



Social Environmental Determinants of Student Dropout in the Plantation Settlement

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Abstract

The role of institutions in the social environment appears to be one of the important predictors of student's attendance and academic performance and social development. Despite existing research on contributions of social environment factors namely home, social and school on student dropout but these factors were examined in a separate fashion and primarily focussed in rural villages. This study aims to develop a comprehensive framework of social environmental determinants of student dropout in secondary school in the the plantation settlement which is understudied. These determinants play a critical role in identifying the measures or interventions that will enhance a child's education. The role of these institutions in the social environment and its influence on student dropout is examined in general and amongst the secondary school students in the plantation settlement in particular. The findings reveal that although family factors contribute predominantly to student dropout as shown in conventional literature, school and social variables appear to be equally important and emerging determinants as well. Implications to policy and intervention are also discussed.

Keywords – education, family, social environmental, student dropout, school, plantation settlement

Introduction

Education is one of the necessities of modern society's access to wealth as well as social well-being. Education contributes to enhance and develop the social and economic status of individuals and build a vibrant community and a strong nation. Education is an important social objective and plays a significant role and contribution to societies (Quinn & Rubb, 2006). Education is not only a human right access issue for the marginal groups but it is also a significant tool to eradicate poverty and improve the socio-economic status of these groups particularly in developing countries.

Over the past several decades, major challenges in education have threatened educators to rethink their roles and approaches. This involved political consensus within the society to translate the educational reforms to achieve the steadily rising living standards and economic growth. There is an urgent need to increase the literacy amongst the masses in society and marginal groups in particular. Education is an important avenue to gain knowledge and skills that enable the poor to exercise their rights in society. Currently, in the school education system, student dropout is one of the issues that have gained attention. This issue has serious consequences to the students' pursuit of education goals. Moreover, student dropout is not only a local issue but has also become a severe problem in many places around the world (Quinn & Rubb, 2006), especially in developing countries. According to Lewin and Sabates (2012), though there are large numbers of children who have started primary school than before, the percentage of children dropping out from school has also been increasing in developing countries. Although there is an increase in student dropout at the primary level, the situation is more severe at the secondary level. The latest data show that there are 7.57 million children who should be in primary school, who are not attending school in the South Asian region (UNICEF, 2014). Another 25.29 million children should be in secondary education but many are not

in school at all. These figures are mainly based on the country reports from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka (UNICEF, 2014). Therefore, student dropout is a serious problem for both students and the society. Several reviews have shown that there is no simple cause for student dropout (Rumberger, 1983; Rumberger & Lawson, 1998; Swanson & Schneider, 1999; Goldschmidt & Wang, 1999; Krohn, 1997).

Understanding the factors of secondary students drop out of school is one of the key issues to address the social and economic problems that impede the progress of human resources utilization in developing countries. Completing secondary education is important to facilitate basic entry into employment, besides providing adequate foundation for further progress in an individual's career, as well as enabling to interface with technological utilization. Thus, secondary education has ramifications toward improving individual socio-cultural behaviour and the socio-economic growth of a country, essential for national development, particularly in developing countries. Dropping out from lower and/or upper secondary school is considered a serious educational, social, and cultural problem. However in this article, attempt is made to examine past studies that have viewed determinants of student dropout in a rather separate fashion namely attributing to individual or student's human behaviour factors (i.e. psychological factors), home or social or school factors. This study attempts to provide a sociological approach in a holistic and relational manner by utilizing an institutional social environment approach examining the related home, school, and social factors.

Student dropout rates have witnessed dramatic increases in the plantation sector and settlements (TIS, 2010). This trend is attributed to the largely minority population residing in these areas who encounter severe problems of livelihood and are often in poverty-stricken situation (UNICEF, 2014). This area does not have adequate facilities and infrastructures to facilitate students to continue and complete their secondary education (World Bank, 2005). The plantation sector and the surrounding settlements are very different in terms of their geographic, economic, and social conditions. The contextual environmental determinant of the plantation settlement on student dropout is a critical gap that has not been addressed in previous studies. Few studies have identified the causes for student dropout in the plantation area. In fact, variations in institutional environment between plantations exist, where the tea plantation sector is different from other plantations such as palm oil, rubber, and coconut plantations. In the plantation settlements, only a few studies that have focused on the actual and potential student dropout and examined the varying factors associated with family, school, and social aspects of the people residing in the plantation area. The plantation sector comprises primarily of the minority ethnic group and this minority group is poor and faces problems in sustaining its livelihood. They are prone to poverty. Some remote areas are unable to get good facilities to continue education (World Bank, 2005)

The purpose of this paper is to develop a framework of social environmental determinants of student dropout in the plantation settlement. The following sections review the literature related to the history and definition of student dropout followed by a review and discussion of the social environmental determinants of student dropout that includes family, school, and social factors.

