

THE STUDY ABOUT THE FACTORS AND AGENCIES THAT CREATES THE REASON FOR SCHOOL DROPOUTS AND THE ATTITUDE ABOUT THE CONTINUOUS EDUCATION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MODARA AND MATTAKKULIYA AREAS OF SRI LANKA

SOLANGAARACHCHI T. G. K & GAMAGE H. G. C. L

Aquinas College of Higher Studies,
Colombo - 08, Sri Lanka

<https://doi.org/10.37602/IJSSMR.2022.5120>

ABSTRACT

This sociological study is done based on Children who are considered to be the School Dropout of Adolescents in the Urban area of Colombo, Sri Lanka. These Children live under the care of their parents, grandparents, and other caregivers. The school dropouts in the Urban area of Colombo are found to be the victims of a society that is corrupted strongly due to Socio-Economic factors. The main objective of this research article is to look into the main causes for students to drop out half of their schooling. The primary and secondary data were collected by providing questioners, interviews, and observations using accepted data collecting methods. The collected data are presented using the most suited methods to analyze data by charts, tables and descriptive methods. The Parents, Teachers and Key Informants are being questioned as to why the percentage of School dropouts in this area is high and vulnerable. In order to achieve this objective, the questionnaires have been used particularly with School Dropouts and with their Parents further conducted interviews with Teachers and Key-Informants.

Keywords: Adolescent, Dropout, Factors, Agencies, Poverty, Attitude.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Education fosters personal development and self-fulfilment. It encourages the individual to develop his mental, physical, emotional and spiritual talents to the full. Understandably, the word Education derives from the Latin word e-ducere, which means to lead out. In advanced industrial societies, Education is provided by the state as a matter of right for all its citizens. Formal institutions, schools, colleges and universities are organized for this purpose. (M. Haralambos with R. M. Heald, 2011, P.172). The technical understanding in other words is to transmit the stored knowledge, values and skill from one generation to another. The Global publication of human rights and the act of child rights state that education is a universal human need. This is also a very powerful human right including freedom and democracy. They are staffed by full-time professional practitioners, Teachers and Lecturers. Attendance at schools is compulsory; it is upheld by legal sanctions. Education is provided free of charge,

though ultimately it is paid for by the taxpayer. Although free compulsory state Education is largely taken for granted today and regarded as a perfectly normal and natural state of affairs, it is important to remember that it is a very recent development in the history of man.

The word education has a complex meaning in a broader sense. Further, Education is always in the development process with new adoptions in any country. (Reddy, 1979). Education for human beings and animals has a different meaning. That means human beings could be educated always while animals are being trained. French sociologist Emile Durkheim saw the major function of education as the transmission of Society's norms and values. He maintained that "Society can survive only if there exists among its members a sufficient degree of homogeneity; education perpetuates and reinforces this homogeneity by fixing in the child from the beginning the essential similarities which collective life demands". Durkheim argues that in complex industrial societies, the school serves a function that cannot be provided either by the family or peer groups. Further, he says that Education teaches the individual specific skills necessary for his future occupation. (M. Haralambos with R. M. Heald, 2011, p. 175).

According to the "Sustainable Development" introduced in Brunt Land Report – 1972 of United Nations and Millennium development goals suggested to start in 2000 up to the end of 2015 and its annexure, the younger generation should be provided with a meritocratic education because many issues faced by the present society can be solved through it. The research was done by many of the recognized international organizations including UNESCO, which state that most of the children who are in the schooling age have not received their primary education. Education is the basic foundation of a person's life. Therefore, not providing proper education causes to bring bad results to children as well as to the whole society where they live. American sociologist Talcott Parsons argues that after primary socialization within the family, the school takes over as the focal socialization agency. The school acts as a bridge between the family and society as a whole, preparing the child for his adult role. Parsons sees the Educational system as an important mechanism for the selection of individuals for their future role in society.

According to the UNESCO report in 2016, 52% of the world population is urban population (8 billion). One billion of the world population belongs to the urban community who receive low income according to the same report and they live in slums. This slum population has a very low economy and poverty has become their culture. Therefore, this community is the source of many social issues that are directly affected by the co-existence and the development of human society. socialist states that many deviant and delinquent behaviours such as prostitution, suicides, drug addiction, begging as a profession, underworld criminality, family problems, child abuse etc. have been created by its community.

Use of alcohol and other drugs among school children is a current global problem giving rise to many health hazards, psychosocial problems and reduced school performances, both in academic work and in sports. These problems are also seen in Sri Lanka and very few studies have been done to estimate their prevalence. Furthermore, no not worthy actions have been taken to improve this situation. (National Dangerous drugs control Board, RESEARCH MONOGRAPH, 2006, p. 146).

In the first place, need to discuss the vast amount of resources provided on Education. The highlighted fact is that in Sri Lanka, it is free Education and not only that even government provides free provision of textbooks, uniforms and mid-day meals. It records that the literacy rate of Sri Lanka stands at 92% for adults and 97% for youths. (Perera, 2012). This is a major drawback in schools located especially in the urban areas of Colombo. Thus, the literal meaning of School dropouts can be noted as "A student who leaves the school before completing the education for any reason other than death or without transferring to another school". (Perera, 2012).

It has been revealed that the highest numbers of school dropouts are from low-income families in urban areas and their quitting education halfway through has a disastrous effect on society. (Ministry of Education, 2017). Even among them, school dropout is frequent among adolescent children (11-18 years of age).

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Research refers to a search for new knowledge. It is a scientific and systematic search for pertinent information on a specific topic. To Redman and Mory, "Research is a systematized effort to gain new knowledge". (Sminatharatnam and Chandra, 2004). Methods are methods of data gathering and interpretation, whereas methodology is concerned with the theoretical assumptions about methods. (Uyangoda, 2011). This research followed a mixed-method design including both qualitative and quantitative research designs. Quantitative research analysis will be utilized to gather ground data of the school dropouts where qualitative research design will be employed to follow the narratives of the other entities related to the subject. The quantitative research design will allow the researcher to understand the family structure, economic structure and societal relationship towards the community through their relationship among various community organizations of their social setting. The qualitative research design permitted the researcher to identify the unique stories of each and every school dropout regarding the real-life situations that they live.

The School dropouts and their families in Modara and Mattakkuliya of Sri Lanka are taken as the study population of the study. There are 50 families with students who do not attend schools and they are considered school dropouts. (Field Survey, 2020). It will be non-random methods in selecting the sample of the study. Particularly 5 "Gramasevaka Areas" will be monitored. It is observed that Modara has 3 "Gramasevaka Areas" while Mattakkuliya has 2 "Gramasevaka Areas". The key informant such as School Teachers, Principals, and Gramasevakas (Headman of the Village) will be selected purposively.

The researcher employed a structured questionnaire which will be followed by an interview. The first interview will be done with children and the second interview will be with their parents and Guardians. Thirdly, the Teachers will be interviewed and the key informants as well. The questions of the questionnaire were ninety percent designed with close-ended questions whereas the researcher will interview each and every dropout selected from the purposive sample in filling the answers to all the questions.

3.0 MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

According to Functionalism, society is studied as a system, that is as a set of interconnected parts which together form a whole. The basic unit of analysis is society and its various parts are understood primarily in terms of their relationship to the whole. The early functionalists often drew an analogy between society and an organism such as the human body. They argued that an understanding of any organ in the body, such as the heart or lungs, involves an understanding of its relationship to other organs and in particular, of its contribution towards the maintenance of the organism. In the same way, an understanding of any part of society requires an analysis of its relationship to other parts and most importantly, of its contribution to the maintenance of society. In order for these essential services to be maintained, individuals must be sufficiently motivated to perform their roles. If they were totally apathetic, the social system would collapse through lack of effort. These socioeconomic variables are ideal descriptive cross-cutting that illustrate the realistic and profound circumstances of students who are living in a specific area. This phenomenon is studied under the topic of “School Dropouts of Adolescents in the Urban Area of Colombo, Sri Lanka and possible Strategies towards Continuous Education” and for this Colombo Divisional Secretariat of Sri Lanka is selected because in which it is visible that in the urban areas which exists a large number of school dropouts.

