



## Dropout issue: An obstacle at the way of development for the ethnic group of the chain community at Farakka block in Murshidabad district

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### Abstract

The Chains are a highly underprivileged and downtrodden section from socio-economic perspectives. At Farakka Block under Murshidabad district in West Bengal state the Chain community is enwrapped by a burning issue which becomes a hindrance for the up gradation of this community. The dropout rate of the students among this community is increasing day by day. It affects the Chain community from multidimensional aspects. Out of 500 samples of students both boys and girls belonging to the Chain community only 53 students complete their study and the rest of the students drop out their study at various stages of the school education. The Right of Children for Free and Compulsory Education Act, No. 35 of 2009 is not utilized properly to upgrade this community. Thus the society has to face many problems due to lack of education. The literacy rate of the Farakka CD Block is 60.47%. The literacy rate of this Chain community is very low here due to drop out problem. Behind this dropout problem many reasons are observed such as reluctance of the parents towards giving educational field to their wards, poor economical condition, involvement of the children into household affairs, early marriage and so on.

**Keywords:** dropout, education, social degradation, chain community, hindrance

### Introduction

“A child without education is like a bird without wings.”

– Tibetan proverb.

The Farakka Block under Murshidabad district is highly populated by various kinds of caste. Among all these the area is also occupied by a sub-caste known as “Chain”. The Chain is a highly underprivileged section and due to this downtrodden situation this caste has to suffer very badly from various aspects of life such as socially, economically as well as educationally. This is a very little known ethnic community of India. This community may also be found in Bangladesh and Nepal. In India, the Chain community settled in many states such as West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh. Now our concern mainly revolves around the sufferings and exploitation of the Chains belonging to the Farakka Block in West Bengal due to the dropout problems of the students. In this aforesaid state the Chain community lives in Malda, Murshidabad, Nadia, North and South Dinajpur, Birbhum and Midnapore. This community spread their settlement largely at the most part of Malda and Murshidabad district of West Bengal. Total population of the Chain community in West Bengal is estimated at about twenty-five lakhs (Sarkar 2014) <sup>[13]</sup>. In Farakka Block of Murshidabad district the estimation is at about nine thousands. In this block the Chain community lives mostly in number at the villages situated at the right bank of the River Ganges. From the perspective of socio-economic condition the Chain

community can be placed in a very poor belt of region. They also live in the far away from the main centre of the block and they are marginalized. The maximum people of the Chain community on this block are farmers actually sharecroppers. Around 90% of the Chains now depend wholly or partly on labour for an income. Approximately 60% among this labour section who join works by taking advance loan (Formally known as Dadan Labourer) go to the outside of West Bengal mainly Gajjiabad, Delhi, Rajasthan, Kerala etc. for working at constructional side. They are recognized from socially as a subaltern section of the Farakka Block. Many among this community have to earn their livelihood by daily wages. They are paid very small amount of money as the cost of their whole day labour. Mostly the female section of this downtrodden caste engages them to the work of Beedi-rolling to support the journey of the lives. So, naturally they have so much anxiety to earn the day to day livelihood that they cannot pay any heed to the other aspects of life. They cannot pay any attention to the educational need of their wards. They are actually indulged in total ignorance of such crucial need of social life. They are unconscious of the education, health and all the other modern facility of the present day. They are totally illiterate and poverty stricken section of the modern society. So, on this badly affected circumstance the drop out problems of the Chain students are very high in the Farakka Block. The maximum number of student leaves their educational journey without being literate because at a very young age they are engaged to earn livelihood to survive in this life struggle. So, statistically the rate of literacy among the

Chains is very low as they are not in a position to grasp the necessary advantage of getting education due to lower per capita income. Even most of the children don't get the chance to cross the threshold of the school gate. The reason behind this shivering worst condition is nothing but the economically lower position of this community.

**Historical Background**

The Chain, normally pronounced as "Chai", is a sub-caste which mainly involves in fishing and cultivation. They are a part of a large 'Kewat' community of North India. They belong to the Hindu-Kshatriya according to their heredity. This so ancient race of human beings is now downtrodden and due to this reason they are also deprived from the basic right to get education. According to the Constitution every child has the right to get basic education as their birth right but only for lower economical status the children of this community in Farakka Block cannot get proper education. On the other hand, though very few child belonged to this community get this opportunity, they dropout from school before completing their education. Their educational life becomes dead prematurely. This socially backward section faces this problem and becomes subaltern class through marginalized section.

