The economic reforms which were made up for well being of all people equally could not do so. Consequently, economic conditions of poor people became worse. Education could be a key factor in improving economic conditions of a person but it is found that despite knowing that education can be a vehicle to come out from the misery people did not move towards getting education as the governments supposed. The problem of dropout is not always associated with poverty and lack of surety of jobs after getting education, the relationship among the parents, availability of family members at home, taking care of children and diseased family members by staying at the home are also found as responsible causes. Further, process of dropout does not merely result in leaving education but it also coincides with social and economic downfalls in the status of the person in society. People are inclined towards the education due to the inspiration from successful people rather than by the initiatives of the government.

[Keywords: Education, Dropout, Household economy, Misery]

1. Education: A Necessity of Social Life

Education has great importance in the whole life of a person. It is a process of learning which continues from birth to death. Education plays an important role in learning approved and disapproved behaviors of society. It is a factor in the process of socialization which prepares a child for social living and is helpful in the creation of prospects of people. Through socialization, a person learns social
values, beliefs of the society that help him to behave accordingly for maintaining social order. Education plays a key role in all path of development which allows transferring knowledge about culture, values, and skills through teaching and many other learning processes from one generation to another. Education is one of the factors which can help in the formation of an egalitarian society by preventing many social evils like poverty, untouchability, gender discrimination, caste discrimination and dowry etc. Importance of education is generally accepted by the villagers and it is said that for an illiterate person kala akshar bhais barabar (black letters are equal to a water buffalo). The saying means that for an illiterate person anything written on paper is useless whether it contains very useful information. Despite this perception, many children leave education before completing the primary level.

A.P.J Abdul Kalam (2005) defined education as an endless journey through knowledge and enlightenment. Education is an instrument for arranging means for deriving livelihood. The schools and other educational institutions are the agencies of learning new skills and the ways to interact with people of diverse social milieus. All socio-economic and cultural innovations are possible through education.

After independence, both central and state governments of India took many initiatives to increase the awareness about education and to make all people educated. Due to the initiatives, rural people understood the value of education and inclined towards getting it. Consequently, they became ready to send their children to the schools. But despite the initiative the target has not yet achieved. Up till now, a large number of children could not be even enrolled in the schools. Many children who somehow were enrolled in schools have dropped out their education before completing a primary level of education.

India is a country of villages as more than 60% of the population resides in villages. So the development of India depends on the development of villages and their educational institutions. During 1990s many changes have been done under economic reform policies to stay competitive for global challenges. Privatization of education was also involved in these reforms to increase the interest of private stack holders and foreign investors. Although it resulted in many severe problems at grass root level which would be among the core interests of this paper. Besides, the paper explores the reasons for barring students to be educated and involvement of them in lower graded working for fulfilling the monetary needs of the families in age of school going children.

2. Dropout: A Historical Overview

Education can help a lot in improving the economic condition of households because it is found that education and economy are in a reciprocal relationship. R. Govinda (2005) found that education is one of the most important factors in human development. Despite it, the dropout rate at different levels of education is very
high among children of rural society in India. This dropout from the education has been because of many reasons as George E. Curry (2006) described that necessity to be engaged in jobs to make more money; becoming a parent; care for a diseased family member; lack of motivation to work hard, failure in early years and feeling that they cannot catch up their classmates are some factors that caused some students to dropout in high school. Abdul Rahim Al-Showthabi (2008) finds that improper economic policies are responsible for children’s daily struggle for survival and their dropout from the schools. These policies are also responsible for many evils such as taking drugs, working as drug dealers or even as sex slaves in case of the girls. While Russell W. Rumberger (2013) pointed out that poverty is a cause for dropout from education at high school level among the children. Apart from economic consideration of households Keith Gerein (2009) finds in Canada that children who experience changes in their family structure i.e. numerous divorces among parents are much more likely to become high school dropouts than their classmates whose parents stay together. Promesh Acharya (1994) quoted The Indian Year Book of Education, 1964 which describes that after the age of 9 a child becomes ready to support his/her parents in terms of family income whether he/she helps in domestic works or works outside to raise the income of the family. Consequently, he/she leaves the school before completing his/her primary education. In case of girls, the book concludes that lack of interest for sending girls to co-ed schools, lack of women teachers and betrothal of marriage etc. are the reasons for dropout in them (Acharya, 1994). The above studies show that leaving education at various levels of schools is not the problem in India only but it is present around the world. Many children leave the schools even before completing the primary education.