Literature Review

The term student dropout has now emerged as a critical issue in ensuring that students do not indulge in such behaviour so that they can benefit from completing their secondary education, and secure their role and function in the society as well as in the wider economic system. The term dropout is not new and is common to all disciplines and perspectives, as the students' access to education involves the field of sociology of education (Rumberger, 2001). Dropout rates are regarded as problematic and have critical social implications over time. An alarming increase in dropout rates in rural areas has been attributed to the lack of opportunity and social inequality (Rumberger, 2001). Dropouts tend to occur due to sub-cultural differences among social classes, lower socio-economic, and minority status groups. Steps and measures to reduce dropout rates such as desegregation, gender equality in education, tuition fee incentives, and efficient and suitable curriculum have been instituted. However, in contrast to these measures, efforts to encourage children to complete their secondary school have failed, as the dropout rates are increasing. This is particularly alarming when we consider the costs

and benefits involved in establishing high school education and placing priority on high school graduation as a minimum educational goal. Leaving school before secondary school graduation is a critical deviation from the commitment in attaining the educational goal. The family, school, and society exert an effective influence on children to complete their education and seeing the benefit of fully utilizing the available educational opportunity. It has been argued that the students who drop out encounter adverse effects both culturally and economically (Rumberger, 2001). As such there is an urgent need for studies to elaborate and address this problem.

History of the dropout problem

The concept of the dropout problem was identified in the 1940s and expanded in the 1950s as part of the social disorder that existed during the post war period. However, the dropout problem did not begin until compulsory education laws came into effect in the early 1960s (Dorn, 1996). To restore the social disorder after World War II, most countries created a need for compulsory education to restore consistency in behavioural norms among students (Richardson, 1980). The extensive study on the dropout phenomenon had been developed in the early 1960s in response to substantial increase in student dropout in terms of less number of students completing their studies at the high school education level. Moreover, the effects of student dropout create increasing family dependency and potential social problems to emerge such as criminal attitudes and behaviour. Historically, there has been an increase in high school completion rate, which provides opportunities for employment. This scenario was affirmed in the study of Tyack (1974), which indicated the number of students completing their studies in high school. This shows that the increase in the education level among adolescents were able to meet the employment opportunities.

High school dropouts entail those who never complete their secondary education or obtain equivalent qualifications (Dorn, 1996). Student dropout is a major concern that affects the country both economically and socially. Ample evidence has been compiled to show that students who drop out of high school are far more likely to be unemployed. According to Christle et al. (2007), 56% of dropouts were unemployed as opposed to 16% of those who completed their secondary education. Numerous studies have shown that high school dropouts are a complex problem with no simple solutions in sight (Christle, 2007). These studies have made a significant contribution in raising the issue of student dropout and its wider societal implication. Children who do not complete high school have higher rates of unemployment, are over-represented in detention camps, more dependent on welfare and other government programs, and in general, obtain lower incomes than those with high school certificates. However, student drop out issues go beyond economic concerns of poverty and unemployment to include structural and social concerns such as inequality, community, social values, role of families, child abuse, and drug abuse.

Definition of Dropout

Dropout is referred to as leaving the school and class before completing the prescribed courses. The term dropout can be defined in many ways. A dropout is generally defined as “someone who has not graduated from, or is not currently enrolled in full time, state approved education programme” (Rumberger 1987). According to Frances (2008), the term dropout refers to the “students who have not completed a cycle of basic education, which depending on the compulsory age of enrolment, should generally encompass children from the ages of five or six to fifteen years”. However, this age differential varies according to the country’s level of development and period of growth. Meanwhile, Glatter & Wedell (1971) viewed dropout as “the proportion of students who enrol for the course but withdraw before examination”. Meanwhile, Good (1973) defined dropout as “an elementary or secondary school pupil who has been in membership for any reason except death or transfer to another school before completing the prescribed programme of studies; such an individual is considered a dropout whether his dropping out occurs before or after he has passed the compulsory school attendance age and where applicable, whether or not he had completed a minimum required amount of school work”. According to Pittman (1987), dropouts can be classified as either ‘stay outs’

or 'returnees'. Stay outs are those dropouts who never return to the educational program that they have enrolled, while returnees are dropouts who return to the educational system at least once.