**Geographical Location of the Study Area**

Farakka is a community development block that forms an administrative division under Jangipur subdivision of Murshidabad district in the state of West Bengal. This block is under Farakka police station. It is located 100 km from Berhampore, the district headquarter. Farakka is located at 24°47'51"N 87°54'51"E. Farakka CD Block is bounded by Kaliachak 3 CD Block, across the River Ganges in Malda district, the North, Barharwa CD Block in Sahibganj district of Jharkhand, in the West, Pakur CD Block in the South and Samserganj CD Block in the East. Farakka CD Block has an area of 132.74 km<sup>2</sup>. The Chain community is traced in the villages such as Kuli, Kashinagar, Khairakandi, Srirampur, Pardeonapur, Shibnagar, Mahadevnagar, Jafarganj etc. under this Block. There in this Chain community the drawback that becomes a great obstacle in their way to progress is the increasing number of dropout students. This increases the rate of illiteracy.

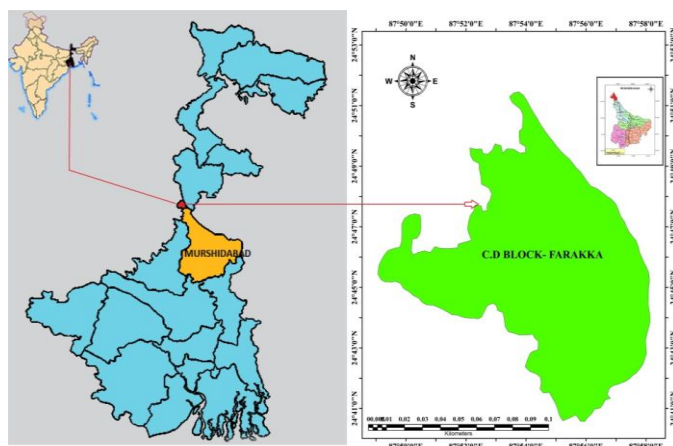


Fig 1: Location of the Study Area (Farakka C.D Block)

**Objectives**

To identify the dropout ranges among the children of the Chain community is the main and concerned subject matter of this study. The second objective of this paper is to find out various factors which overwhelm the dropout rate.

**Materials and Methodology**

This study has been mainly based on primary data which has been collected directly from field to field survey method. The primary field survey, personal interview has been done in April 2017 for this study. In the Study, 500 sample students are selected by the random sampling technique. Thus we try to establish the drop out problem of the chain students and the problem of backwardness. Out of 500 samples there are 200 samples of the girls and 300 samples of the boys. To analysis the trend of the dropout rate of boys and girls at their different educational level a statistical technique named Linear Regression method has been used. Beside all these, to fulfil our objectives we have used MX Excel Software and SPSS-17.0.

**Set of Hypothesis**

Through pre-field study we observe that in this Chain community the dropout rate among the students (both male and female) exists at various levels of educational journey and behind this problem the socio-economic condition of this community has a major role to play.

**Result and Discussion**

**A Critical Scenario of the Dropout Rates among the Chain Community**

The dropout from school is found among the children of the Chain community in the Farakka Block. The children including both male and female sex have to face this problematic situation almost in a same nearby ratio. The primary field survey including door to door data collection on educational qualifications and the records of individual opinions have been compiled to create strong evidence against this crucial issue. The dropout rate among the girl students is high at the upper primary level. On the other side, the dropout rate among the boy students reaches at the peak at the secondary level of education. The regression value of the dropout rate among the boys is R<sup>2</sup> = 0.422 and the regression value of the dropout rate among the girls is R<sup>2</sup> = 0.446. This vividly indicates that the dropout rate of the girls is higher than the boys'.

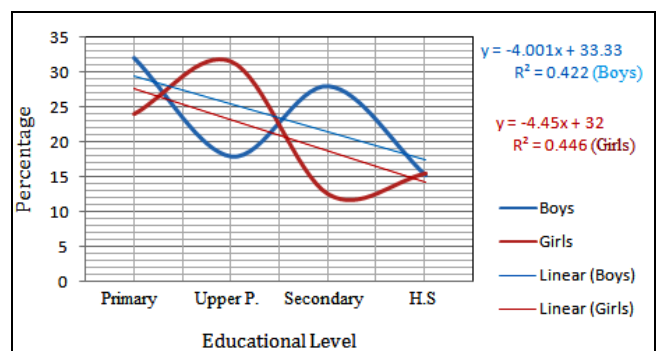


Fig 2: Dropout Trends of Students at Various Educational Levels

### Dropout Rates in Girls

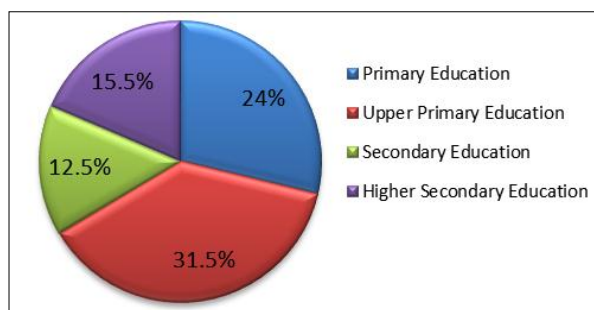
The condition of the girl children is very worst among this community. They don't get proper opportunity to enjoy the constitutional rights. They are treated as burden to their family. Out of two hundred girls, forty eight girls drop out from the primary school. They don't get the chance to live a

school life. Out of the rest sixty three girls have to leave their study at the level of upper primary education, twenty five girls drop out without completing the secondary education and thirty one girls leave the education before completing the higher secondary education. Only thirty three girls among two hundreds girls complete their higher secondary education.

