

# Teachers' Perception on Identifying Steps to Minimize Drop out Rate at Secondary School Stage of Punjab

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## Abstract

The prime aim of basic education is in ensuring that students stay in school until they complete their education. The dropout problem is pervasive in the Indian education system, especially in Rural Punjab. Teachers play a significant role in continuing their students' basic education. A teacher is always aware of the reasons for absenteeism, dropouts and problems faced by students in receiving education. The objective of the study was to examine steps to minimize dropout rate according to the perception of teachers. . Descriptive research method was used. Questionnaire cum interview schedule was used. The present study was carried out on four districts of rural Punjab namely- Amritsar, Jalandhar, Mansa and Patiala. 50 teachers from each district has become the sample for the study. The results of the present study show that: supportive home environment, that regular check on students' performance in school, providing free books and copies and reduction in fee to the poor general students, attractive infrastructure, innovative teaching methods, usage of English medium along with Punjabi medium, flexible curriculum are some of the measures to reduce dropout having the similar perception by the teachers' of all the districts. Further, teachers' perception on teaching students only through mother tongue and stressing on their primary level education only do not found to be the same view.

**Keywords:** Dropout, Teachers' Perception.

## Introduction

The prime aim of basic education is in ensuring that students stay in school until they complete their education. Dropping out is a serious problem because it denies individual students their fundamental right to education. The dropout problem is pervasive in the Indian education system, especially in rural Punjab.

Multiple factors are responsible for their dropping out of school. It includes: poor economic conditions, helping parents in household chores, lack of interest in students, lack of family support, lack of transport facilities, lack of infrastructure in school, taking care of siblings at home, distance of school, parents' illiteracy, failure in studies, health problems, friends are not going to school, migration of parents, parents' separation, death of parents or many other reasons create an environment which negatively affects the value of education. These factors force them to experience exclusion leading to eventual dropout.

Teachers play a significant role in continuing their students' basic education and have a unique ability to reach individual students on a more personal level. Teachers are expected to use the best practices and adopt strategies to meet the challenging task i.e. reducing the dropping out rate of school children. It is important to carefully design preventive measures and intervention strategies that can be adopted in order to help all dropouts (Chugh, 2011).

A teacher is always aware of the reasons for absenteeism, dropouts and problems faced by students in receiving education. Keeping in consideration the eminent role played by the teachers in minimizing dropout rates, here, the researcher has identified some initiatives to be taken by the teachers at the secondary stage of rural Punjab. In this context, the teachers were interviewed to know their perception on different aspects of education and dropouts of students has been taken into account.

**Review of the Literature**

Majzub and Rais (2010) studied teachers' and parents' perception on effective strategies for dropout prevention. Academic, social, emotional and societal factors were reported to influence dropouts. The study involved a focus group session with 20 secondary school students and 20 teachers to examine the effective dropout prevention strategies.

Sridevi and Nagpal (2019) assessed the trends in school dropout rate in India. It also highlighted some policy implications such as *improving school culture, providing basic facilities in schools, organising in service teacher training programmes for teachers to identify and handle at-risk students and conducting remedial teaching programmes for the needy students in schools in order to guide policy makers to combat this problem.*

Kaur and Puri (2019) studied the causes of dropout of Secondary stage. After identifying the causes certain steps had been suggested such as providing financial aid to the poor students, transportation system to pick and drop students from school to their respective location, parental encouragement, student-teacher relationship and focused teaching learning process were the dominants.

**Objective of the study**

The objective of the study was to examine steps to minimize dropout rate according to the perception of teachers.

**Methodology**

The sample of the study included a Multi-stage sampling of 200 secondary school teachers who have been teaching there and who are also in the Parent-Teacher Association of the schools. The respondents were interviewed with the help of Questionnaire-cum-interview schedule to find out the certain measures to be taken to minimize dropout rate.

The present study was carried out on four districts covering Majha, Malwa and Doaba of rural Punjab. Amritsar, Jalandhar, Patiala and Mansa were chosen purposively. The purpose of the study was explained to the government secondary school teachers. The data obtained from 200 teachers were used for the analysis purpose. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 22. Chi Square Test was used to find the association between the 4 districts covered under study.