Table 01: Number of Samples selected for the study

Police Division	GS Division	Sample Size			
		Students	Parents	Teachers	Key Informants
Modara	Modara	10	5	5	2
	Aluth Mawathe	10	5	5	2
	Lunu Pokuna	10	5	5	2
Mattakkuliya	Mattakkuliya	10	5	5	2
	Samithpura	10	5	5	2
Total		110			

In aiming and focusing the objectives of the study, five GS divisions namely Modara, Aluth Mawatha, Lunu Pokuna, Mattakkuliya and Samithpura in the Colombo Divisional Secretariat division of Sri Lanka were selected. During the background analysis, the researcher observed that the urban area of Colombo recorded the highest number of school dropouts (Perera, 2012).

1. Family-Related Factors.

Many sociologists have regarded the family as the cornerstone of society. It forms the basic unit of social organization and it is difficult to imagine how human society could function without it. Although the composition of the family varies, for example in many societies two or more wives are regarded as the ideal arrangement, such differences can be seen as minor

variations on a basic theme. In general, therefore, the family has been seen as a universal social institution, as an inevitable part of human society.

In a study “Social Structure”, George Peter Murdock Examined the institution of the family in a wider range of societies. Murdock took a sample of 250 societies ranging from small hunting and gathering bands to large-scale industrial societies. He claimed that some form of family existed in every society and concluded, on the evidence of his sample, that the family is Universal. Murdock defines the family as follows, ‘the family is a social group characterized by common residence, economic co-operation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually co-habiting adults. Thus, the family lives together, pools its resources and works together and produces offspring. At least two of the adult members conduct a sexual relationship according to the norms of their particular society.

The smallest family unit is known as the nuclear family and consists of a husband and wife and their immature offspring. Units larger than the nuclear family are usually known as extended families. Such families can be seen as extensions of the basic nuclear unit, either vertical extensions or horizontal extensions.

Primary socialization probably, the most important aspect of the socialization process, take place during infancy, usually within the family. By responding to the approval and disapproval of its Parents and copying their example, the child learns the language and many of the basic behaviour patterns of its society. The young child, by interacting with others and playing childhood games, learns to conform to the accepted ways of a social group and appreciate the fact that social life is based on rules. Socialization is not, however, confined to childhood. It is a lifelong process. Without socialization, an individual would bear little resemblance to any human being defined as normal by the standards of his society. Thus, after the Primary socialization, the school take over the secondary socialization. (Haralambos with R. M. Heald, 2011).

1.1 Age of the Student when Admitting to the School and The Person who is Interested in Educating the Child.

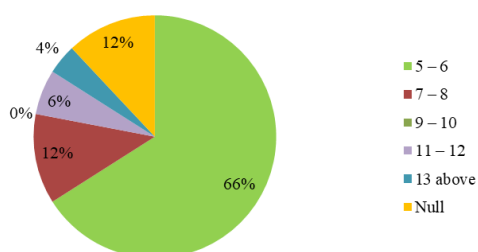


Figure 01: Age of the student when admitted to the school

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

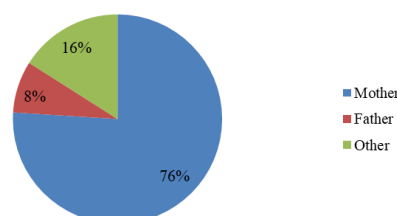


Figure 02: Person who is interested in educating the child

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

In every society, there is a recommended age for a child to be admitted to a school for primary education. Thus, in Sri Lanka, it stands as age 5 and 6. The researcher finds that in this area of study, children are admitted to school at different ages due to many reasons. (66%) of children aged between 5-6 have been admitted to schools, (12%) of children aged between 7-8, (0%) of children aged between 9-10, (6%) of children aged between 11-12, (4%) of children age 13 and above and (12%) children are not aware of their age when admitted to the school. Understandably, the admittance of children to schools has proceeded at different ages.

The researcher identifies that the Mother of these children most of the time have been interested in schooling the child. The field data highlights that (76%) of Mothers have tried to school the child anyhow. It is pathetic that (8%) of Fathers have tried to school the child while (16%) by someone else.

1.2 By whom the Student is admitted to the School and Education Status of the Parents and Guardian.

The most important aspect of a child is the beginning of school life after completing life in the family and in the nursery.

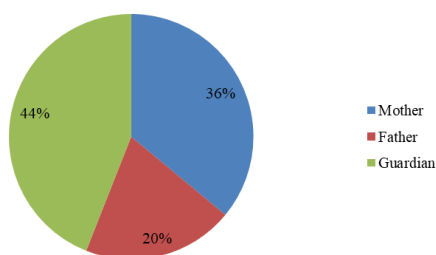


Figure 03: Person who is admit the child to school

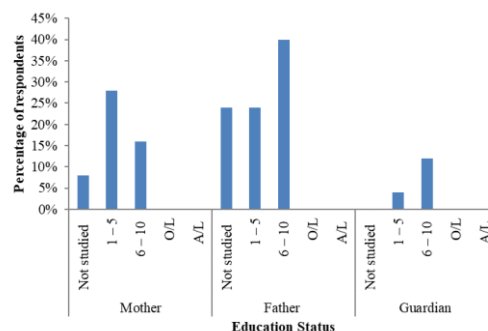


Figure 04: Education Level of the Parents / Guardian

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

The students confess that during the field survey that (36%) of Mothers have admitted their child to the school, (20%) of children have been admitted to schools by their Father while (44%) of children were being admitted to the schools by their Guardians or by someone else in the family. What is highlighted here is, majority of children have been admitted to schools not by their parents but by someone else.

The researcher interviewed the Parents of these children during his field survey and found their education level of them as noted in the above chart. (8%) of Mothers of these children are not gone to any school and (24%) of Fathers of these children are not gone to schools anyhow. (28%) of Mothers have studied only between grade 1-5, (24%) Fathers have studied between grade 1-5 while (4%) of Guardians have studied between 1-5. Then about (16%) of Mothers have studied between grade 6-10, (40%) of Fathers have schooled between grade 6-10 while (12%) of Guardians have schooled between 6-10. What is highlighted here in this

interview was the researcher found that none of them have studied up to O/L and A/L. there is no any single parent who has studied up to O/L.

1.3 Nature of the Occupation of the Parents or the Guardian and the Nature of the Income.

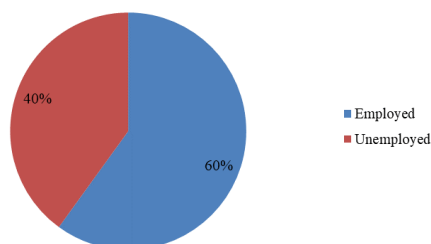


Figure 05: Employment Status of the parents

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

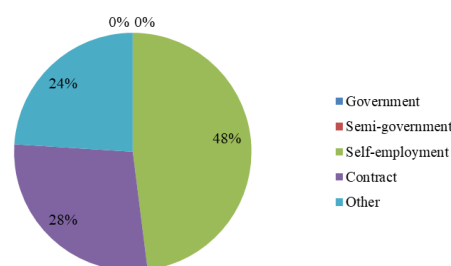


Figure 06: Nature of the occupation of the parents

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

When it comes to the occupation of the parents and guardians the researcher finds that (60%) of them are doing something to earn a living and (40%) of them are not at all doing anything.

