Maharashtra State (both urban, rural areas) have reached the following meaningful conclusions:

"Not all the enrolled children continued in school, several of them dropped out. By age 14, the proportions of “dropouts” approximated 36 to 43 percent in rural Gujarat and 19 to 22 percent in Urban Gujarat. The corresponding ranges were 40-65 percent for rural Maharashtra and 17-33 percent for urban Maharashtra (in all the four pairs of numbers, the lower figure relates to boys and the higher figure to girls). On the whole, the dropout phenomenon begins after age 10 and more particularly after age 12. The phenomenon probably coincides with the completion of primary schooling but the possibilities of work or economic activities also seem to play a role, particularly in rural areas, for girls, the need to develop the capacity to handle domestic chores, becomes an important competing demand, and receives priority over schooling.”

S.M.I.A. Zaidi (1991) has analysed nature and extent of dropouts at elementary school level in India. He has identified poverty of parents and poor performance in the schools as the strong factors contributing to the accentuation of school dropouts problem. His study has a reference period of 1960-61 to 1981-82. He has reviewed the study conducted by NIEPA about the school dropouts. The important findings of Zaidi’s study are as follows:

(a) At elementary level the highest dropouts take place in Class I. For the latest
cohort i.e. 1974-75 to 1981-82, about 36 percent students dropped out in Class I which is nearly half of the total dropouts up to Class VIII.

(b) As compared to primary classes the dropout rate at middle classes is quiteless. Roughly three-fourth of the students taking admission in Class VI reach the final class of middle level i.e. Class VIII.

(c) Out of the students taking admission in Class I only about 38 percent reach class V and hardly 28 percent reach class VIII. These figures for girls are even less than that, i.e., about 34 percent and 24 percent respectively.

(d) It is very disheartening to note that over a period of 15 years (from 1960-61 to 1974-75) the retention rates have very marginally increased which means the dropouts rates have reduced marginally. In 15 years dropouts in Class I have reduced from about 40 percent to about 35 percent. Thus the progress in retention is almost negligible.

(e) Transition from primary level to middle level seems to be better. The latest cohort data shows that out of 38.6 percent student reaching Class V in year 1978-79 as high as 34.4 percent enrolled in Class VI in 1979-80 which means the dropout from final class of primary stage to the first class of middle stage is only 4.4 percent points.

V.N. Reddy (1995) has examined gross enrolment, dropout and non-enrollment ratios in India for primary and middle level education for children in the age group of 6 to 11 and 6 to 14 years. He has used the technique of multiple linear regression analysis for analyzing state level primary and secondary school education data from 42 round of National Sample Survey the period of July 1986 to June 1987. This study explains regions for interstate variations in school enrollment but fail to identify factor responsible for increasing dropouts and non-enrolment of children in schools. This clearly shows the need for village level studies or urban slum level studies to establish the relationship if any between poverty, dropouts and non-enrolment of children in schools.

Kusum. K. Premi (1990) has analysed the problem of primary and secondary education of working children in India. This study is based on censes data relating to work
participation rates (WPR) of children in the age groups 5 to 14 years by sex and rural urban residence for India as whole period 1961 to 1981. It provides a good account of interstate distribution of working children in India. Kusum.K.Premi reaches the following conclusion:

"State-wise distribution of child workers indicates inverse relationship in literacy rates and WPR of children. There is a definite correlation between dropout rates and WPR of children, sectoral distribution of child workers shows sharp rural-urban and male-female disparities, indicating the need for micro-approach for catering to the needs of different clientele groups. The 1981 census, which is more comprehensive, clearly indicates that economic activity is only marginal (less than 3 percent) in case of children in the age group 6-10 years. Even among children aged 11-13 the proportion of working children is only 15 percent. A number of children, especially girls, were neither economically active nor attending school. This analysis dispels the general notion that economic activity keeps the children away from school or leads to their premature dropout. It also indicates the need of conducting more in-depth studies of non-enrolled and school dropouts studies based on survey approach and undifferentiated samples may not help us in identifying the real causes of non-enrolment or dropouts of children at the primary level."