There are three main types of dropouts, namely cohort dropout, event dropout, and status dropout as classified by Drewry (2007). The student who has committed the mere act of leaving high school before graduating is called an event dropout. The percentage of student dropout in any particular year is called the event dropout rate. Status dropout describes the person of school age who has not been in school at the time of the survey. Status dropouts are often used to describe the portion of students who have dropped out of school before graduation. Cohort dropout utilizes the base year and determines the students who did not obtain a high school degree. Cohort dropout rates usually categorize the differences in dropout rates for particular groups of students. Due to the ambivalent nature of the dropout definitions, researchers often use quantitative measures and group students into categories to describe their status with respect to school completion (Drewry, 2007). Dropout definition can be enhanced by knowing the reasons individual students have dropped out of school.

Social Determinants of Student Dropout

Many studies have discussed the factors influencing student dropout at the secondary education level. Dropping out of secondary school without graduating is a severe problem in most developing countries. However, the dropout rates in developing countries have been relatively stable registering between 5% and 10% since 1970 (Koller et al., 2001). But there exist difference in drop out within the country especially rural and urban (Rumberger, 1983; Rumberger & Lawson, 1998; Swanson & Schneider, 1999; Goldschmidt & Wang, 1999) and more importantly differences within the rural context. According to Chandra Gunawardena (2006), the significant aspects of non-schooling and dropout are related to (1) family related aspects (lower income, apathy of parents, unpredictable family environments); (2) school related aspects (denying enrolment to poor children, or those without birth certificates, lack of amenities for physically challenged children, and severe punitive measures.); and (3) personal reasons (persistent ill-health, impairment, and learning difficulties).

To understand the negative consequences of student dropout, many researchers from different discipline such as sociology, education, and psychology, have investigated the reasons, and identified the causes of early school dropout and proposed preventive measures to control this phenomena. Researchers have classified the causes for student dropout from high schools into varying categories namely school, family, social, and personal factors. However, this article takes an institutional perspective uses a social environmental approach (Rumberger, 2001b) that entails family, school, and social factors. This approach comprised of social conditioning factors that have an impact on changing behavioural norms as asserted by Richardson (1980).

Family related factors

Factors associated with failure to complete secondary school education or student dropout include family conditions, family structure, family size, low income, educational status of parents, hard labour family, minority community, mobility, and parents and children's perspective of education (Rumberger, 1983; Rumberger & Lawson, 1998; Swanson & Schneider, 1999; Goldschmidt & Wang, 1999).

(1) Effect of home background on student dropout

Many researchers have examined the various characteristics of a student's home background to investigate the issue of student dropout. Kitavi (2005), and Cynthia (2013) have established that factors, which students interact with or depend on for their livelihood during their school life affects their outcome at the end of their secondary school education. This includes the unfavourable living conditions prevailing within the family such as kinship ties, family composition, and parent's attitude towards education. The attitude of the parents towards the child's upbringing on personality is more important during the early years of childhood.

SACMEQ (2005) identified four main home based factors that affect a student's performance and consequently the potential for dropout rate. Their study focused on how family background

affects the tendency for students to drop out. The study attribute the quality of the living condition house, possessions at home, parents' education level and income contribute to the effect of family background. Kitavi (2005) documented that parents and the family communal ties are two of the most important contributing factors in the family background affecting both learning and students' performance.

Children from low educational or uneducated families are often associated with more dropouts and failures (Njuguna, 2004; Kitavi, 2005; Cynthia, 2013) This proves that the parents' perception of the importance of education depends on their own educational level. Family's social mobility, financial position, personality perceptions, and ability affect occupational and social security, including the student's education in society. Social mobility is an important variable for gaining consistent educational opportunities and it is related to demographic and locational factors, especially enabling social interaction, material factors, religious inclination, social class of locational and economic environments (Patrick, 2012). Overall, this includes home living condition, poverty, distance and perception of parents on education (Oluwadare & Julius, 2011; Sander, 2006). These factors can greatly affect the educational achievement of students and subsequently their school life success.

(2) *Effect of socio-economic background on student dropout*

Low socio-economic status is considered the primary characteristic associated with dropping out. Economic issues have a significant impact on the factors associated with the dropout aspect. The feeling of relative poverty in a heterogeneous society can be attributed to the physical and mental disadvantages among the parents and children, causing the dropout phenomenon to emerge, and affecting the educational achievement of pupils. Researchers have identified that most dropouts come from low socio-economic families. Low socio-economic levels and dropouts are inevitably associated with three major settings, which impact teenagers namely families, schools, and communities (Shonkoff et al., 2012). These children who live in extreme poverty include children living in public organizations (orphanages) and in non-urban, coastal and plantation areas.