The researcher finds that there is no one working in the government sector and in the semi-government sector. (48%) of parents and Guardians are engaged in self-employments and (28%) of them are on contract while (24%) of them are engaged in quick jobs that they find in and around them.

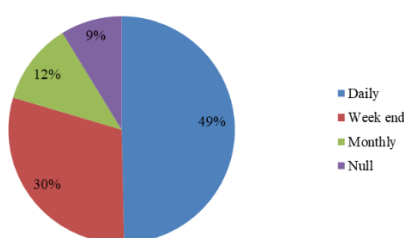


Figure 07: Nature of the salary of the parents

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

The salaries of these parents and Guardians vary and (68%) of them are daily wages, (41%) them receive their salary on weekends. There is (16%) who receive their salary on monthly basis and (12%) of them receive nothing.

1.4 Poverty, Low level of Income, Economic instability and Job insecurity.



Figure 08: Poverty Status

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

The researcher finds that (60%) of families depend on the salary of their own and (40%) of them confess that not on their salary only. The question raised by the researcher about the satisfaction of their salary, (96%) of them said that these parents are not satisfied with what they receive and only (4%) of them are satisfied with the salary they receive.

Thereafter, the question raised by the researcher was the affection of their financial situation to their child to drop out of school. It is highlighted that (72%) of them say that their financial situation has affected the child to terminate his or her schooling.

1.5 Family Relationship and Parents Contribution to the Children’s Education.

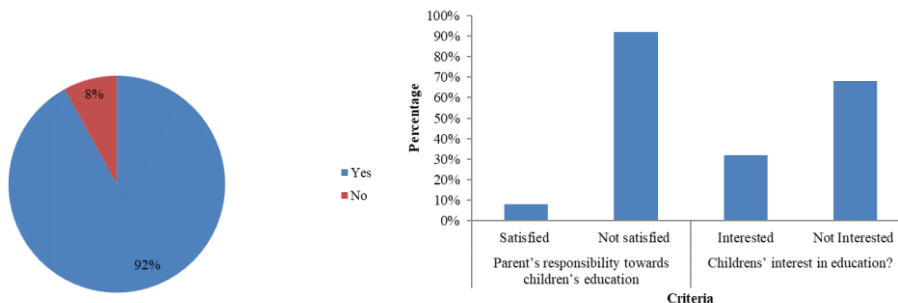


Figure 09: Relationship Status of the family Figure 10: Parents Contribution to the Children’s Education

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

The researcher interviewed the school Teachers (25) of this study area and the other ten (10) key informants for his study. The Teachers were interviewed basically on a few questions and one of them is to find whether the family of the child has affected the child to drop out of school. (92%) teachers’ response is “yes” and (8%) says “No”. likewise, the key informants answered the same question and from them (100%) say that family has affected the child to terminate from schooling.

The school teachers who were interviewed by the researcher expressed themselves about the Parents interest towards their children. (92%) not satisfied with the interest of the parents towards the education of their children and only (8%) of them are satisfied. Accordingly, the question of whether children are interested in education, responded (32%) positively and

(68%) negatively. The researcher understands this is a serious issue for the society of the future.

1.6 Parents Responsibility and Children’s Interest

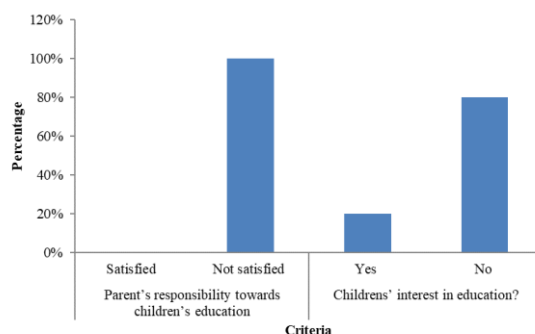


Figure 11: Parents Responsibility and Children’s Interest

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

Likewise, the key informants whom the researcher interviewed (100%) were not happy with the parent’s interest and dedication towards the education of their children. The speciality is that only (20%) of children are interested in education according to the teacher's interview and (80%) of children are not interested in education. This is once again another extra burden to society in the near future.

2 School-Related Factors.

When searching the reasons for the children to drop out of school, the school-related factors are very impotent to reflect upon. The grassroots level interviews with students could certainly provide valuable and concrete factors as to how they have caused the children to terminate their studies at schools.

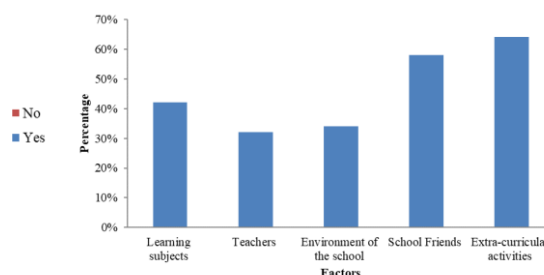
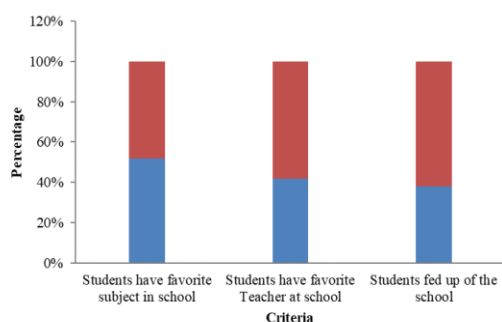


Figure 12: Subject and Teacher Preferences Figure 13: Factors preferred by the children to go to school

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

The ground level interview with students direct the researcher to identify that (52%) of children have had a favorite subject at school and (48%) of children have been without any favorite subject.

For Children also there have been a favorite teacher during their schooling and (42%) children have had a favorite teacher at school while (58%) of children have been without a favorite teacher.

The researcher also searched whether the child is fed up of education provides. Field data highlights that (62%) of them confessed that they are not fed up of their schooling while (38%) of them say yes.

The researcher also wants to discover the happiest factors of children during their schooling and accordingly (42%) of children liked the subjects, (32%) of children liked the Teachers, (34%) of children liked the school environment, (58%) of children liked the school friends and (64%) of children liked the school extra-curricular activities.

2.1 Facility issues Caused for Students to Drop out of School and Issues in the Government Education System.

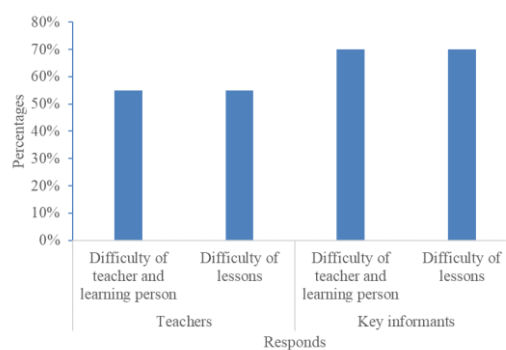
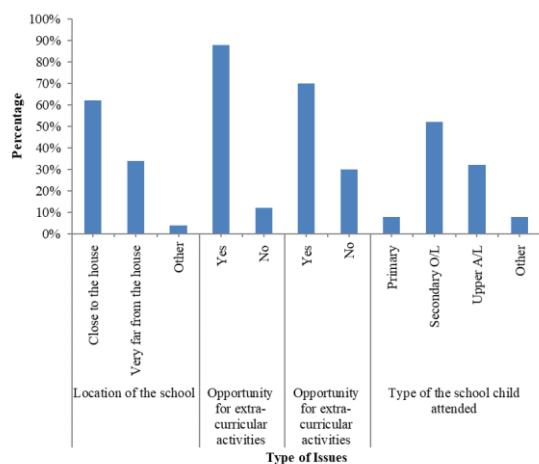


Figure 14: Facility issues Caused for Students to Drop out of School

Figure 15: Issues in the Government Education System

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

It is observed that (62%) of children say that their school has been very close to them and about (34%) children say that their school is very far while (4%) has been neutral.

