

Poverty and Girl's Child Education in Rural Senapati, Manipur

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Abstract: Due to poverty and inadequate resources, many girls in rural areas of Senapati District, Manipur, are robbed of the fundamental right to an education. Socioeconomic hurdles, traditional gender norms, and infrastructure restrictions continue to cause structural inequities and gender gaps in enrolment and completion rates despite global efforts to provide universal primary and secondary education. Low income and other economic constraints still drive gender prejudice in schooling. Siblings cannot share household finances fairly because resources are scarce. The average resource amount is much lower than the minimum productive capability. The uneven distribution of costs associated with poverty is a significant consequence. The "lifeboat dilemma" is a well-known phenomenon that causes extreme poverty to lead to preferential treatment within households. In general, women are vulnerable to mistreatment. This study investigates the impact of poverty on girls' education in the rural Senapati districts of Manipur using data from household surveys. The study concluded that higher household incomes are associated with more significant female education investments. Children from low-income homes were more likely to drop out of school because of poverty than children from middle-class families, according to the study. The high dropout rate among girls was also associated with family-related problems and duties, such as caring for a younger sibling or completing housework, as well as the dysfunctional state of the public school system. Improving educational opportunities for girls and providing financial assistance to low-income families could ensure that all children can attend a high-quality, inclusive education.

Keywords: *Poverty, Rural, Gender, Income, Manipur*

1. Introduction

Inequality in educational opportunities between the genders gets in the way of basic human rights essential to individual and societal success. A rights-based strategy grounded in gender equality should provide all children with a quality education. Education is the greatest weapon a child may have in the fight for their right to realise their aspiration and achieve their life goals. Gender parity boosts present-day productivity and lays a solid foundation for future generations. In most third-world nations, the economic health of the household has a significant role in whether or not to invest in children's education. There are few options for children living in impoverished households to go to school and advance in life. Nonetheless, raising investments in human capital—especially in education—would be essential to raising family members' efficiency and production in the battle against and escape from poverty. Economic growth, social standing, and quality of life can all benefit from gender equality. The fifth report from India's National Family Health Survey shows that school gender inequality is declining. However, 13 per cent of children aged 6 to 17 did not attend school.

The gender gap in educational attainment is an important indicator of gender inequality. Restricting girls' access to schooling traps them in poverty and hinders their ability to become economically independent, socially progressive, and generally well-off. Poverty is cited as the most critical issue influencing a girl's ability to attend school in the World Bank report. Boys are more likely than females to be sent to school by their families if they can afford it. About 15 million females do not have access to education, compared to 10 million boys. Families in poverty usually have to choose between providing for their children's basic needs and their educational needs. Even if families are exempt from paying tuition, attending school still requires expenditures like uniforms, books, supplies, and tests. Poverty strips today's children of their potential as the nation's future leaders. Inaction on this problem will cause the country to face serious difficulties in the future. Poverty is a worldwide problem that prevents young children from getting the things they need and puts a major damper on their social and academic growth. Poverty has a profound effect on children, especially from rural areas. A malnourished and resource-scarce child lacks the impetus to pursue an improved existence. Poverty and insufficient economic means continue to be the primary factors contributing to gender inequality in educational access.

It is necessary to re-evaluate the fair distribution of household economic resources among siblings because, on average, significantly fewer resources are available than required

to meet the minimal productive capacity. The uneven distribution of the costs associated with poverty is one of its most significant consequences. The "lifeboat dilemma," a well-known occurrence, causes extreme poverty to result in preferential treatment within a household. This dilemma states that equal treatment may deprive every one of the minimum resources needed to live a productive life. In its entirety, women are vulnerable to being treated unfairly. Educational disparity is more prevalent for women than for men. Cultural and customary beliefs that men will provide financially after marriage lead many households to prioritize boys' education over girls. Consequently, girls frequently forfeit this opportunity. The investment drive benefits children because sons and daughters have different returns. By doing so, they cut off the girl's opportunities to follow her passions. Chernichovsky and Meesook (1985), Kabubo-Mariara and Mwabu (2007), and Rolleston (2009) are just a few examples of the many empirical studies that find a positive and significant relationship between family income, poverty status, and child schooling. Strong evidence of gender bias in intra-household resource allocation in poor countries has also been presented in a large body of work (see Gong et al., 2005; Shah et al., 2006; But and Asad, 2017). The study examines the relationship between household income (poor) and the education of female children, drawing on field observations in the rural Senapati districts of Manipur. It reveals the least examination into the realities of girls' education.