R.L. Bhat and Effat Yasmeen (1994) have examined the nature and magnitude of wastages in primary education with reference to Kupwara district in Jammu and Kashmir. This study focuses on the progress and dropouts in primary education from Class I to V for the years 1987 and 1988. This study concludes as follows:

"The present study conclusively pin points that the main causes of stagnation are the illiteracy of parents (which gives rise to undesirable home at most here not conducive to studies) and the heavy courses of study (which retard the interest in studies of a below-average student). For the dropouts, the major causes have turned out to be family’s poverty, economic usefulness of young boys and girls in family activities, ill-health and the illiteracy of parents, and their reluctance to keep their children in schools - all being the various facets of low income level.

It has been found that the wastage rate in Government schools is higher than in private schools, in spite of the fact that the former type of schools have more qualified and trained
teachers as compared to the latter. This apparently paradoxical phenomenon can be explained by the fact that there is adequate availability of inputs in private schools as compared to many Government schools. However, one feels tempted to argue that mere educational qualification and professional training of teachers does not necessarily ensure good quality teaching (which should help in minimizing wastage in terms of stagnation and dropouts). Perhaps a sense of hard work, commitment and above all the accountability on the part of teachers may give better results. The stagnation and dropout rates in case of girls were found to be higher compared to those of boys, which is a usual characteristic of a rural society where the girl’s education is still considered to be an optional decision.”

A.B.L. Srivastva (1999) has analysed the relationship between internal efficiency and dropout rates with reference to Phase-I-districts DPEP. The reference period of study is 1996 and 1997. He provides a cohort analysis of the school dropout rate for the select districts. The major findings of the study are given below;

(a) Cohort dropout rate is between 4 and 32 percent in the majority of the districts (about three fourths of the districts) in 1997. It is less than 20 percent in 19 districts and less than 10 percent in 8 districts.

(b) Cohort dropout rate is 30 percent or more in 11 districts according to 1997-98 data, whereas it was over 30 percent in 14 districts according to 1996-97 data. In the middle range (20 to 29 percent), there were 6 districts in 1996 and 11 districts in 1997.

(c) In 15 districts, the cohort dropout rate decreased by over 3 percentage points between 1996 and 1997; it remained almost the same in 11 districts, (the increase or decrease being less than 3 percentage points), and increased by more than 3 percentage points in 12 districts. Only in 13 out of 40 districts, cohort dropout rate of girls is greater than that of boys by more than 5 percentage points in 1997. In 25 districts, the gender disparity in CDR is less than 5 percentage points, out of which, there are 19 districts in which it is less than 2 percentage points. In 2 districts, CDR of boys exceeds that of girls by more than 5 percentage points.

(d) Comparing the gender disparity in CDR of 1996 with that of 1997, we find that there has been some narrowing of the gender gap between 1996 to 1997. The difference between CDR of boys and girls was less than 2 percentage points in only 12 out of 40
districts in 1996. But in 19 districts out of 40 districts in 1997. The districts in which the gender gap has increased instead of decreasing are Sirsa in Haryana, Kolar in Karnataka and Tikamgarh in Madhya Pradesh.

(e) Overall, the number of districts in which CDR of boys differs from that of girls by less than 5 percentage points has been almost the same in the years, 1996 and 1997. In Phase-I districts, the percentage of children who dropped-out, out of the total enrolled in classes I to V in 1997, was less than 5 percent in 22 out of 40 districts, that is nearly half the districts. There are only 5 phase-I districts (that is, 20 percent districts) in which the annual dropout rate exceeded 10 percent. All these high dropout rate districts are in Assam and Madhya Pradesh.

(f) The gender disparity is not serious in most of the districts. Only is 10 out of 38 phase-I districts (that is, 23 percent districts), the annual dropout rate of girls exceeds that of boys by more than 2 percentage points.

R.P.Singh (1991) has analyzed the problem of dropouts in non-formal education systems. This is an interesting study focusing on wastages in non-formal education system on account of disinterest and other personal problems of learners and disinterest and incompetence of the teachers. R.P.Singh has made the following observation regarding the dropouts in non-formal education systems.