3. Methodology

This paper tries to seek some responsible causes for dropout from education at primary level particularly in a village ‘Nanhera Aliyarpur’ in the western part of Uttar Pradesh. Moreover, it tries to find out its following impact on households economic activities. The paper is based on published literature on the topic and empirical data collected from the villagers through various field visits to the village between 2011 and 2015. The village Nanhera Aliyarpur is situated 7 Km. in the North from Kailsa railway station, which lies on Delhi to Moradabad railway route. This village is a Nyay Panchayat as well as gram panchayat in Block Amroha. This village consists of many schools, hospitals, bank, and shops so it is considered an advance village in comparison to other surrounding villages.

During field visits, Aganwadi’s workers worked as an important source of information. There are three Aganwadi’s workers in the village. They have distributed total households of the village into three groups for their functioning. They distributed village households according to their convenience. No official record is available about this distribution. As per the data of October 2012 the total
population of the village was 3318 consisting of 1770 male and 1548 female. Brahmin, Jat, Gurjar, Prajapati, Pal, Saini, Jatav, Balmiki, Bhurji, Kashyap and Dhobi are the castes among the Hindus and Darji, Shekh, Manihar, Mirashi, Badhai, and Teli are the castes among the Muslim in the village.

4. Types of Schools in the Village

Nowadays rural people are inclined to providing good education to children because many people of the rural areas have got selected in salaried jobs in cities. These people are source of inspiration for other people of the village and from its surroundings. There are mainly two types of schools in the village which provide education to children. These schools can be differentiated on the basis of funding and the authorities under which they run. Some schools are running under state government while others are under private ownership. Besides, many schools run in the state through funding by central government and other organizations but the number of such type of schools is less and they are established at few places of rural areas in the state. No school of this type is established in the village.

4.1 Government School

These schools run through the funding of government. State government appoints teachers in these schools. The medium for teaching instruction is Hindi in these schools. Generally, it is found that government schools usually run in a shortage of appropriate buildings for classes, toilet facilities and teaching staffs etc in the state. However, the primary schools located in Nanhera Aliyarpur have proper buildings and toilet but there is a shortage of teaching staffs. Although education is free in these schools till primary level. Besides enrolled students also get dress, books, midday meals, scholarship (in a year), and some amount of grains every month. Despite a number of children in these schools is very small. However, the state government has initiated many efforts for increasing the number of children in the schools. It is found that dropout rate is higher in the government schools as compared with private schools in the area. The village has two older government primary schools (up to 5th class) both co-educational, although the one which is located in the village settlement is known as Kanya Pathsala. Both these primary schools were established in 1954. Besides, there is also one junior high school from sixth class to eighth class which was established in 1958.

4.2 Private School

Private schools are schools which run under private ownership and all funds are arranged by owners of the schools. They collect fees from the students in the name of developing the infrastructure of the school or paying salaries to the teachers. Teachers are appointed in them by management body of the schools. There are two Montessori schools till class 5th. Usually, they use both English and Hindi language as teaching instructions. This is because students are not able to
understand teaching instructions in English only, therefore, they have to use Hindi also. Besides, two convent schools are also available in surrounding villages in the periphery of six to eight kilometers of the village.