2. Review literature

Numerous economists have conducted studies in the academic literature in recent years in an effort to explain the factors that influence children's schooling. A substantial amount of research has shown that family income significantly affects the number of children in developing nations who attend school. Family economic resources, including land ownership, household income, positively and considerably impacted child education and girls are more likely than boys to be the victims, Burney and Irfan (1995). Basu and Van (1998) found that poverty increases the likelihood of child labour, which in turn reduces the quality of schooling that these children receive. The financial resources of the household shape the decision of parents to send their children to work or school. There is a correlation between financial constraints on investment in education and lower enrolment and failure rates among children from low-income homes, based on Zimmerman (2001). Nidup (2016) found a positive correlation between household income and school enrolment, revealing that the poor place a

higher value on education for their children than the wealthy. Iddrisu et al. (2017) Poverty and persistent socioeconomic disadvantage have a substantial impact on school enrollment and academic achievement. Gender inequality in schools is exacerbated by poverty, which further isolates girls and limits their access to excellent education, as pointed out by (Godfrey et al. 2023).

Furthermore, there is a lot of research showing that investing in children's education is biased toward girls. A few studies that focus on gender discrimination are highlighted. Khan and Ali (2005) found that household attitudes were found to be influenced by sociocultural norms, which in turn reflect the bias towards the education of female children. Utilizing microdata derived from a field survey of children residing in rural Andhra Pradesh, India, Ota and Moffatt (2007) investigated the decision-making processes within households with regard to schooling. Findings show that factors such as a child's age, sex, and family status have the greatest impact on the work-schooling decision. The study indicated that females have a greater rate of dropping out of school compared to boys. Iddrisu et al. (2018) noted that both enrollment and spending decisions among elementary school-aged children are skewed toward males. The research above, which is skewed toward females, found large gender differences in household spending on education and educational achievement.

3. Data and descriptive statistics

Both primary and secondary data were used in this study's analysis. The most recent iterations of the National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5) and the Annual Status of Education Report 2022 (Rural) (ASER 2022) are utilized as secondary sources of data. The primary source of data is a database of household information from six villages in the rural Senapati districts of Manipur, India. 210 households were surveyed. This household survey obtained detailed information about a wide range of characteristics, including population, education, housing, migration, agricultural practices and employment. The research specifically gathers information on the yearly expenditures made by households for higher education. This data provides an invaluable opportunity to examine the trends of educational expenditure made by the household and how they differ by gender. Boys and girls aged 6–16 constitute the majority of this survey's sample.

Table 1 shows the gender distribution of school attendance in rural Manipur state and India to children aged 6–17. The data highlights that school attendance rates in Manipur,

classified by gender, are consistently higher than the national average (see Table 1). Manipur has a statistically insignificant gender discrepancy in school attendance rates, with males at 96.0% and girls at 95.1%. The rural area's overall school attendance rate is 93.96 per cent. Based on the data, Manipur has higher school enrollment rates than India overall. However, compared to the national average of 72.9%, Manipur has the lowest rate of primary and upper primary school attendance at 60.3% (ASSER Report 2022). When comparing private school enrollment rates across Indian states, Manipur ranks first with 66.1%, and West Bengal has the lowest with 5.8%. The above figures suggest that taxpayers' money goes into paying teachers and support staff in Manipur without any sign of ever setting foot in a classroom, leading many to believe that government schools in most regions, particularly in the hill districts, are either non-existent or completely shuttered.

Table: 1. *Percentage of school attendance rates by Gender and residence in rural Manipur, India, for Children Aged 6–17*

State	Male	Female	Combined
	Rural	Rural	Rural
Manipur	96.0	95.1	93.9
India	89.9	91.0	86.1

Sources: *National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), 2019-21: India.*

Table 2 also shows the gender breakdown, income per capita, dropout rate, and school attendance for the sample. For children aged 6–16, the descriptive statistics show that the proportion of male and female students enrolled in school increases as household income rises. The percentage of students attending school is 86.21%, and among those students, 61.29% of girls and 73.33% of boys live in households with a per capita income below 50000. The overall attendance rate has improved to 74.07%, while it decreased to 53.86% for girls and 92.86% for boys within the per capita income group of 50,000 to 100,000. At the following income level, the attendance rate is 92.86%, which is consistently on the rise. The attendance percentage for girls is 90%, while for boys, it is 100%. At the next income tier, every segment's attendance rate is 100%.