"Premature withdrawal of a child from a school constitutes dropout. In India it is not a new phenomenon for educationists. In 1928 also attention was drawn to it by Hastog Committee. Since then numerous regional and national studies have been undertaken. In 1966-69, NCERT made an in depth study of this problem. Since then other studies have merely tended to reinforce the findings of the NCERT. Based on the data on dropout and stagnation from different states of India during 1950-57 the NCERT study observed that of 100 pupils enrolled in grade I about 39 dropout or stagnate in grade I and II, 8 each in III and IV, 7 in grade V, 3 in grade VI and 2 each in grade VII and VIII. In India for every 100 children who enter grade I, only 50 reach grade V and 24 pass grade VIII. The percentages vary from region to region. For example in Madhya Pradesh during the year 1973-74 to 1977-78 there was a dropout rate of 65.8 percent at primary stage alone. These figures should be valid for
the nine educationally backward states as well identified by a group set-up in 1979. Since then one wonders whether the picture has changed. Most of these backward states are Hindi speaking."

Kiran Bhattly (1998) has analyzed the educational deprivation in India. A survey of field investigations, addresses the issues of economic constrains, schooling quality and parental motivation as a set of possible influences determining the educational decisions within a household and contributing to the over all picture of educational deprivation at the national level. He finds as exaggerated emphasis being placed as child labour and inadequate motivation among poor parents as the major obstacles to universalization of primary education. Rather, it is the direct costs of schooling, which impose substantial burden on families and the low quality of schooling facilities, which reduce the child’s interest in education that primarily account for educational deprivation. In both these aspects / reducing private costs of schooling and improving schooling quality the state have a crucial role to play, but there are few signs that the government is addressing these problems.


This article is based on the desk review of DPEP and qualitative micro studies in six DPEP states, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Karnataka, and Tamilnadu. The introductory section briefly focuses on the DPEP, especially with regard to its strategy to achieve gender and social equity in primary education. Section II reviews the available statistical data on primary education and maps and the success and failures of the last decade in primary education with special emphasis on girls and other marginal groups. Section III on the basis of the statistical review as well as other documented evidence, introduces the emergent concept of hierarchies of access' to describe the new segregation occurring in primary education; whereby a child’s caste, class and gender seems to be defining the nature of school they attend Government primary schools. AS/EGS, or private schools and its
implications for the process of teaching and learning as well as achieving the larger stated objectives of gender and social equity. He has further unravels the hierarchies of access by shifting the focus on to the micro studies and extensively the tangible and intangible dimensions of gender and social equity that frame the implementation of DPEP at the village and panchayat level.

The penultimate section draws from both the desk study as well as the micro studies and suggests ways to reverse the trend of segregation in order to move ahead and make universal primary education a substantive reality and highlights the social and gender equity dimensions that frame primary education today.

Vimala Ramachandran, Kameshwari Jandhyala, Aarathi Sahjee (2003), in their study of the through the life cycle of children; impede successful primary school completion, it is focuses on children, their family, larger community, the available education and health services in an effort to understand the causality and social processes that affect, partially or wholly, children’s full participation in schooling. It explores the continuous and cumulative nature of social and economic exclusion that poor children face and the impact this has on their ability to complete primary schooling. Areas that could make a difference, the study suggests, are well-functioning schools with basic facilities and motivated teachers; an adequate pre-school educations component within the ICDS programme; Lightened public awareness of health and nutrition and equally importantly, strengthening of traditional community structures.

Venkata Narayan. M. (2004) has examined the out-of-school children, child labourers of educationally deprived? This study focuses on out-of school children are child labourers. This study concludes as follows.

This study conclusively points that the important causes that all out-of-school children are child labourers are not convincing. Firstly, while suggesting that all out-of-school children are child labourers, it sounds as if work and schooling are mutually exclusive activities for children. That is, it implies that only out-of-school children are working and school-going children are not working at all.
Secondly, among the out-of-school children, a significant number are disabled or unhealthy for such children it is their deprivation of health that deprives them of education. Therefore once cannot say that all out-of-school children are working. As per the NFHS-1 1992. It is found that in Andhra Pradesh around 8 percent of the children in the age group 5-14 are disabled by their activity status.

Thirdly, parents’ perceptions of a suitable age for their children to enter school differ. For instance, in rural Andhra Pradesh in the NSS 50th round, about 7 percent of the parents reported that the reason for their child not attending school is that he/she is too young to go to school. In such cases, it is doubtful if they engage the same children in any work.

Fourthly, the time use survey and PROBE, which included a broader definition for work than the conventional one. Do not find that all out-of-school children are working. In the PROBE survey, only 25 percent of the out-of-school children were reportedly working the day before the survey.