5. **Dropout in Education and its Factors**

Villagers described that many government primary schools and private schools have opened in the village and in its surroundings during last few years. Earlier around 20 years back people from surrounding villages used to come in the village to attend the schools. There were no government schools in those villages at that time. Now surrounding villages also have some government schools. Khempal Singh, 45 years old, a Saini, described that quality of education in government schools have decreased up to a considerable level as compared with the time when government schools were the main source for education in the area. Those days all children of the village and its surrounding villages used to study in the schools irrespective of castes and class. Actually, through this statement, he wanted to point out that because of unavailability of private schools in the area rich people also used to send their children in the government schools so they used to keep an eye on the government schools to maintain the quality of education in them. But nowadays their children attend private schools for education so they are not interested in doing so. When I talked with teachers of these government schools, I found that their children are not enrolled in the government schools while they are teaching in these schools. These teachers prefer private schools for the education of their own children as they know the difference of the qualities of education between private and government schools. Moreover, they also accepted the importance of English in present scenario which is lacking in government schools.

Quality of education in private schools is much better as compared to government school as reported by R. Jeffery et al. (2007) on the basis of their study of district Bijnor in Western Uttar Pradesh. They described that teachers employed in government schools come late and focus on their own domestic work instead of children’s education because being permanent, they get fixed salaries whether they work or not (Jeffery et al., 2007). Further, they also differentiate among different kinds of private schools on the basis of the quality of education. They described that children of small town’s professionals and rich peasants of Bijnor who study in private schools of the same town are also unable to compete with those who study in much more advanced and sophisticated schools like those in Meerut, Dehra Dun, and Delhi. I found that usually poor parents send their children for getting education in government schools since they are economically incapable for sending their children into private schools. Despite knowing that quality of education is better in private schools than government schools they have to send their children in government schools because education is free of costs in the government schools. Some of them initially get their children enrolled in private
schools but gradually as level of education increases, fees and other expenses also increase consequently they find themselves incompetent to cope up with risen expenses and finally get deregistered their children from private schools and get them admitted in government one. The shifting in schools also creates many problems for children while they try to adapt environment of government schools. I observed that number of children in government schools is very small in comparison of private schools.

Additionally, Shashi Bhushan Singh described that due to the low quality of education in government school people prefer to send their children to English-medium private schools which is costly (Singh, 2004). It depends on the assets of households, which determines how much people can afford on the education of their children. Thus, education in good private schools needs more money and it is not possible for marginal peasants, unlike large landowners, who do not have regular salaried jobs. Education is significant for getting means of livelihood outside agriculture which works as an additional source of income for an agricultural family. Often it is found that possession of resources is in relation to caste in the society. The upper castes have good sizes of landholdings and other sources of income so they are able to afford the costs of education in private schools. On the other hand, a large percentage of people of the lower caste do not possess any land. Owning to their poor economic conditions, their children get education mainly in government primary schools where education is free and they also get dress, books, midday meals, scholarship (in a year), and some amount of grains. Thus the economic condition of the family influences to the education of the children and later on decides to chances for completing primary education.

Nowadays people prefer to send their children to private schools because of a better quality of education and for learning the English language. All they have accepted that the English language is very necessary for the present scenario. It helps in making a good impression when a person is seeking a job. Consequently, many prosperous people are purchasing plots in the cities and constructing them for the purpose of providing good education to their children.

Meanwhile, some people whose economic conditions do not allow for purchasing plots and constructing them they are staying on rents in cities. Usually, these people have regular salaried jobs in same cities or if they work elsewhere then their wives live with their children. Some people whose economic conditions don’t allow for sending their children to the cities, they seek better private school in the local area. Moreover, people who have salaried jobs in the surrounding of the village and equally they do not find it compatible to leave their wives and children in the cities, they are sending their children to private schools situated in other villages where the quality of education is better. Many vehicles like vans, autos, and buses are carrying out children to these schools. These vehicles are facilitated by the schools but people pay charges of these vehicles on monthly basis. Besides teaching in private schools mainly these people’s children take tuition from a
teacher at home for a better understanding of syllabus and doing homework properly. The tuition also increases knowledge of children and helps them for making better performance in exams.