Due to income fluctuation, poor people are severely affected and consequently preventing their children from attending school, and sometimes going to work to support their household chores and expenditure. However, in some families, before preventing their children from going to school, they attempt to secure loan or financial assistance from friends and relatives (Janvry, 2006). Generally, it is asserted that the poor families appear to know the value of education but have logical reasons for not sending their child to school, namely associated with decisions made on educational quality, financial value, and future investments (Boyle, 2002). The important factor in determining access to schooling is household income, since schooling is likely to incur both direct and hidden costs. Direct costs include tuition fees and other administration costs while hidden costs include uniform, books, stationery, transportation, equipment, and the opportunity cost of sending a child to school. Several factors are linked to household income such as the time when children start school, attendance frequency, potential to temporarily withdraw, and also when and if they drop out (Croft, 2002).

Besides that, low income level also influences propensity for households to fall into poverty. Many researchers found an association between poverty and student dropout (Birdsall et al., 2005; Boyle et al., 2002; Brown & Park, 2002; Cardoso & Verner, 2007; Dachi & Garrett, 2003; Hunter & May, 2003; Ranasinghe & Hartog, 2002; Vavrus, 2002). In an interview conducted among parents and guardians in Tanzania, it was found that parents realize the importance of going to school, but they are unable to pay the fees, which is the main reason for dropping out from schools (Dachi & Garrett, 2003). Lack of finances is also the reason for temporary dropouts and under-enrolment (Mukudi, 2004). The consequences of financial difficulties on schooling have been attributed to three factors by Croft (2002): a) the age at which children enrol in school; b) how often they attend; and c) when and if they drop out.

School related factors

There are several factors that are attributed to student dropout that are related directly or indirectly to the school. School related factors have a significant role in influencing children leaving school and have been found, in some cases to be the most important predictors for dropout incidents (Bryk & Thum, 1989). School-related reasons for dropping out include school size, unfriendly school environment, absence of teachers, weak teachers, poor teaching, demands of school curriculum workload, poor school facilities, and teacher's attitude towards pupils, school policies, school climate, absenteeism rates, and lack of co-curricular activities (Allenworth, 2005; Bryk & Thum, 1989; Roderick, 1994; Goldschmidt & Wang, 1999; Pittman & Haughwout, 1987). Another school related factor for student dropout includes the non-existence of the mother tongue as the language for medium of instruction, often experienced by minority groups (Goldschmidt & Wang, 1999). Teaching methods and curricular content are equally significant causes for pupils to dropout from schools. Some studies have reported the shift-system of as one of the causes contributing to the dropout incidents (Bryk & Thum, 1989; Roderick, 1994).

(1) *Effect of curriculum on school dropout*

The curriculum in most public schools includes subjects such as the student's first language, English, a second national language, mathematics, religion, history, science and technology, health and physical education, practical and technical skills, social studies, life competencies, and aesthetic studies. Students are evaluated through a series of school-based exams, projects, and practical work. Teaching methods and curriculum are equally significant causes for school children to dropout from schools.

Shadreck (2013) examined the dropout phenomenon with respect to irrelevant curriculum related factor. It was found that irrelevant curricula and the lack of educational programs influenced the dropout behaviour in schools. The dropout phenomenon occurred because the curriculum was unable to meet the individual's vocational and intellectual needs. He also found that school distance, inadequate resources and facilities were a major reason for premature school dropout. He concluded that the school should expand and engage in meaningful curriculum to meet the students varied interests, needs, and aptitudes to reduce the dropout rates. Bryk and Thum (1989) found that a high percentage of students in educational programs who were given more homework exhibited low dropout rates than the average levels of homework schools.

Several educational experts have suggested various approaches in designing the curriculum to increase student engagement and learning. Strong et al. (2003) suggested an approach in designing curriculum to improve the student's involvement using four natural human interests. These interests include "the drive toward mastery, the drive to understand, the drive toward self-expression, and the need to relate". They documented their work with several schools and students in various districts, and recommended a curriculum design that raised questions related to each interest, and designed a survey tool to help identify students' interests. They concluded that educators needed to know how to design a curriculum around student interests and to differentiate the instructions to appeal to learners of all styles. In the rural context, the 'the need to relate' the curriculum to their local environment was found to create enthusiasm amongst students to stay engaged in school, as this was revealed in a study in a remote primary school in a mountainous environment at Bakalalan, Sarawak in Malaysia (Selvadurai et al., 2014).