We found that the percentage of girls who drop out of school is much higher than the percentage of males from the first to the third income quartile. In the first income quartiles per capita, the dropout rate for boys is 13.79%, and for girls, it is 38.71%. The drop-out percentage for girls in the second income category rose to 46.15 percent, while the rate for boys fell to 7.14 percent. There is a declining trend in the third income quartile for both boys and girls,

with the former dropping to 0% and the latter to 10%. In the first income quartile, the total drop-out rate is 26.67%; it lowers to 25.93% in the second quartile and then to 7.14% in the third. At the next income tier, there is no dropout rate at all. The percentage drop-out rate shows an apparent gender disparity from the first to the third income quartile. Figures 1a and 1b, which display the rates of male and female school attendance and dropout, provide a clearer picture.

Table: 2: *Per capita income, gender, school attendance, and dropout rate in rural Senapati district, Manipur.*

Income interval	Girls' child School attendance	Boys Child School attendance	Total Childs School attendance	Girls' child School drop out	Boys' child School drop out	Total child School drop out
0-50000	61.29	86.21	73.33	38.71	13.73	26.67
50000-100000	53.85	92.86	74.07	46.15	7.14	25.93
100000-150000	90	100	92.86	10	0	7.14
150000-200000	100	100	100	0	0	0
200000-Above	100	100	100	0	0	0

