

## Gender Related Risk Factors in Rural School Dropouts

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**ABSTRACT** The present research problem was undertaken to study the gender related risk factors in rural school dropouts. The study also aimed to identify the differences among dropouts and school goers of the same age group. A sample of 100 children aged 10 and above was drawn from six randomly selected villages of Ludhiana district and were evenly distributed (50 boys, 50 girls) to form two groups that is, dropouts and schoolgoers. Hundred parents from both the groups, 15 teachers and 10 religious heads were also interviewed. Socio-economic status of the respondents was determined by using scale given by Parikh and Trivedi (1964). Draw-a-man test (Mishra 1984) and Achievement Motivation Test and Inventory (Mehta 1993 - revised) were administered to assess the intellectual and achievement motivation levels of respondents. Self-structured interview schedules and questionnaires were used to collect relevant information from the families of respondents, religious heads of respective localities and concerned teachers. The results revealed that the dropout phenomena becomes a major problem after children complete 12 years of age and this age coincides with completion of primary schooling. Accordingly, class 8<sup>th</sup> among girls and class 9<sup>th</sup> among boys were seen to have maximum dropouts. Dropouts and schoolgoers were at par in their intellectual level and socio-economic status but differences were statistically significant when their achievement motivation ( $p < .05$ ) and social environment ( $p < .01$ ) were compared. Parents and teachers had indifferent attitude towards education of children unlike the religious heads who were highly positive. In spite of unfavorable social backing, most of siblings of dropouts responded negatively to any sort of effect of their brother/sister having dropped out. Marriage related reasons and shouldering financial responsibilities of the family had made a large number of girls and boys respectively to discontinue their studies.