**Findings of the study**

**Parental Support / Family Support**

The first research question required teachers to indicate the views of parental/ family support in minimizing dropout rates of rural Punjab

**Table 1  
Parental Support/ Family Support**

District → Teachers Response ↓	Amritsar (N=50)	Jalandhar (N=50)	Mansa (N=50)	Patiala (N=50)	p value
Supportive home environment is needed	12 (24%)	11 (22%)	9 (18%)	10 (20%)	0.896
Regular check on students' performance in school is to be monitored by parents	10 (20%)	8 (16%)	9 (18%)	11 (22%)	0.885

Table 1 reveals that supportive home environment is needed to minimize the dropout rate of the students as stated by 24% of the teachers from Amritsar, 22% from Jalandhar, 20% from Patiala and 18% from Mansa. So, it can be said that there is no significant difference in the teachers' perception on parental/ family support of all the four districts as the p value (0.896) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance.

Further, Table 1 also reveals that regular check on students' performance in school is to be

monitored by parents as opine by 22% of the teachers from Patiala, 20% from Amritsar, 18% from Mansa and 16% from Jalandhar. Teachers' perception on all the 4 districts is found to be same in their feelings as the p value 0.885 is greater than the level of significance.

**Financial Support/ Aid**

This research question required teachers' to indicate the financial provision which can help in reducing dropout rates in rural Punjab.

**Table 2  
Financial Support/ Aid**

District → Teachers Response ↓	Amritsar (N=50)	Jalandhar (N=50)	Mansa (N=50)	Patiala (N=50)	p value
Poor general category students should also be provided with books and copies free of cost	27 (54%)	25 (50%)	23 (46%)	20 (40%)	0.543
The fee of poor general category students should also be waved off	18 (36%)	16 (32%)	20 (40%)	19 (38%)	0.860

Table 2 reveals that 54% teachers from Amritsar, 50% from Jalandhar, 46% from Mansa and 40% from Patiala are in favour of providing free books and copies to the poor general students. Thus, it can

be said that there is no significance difference in the teachers' perception on financial support of all the 4 districts as the p value (0.543) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance.

Further, Table 2 also shows that reducing fee of poor general category students can lead to the perusal of their studies has been resulted by 40% teachers from Mansa, 38% from Patiala, 36% from Amritsar and 32% from Jalandhar. Hence, there is no difference in the views of teachers regarding waiver

off fee as the p value (0.860) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance.

**School Infrastructure**

This research question required teachers' perception to indicate the role of school infrastructure in minimizing the dropout rates in rural Punjab.

**Table 3**

**School Infrastructure**

DISTRICT →	Amritsar (N=50)	Jalandhar (N=50)	Mansa (N=50)	Patiala (N=50)	p value
<b>TEACHERS RESPONSE ↓</b>					
The school infrastructure should be attracting for students	15 (30%)	20 (40%)	18 (36%)	17 (34%)	0.767
There should be proper facility of transportation to school	15 (30%)	18 (36%)	15 (30%)	16 (32%)	0.907

Table 3 indicates that high majority of the teachers among 4 districts - Amritsar, Jalandhar, Mansa and Patiala are in favour of attracting school infrastructure for students. Conducive school infrastructure can be a dominant factor in reducing dropout rates of students. Thus, it is resulted that there is no significance difference in the comparison of views of teachers' of 4 districts as the p value (0.767) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance.

among 4 districts can be minimized if transportation facility is to be facilitated properly. So, it can be concluded that there is no significance difference in the teachers' perception on transportation facility as the p value (0.907) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance.

**Teaching Learning Process and Curriculum**

The following research question required teachers' perception to indicate the importance of teaching-learning process and curriculum in reducing the dropout rates in rural Punjab.

Further, Table 3 also reveals teachers' view regarding transportation facility for students. It has been observed that maximum number of teachers' opined the same view that dropout rates of students

**Table 4**

**Teaching Learning Process & Curriculum**

District →	Amritsar (N=50)	Jalandhar (N=50)	Mansa (N=50)	Patiala (N=50)	p value
<b>Teachers Response ↓</b>					
By using interesting methods of teaching like activity method, practical method, play way, A-V aids	47 (94%)	48 (96%)	48 (96%)	47 (94%)	0.936
The curriculum should cater according to daily needs of learner	11 (22%)	10 (20%)	12 (24%)	15 (30%)	0.674
English medium should also be provided along with Punjabi medium	3 (6%)	5 (10%)	4 (8%)	2 (4%)	0.792
By teaching students in mother tongue	5 (10%)	0	7 (14%)	0	0.001
Education should be made interesting and strong at primary level	0	5 (10%)	0	6 (12%)	0.004

The findings have shown that innovative and interesting teaching- learning methods like activity method, practical method, play way method and various audio- visual aids can help in creating an interesting environment in the school. A high majority of teachers' perceived the same view of all the 4 districts- Amritsar, Jalandhar, Mansa and Patiala that these methods can help to reduce dropout rate of students. Thus, it is resulted that there is no significance difference in the teachers' perception on using different creative methods to make teaching-learning process interesting as the p value (0.936) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance.

difference is found between the teachers' perception of 4 districts as the p value (0.674) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance.