Sources: Authors household survey

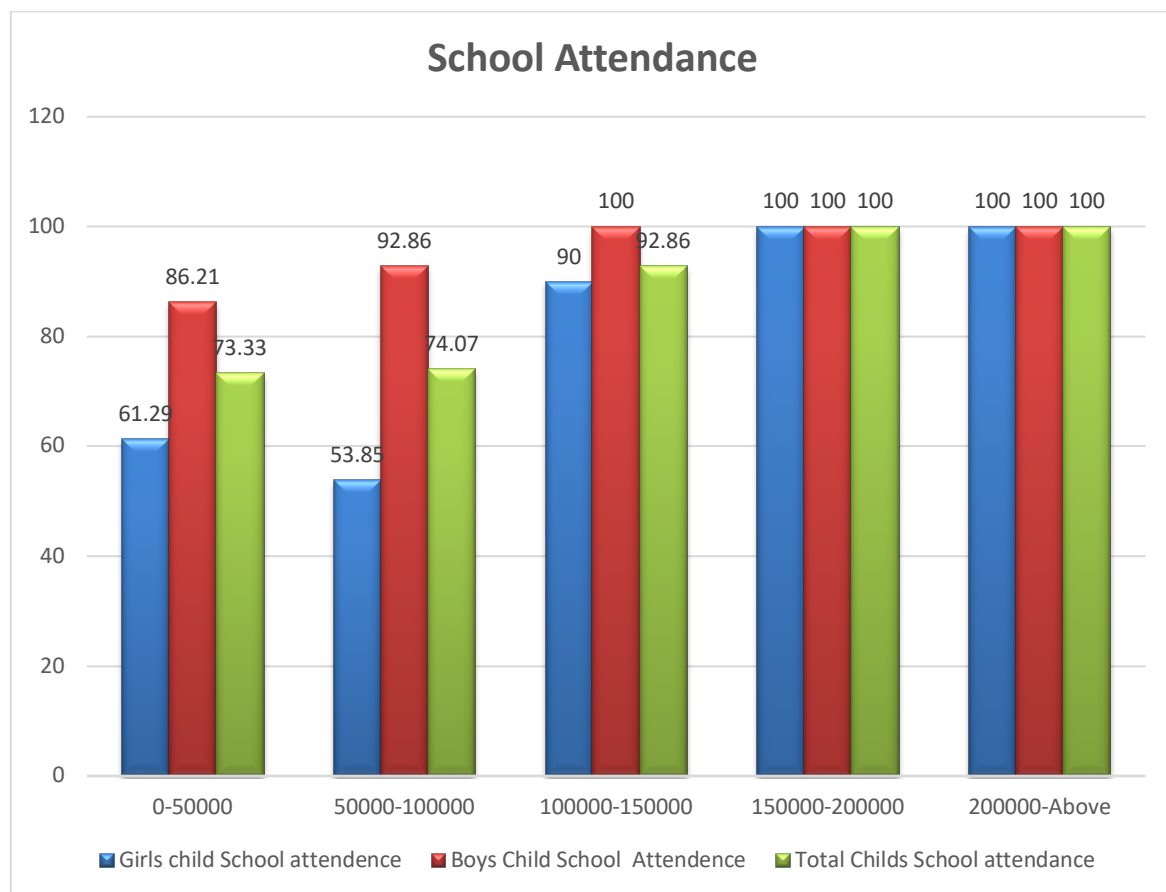


Fig.1a: *School attendance*

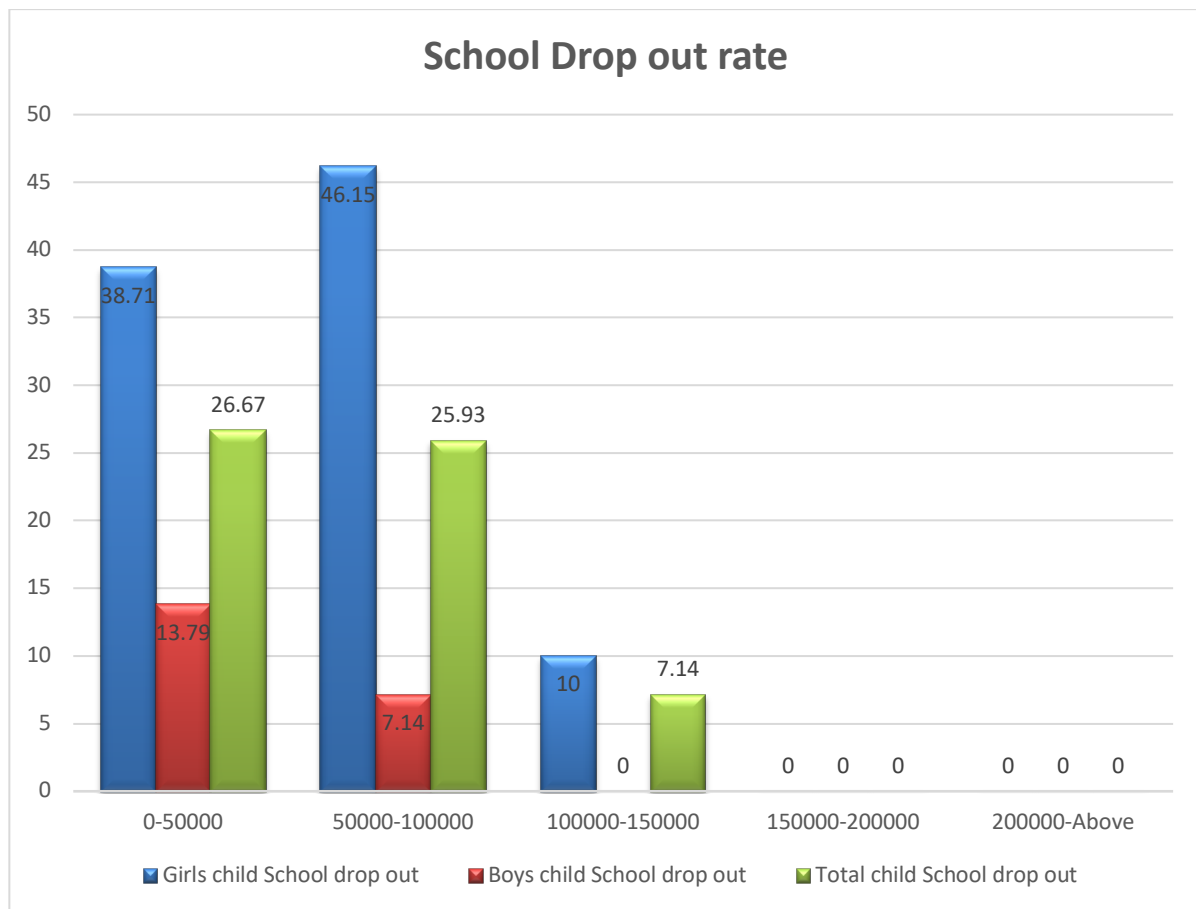


Fig.1b: *School drop-out rate*

4. Conclusion

The school attendance rates in rural Senapati districts in Manipur, India, are examined in this study. Based on first-hand information gathered from 210 households. We found that children from higher-income families are more likely to attend school regularly. Investments in girls' education rise in tandem with household income. Additionally, the study found that compared to children from middle-class homes, those from low-income families were more likely to drop out of school because of poverty. These findings add to the growing body of research showing that developing nations have a very uneven distribution of poverty. Girls' school attendance is greatly impacted by illness, disability, and parental separation. High rates of girls' school dropouts were associated with problems within the family, such as caring for younger siblings or helping out around the house, as well as the dysfunctional state of the public school system. The effective ways to guarantee that everyone has access to inclusive, high-quality education are expanding educational opportunities and financial aid for low-income possibilities.

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