Ideally, all children in the age group 5-14 must be in school irrespective of caste, gender, region and any other specificity. Those children are to be given a minimum level of education. Education is a prime requirement for them. Those who are not able to attend school due to economic, health or school-related problems can be referred to as educationally deprived children. It is justified in the perspective of human capital, human development and human rights with this objective we can categories homogeneously all those out-of-school children as educationally deprived children rather than child labourers. Keeping the child in school reduces the working hours of the children.

Naomi Hossain, Naiil Kabeer (2004) has analyzed the achieving Universal Primary Education Eliminating gender disparity. This study argues that underlining this success is a confluence of both demand and supply side factors involved in bringing about a profound social change. It explores the changing structure of economic opportunities and gender relations affecting parents, perception of the value of female education. The challenge now is to improve the quality of education that may prove more difficult than the expansion of access.

Kumar Rana, Samantak Das (2004) has explained the primary education in
Jharkhand. This paper details the results of a survey conducted in selected areas of Jharkhand's Dumka district. While inadequate infrastructure and the lack of non-enrollment, dropouts and poor attendance of pupils scheduled tribe children are particularly at a disadvantage, as education is not imparted in their mother tongue. The state of primary education, as this paper suggests, needs a multi-pronged effort to ensure its greater effectiveness. The government can step in with incentives such, as mid day meal schemes, community participation in the governance of the primary schooling has to be ensured.

Kumar Rana With Subhrangsu Santra, Arindam Mukherjee, Tapati Banerjee, Moumita Kundu, (2005) has explained the public-private Interface in primary education with reference to West Bengal. In this study private schooling as the alternative to public schools, since a vast majority of parents cannot bear the cost of private school education. Even if a ‘voucher system’ is introduced (where the Government may issue education vouchers to the parents which would enable them to enroll children in schools of their choice). The feasibility of such a system is remote mainly for two reasons:

1. Private schooling would involve a far larger amount of parental expenditure than vouchers could offer, and
2. The possibility of establishing private schools in the rural and underprivileged areas of the country is nothing more than a delusion.

Melissa Binder and Christopher wood-ruff (2002:pp249) have observed that “A growing body of theoretical and empirical research suggests that inequal income distribution creates obstacles to economic development one of the channels through which inequality is posited to operate is in hindering investments in human and physical capital; imperfections in capital market prevent those with low incomes from making profitable investments. The failure to invest in human capital has long-term consequences, both for the individual and the economy. If the poor are unable to garner, the resources needed to send their children to school, then income inequality is transmitted from one generation to the next. The interaction between schooling levels and inequality has led many to suggest that broadening educational attainment is the best way to reduce inequality”.
"G.Psacharopoulos reports higher returns to schooling in Latin America relative to returns in industrialized countries. The higher returns no doubt reflect, in part scarcity rent. According to human capital theory, these high returns, over time, should increase the demand for schooling, raise the supply of highly educated workers, and thereby dissipate the scarcity rents. Nevertheless, it is widely presumed that incomplete credit markets the poor quality of basic public education, and non-economic barriers prevent the majority of the population from pursuing optimal education investments especially in higher education. The problem is that children from families with limited resources cannot finance even potentially very profitable investments in schooling, are stuck in low-quality public schools, and lack access to the social capital - such as role models - that can greatly reduce information costs. Studies of both industrialized and developing countries show that family background is an important determinant of schooling attainment. Thus, a primary component of reducing income inequality is the degree of intergenerational mobility in schooling. Countries with rising mobility have better prospects for reducing income inequality. A final consideration on the link between intergenerational schooling mobility and inequality concerns different patterns between and within cohorts. Almost universally, individuals complete their schooling in their youth. Thus rising schooling levels over time tend to increase between-cohort inequality even as within-cohort inequality falls”. (Ibid, pp 251-52).

The Governments may intentionally or unintentionally change schooling options for various types of households by influencing or changing the quality of public schools. This situation is found in India where we have English medium well-equipped schools Vis-a-vis the ill-equipped regional language medium schools. A number of recent studies have analyzed the significance of school quality on school outcomes, Card and Kruger (1996) and Moffitt (1996) have analyzed situation in USA; whereas Alderman and et.al (1996), Behrman and Birdsall (1983), Behrman, Birdsaall and Kaplan (1996), and Hanushek (1995).have analyzed the way how school quality affect school outcomes in developing countries.