The above Table also favour the English medium along with Punjabi medium. Majority of teachers' viewed the same thinking that English should be taught as a medium of instruction along with Punjabi medium. Usage of English language can make the teaching- learning process upto date and students will take more interest in their studies and drop the ideas of leaving their studies. No significant difference is found in the teachers' perception as the p value (0.792) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance.

Further, Table 4 also shows how a moulded curriculum can cater the daily needs of the students belonging to rural Punjab. Maximum number of teachers' perceived that the same view regarding to their students' daily based curriculum and it can motivate to pursue their studies. No significant

Results of the question regarding mother tongue as the medium of instruction indicates that Amritsar and Mansa district teachers' are in favour of it, but, Jalandhar and Patiala district teacher' do not opine the same view. Overall, it is resulted that a

significant difference is found in the teachers' perception of 4 districts as p value (0.001) is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Thus, it is concluded that teaching students only through their mother tongue is not enough in reducing dropout rates of students.

Further, an appealing question regarding their education at their primary level should be strong enough in pursuing their further studies is also having varied view of the teachers. Among 4 districts, only Jalandhar and Patiala teachers are strongly stressed at their primary level education, otherwise, Amritsar and Mansa teachers do not feel so. In nutshell, it can be said that teachers of 4 districts hold a different opinion in relation to make their primary education interesting. A significant difference is found in teachers' perception as p value (0.004) is less than the 0.05 level of significance.

#### **Discussion of the Results**

The results of the present study show that:

1. It is found that from all the 4 districts- Amritsar, Jalandhar, Mansa and Patiala teachers' have similar view that supportive home environment is needed in reducing dropout rates.
2. It is evident that teachers' viewed regular check on students' performance in schools is to be monitored by the parents.
3. Teachers' notices in their working environment that dropout rate of students can be minimized by providing books and copies free of cost to the poor general category students. The same view has been shown by all the 4 districts- Amritsar, Jalandhar, Mansa and Patiala teachers'.
4. It is found that by waiving off the fee of poor general category students can help in minimizing dropout rate as perceived by teachers of 4 districts of rural Punjab.
5. According to 70 teachers out of total sample 200 said that school infrastructure should be attractive and 64 teachers out of total 200 said that transport facility can also be taken care of.
6. Innovative and interesting teaching methods, effective need based syllabus, flexible curriculum, provision of English medium along with Punjabi medium have been favoured by maximum number of teachers.

Further, teachers from Jalandhar and Patiala don't view same regarding teaching in mother tongue and of Amritsar and Mansa district teachers don't keep the same view to make students' education strong at the primary level.

The results of the present study are in accordance with the result of Latif et al. (2015) who demonstrated the economic effect of student dropouts. It was found and revealed the effects of students' dropouts on economy and suggested some remedial measures such as free education program, curriculum adjustment, teachers training workshops, provision of all facilities in schools.

#### **Conclusions**

On the basis of the analyses of the data, it can be concluded that there are many measures with which one can help to reduce dropout rate of the secondary school students. Most prominent ways are

the family support, financial aid, attractive school infrastructure and effective teaching-learning process and flexible curriculum. These strategies can be noticed to minimize the dropout rate as perceived by maximum number of teachers belonging to the Amritsar, Jalandhar, Patiala and Mansa districts of rural Punjab.

But still a majority of the teachers don't take mother tongue as the medium of instruction and primary level to be strengthened before reaching at the elementary stage as the powerful measures in reducing dropouts.

In nutshell, it can be concluded that teachers' perception from rural Punjab covering all the 4 districts namely- Amritsar, Jalandhar, Patiala and Mansa, a wide range of initiatives have been identified and a list of different reasons of dropouts and how to minimize it have been recognized.

#### **Recommendations**

On the basis of the findings of the study, the following efforts can be made to lend a hand to stick in the schools:

1. Mass poverty is the great hurdle in bringing all children of the target group to the schools. So, it is recommended that free books and notebooks as well as meagre fee should be charged from all the students.
2. It is recommended that compulsory primary education to all the children in rural Punjab should be strengthened so that they can be promoted to the secondary level.
3. An effective in service teacher training programmes for teachers should be organized so that they can identify and handle at the risk students. Parent-teacher association, school development committee should frame a policy for the needy students in order to combat the problem of dropouts.

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