According to teachers (88%) say that there are facilities for extra-curricular activities and at the same time according to the key informants, (70%) say that there are enough facilities in schools.

There (8%) of primary schools, (52%) of schools are up to grade 11 and (32%) of schools are up to advance level.

It is much identified that during the interview with students (68%) comment about the difficulty of Teaching and Learning process available in their school secondly, these children have the problem of the difficulty of understanding the lessons (68%). This fact is much obvious and proved by the teachers who are in school in this area. Evidently, (60%) teachers noted about the difficulty of understanding the lessons and another (60%) claims the

difficulty of teaching and Learning Process of the Government Education system. This fact is much clarified by the key informants too. Convincingly, (70%) of them note the difficulty of understanding the lessons and (70%) of them highlight the difficulty of Teaching and Learning Process for these students in Modara and Mattakkuliya. Therefore, this evaluation is a serious fact for the children in school in this area.

2.2 The Stages where the Greatest Number of School Dropouts are Found.

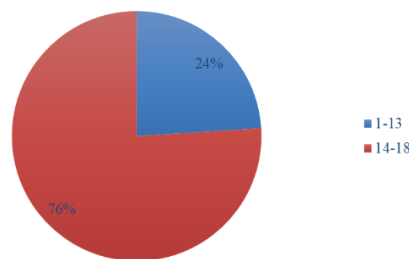


Figure 16: The Number of School Dropouts by Age

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

The field data clearly proves and approves that the age 14 is found to be the vulnerable age. This is the age much discovered by the researcher that many students begin to experiment with certain things and habits available in their vicinity. It is observed that (76%) of students age 14 and above have been dropped out.

An age 14 student, according to the Government Education system of Sri Lanka, should be in Grade 09 and which means he or she has not yet sat for the O/L examination. For Primary Education the children are anyhow connected but the crisis begins from Grade 09 and upward. Hence, it is clearly manifesting the children are dropped out without the O/L.

2.3 Closest Reasons for Students to Drop out of School.

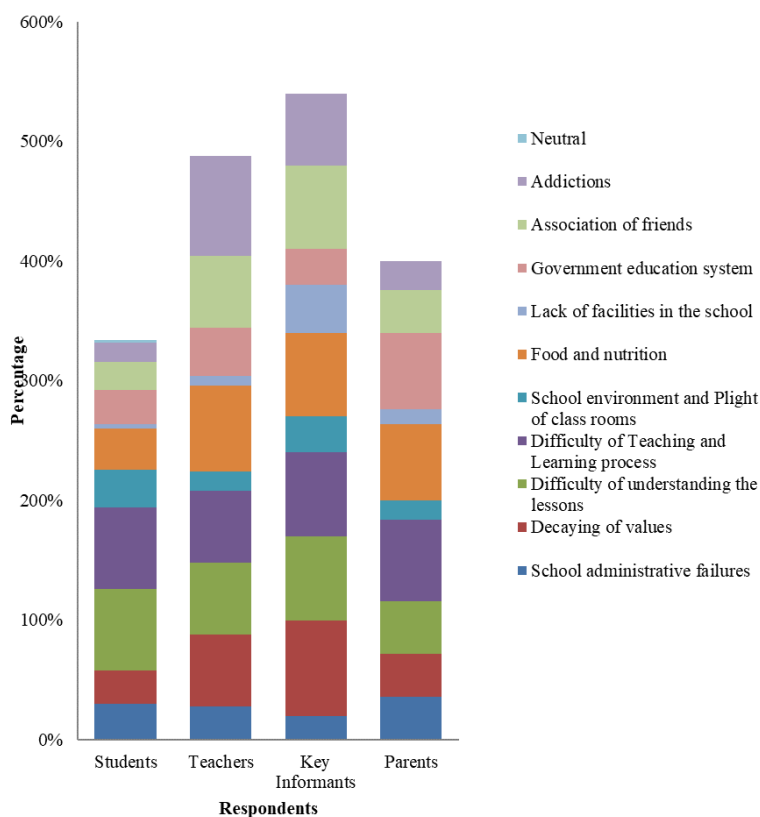


Figure 17: Reasons For dropout School

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

According to the students, there is a number of reasons for them to drop out of school. First, the difficulty of understanding the lessons and (68%) of children have this problem. The second reason is the existing teaching and learning process that is available in Sri Lanka and again (68%) of children have given this reason. Next, the closest reason is the food and nutrition and (34%) of children have this problem. Then the school administrative failures, (30%) children have confessed this. Next, the decaying of values and (28%) of children have highlighted this fact. Then the school environment and the plight of classrooms and this has caused (32%) of children. (28%) of the government education system has caused. Association of friends also have come up as a reason and (24%) of children have observed this fact. The lack of facilities in the school stands as (4%). Involvement of addictions contains (16%) while (2%) has been neutral.

According to the Teachers, the very reason is the addictions of children to various unwanted and unhealthy habits available in society. According to them, this fact contains the highest percentage of (84%). Secondly, teachers highlight the food and nutrition as (72%). Thirdly, teachers highlight four factors which contain the same percentage of (60%) such as decaying of values, the difficulty of understanding the lessons, difficulty of teaching and learning process and association of friends. Fourthly, teachers note the government education system

and it stands as (40%). The fifth fact is the school administrative failures, (28%) of teachers have highlighted this fact. The (16%) of school environment and plight of classrooms while 8% of teachers have said that lack of facilities have caused the children to drop out of school.

According to the key informants, (80%) of them have highlighted the decaying of values and secondly four factors which contain the (70%) such as the difficulty of understanding the lessons, the difficulty of teaching and learning process, food and nutrition and association of friends. Thirdly, (60%) of key informants have observed the addictions. Fourthly, the (40%) as lack of facilities. Fourthly, again two factors which have (30%) and they are school environment and plight of classrooms and government education system. Finally, key informants highlight (20%) of school administrative failures.

According to the parents, the first reason is the difficulty of teaching and learning process and (68%) of parents have expressed this fact. Secondly, there are two reasons which contain the same percentage of (64%) such food and nutrition and government education system. Thirdly, (44%) of parents have highlighted the difficulty of understanding the lessons. Fourthly, once again there are three reasons of the same percentage of (36%) such as school administrative failures, decaying of values and association of friends. The fifth reason, (24%) of parents have said it is because of various addictions. The sixth reason is the school environment and the plight of classrooms and (16%) of parents have this fact as one of the reasons. Finally, (12%) says the lack of facilities in the school.

2.4 Reasons to Dislike Schools

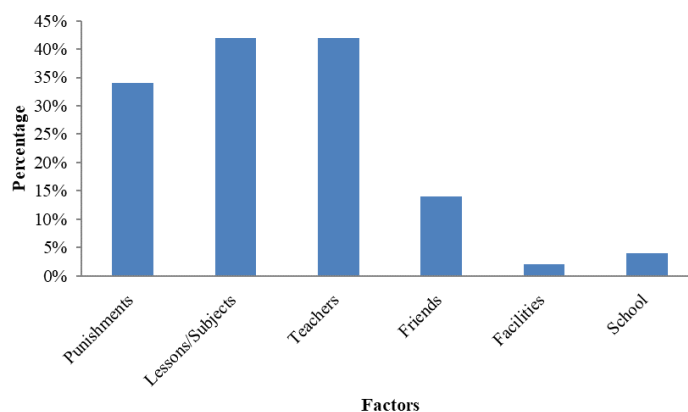


Figure 18: Reasons to Dislike Schools

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

The researcher also interviewed the bitter experience of the children during their schooling. First of all, two factors came across as main reasons for children to drop out of school, they are subjects and Teachers. (42%) of children stated these two reasons. Secondly about (34%) of children have stopped going to school due to punishments. (14%) of children have stopped schooling due to bad friends. (4%) of children highlight the school as the reason. Finally (2%) due to the facilities.