Jere.R.Behrman and James C.Knowles (1999:211-56) have shown that: “The stronger are the associations between household income and child schooling, the lower is intergenerational social mobility and the less equal is opportunity. This study establishes positive
relationship between household income and children’s school success in Vietnam. J.R.Behrman and J.C.Knowles have shown that; “If all markets function perfectly, there are no government interventions, and schooling is only an investment, then every one invests in schooling until the expected rate of return from schooling equals the expected rate of return on alternative investments, regardless of household income. In this case there are no or very few channels through which income may be associated with schooling. But given the range of real world market imperfections and government interventions, there are many reasons why household income may be associated with schooling, even if schooling is purely an investment”.

J.R.Behrman and J.C.Knowles (1999: pp 219-20) have identified several reasons for the close association between marginal private benefits of schooling and household income is the presence of government policies or market imperfections. Let us briefly sum up them as shown below:

(1) The Government might allocate more resources to schools which are more attended by the children of the rich households and less resources for schools that are attended by the children of the low income households;

(2) Generally wealthier households invest more in their children’s tutoring, health and nutrition than the low income households do. Thus, under conditions of market imperfections is educational investments, and low costs of education for rich households, the marginal private benefits of primary and secondary education is larger for the rich households.

(3) Children’s genetic endowments acquired from their parents often interact with schooling investments and ultimately affect and are affected by household incomes;

(4) Households do make supportive investments in job search and establish contact with others, which help to go for proper job search in future.

(5) “…Higher income households may have better information (in part because of better family enterprise options and better connections), given imperfect markets for information. As a result, they face less uncertainty about schooling investment decisions and, assuming constant risk aversion, therefore, have higher expected marginal private benefits than poorer households” (J.R.Behrman and J.C.Knowles: 19
1999: pp 220)

(6) “...Higher-income households may have lower risk-aversion. Therefore, in the presence of imperfect insurance markets or insurance with positive private costs their private incentives would be to invest more in schooling than otherwise identical lower-income households”. (Ibid).

(7) “...High-income households may be better able to deal with stochastic events. For example, through their connections (perhaps facilitated by income transfers, including bribes), they may be better able to offset their children’s bad performance on admissions examinations than poorer households can. They therefore have private incentives to invest more in schooling than otherwise identical lower-income households”.

“The first possibility (involving public policies) relates to endogenous policy choices which depending on the mechanism, could favor either higher or lower income households. In the other six cases higher-income households have private incentives to invest more in the schooling of otherwise equal children because they cope better with market imperfections or higher-incomes households have unobserved characteristics that increase schooling investments and are associated with household income”. (Ibid, pp 220).

RESEARCH GAPS IDENTIFIED:

1. The theories of pure public goods being economic explanations of supply side neglect the socio, political, cultural, and determinants of the demand for school education. So there is need for identifying and analyzing the non-economic factors leading to slow progress in school education.

2. Many empirical study attempted so far have not studied in detail the impact of new progress of school support systems like mid-day meal programme on improvement in school enrolments, distribution of school uniforms and books etc. in the recent and past in general and with reference to Karnataka state in particular.

3. Many empirical studies have not analyzed systematically the extent of poverty resulting in higher school dropout rates and never-attended children by gender
and across different rural cast.

4. Within school education system that is between primary level (I to V), secondary level (VI to VIII) and Higher Secondary level (IX and X-plus). The School enrolment, Retention rate, school dropout rate tends to be different, (vary). The causes of for these change variations are not explained in the existing studies except S.M.I.A. Zadi, Pravi visaria, and R.P.Singh.

5. Family environment is a important determinant of school enrolment of children this social variable does not seem to be taken into account in different studies analyzing the problem of higher dropout rate and never attended children situations in school education.

6. Further since the early 1990’s a few programmes of school education improvement programmes like Mahila Samakhya, DPEP, School towards community (samudayadatta shale), Free education for girls upto degree level, Mid-day meal programme etc., are implemented. Their impact on improving the school enrolment of children may tend to be lower or weaker as against the potential benefit of the short-run through alternate employment of the children in a backward region, causing in again to continuation of the problem of school dropout and never-attended children. This likely problem is not studied by any earlier attempts.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY:

The problem of poverty increasing school dropouts, proliferation of child labour are interlinked and have a very complex relationship. This subject is highly under researched so far. The importance of the present study may be explained as follows:

The problem of poverty, school dropouts and child labour is highly interrelated and it is both growth arresting and welfare depressing in nature. They are major symptoms of social and economic under-development. So a study dealing with such a pervading social problem would be useful in avoiding rural and urban poverty and concentration of the poor in low
productivity and are unproductive occupations.