**Table 1:** Percentage Calculated on the Basis of Total No. of Sample Dropouts of Girls

Drop Out Stage	No. of Total Sample	Girls Drop out Student	%
Primary Education	200	48	24
Upper Primary Education		63	31.5
Secondary Education		25	12.5
Higher Secondary Education		31	15.5

*Source:* School Efficiency Study (Based on Field Survey Method) Farakka, 2017



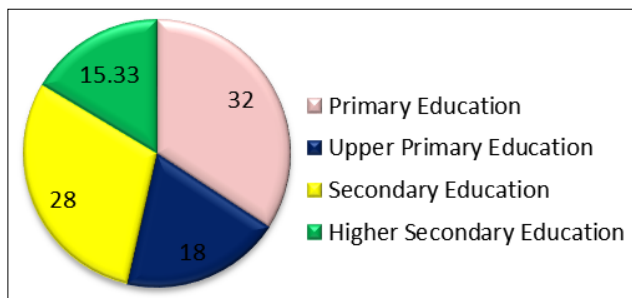
*Source:* field survey

**Fig. 3:** Percentage of girl's dropout of the 'Chain' community of the Farakka Block

**Table 2:** Percentage Calculated on the Basis of Total No. of Sample Dropouts of Boys

Drop Out Stage	No. of Total Sample	Boys Drop out Student	%
Primary Education	300	96	32
Upper Primary Education		54	18
Secondary Education		84	28
Higher Secondary Education		46	15.33

*Source:* School Efficiency Study (Based on Field Survey Method) Farakka, 2017



**Fig. 4:** Percentage of boy's dropout of the Chain community at the Farakka Block

### Socio-Economic Condition

The Chain community at the Farakka Block is mainly categorized as the Schedule Caste. They are also demarcated as below poverty level. They have to struggle for the life force. They mainly depend on day to day labour as worker and by struggling crucially they earn their livelihood. The female section among the Chain community also engages themselves in earning as Beedi orkers. At Farakka Block the Chain

### Dropout Rates in Boys

At the Farakka Block not only the girls but also the boys among the Chain community leave the school education. Out of three hundreds boys there are ninety six students who drop out their study without completing their primary education, fifty four boys leave their education at the level of upper primary, and eighty four boys leave their study without completing their secondary education and out of the rest forty six boys' drop out the school at the higher secondary level. Only twenty boys out of three hundreds complete their journey of education up to higher secondary level.

community is economically downtrodden section. This poverty stricken race is usually underprivileged in a society. Thus they become socially marginalized class and have to suffer a lot both economically and socially. This poor socio-economic situation of this community affects the education for the children. They from their childhood have to face many struggles for day to day food. The basic need of a human being is not available there. So, they cannot think about education. They have to struggle a lot to satisfy their daily hunger. Education becomes for these poverty stricken people a luxury.

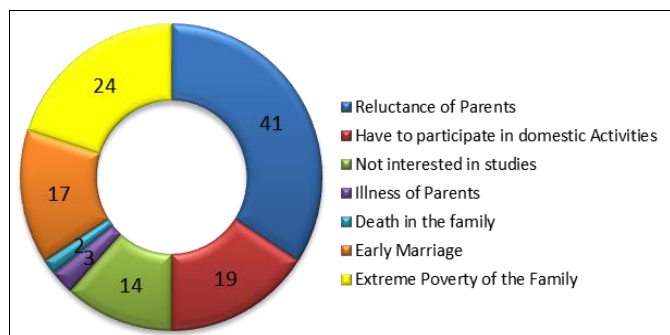
### The Reasons behind Dropouts

In this study the main concern is to find out the real scenario of the drop out problem among the Chain community. To present this estimation the field survey method points out many serious reasons behind this growing problem. The hypothesis on this problem presents the below mentioned causes which create this burning over-growing issue of dropout in this CD Block of Farakka.