3. The Attitude on Continuous Education

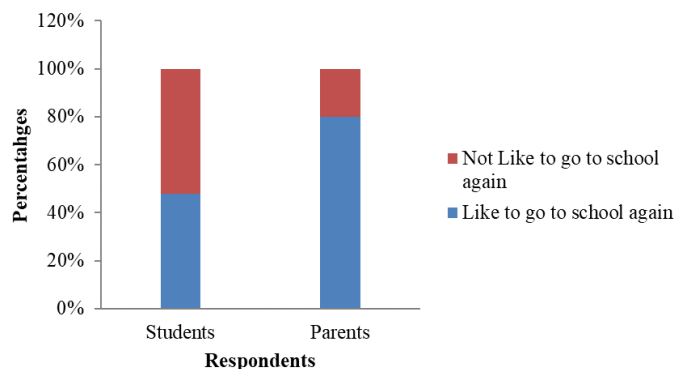


Figure 01: Attitude About Continuous Education

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

The researcher identifies that (52%) of school dropouts do not want to go back to school while (46%) like to continue their schooling again. The researcher discovers during his field survey with students that amidst there are children who actually show love and concern towards their Parents. There are children who do not want to see their Parents suffering due to poverty and because of this reason, children terminate their schooling.

“No, I don’t want to go to school because I want to help my Parents and for that I need to find a suitable job”. S/06

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

“Yes, I want to continue my schooling and for that I should have a permeant house and a permeant income to the family”. S/10

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

Most of the school dropouts stay at home without involving anything and these children go to bed late spending time with a mobile phones or else spending time with friends till late at night. Thus, the following day wakes up late and there is no one at home to pull these students to motivate them for education.

“I don’t like to go to school because I want to sleep late and want to wake up late”. S/20

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

Many children noted during the interview about the prevailing school system in the country. The researcher evaluated deeply that these children are slow learners and thus the prevailing Teaching and Learning Process of the school has to be changed in a way that would support these students to retain in their school.

“There should be an easy system of Teaching and Learning system in the school. Then, I hope I can continue my studies”. S/33

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

According to the graph above, the major proportion of parents (80%) answered the same question and they like to see their child going to school again. (20%) of parents do not want to send the child back to school. It is a fact that a considerable portion of parents still impress the child to continue schooling.

"I still try to impress this child to continue his studies at school". P/02

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

One strong fact which prevails in this society is that majority of school dropouts are not controlled by their parents and even these students reluctantly listen to their parents. One extraordinary fact is, these children need to fulfil their wants and needs overnight some time parents cannot afford them.

"I still encourage the child to continue schooling, bearing the shortcomings at home". P/08

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

There are also parents who understand that at their house do not have a proper conducive environment for the child to continue school. These are discovered factors that these people live in shanties, no proper sanitary facilities, just one room for everything, people take turns to rest at home, probably when parents rest at home children lie on the road near the house, lack of food and nutrition and helpless. Therefore, psychologically and Biologically there are difficulties in and around.

"I prefer my child going to school but before that I need to create a conducive environment within the family at home". P/12

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

Hence, having a such hectic and vulnerable condition at home, there should be people around these children who would understand their life situations. Their life is almost suppressed life and children look for protection and love once they come to school. In failing this need from the teachers at school, children are tempted to be in the suppressed conditions exist at their home thinking that would okay for the rest of their lives.

"Need to send the child to a school that would suit him and to a place where there are Teachers who understand him". P/18

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

Even though the conditions are as such, still Parents taking into consideration the poverty and real-life conditions at home and since there is no any option at home, parents like if the school dropout do a job. This is due to typical poverty exist in and around them.

"Due to the poverty at home, I would prefer if my child could do a little job and earn something". P/09

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

3.1 Likeness towards Vocational and other Professional Courses.

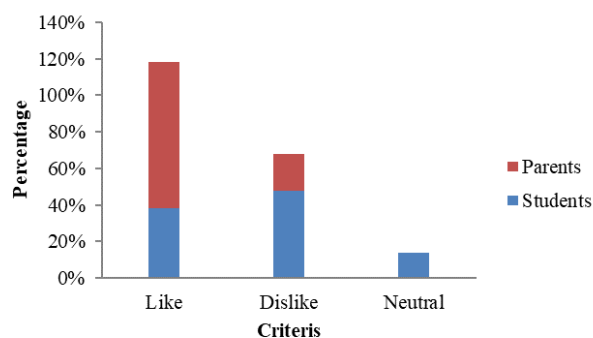


Figure 02: Preference to Going Back to the School

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

The researcher also questions the school dropouts to identify whether they would like to follow any vocational or other professional course. Accordingly, (40%) says they would follow vocational training, (50%) of children says “No” and (10%) of school dropouts have been neutral.

“I don’t like schooling again. I am learning about CCTV operations right now and I would like to learn something more on the same field. I am trying to go ahead in this field and hope, I would be successful”. S/01

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

The researcher discovers that there are school dropouts who would prefer vocational training because they have the understanding that it can push them to commence a self-employment at any time. The self-employment is unique and these students may like it since it contains freedom.

“I want to train myself vocationally and then I hope, I can begin a self-employment one day”. S/02

“I would like to follow any Course that would help me to do a job or to begin self-employment”. S/03

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

One sad note, that the researcher came a cross is, there are school dropouts who like Computer science but they have discovered that without O/L they are not being recruited and thus regrets missing school life.

“I would like to learn about Computer Science. I got the opportunity to follow a Course but I missed it since I do not have O/Ls and English”. S/22

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

For the same question, the parents respond as follows, (80%) of parents like if their child follow a vocational training or a professional course for the future of their child. The following testimonies from parents would approve the fact.

"I don't like to see my child following a vocational Training Course but what I want is, he should study first otherwise he would also suffer like me". P/02

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

The greatest desire of many Parents is that anyhow to see their child doing well one day without getting into unnecessary circumstances in the future. Therefore, even by following any type of course or a training, Parents expect a better future for the child.

"I like even by following a Course if he could organize his future one day". P/05

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

The poverty is a major issue for children to drop out of school in this area, therefore the researcher discovers that the vocational training and other Technical courses which would cost money cannot be afforded by the Parents of these children.

"I have financial difficulties and therefore, I find it difficult to finance the course right now". P/07

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

Hence it is clearly manifesting that at this stage parents desire not further education for their children but some sort of job to cover their own expenses of their school dropouts.

"The child likes to learn about Hotel Management but if I have to spend something for that, then I am unable. Therefore, prefer any job for the child". P/08

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

3.2 School level Mechanisms to Encourage and Promote Continuous Education.

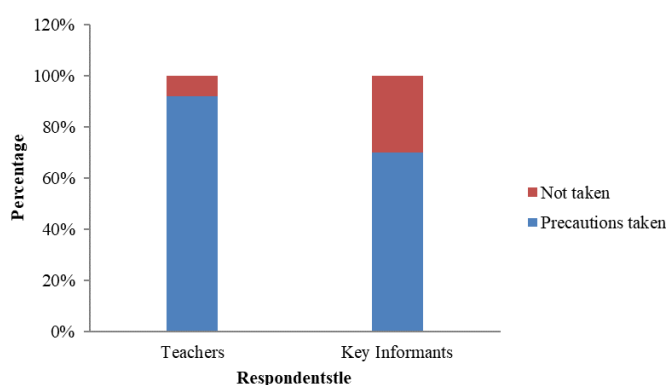


Figure 03: Precautions Taken to Promote Continuous Education

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

The teachers of schools in Modara and Mattakkuliya areas have played a wonderful service to keep the students in their schools. Considerable proportion (92%) of teachers express

themselves with their programmes and activities that they have done as a school to continue the education for these students.