The present study has also evaluated the social and cultural factors contributing to increasing school dropout rate and proliferation of child labour particularly in rural areas. Thereby this study would help policy formulation intended to increase the school enrolment and continuity in education of children. It would also help to increase the school enrolment of the girl child since it has analyzed the socio-cultural and economic constraints in her way.

The universalisation of school education is essential to enable the citizens to enjoy the freedom and participate in the smooth working of democracy.

Education also economically helps the people to understand and expand their mental faculty to learn modern jobs skills and technology in production process. The complete universalisation of school education is also very essential for promoting socio-cultural development and it enhances the overall quality of life of people. Therefore, the present study is helpful for making a scientific study of the problem of poverty and school dropouts, and their consequences and also to suggest policy measures to reduce drastically these two social evils. Hence, the present study is useful for educational planers, sociologists, economists and Government at large.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

Based on statement of the problem and a brief literature review attempted already the following objectives are set for the present study:-

(a) To study the nature of intricate and complex relationship between rural poverty, increasing school dropouts and increasing proliferation of child labour in a backward region of a progressive state like Karnataka;

(b) To examine the programmes and policy initiatives to promote the growth and spread of primary and secondary education in India and Karnataka State. To study the inter district disparities in the progress of primary and secondary school education in Karnataka state and identify the factors responsible;

(c) To identify and analyze the failure and problems of primary and secondary education at national and state level with a view to examine their probable influence on increasing school dropouts. To study the extent of adverse socio-cultural
factors contributing to the increasing rate of school dropouts and thus contributing
to the continuation of the problem of child labour;

(d) To find out the extent to which the shortages of educational aids, teachers,
inappropriate school hours and location as factors contributing to the problem of
increasing school dropouts; and

(e) To analyze critically the role of educational programmes like mid-day meal, free
distribution of books and school uniforms, and DPEP etc., on increasing the
school enrolment, school attendance and continuation of school education from
stage one (Class I to IV); Stage two (V to VII) Stage three (VIII to X).

HYPOTHESIS:

The present study intends to empirically verify the following hypothesis;

1. There is a complex relationship between different socio-economic and cultural
   factors responsible for poverty, school drop-out and transformation of school
   dropouts into the child labour. These forces of under development are more
   strong and powerful in backward areas than elsewhere;

2. The gender discrimination based on male bias is a hurdle for promoting the
   increasing enrolment of girl child in schools, which is a source of gender inequality.

3. The rate of school dropouts is directly proportionate with landlessness, poverty,
   social backwardness and segregation and vice-versa.

Defining Regional Backwardness in India:

As is well-known the economic growth process in general results in regional disparities.
Regional economic inequalities are spatial divergences in growth producing what is known as
advanced regions, developing regions and backward as well as very backward regions. (Gunnar
Myrdal, A.R. Kuklinski and et. al..). In India the awareness about regional inequalities was
created by mid-1960’s.

The Pande Committee (1968) appointed by government of India has proposed the
following criteria for identifying backward districts (from industrial development perspective)
a) Distance away from large cities and major industrial project areas;
b) Percapita income.
c) Proportion of workforce engaged in secondary and tertiary sectors;
d) Industrial employment level;
e) Low/underutilization of economic and natural resources;

This identification of backward districts was intended to undertake industrial
decentralization and dispersal policies. It was attempted seriously during 1970-1990 in India.

The following criteria were formulated by the Planning Commission of India, which
were approved by the National Development Council in 1970.

1) Percapita production of food grains and commercial crops;
2) Proportion of agricultural labour in the total labour force of a region;
3) Percapita industrial output (total)
4) Size of employment in secondary and tertiary sectors;
5) Percapita use of electricity;
6) Length of roads and railways (in kms) for a given unit of population.

The attempt of the planning commission has also been concentrating on economic
backwardness focusing on agricultural, industrial and some infrastructure disparities. The social
norms for identifying and measuring social/human development backwardness/disparities were
missing.