Also lack of varied streams (such as technical and vocational streams) in secondary schools and lack of co-curricular activities in schools are inhibiting factors for students to stay engaged in school (Kuthemba Mwale, 1988). Some of the students who are less academically inclined are less likely to be interested to stay in school if the academic streams are not varied and if diverse cocurricular activities are not available (Shadreck, 2013).

(2) *Effect of school administration on student dropout*

The schooling system and social structures are closely related to each other. Every society and its prevailing ideologies are constructed based on the relationship between school and society (Cohen et

al., 2009; NSCC, 2007). The school's management and teachers have to be technically strong in meeting the expectations of the students and the society (Bear et al., 2011; Charland, 2011; Lingard et al., 2003; Singal & Swann, 2011).

Jeffrey (2012) reported on student dropout from high schools prior to graduation in relation to school management. A phenomenological study was conducted to gain the personal perspective of individuals who dropped out of an urban school district. The specific goal of the research was to determine the factors that contributed to the students deciding to drop out of high school. Individual and small group interviews were conducted. They found that the prominent theme for student dropout was associated with the school culture. The results reflected the opinions of both the individuals and the school community. The author recommended that the school should change the culture of the institution to improve the graduation rate. According to the American School Counselling Association (2003), counsellors should meet with every student on their caseload during the school year. This approach will create a close connection between the school counsellor and students to help them achieve their goals. This can only be possible if the school counsellors meet every student on a regular basis.

Duignan (1986) notes that students' performance and the overall success of a school are largely dependent on good school administration. The study revealed that the effective leadership of the school administrators was a crucial factor in the success of a school. The author mentioned strategic activities that constitute effective leadership by the school principal including setting an atmosphere of order, providing effective student-teacher relationships, creating a strong spirit and building commitment among the students and staffs to meet the school's goals. Furthermore, the school administrators should be knowledgeable in managerial skills, which would enable them to plan, supervise, control, evaluate, and make adequate decisions. The author also noted that school administrators should carry out six tasks to improve the school quality, which includes the students, staff, school-community relations, and adequate provision of physical facilities and financial management. Hubbar (1965) conducted a survey on student dropout and reported that school teachers as well as school administrators must execute the administration function sincerely to improve the school dropout rates. Lee and Burkam (2003) conducted studies on student dropout in high schools in relation to school organization and structure. The study showed that the problem of dissatisfaction with the school among the students due to the relative lack of school administration influenced the students' decisions to stay in school or drop out.

(3) *Effect of teacher characteristics on student dropout*

The classroom remains important in describing the features of the classroom setting (Burke et al., 2011; Galton, 2010). Educational achievement cannot be obtained without the adequacy of the teacher's quality and teaching skills (Adesina, 2011; Adeyemi, 2007; Aggarwal, 2006; Farrant, 2004). Teachers play a significant role in the life of the child during his/her school going age. It is the teacher who encourages the children and thereby assists them in academic adjustment. The teacher's role is to create a bridge between various groups particularly student-student and teacher-student relationships with a clear objective of shaping the personality pattern of the children.

The interaction of the teacher with their student has important social influences that determine the direction of the student's personality development as well as in ensuring effective classroom learning. Kathuri (1991) observed that teachers' ability to interact, communicate, organize, and utilize the resources effectively determines the achievement of a low dropout rate. The author mentioned that the underlying factors determining the quality of a teacher are teacher characteristics, availability, competence, experience, and level of training. Kinyanjui (1979) also observed that the quality of teacher in any school or school system forms an important factor that can have enormous impact on school outcomes. Lessard et al. (2010) conducted a study on student-teacher relationship that evaluated the students' performance and dropout rate with respect to the student-teacher relationship and teacher quality. The result postulated that teacher's qualification and personality had a significant effect on students' performance. The authors highlighted that students who had lower satisfaction and lower achievement levels were at a higher risk of dropping out of school.