The key informants (70%) witnessed to what teachers have been conducting and doing special programmes at schools to motivate students to continue their studies. The researcher finds that many kind-hearted Teachers conduct personal classes amidst their other responsibilities in both school and in their homes.

"We conduct Personal classes for weaker students, extra classes, seminars and counselling sessions for students to keep them bound to the school". T/01

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

In many occasions the researcher finds during the interviews that a lot of Teachers together with their Principals conduct extra-curricular activities since the students in the schools specially in this urban area of Colombo are much interested. It is observed that this type of activities can attract the students to the school.

"We have introduced a lot of Extra events to the school programme such as Sports, Aluth Aurudu Uthsawa, Christmas Events etc... because children like these events". K/02

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

Helping a child to continue studies in a school is a worthy course at any time. Understandably, students from Universities in the country volunteer to teach weaker students in this area. This worthy course is coordinated by Teachers and Principals in few schools in this area.

"The Students from the Engineering Faculty, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka come and conduct extra Maths classes for students. On Saturdays and Sundays; the Musjeed Federation conduct extra classes for students and students from the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka come and conduct seminars for O/L and A/L students in the school". K/04

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

One highlighted fact, that few schools do in this situation is, school selects the best attendance time to time and give gifts so that students keep on continuing their school. Giving a gift also cost but Teachers manage to do it with the help of their friends and neighbours.

"The school has started to give gifts to students all those who come daily to school". K/03

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

At this stage, it is necessary to note the availability and the commitment of Teachers working in the schools in Modara and Mattakkuliya. The researcher discovers many teachers work while being out of their frame of work in the school. This is much commendable and appreciated because at times Teachers take risks in dealing with these students and with their families.

"There are Teachers who help the needful students in a personal level. Teachers arrange Tuts by their own to give to students. There are Teachers who produce clothes and food for students. They do it with love and affection". T/02

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

The next fact that the researcher identifies is the commitment of the old boy/girl unions of schools. There are students who really love the school in which they have studied for many years. These passed out students have formed groups and go in search of school drop outs and somehow, they try to connect the students with the school.

"The old boy union of the school go to houses in searching the absentees and encourage the students and motivate the Parents to send their child to the school without any failure". T/01

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

The researcher understands that every school dropout in this area has a problem for him or her to get out of school. In some schools' principals organize their Teachers and send them to houses of students and accordingly identify the root causes and burning issues for students to terminate schools. Likewise, these Teachers are able to identify the important basic need and then cater to them first.

"Most of the time there is a reason for the student to terminate their schooling. Therefore, what my school does is; always Teachers are sent to these families to discover the real burning existing problem around child. Likewise, we try to solve that particular burning problem first and then to move him or her for school education". T/17

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

As one Precaution, many times Teachers call for Parents meetings and send letters stating the progress of the child. The parents' availability for meetings is not satisfactory and it shows a lack of participation all the time.

"The school conduct Parents meetings to keep the Parents updated and sent letters to the Parents. Further we have informed the parents through the Police as well". T/02

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

The researcher discovers that the Community Police Unit and Grama Sewaka (GS) play a major role in encouraging parents and bringing children to school. In this area children are bit excited since there is a government rule that every child below 18 year of age should continue school education. Therefore, (CPU) is much alert in this area on students who are not attending schools.

"We informed the Parents of these absentees through Grama Sewaka (GS) and through Community Police Unit (CPU)". T/08

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

There is a discovered fact that most of these students are slow learners and thus Ordinary Level (O/L) is only a dream for many students. What they prefer is a little involvement to earn something and as a preparation these schools, conduct professional Training after school. This training consists; electric, carpentry, home science etc...

“We as a school have commenced professional and vocational education apart from the general education of the school”. T/05

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

The commitment of the Teachers is enormous but what is discouraging is the commitment and contribution of the Students. The researcher continuously identifies that the enthusiasm of students for education is lacking. The experience and testimonies of Teachers would draw the reader much discouraged.

“We conduct extra classes and seminars for students specially for weaker ones but it is pathetic that students don’t turn up for these classes”. T/08

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

To make the teaching process easier, these students are categorized according to academic performances of students.

“According to Marks the Teachers categorize the group and conduct extra classes to make the process easier. But the support from the students is not satisfactory”. T/10

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

It is realized that the support from the students is very discouraging and pathetic according to the personal notes of their school teachers.

“We were asked to conduct zoom classes but there wasn’t any sufficient participation for these classes”. T/09

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

3.3 School Attendance of the Children.

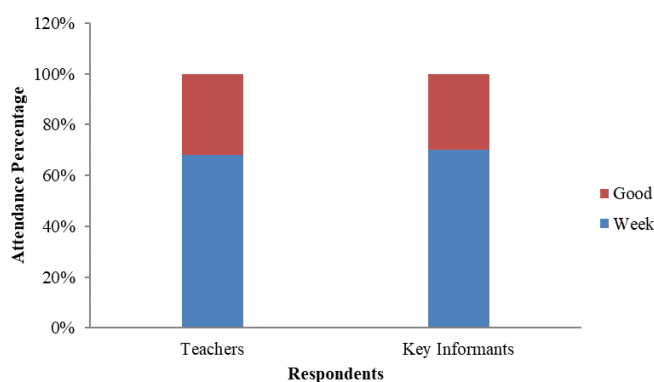


Figure 04: School Attendance of the Students

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

According to the above chart, it expresses the views of the teachers about the attendance of the school children in their schools. Convincingly, (68%) of teachers highlight that the attendance of the children is very poor. About (32%) of students have been continuous for studies.

The same opinion is expressed by the key informant. (70%) of the week in attending the schools while (30%) has been good.

3.4 Children’s Interest in Education.

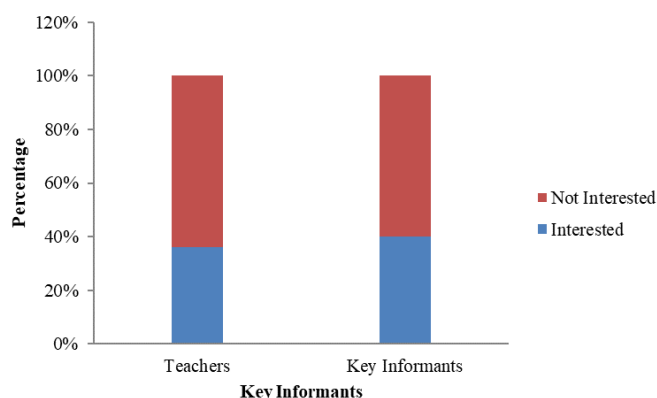


Figure 05: Children Interest to School Education

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

The next fact the researcher identifies is the interest of the students for schooling. According to the teachers (36%) the children are interested on education while (64%) are not interested at all. The key informants express the same, only 40% interested on education while a considerable proportion (60%) is not interested on education.

3.5 Are these Children clever for Studies?

The researcher found that there are very clever students in Modara and Mattakkuliya. The teachers (84%) with their own experience with children at schools prove this fact and 16% say that there no clever children.