Lack of awareness of parents is also the responsible reason for dropout even for admission in the schools. Many children do not take admission in schools while some get into the schools but leave the school without completing elementary education. This is because people have a presumption that there is not any surety about salaried jobs after getting education too. They have examples of those people who are educated but work as laborers with them. They describe that on the one hand if a person gets success in getting a salaried job after spending long time and money in education and other works merely as a laborer then a laborer can earn a large amount of money in the time which first spent on education. Moreover, it results in a dual impact on the households first takes money from the household while other give the money to household and support to his parents in fulfilling needs of the family. This type of notion is found mainly among the people of lower castes because relatively they do not feel any problem in working as laborers.

Some poor people reasoned out that they are not economically able to invest on the education of their children for a long time usually above of twenty years. So they find it fruitful for their children to work as laborer either with them at brick kilns or elsewhere which helps in fulfilling needs of the households. An Aaganwadi worker described parents’ lack of interest for education to the children; “When we go to people for admission of their children in schools then they do not take any interest in it. On many visits to their houses, they reason out that many people in the village who got education up to 8th or 10th but still work as laborers like us so what is the benefit of spending time and money on getting an education. There is not even any surety about getting jobs after education.”

Anand Chakravarti (2014) also described in his paper based on field experiences (2001 to 2009) of village ‘Muktidih’ in Rohtas district of South Bihar that economic and political forces are responsible for the deprivation of marginalized communities. He described that in village Muktidih casual laborers and landless people depend for their livelihood on landowners who usually belong to the upper castes. Some laborers work as sharecroppers or lease-in small amount of land. In agriculture, there is no guarantee of employment throughout the year, and wages are not sufficient to meet the requirements of a family. As a result, laborers have to take a loan in cash or in kind on high interest, on days of unemployment. Somehow, they are barely able to pay back dues with interest. Poor economic conditions of laborers are revealed in their quality of food, clothing, and housing while laborers are aware of ingredients of a good diet (Chakravarti, 2014). Besides Chakravarti, Daniel Thorner also described that socially malik and moneylenders form a distinct group within the village. These maliks generally belong to Brahmin, Thakur, or any other high ranking castes, or respectable
cultivating castes. They live in larger houses, wear finer clothes, and eat a better diet than the rest of villagers. Opposite of this, the kisans are drawn primarily from cultivating or artisan castes and the majdurlog primarily from harijans, scheduled, depressed or “backward” classes (Thorner, 1978). Thus, a difference of economy reflects on the education and other opportunities for transforming life into better one in many ways. Mona Sedwal and Sangeeta Kamat (2011) described that income of the household, parental education, home environment and school environment are main factors to retain a child’s education and complete it and often these are associated with affluent upper caste families (Sedwal and Kamat, 2011). Aaganwaris reported that some parents whose children somehow get enrolled in the school they are not in favor of punishment of their children even if their children do not do homework properly or leave the schools just after taking midday meal. If Aaganwaris insist them for doing homework or punish them then next day their parents do not send them to the school. Their parents do not force them for doing homework properly while doing homework is very necessary after attending the schools. This is like what reported by Rajan and Jayakumar (1992) in their study of south Indian state namely Tamil Nadu. They found that after introducing the midday-meal program in Tamil Nadu the number of girls and boys for attending primary school increased and dropout decreased on the considerable level in the state.

Besides above family composition also influences to the education of children. If a family contains physically disabled parents then all the responsibilities come on the shoulders of children then there is a probability of dropout from the education. This is because most of the expenses are covered by the earning of children. Thus alcoholism, seasonal migrations, parent’s education and neighborhood of family play main roles in creating interest of children towards education followed by a decrease in a number of dropouts. Examples of successful people from kinship and from the village boost interest of people towards the education of children.