In case of Karnataka State, Dr.D.M. Nanjundappa, the then Principal Secretary to
the Department of Planning, Government of Karnataka has used the following 22 norms to
delineate regions / districts as backward / undeveloped / underdeveloped. These norms may
be broadly grouped under 4 categories viz., (a) Population and Occupational structure; (b)
Land Utilization and Agricultural Development; (c) Industrial Development and Infrastructure;
and (d) Composite Development Index.

The 22 norms used to identify backward regions in Karnataka are as under:

1. Density of Population
2. Urban Population Ratio
3. Ratio of Non-agricultural population
4. Sown Area as a proportion of Total Sown Area
5. Double Crop Area as a percentage of Net Sown Area.
7. Corn productivity per hectare of land.
8. Productivity of pulses per hectare of land.
9. Oilseeds productivity per hectare.
10. Net irrigated area as a percentage of Net Sown Area.
11. Number of Industrial units as a percent of Total Number of Industries.
12. Total number of vehicles per lakh population.
13. Road length km per lakh of population.
14. Total population served by a Bank Office (Branch)
15. Total transactions value of each regulated market.
16. Percentage of Literates to the Total Population.
17. Total Number of Schools per lakh of population.
18. Total Population served by a given Educational Institution and University.
19. Total Population served by each Primary Health Center / Hospital (Taluk / District).
20. Total Number of Beds per lakh of Population.
22. Number of irrigation pumpsets (electricity connected) as a percentage of total pumpsets in the State.

Identification of Backward Regions:

The Sukhmoy Chakravarthy Committee also has identified the following norms for measuring socio-economic backwardness of a district/region in India:

(a) Percentage of agricultural labourers in the total labour force.
(b) Population density in a square km.
(c) Total value of productivity of foodgrains per rural person.
(d) Total value of non-food grains for per Rural person.
(e) Total value of all crops per person in rural areas.
(f) Electricity using industrial units in the total number of (manufacturing and repair) industries.
(g) Number of electricity using household production units in the total number of household industrial units.

(h) Electricity using non-household units in the total number of non-household units.

(i) Total number of industrial workers in registered units as a percentage of 1 lakh population.

(j) Length of Surface Road for every One Lakh of people.

(k) Percentage of Male Literates in the total male population.

(l) Percentage of Female Literates in the total female population.

(m) Ratio of total literates to the total population.

By using a combination of D.M. Nanjundappa and Sukhmoy Chakravarty Committee norms the socio-economic backwardness of various districts in Karnataka is identified and measured. Accordingly, the Hassan district, our case study region belongs to the total backward region – agriculturally and industrially. Therefore, we may say that the Hassan district is a socio-economically backward area. Except the Sakaleshpur taluk, all the other taluks are highly backward in Hassan District. So the incidence of agricultural and industrial backwardness, educational and health and also nutritional deprivation is also considerably high among, the other districts Southern Karnataka. That is the reason why we have selected the Hassan district for our case study.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

For national and state level analysis of poverty the NSS method and data is used. The relative and absolute poverty in rural areas is taken into account. The food intake, clothing housing, houselessness, illiteracy, landlessness, ill-health, duration of seasonal unemployment and under unemployment is used as parameters of poverty estimates at the household level.

The impact of poverty on school dropouts is studied in terms of the variables like ignorance, illiteracy, inability to provide minimum food to attract children to schools and alternative earnings from the child labour etc... The problem of child labour has its roots in failure of our school education and failures in rapidly reducing poverty.

To analyze the problem of school dropouts the variables like poverty, social attitude towards child education, the level of agricultural commercialization and income, the distance
between residence and school, mode of transport, the efficiency and social motivation of
teacher to attract the children of school etc., are used to study the process of increasing or
falling school dropout rates in Indian context. This problem in terms of its nature and composition
differs across different social groups and regions.

The major definitional terms used in the study are explained as follows:

Gross enrolment ratio measures what percentage of the total population in the relevant age
group the various educational programmes being run in the country i.e., are covering,

\[
\text{Gross enrolment ratio at stage 1} = \frac{\text{Enrolment at state 1}}{\text{Population in the age group corresponding to the state}} \times 100
\]

Two stages are: primary (Class I - V) and middle (Class VI-VIII)

The corresponding age-group for these stages are 6-11 years and 11-14 years respectively. Therefore, gross enrolment ratio for primary stage (I - V) is

\[
\text{GER for Primary School} = \frac{\text{Total enrolment in classes I-V}}{\text{Total population in the age}} \times 100
\]

While interpreting these figures it should be noted that there may be many students
outside the age group 6 — 11 enrolled in classes I-V. Therefore, enrolment ratios in some age
groups can be more than 100.