**Table 3:** Percentage of Reasons Calculated on the Basis of Total No. of Sample Dropouts

Reason for Dropout	Percentage*
Reluctance of Parents	41
Have to participate in domestic Activities	19
Not interested in studies	14
Illness of Parents	3
Death in the family	2
Extreme Poverty of the Family	24
Early Marriage	17

**Source:** The Study of the Area (Based on Field Survey Method) Farakka, 2017



**Fig. 5:** Percentage of the Reasons for Dropout of the 'Chain' Community students in the Farakka Block

- 1. Reluctance of Parents** At the Farakka block the parents belonged to the Chain Community are in deep ignorance about the need of education in life. So, they never feel the need for sending school to their wards. In reality they always keep themselves busy in daily earnings for the welfare of their families. They are not aware about the R.T.E. act of 2009. The 41% parents belonged to this community is unwilling to send their wards to the school. The reluctant parents rather ignorant guardians become a vital cause to create this dropout problem.
- 2. Participation in Domestic Activities:** At the Farakka Block most of the parents (both father and mother) involve themselves in earning livelihood. According to the Census Report of the Year 2011, in the Farakka Block out of 33,571 marginal workers no. of male workers is 14,824 and no. of female workers is 18,747. So, they cannot pay their attention properly to the household affairs. Usually, they cannot take proper care of their children too. The children mainly the girls have to do the household works such as washing clothes, sweeping floor, taking care of their younger brothers and sisters. Thus they don't get time to go to school and this creates negligence towards school and study. Here 19% students of this Chain community drop out from school due to the participation in domestic affairs.
- 3. Lack of Interest in Study:** The ignorance of the guardian about the need of education affects the educational environment of the children in this community. Being illiterate the awareness about the study is not prevailed among the people of the Chain community. Thus they lose the interest in study. So, the children also grow up in such illiterate society which creates lack of interest in study among their hearts. 14% students drop out their study at its

initial stage due to lack of interest in study. They don't want to go to school and going to school regularly becomes a burden to them and to get rid of this apparent problem they prefer to drop out the school.

- 4. Illness of the Parents:** Due to poverty the illness of this belt of chain community has reached to its peak. Every two out of six people are found sick and victims of ill health. They have to live in a congested and unhygienic place and so they have to face many diseases such as Tuberculosis, Cardiac disease etc. the work of Beedi rolling also begets many health hazards. So, these diseases affect the base of the society and the victims are badly affected. At about 3% students drop out their study due to the illness of their parents.
- 5. Death in the family:** Poverty, illness etc. hit this community in this block in such a way that the rate of premature death is very high. The death of the mother or father in a family destroys the family and the children have to drop out the school to face the life force. At about 2% students drop out their education due to this sad reason.
- 6. Poverty:** The crisis of day to day earning creates so much trouble for this community in the Farakka Block that they live in a very crucial way. Their daily per capita income is very poor. Day to day basis the per capita income is R.s. 80 to 120. According to the Census Report of the Year 2011, in the Farakka Block out of total population 120,946 are engaged in working activities. Among these workers, 27.8% are involved in marginal activity providing livelihood for less than six months. So, the parents cannot provide necessary educational equipment for their wards. Due to poverty 24% students of the Chain community have to leave their study.
- 7. Early Marriage:** The girls are regarded as the burden of the family. So, at a very young age the girls are married. The boys also get married to some extent due to lack of consciousness about their future or health. At about 17% students drop out their study at its middle due to early marriage. This is a curse to this community.

### Empowerment through the Amendment of the Constitution

In India the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order 1950 comes across many amendments to inculcate advantages to the Chain community in West Bengal along with other states of India. To empower and to mix up this community with the average races are the purpose of these amendments rules of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) order. This marginalized Chain community has got recognition as scheduled caste in the four districts – Malda, Murshidabad, Nadia and South Dinajpur under the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order Act 2002, No. 25. After that the Chain community has been recognized as a scheduled caste community all over the state of West Bengal under the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order Act 2016 No. 24. It was enacted by Parliament in the sixty-seventh year of the Republic of India.

### Conclusion

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." – Nelson Mandela.

In the Farakka Block the dropout rate of the students



belonging to the Chain community decreases the condition of this community and becomes the powerful hindrance behind the socio-economic as well as cultural position. According to the R.T.E. Act, of 2009, the education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years is implemented compulsorily in India and it is mentioned that child belonging to weaker section i.e. the child belonging to parent or guardian whose annual income is lower than the minimum limit is specified by the appropriate Government. The local authority such as Panchayat or Municipal Corporation is given the provision by the Government to empower the marginalized section. But in spite of all these provision the dropout problem becomes a drawback of the Chain community. The education is such a weapon that can erase all the faults and erect a strong society with all its hereditary glory. The proper education for the boys as well as girls is very much needed to erect a strong society. So, this dropout problem is a glaring concern in the arena of education of the Farakka Block under Murshidabad district in West Bengal. Revisions and re-orientation of policies are required to control the situations. An overall awareness would spread the objectives of Right to Free and Compulsory Education among the Chain community.

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