I found children of marginal peasants in Nanhera Aliyarpur help their parents in domestic work, and also assist as part-time laborers, and often fail to continue their education. It happens mostly in the peak season of crops (wheat cutting) when the time is critical and timely cutting and threshing is required to store wheat for the household for the year. Children of poor peasant’s families used to work with their parents on their own fields or on others’ fields as their parents alone are not able to earn enough to meet all expenses of the family. Amartya Sen (1971) analyzed data on school dropout for all India and for rural schools of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. He observed that withdrawal of children from school during the peak agricultural seasons was considerably higher among the economically less privileged group (Sen, 1971). Even after 40 years since Sen’s (1971) observation, there is little change in peak agricultural season withdrawal of children of marginal peasant households. Thus, weak economic condition works as
a cause for school dropouts, notwithstanding the common view that education is a basic factor in transforming occupations and economic conditions of peasants.

Education plays significant roles in capacity building for economic activities, improving the livelihood of families and coping with social problems and economic distress (Sidhu et al., 2011). These marginal peasants have small landholdings and due to subdivision of these holdings among successors, it becomes very small and fragmented. Education is double-edged for them. It is seen to serve as a significant agent in arranging a better means of livelihood, but in the short run, dropping out of their children from education to make ends meet, works in the long run, as a failure in arranging additional sources of livelihood and improvement in the condition of the household. Further, as the marginal peasants fail to fulfill the family’s requirements from the small size of land, they find it better to arrange non-farming sources for drawing livelihood. In this village, many people have opened their own shops after selling their land which was not providing enough for the family’s expenses despite a great deal of hard work.

In case of girl child, it is found that they have been a victim of discrimination always. Gender discrimination reflects in many activities within the households. For example, it can be seen in the context of dieting, health facility, carrying out responsibilities about domestic chores and providing education in the households. Girls are kept on the second stage always in receiving any facilities in the households. They have to sacrifice and leaving education just because of giving financial support to their parents and to help in domestic works. On the later stage they are not permitted to live outside the home for completing education. Sometimes they are bound to be present at home to take care of their younger sisters and brothers.

6. The Subsequent Impact of Dropout

Nowadays agriculture as an occupation is shrinking because agriculture has proved unprofitable and uninteresting due to many reasons. Majority of the peasants falls in the category of marginal peasants and have below than one hectare of land. This landholding is so small that they are not even able to fulfill needs of a family of five members. To overcome the problem peasants have to be involved in working outside the agricultural sector. In this situation education work as an agent for getting good salaried jobs either in government or private sectors while in lacking good education, someone can work as laborer only. After getting salaried jobs he can fulfill his family needs in better ways which are not possible through working as a laborers. Working as a labourer is seen as degrading occupation in the society. Therefore it is seen that it lowers status and prestige of a person in the society. Further, it also affects to future of next generation because such parents are neither able to guide their children in terms of their further study nor able to offer financial support to them for a long time. They also find themselves incapable of helping their children to complete homework properly.
Economic inequality is obvious among villagers and it results in many problems. On the one hand, government initiatives proved limited valuable in increasing number of students enrolled in primary education but aspirations which were the result of successful people of the village and its surrounding villages played a significant role in increasing number of students in schools and to be stayed in education for getting jobs and subsequent bright future.

Education influences economic activities, lifestyle and status of a person in society in various ways. Education is very necessary to be own reliant. If someone gets a good education then there are chances for attaining salaried jobs so he can earn livelihood himself. But a person who dropped out from education it is found that usually he works as laborers with their family members. Further, there will be a great difference in lifestyles of both the persons and their way of thinking. An educated person will understand the value of education and will do his best to provide education of his children.

Footnotes

1. A nyay panchayat consists of few gram panchayats. It works as a link between gram panchayats and Panchayat samiti (Block Panchayat).

References