The pupil-teacher ratio is defined as the average number of students per teacher for a
particular type of school, e.g. Total Enrolment in class – IV

\[
\text{Pupil teacher ratio for secondary school} = \frac{\text{Total enrolment in secondary school}}{\text{Total number of teachers in secondary school}}
\]
 Dropout rate in different stages of school education

Dropout rate:

Dropout rate at primary stage during a given year is defined as the ratio of the difference of enrolment in class in the fourth year preceding and the enrolment in class V during the year to the enrolment in the class I in the fourth year preceding. In mathematical terms, these rates for primary (I-V), middle (I-VIII) and secondary (I-X) stages are defined as:

Drop out rates at primary state (I-V) during year = t = \frac{\text{Enrolment in class I preceding four years (i.e., year = } t-4 \text{) minus enrolment in class V during the year ‘t’}}{\text{Enrolment in class I preceding four years (i.e., year = } t-4 \text{)}} \times 100

Drop out rates at middle stage (classes I-VIII) during year = t = \frac{\text{Enrolment in class I preceding 7 years (i.e., year = } t-7 \text{) minus enrolment in class VIII during the year ‘t’}}{\text{Enrolment in class I preceding 7 years (i.e., year = } t-7 \text{)}} \times 100

Drop out rates at primary state (I-X) during year = t = \frac{\text{Enrolment in class I preceding 9 years (i.e., year = } t-9 \text{) minus enrolment in class X during the year ‘t’}}{\text{Enrolment in class I preceding four years (i.e., year = } t-9 \text{)}} \times 100

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS:

The present study has used relevant data from both secondary and primary sources.

The secondary sources of data are annual publications of the Central and State Ministry Department of Primary and Secondary School Education, Directorate of Economic and
Statistics, Government of Karnataka, Office of the Deputy Director of Public Instruction and other sources of statistical information published by national agencies and government commissions on school education.

To considerable extent the present study depends upon primary data. So using appropriate questionnaires for interviewing parents of children, teachers and educational administrators the researcher collected the required primary data on supply and demand aspects of school education.

SAMPLE SIZE AND SELECTION:

Our case study region namely Hassan District has a fairly large geographical area comprising eight taluks. It has dry land, wetland agriculture and plantation economy sectors. Therefore, random sampling method and random stratified sampling methods are used while selecting the required sample of rural households, spread over in select taluks (viz Arasikere and Belur).

The sample comprises student households, schools and teachers, a small sample of educational administrators like head masters and teachers also were identified and interviewed to ascertain their perceptions and suggestions regarding the school dropouts problem and ways and means to reduce it.

The sample selection of parents is based on norms like rural residential location, household income, social group of parents, literacy and illiteracy status, occupational structure and paying ability for education etc.,

The sample of educational administrators was selected based on their bureaucratic or voluntary supervision, participatory roles in building and managing school education system at the grass-root level.

Data Tabulation:

Both secondary and primary data collected and generated for the present study was tabulated into master tables in the first round and later on functional tables. Based on master tables devised and used for interpretation and analysis purpose, appropriate statistical concepts and tools like totals, averages, percentages, and measures of central tendency and correlation
technique are used to analyse the data and explain the results.

Reference period of the study:

The reference period of study has two components, namely:

(1) The experience of the growth and development of primary and secondary education is studied at the National and State Levels in India and Karnataka for the period of 1951 to 2001 A.D.

(2) The field investigation part of the present study invariably has the recent past as the reference period, (approximately three years period or five years period).

This way of selection of reference period would help us to bring out the salient features, problems, programmes and changes in programmes and policies relating to school education for a long historical period of 50 years in free India and also unfold the current situation from the recent past.

Selection of Case Study Area:

The researcher intends to select Hassan district as case study region since (a) it is geographically proximate; and (b) it is a backward district with small pockets of agricultural prosperity and large pockets of total economic and social backwardness. Therefore, selection of Hassan district as a case study region may be justified, since the problems of primary and secondary school education in a backward region are more intense and complex sometime different from those in fairly advanced districts or regions in a economically advanced state like Karnataka.