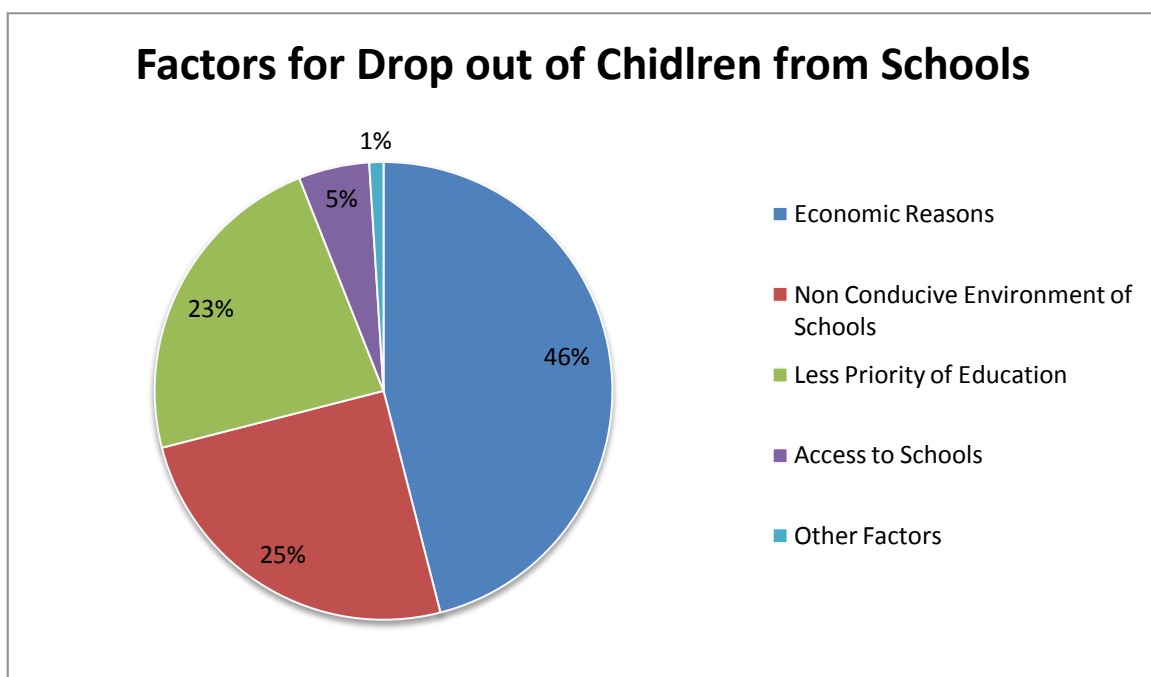


Factors Contributing in dropout of Children from Schools

SSD recently launched a survey through its face book page “Society for Sustainable Development Islamabad” group. The objective of the survey was to assess public perception about the reasons and factors which contribute to the children dropping out from the schools. A significant number of people not only participated in the survey but also gave comments and feedback on the issue. This feedback was greatly helpful in getting a better understanding of the underlying factors. The respondents of the survey include students, teachers, and development sector representatives, NGO people who are working with children and education in one way or the other. Therefore, a diversified, well organized and healthy feedback came on the issue.

Summary

The survey revealed that 46% people believe that economic reason is the major contributing factor in drop out from schools. Non conducive environment is also a major factor as 25% believe that behaviour of teachers and school environment force children out of school. 23% people feel that education is not a high priority of our people and that is why they are not ready to spend on education.



Access to educational facilities has also featured as factor and 5% people have listed it as a factor. 1% believes that none of them is a factor. This survey has shown that economic factor is the most important factor and needs our urgent attention. These below mention pie chart shows the quick snapshot of the survey which will be help full to understand the survey outcome.

Analysis

Majority of people think that despite education being almost free and free provision of books, economic reason is the major factor that parents take out their children from the school. It means that just by making education free and by providing free books, literacy cannot be improved. We need to look at other factor such as economic condition of the families, family burden, lack of awareness and political will, family education and most importantly the household income. The costs of education are not limited to school fee and books. The daily travel to school, uniforms, shoes and stationery to be used daily cost much more than meager school fee and books. Books are to be bought once a year, whereas, copies and stationery need be bought on monthly and often weekly basis. Parents find these costs a much greater burden and take their children out of schools. In order to increase the income of the family mostly parent keep their children away from schools and involve them in domestic child labor, in workshops and sometimes take the children with them in the fields as a helping hand. Although the income of that child laborer is not huge but parents feel that sending their children on work will benefit them in two ways: 1- they will be adding some money to the household budget, 2- the children will eventually learn some technical work for future.

The atmosphere in schools, especially the attitude of the teachers and the tradition of corporal punishment also drives children away from school. Our schools need to be friendlier and teachers need to be more educated and trained if we want to retain our next generation in school. The recent trend of suicide among the students is also a sad reflection of the kind of atmosphere which prevails in majority of our schools. The atmosphere at home also needs to be friendlier. Parents put a lot of pressure on the children to get good marks and to secure position in their respective class and school resultantly the students always study under the tremendous pressure of performing well which causes them a lot of problems.

Lack of awareness about the importance of education has led to a situation where education is not the top priority of parents. They consider it much better if their child could work in a workshop and learn some trade along with bringing daily wages to 50 rupee home. We need to develop awareness among people that by doing so they are forcing their child to be trapped in the eternal web of poverty for short term gains. The perception that a well educated human will get a well paid job also needs to be broken. There is a need to promote the concept that an educated person can perform much better than a uneducated person in all matters including, construction, workshop, labor and all other technical fields.

Recommendations

In the light of above discussion, Society for Sustainable Development recommends the following:

1. The state should allocate enough resources for education to provide equal opportunities to all citizens irrespective of their religion, cast, belief and geographic boundaries.
2. There should be some incentive for the families to send their children in schools
3. The concept about education should be changed from job getting to personality development
4. There is a need to declare education emergency in the country at priority basis
5. It should be made compulsory for schools either to hire only trained teachers or to build the capacity of their staff by providing them opportunities of getting training
6. The process of registration of private schools should be made more rigorous and only those schools should be allowed to work which have basic facilities available.
7. Instead of establishing parallel systems available facilities should be upgraded. The existing systems need to be strengthened. This will be more sustainable and cost effective.