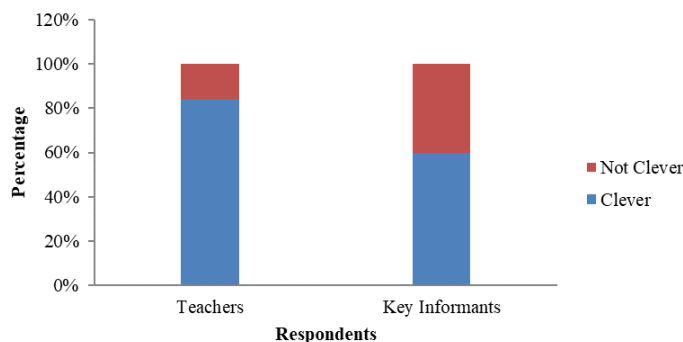


Figure 06: Cleverness of the Students

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

The key informants (60%) says that these students in these areas are clever for studies while (40%) express different ideas.

5.6 Attitude of Parents on Continuous Education.

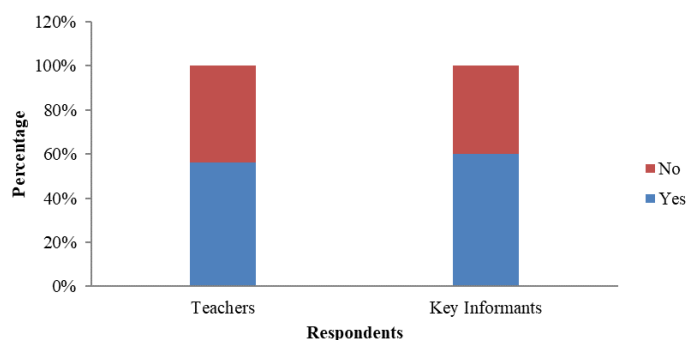


Figure 07: Attitude of Parents on Continuous Education

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

Understandably, the parents have fairly a good attitude towards education and this is evaluated through teachers once again. (56%) of parents like to see their child schooling while (44%) of them have a different idea about the continuous education of their child. According to the key informants (60%) of parents conceive a positive idea about continuous education while (40%) of them do not have a proper attitude towards continuous education.

The children who are under 16 should be in schools and this is considered as a government rule and predominantly has to be strict to the urban area of Colombo. Otherwise, strict punishments, yet even though there are observations, the children are dropped out.

Children under 16 should be schooled and community Police is much alert on the fact. If a child found to be out of the school the Parents will be arrested.

Eg; we find all of a sudden strange child at school, reason is their Mother arrested and to release her, child has to continue schooling. T/10

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

3.7 Parents Interest to School the Child.

It is observed that (56%) parents are interested to school the child while a considerable proportion (48%) of them do not want to see their child schooling. According to the key informants (70%) of parents do not have a proper interest in school their child while only (30%) of them interested in sending the child to the school.

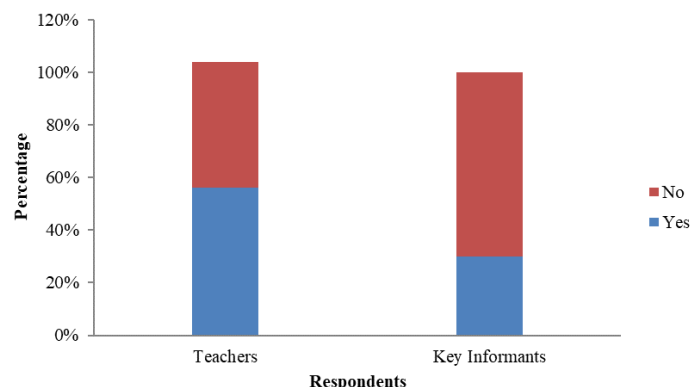


Figure 08: Parents Interest in School of the Child

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

When analyzing the field data, the researcher finds that there is no any big interest within the Parents to school the child due to various factors. The following testimony from a teacher and it gives totally a different idea compared to the factors that are being discussed in this chapter.

There are Parents who give sleeping Tablets to the child because Parent wants the child to be at home thinking that if child goes out, he or she should be spoiled. Therefore, Parent is not worried about the education of the child. T/01

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

Further discovered the Language difficulty of both Parents and children. There are incidents that Tamil speaking children which includes Muslims too, are recruited to Sinhala schools. Thus, these children find it difficult to study the lessons.

The language problem prevails strictly. The Tamil speaking children are admitted to Sinhala medium schools and due the language barrier children have been dropped out of the school. T/07

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

4.0 KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.1 Family-Related Factors.

It is discovered that the school admittance has taken place at the age of 5-6 (66%), between the age of 7-8 (12%), age 11-12 (6%) and age 13 and above (4%). The admittance of children to school has proceeded at different ages.

As in many families, here in this context Mothers (76%) have taken initiatives to educate the child. Father's attention (8%) in this regard is very poor.

The Mother has studied up to Grade 1-5 (28%) up to Grade 6-10 (16%) and when it comes to Fathers, they have learnt up to Grade 1-5 (24%) up to Grade 6-10 (24%). There is no single parent who has studied up to O/L and this is the same with the Guardians as well.

The Parents or the Guardians only (60%) are employed while (40%) are not engaged in any employment.

The researcher finds that there are no parents working in the Government sector jobs. A considerable portion (48%) of parents are self-employed and (28%) of them are on a contract basis while (12%) engage in other means.

Almost half percentage (68%) of parents are daily wagers, (41%) of them receive a salary at weekends. A considerable portion of (16%) parents receives a salary at the end of the month.

The majority responded (60%) depend on his or their family and (40%) is not and (96%) of them are not satisfied with the salary they receive. The financial situation (72%) has affected the child to drop out of school.

The existing family conditions (92%) has affected the child to terminate his or her schooling. The key informants (100%) vow for it.

The researcher discovers that the responsibility of parents towards the education of the children is not satisfactory (92%) and thus children do not show any interest in education (68%).

4.2 School-Related Factors.

The school dropouts even though they have been terminated from school, have had favourite subjects during school (52%). It is observed they have had a favourite Teacher (42%) too.

Many students confess that their favourite item that has made them happy during school is the extra-curricular activities (64%) and school friends (58%). The difficulty of understanding the lessons (68%) and difficulty of the Teaching and Learning process (68%) are highlighted by the students to stop their schooling.

The Teachers comment that as major reasons, the addictions (84%) and food and nutrition (72%). The researcher further discovers, the decaying of values (80%) and association of friends (70%).

The majority of Parents highlight the Government Education system (64%) as one of the main reasons for their children to terminate their schooling. By and large, further discovered by the researcher that Punishments (34%) and Teachers (42%) have caused the children to stop schooling.

4.3 The key attitudes on Continuous Education

Considerably, half percent of school dropouts do not expect to school again (52%). It is much highlighted the Parents (80%) of these children, the majority are positive to send the child back to school. There are Parents who even like to see their child following a vocational or

professional course (80%) knowing that it would support the child to stand on his feet amidst difficulties.

The school Teachers (92%) together with the school principal have taken a number of Precautions to keep the child bound to the school. By and large, the school attendance of the students in this place of study is very weak (68%).

Even though the circumstances are as such, it is discovered there are clever (84%) students in these schools and many times due to poverty the clever students have dropped out of school.

The attitude of Parents towards continuous education (56%) is weak in this Urban area of Colombo. The Parents like to school the child (56%) even though the family exists difficulties in and around.

5 0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, recommendations to reduce issues related to school dropouts and possible strategies for continuous education are defined as follows. First of all, the researcher would note the school-related factors.