Wagle (2012) revealed that many children disagreed with the methods of teaching. The study revealed the importance of teaching methods and classroom functions. Wagle (2012) pointed out that

children preferred a one-way teaching method. When the teacher comes into the class, he/she reads a book and asks some questions. If the children are able to understand, then the teacher does not try to simplify, but rather asks the children to read at home and memorize. It was also found that many teachers focused on memorizing rather than making children understand. The study also showed that teachers focused and encouraged children to understand in real time or at a different time. Cough (2011) states that reasons for dropping out of school include not being able to identify with what is going on in the classroom; teachers not really explaining what needs to be done further; fast teaching and learning process (reading books rather than discussing with students); and having insufficient time for children to complete their class work. Thus, one would expect to find dissatisfaction among students due to the insensitive attitude of the teachers and other staff members, leaving them with no other alternative but to leave school. The problem of dissatisfaction with teachers among children is also considered one of the causes contributing to the dropout phenomenon.

Social related factors

Social related factors include race, social status, child abuse, gender difference, drug abuse, substance abuse, and language (Bryl & Thum, 1989; Rumberger, 1983; Rumberger & Lawson, 1998; Steinberg et al., 1984; Goldschmidt & Wang, 1999). The interaction of these variables results in students' academic efficiency, interest in education, and consequently influence their attendance. It has been observed that in every class, there are some students who do not keep pace with the rest of the children and might likely leave the school because of the numerous frustrations experienced in the classroom.

Goldschmidt & Wang (1999) identified race as a significant factor for students leaving school early. African Americans were significantly less likely to dropout than the whites. Marjoribanks (2002) documented the prevalence of student dropout among different races. The study examined environmental and individual influences on the likelihood of Australian adolescents staying in school using the qualitative research method. The analysis indicated that adolescents from middle social status backgrounds and Asian families were more likely to stay in school than those from the lower social status backgrounds and Anglo Australian families. Academic self-concept, achievement, perceptions of environment, and aspirations had more independent association with those staying in school and there were significant differences in relationships among the aforementioned variables for adolescents from different ethnic groups and among those who decided to stay in or drop out of school.

Rather (1985) identified the main social structure related factors for students leaving school. At the secondary school level, gender was a significant factor; females were significantly more likely to dropout than males. In the Kashmir province, it was found that boys had high socio-metric status in comparison to girls who had a low socio-metric status with a high dropout incident. Goldschmidt & Wang (1999) found that at the middle and high school levels, females were significantly more likely to dropout than males. Epstein (1995) examined the extent to which alcohol use contributes to dropping out of school. The study revealed that background characteristics, social influences to drink and individual characteristics were found to be responsible for alcohol consumption in the high school. The author determined that the existence of social influence from friends, peers, and parents anticipated alcohol use among teenagers. They concluded by developing preventive programs targeting students with prevalence of drinking among friends and peers to correct the misconceptions of drinking.

Mensch & Kandel (1988) also examined the influence of substance abuse among school dropouts. They found that the main predictors of dropout among students from high school were higher rates of cigarette, marijuana, and other illicit drugs usage. Furthermore, they found that illegal substance usage from an early age was more likely to result in students leaving school early. Krohn (1997) confirmed the finding of Mensch & Kandel (1988). Krohn (1997) focused on early substance use and how it correlated with child attitude including student dropout, teenage pregnancy, teenage parenting, and moving out of the parental household. They found that illegal substance usage significantly contributed to adulthood behaviour and academic performance.

Conclusion

This study is based on the understanding that various factors combine to influence the consequences of student dropout. Completion of school or graduation depends on the interaction of certain factors within the home, school, and social environment. Factors in the home environment, which influence students' graduation, include family conditions, family structure, family size, low income, educational status of parents, hard labour family, mobility, and parents and children's perspective of education and school. On the other hand, school based factors affecting students staying in school include school size, unfriendly schools, absence of teachers, weak teachers, poor teaching, heavy school curriculum, poor school facilities, teacher's attitude towards pupils, policies, school climate, absenteeism rates, and lack of co-curricular activities. Lastly, social related factors affecting the students' academic efficiency include child abuse, gender difference, attitude towards life, race, language, etc. The factors of interest are home background, school and social that influences the involvement of student dropout from secondary school. This review has demonstrated that not only home environment matters but both school and social environment play a significant role in the academic future of the student.

Asia is having relatively a higher literacy rate compared to the other developing countries in the world. However, the dropout rate is still high. Therefore, the reason for this type of study is to identify the factors that can reduce student dropout and poverty in the plantation sector. In future, a comprehensive study could be done to develop an adequate solution to overcome the problem of student dropout in the plantation sector. Consequently it would lead to adequate measures to improve the level of education in the plantation sector. Future researches could be carried out in various parts of the country and in the other developing countries as well. It is hoped that this study would be a stepping stone for further studies for the policymakers to come up with a workable solution that should have impact on education and economy which is similar to the developed countries.

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