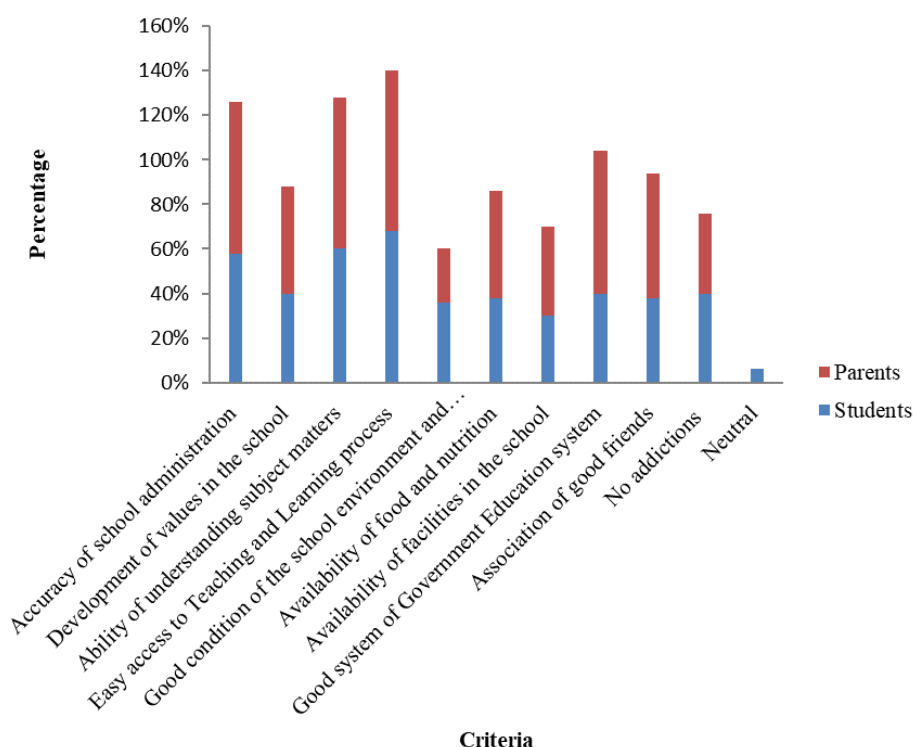


Figure 19: School Related Factors

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021

With easy access to teaching and Learning processes and with the existing system the children of this area find it difficult to learn. Therefore, it is important to introduce simple and understandable access to the teaching and Learning Process. The difficulty of understanding

the subject matters; has to be simplified considering the IQ level of the children in this area. Accuracy of school administration; the existing Government should refine the school administration of the schools in the urban area of Colombo. The Government Education system; has to be refreshed and refined so that every student could be able to get into the track. The association of good friends; the student must be formed in a well-cultured format at schools. This helps the student to respect each other equally at school. Development of Values in the school; this should be included in the school curriculum as a subject. The values cannot be expected from families in this study area and thus, the school should be influenced by the Government or by the Ministry of Education to introduce this as a subject. Food and nutrition; students should be looked after in this regard and the Government or the Private sector should be taken responsibility. Before the education, these children and families should be in good health. No addictions; these people should be used for the economy of the country. It is the responsibility of the Government to stop drugs, reaching people. Availability of facilities in the school and good condition of the school; every student should have equal facilities in every school. If not, it is the responsibility of the Government to facilitate the schools. The cooperation of the Parents with the school teachers should be strong and thus both entities should be able to keep the child at school.

6.0 CONCLUSION

It is discovered that there are family-related factors and school-related factors that cause students to drop out of school's halfway through their lives. When it comes to family-related factors, the researcher discovered the school admittance had not taken place on time, the attention of the parents in this regard had been very poor, the education of parents not satisfactory, most of the parents are self-employed, a larger portion of parents are daily wagers, the family condition of parents has caused the children to drop out of school and parents are not interested in the education of their children.

When it comes to the school-related factors, the researcher discovered that there had been favourite subjects and teachers for these students, children have been much interested in extra-curricular activities and friends. The teachers highlight addictions, food and nutrition as major reasons for children to terminate their school. The parents highlight the Government education system as one of the main reasons for their children to terminate their school.

7.0 ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would be grateful to my God for letting me experience the power of the Holy Spirit throughout this Research work. I am praising the name of Jesus for the beautiful Priesthood and for the blessings He has showered upon me through this blessed Priesthood.

I express my heartfelt gratitude to those wonderful personalities who actively and enthusiastically helped me during the course of this work. Among them, I sincerely thank His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, the Archbishop of Colombo who is the superior me for He allowed me to peruse my Post Graduate Studies at the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. I also in the same way thank Rev. Dr Susith Mark Lal Silva, the Rector/Vice-Chancellor of Aquinas College of Higher Studies, Colombo – 08, for the immeasurable encouragement given to me throughout this work.

Then with a lot of respect and honour, I thank my supervisor Prof. K. Karunathilake of the Department of Sociology of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. His wealth of experience and knowledge in this field has certainly helped me to understand what really Research is. I am grateful to him for the continuous contribution and supervision given to me until the completion of my Research.

I also thank Mr. G. M. Silva, the zonal director of Education, Mr. Janaka Kumara OIC - Modara Police, Mr. Bandara Dewatagedara OIC - Mattakkuliya Police, Mrs. K. L. Chamila N. Perera - GS (Modara), Mr. Kumara - GS (Aluth Mawatha), Mr. Prabath S. Weerasinghe - GS (Lunu Pokuna), Mrs. Shanthini J. Mohan - GS (Mattakkuliya), and Mrs. K. A. Udayangika Anthony - GS (Samithipura).

With greater respect, I thank all the Principals of the schools located in the Modara and Mattakkuliya areas. Their contribution and experience in serving in these schools have led me to broaden my research knowledge and in a special way thank these principals for doing the arrangements to interview their Teachers without any disturbance. My deep sense of appreciation goes out to all the teachers from different schools for their wonderful contribution and availability for me during the time of my work with them.

I also appreciate and thank Rev. Fr. Leo Perera, the Director, Samata Sarana Institute, Mattakkuliya for his tremendous support extended to me by allowing his staff to work with me in the field (Modara and Mattakkuliya). It is much highlighted and commendable the support extended to me by Bro. Mervyn, the Director of Lasallian Institute, Modara.

I am much grateful to Ms. Lasanthi Gamage, lecturer probationary of the Faculty of Agriculture of Aquinas College of Higher Studies, Colombo – 08, for the academic knowledge and technical advice given to me in compiling my Research work. I appreciate her availability and contribution done for me lavishly all throughout this work. I also thank Mrs Gayathri Nirmani Panampitiya, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka and Mr. Eranda Adikari, the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka for the assistance and support given to me when it was really needed. Then I express my gratitude to Ms. Lakshani Gamage, the Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka for shouldering the burden with me in entering the field data into the software.

I also express my appreciation to Mr. Samantha Gunalath (Member of Colombo Municipal Council) for assisting me in the fieldwork and especially doing the necessary arrangements for me to walk in the Shanty areas of Modara and Mattakkuliya. The same gratitude goes out to Mrs. Lakmini Ranasinghe, the student coordinator of the School of Agriculture of Aquinas College of Higher Studies, Colombo – 08 for assisting me in doing the Sinhala Type settings when it was really needed.

REFERENCES

Haralambos, M, with Heald, R. M, Sociology Themes and Perspectives, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2011.

Brunt Land Report-1972

National Dangerous drugs control Board, RESEARCH MONOGRAPH, 2006, P.146

Perera, 2012, Department of Census and Statistics, DCS (2012) Statistics Data Base, Household Income and Expenditure Survey – 2009-10, Colombo: DCS.

Ministry of Education (MOE), 2017 Survival Rates, Colombo: Statistics Division, MOE.

Sminatharatnam and Chandra, 2004. Social Research Methods and Techniques, Authors, India, Tiruchirappalli, 262p.

Uyangoda, U. (2011), Social Scientists' Association, Sri Lanka, Colombo, p135.

UNESCO report in 2016 (<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000246230>)