



Socio-Economic Determinants of Educational Backwardness Among Girl Children in Dhanbad District

Dolly Kumari

Research Scholar, Department of Education , RKDF University, Ranchi
Email: dollysingh6337@gmail.com

Abstract:

This study explores the socio-economic factors that contribute to educational backwardness among girl children in Dhanbad district, Jharkhand. Despite various government initiatives and rising awareness about girls' education, many young girls in this region still face significant barriers to accessing and continuing formal education. The research identifies some major determinants such as poverty, parental education levels, gender bias, early marriage, lack of infrastructure, and limited access to digital resources. It also examines how cultural norms and safety concerns further discourage families from sending girls to school. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study combines field surveys, interviews with parents and teachers, and analysis of school enrollment data. The findings reveal that low-income households often prioritize boys' education, while girls are expected to manage domestic responsibilities. Additionally, poor transport facilities, absence of female teachers, and inadequate sanitation in schools negatively impact girls' attendance and retention. The study emphasizes the need for targeted policy interventions, community engagement, and gender-sensitive educational planning. It recommends strengthening local support systems, improving school infrastructure, and promoting awareness campaigns to challenge deep-rooted gender stereotypes. By addressing these socio-economic challenges, the region can move toward more inclusive and equitable education for all children, especially girls.

Keywords: *Girls' Education, Educational Backwardness, Socio-Economic Factors, Gender Inequality, Dhanbad District, Poverty And Education.*

Introduction:

In many parts of India, especially in regions like the Dhanbad district of Jharkhand, girl children continue to face serious challenges in accessing quality education. Despite national efforts to promote universal education and gender equality, a large number of girls in this area remain educationally backward. This issue is not just about school infrastructure or curriculum—it is deeply rooted in socio-economic conditions that shape the lives of these children from birth. Factors such as poverty, low parental education, gender discrimination, early marriage, and lack of awareness about the importance of girls' education play a major role in keeping girls out of school or forcing them to drop out early. In Dhanbad, many families struggle with financial insecurity and prioritize boys' education, believing that girls will eventually marry and leave the household. Girls are often burdened with domestic responsibilities, limiting their time and energy for studies. In some cases, unsafe travel routes, absence of female teachers, and poor sanitation facilities in schools

discourage regular attendance. Cultural beliefs and social norms also reinforce the idea that education is less important for girls, especially in rural and economically weaker communities. This study aims to understand the various socio-economic factors that contribute to educational backwardness among girl children in Dhanbad. By exploring the lived experiences of families, teachers, and students, the research seeks to identify the root causes and suggest practical solutions. The goal is to support policy makers, educators, and community leaders in designing more inclusive and effective educational strategies that empower girls and promote long-term social change. Addressing these challenges is essential not only for the development of individual girls but also for the progress of the entire region.

Need and Significance:

The significance of this study lies in its focus on understanding the deep-rooted socio-economic barriers that prevent girl children in Dhanbad district from accessing and continuing quality education. In a rapidly developing country like India, education is an important driver of social and economic progress. However, in regions like Dhanbad, many girls are still left behind due to poverty, gender discrimination, lack of infrastructure, and cultural beliefs that undervalue girls' education. This study is important because it sheds light on the real-life challenges faced by these girls and their families, helping us understand why educational backwardness persists despite national policies and programs. By identifying the specific socio-economic factors—such as low family income, early marriage, parental illiteracy, and unsafe school environments—this research provides valuable insights for educators, policy makers, and social workers. It highlights the urgent need for targeted interventions that go beyond general schemes and address the unique needs of marginalized communities. The study also emphasizes the importance of community awareness and the role of parents, teachers, and local leaders in changing attitudes toward girls' education. Moreover, the findings of this study can help design more inclusive and practical educational policies that promote gender equality and empower young girls to break the cycle of poverty. It contributes to the broader goal of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Goal 5 (Gender Equality). In essence, this research is not just about education—it is about justice, opportunity, and building a more equitable society where every girl has the right to learn, grow, and succeed.

Table 1: Need and Significance of the Study

Aspect	Details
Study Focus	Understanding socio-economic barriers to girls' education in Dhanbad district, Jharkhand.
Barriers Identified	Poverty, gender discrimination, early marriage, low parental literacy, unsafe school environments, and undervaluing girls' education.
Impact on Stakeholders	Helps educators, policy makers, and social workers understand real-life challenges and design targeted interventions.
Policy Relevance	Highlights the need for community-specific solutions beyond general schemes; supports inclusive and gender-sensitive educational planning.
Community Engagement	Emphasizes the role of parents, teachers, and local leaders in changing attitudes and promoting girls' education.
Broader Social Benefits	Educating girls reduces child marriage, improves health outcomes, and increases economic participation.

Contribution to SDGs	Supports Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Goal 5 (Gender Equality).
Core Message	The study is about justice, opportunity, and building an equitable society where every girl has the right to learn, grow, and succeed.

Literature Review:

The educational backwardness of girl children in Dhanbad district is shaped by a complex interplay of socio-economic factors. Scholars have consistently pointed out that poverty remains one of the most significant barriers. Families with limited income often prioritize boys' education, viewing girls' schooling as a lesser investment due to traditional gender roles and expectations (Khalid, 2023). This economic pressure is compounded by low parental literacy, especially among mothers, which influences attitudes toward girls' education and limits their ability to support learning at home (Perveen et al., 2019). Gender bias is another critical determinant. Cultural norms in Jharkhand often reinforce the belief that girls should focus on domestic responsibilities or prepare for early marriage, rather than pursue formal education (Bharti, 2025). These beliefs are deeply rooted and continue to affect school enrollment and retention rates. Even when girls do attend school, they face challenges such as inadequate sanitation facilities, lack of female teachers, and unsafe travel routes—all of which discourage regular attendance and contribute to dropout rates (Khalid, 2023). The literature also emphasizes the role of infrastructure and policy implementation. While government schemes like BetiBachaoBetiPadhao aim to promote girls' education, their impact is limited by poor execution and lack of community engagement. Schools in Dhanbad often suffer from overcrowded classrooms, insufficient teaching materials, and irregular teacher attendance, which further demotivates students and parents alike (Khalid, 2023). Importantly, education is linked to broader social outcomes. Studies show that educating girls leads to reduced child marriage rates, improved health indicators, and greater economic participation (Perveen et al., 2019). Therefore, addressing educational backwardness is not just a matter of schooling—it is a pathway to social transformation. So, the literature reveals that poverty, gender norms, infrastructure deficits, and weak policy implementation are main socio-economic determinants of educational backwardness among girl children in Dhanbad. Tackling these issues requires a multi-pronged approach involving community awareness, targeted policy reforms, and sustained investment in school infrastructure and teacher training.

Rationale of the Study:

The rationale behind this study is rooted in the urgent need to understand why many girl children in Dhanbad district, Jharkhand, continue to lag in education despite national efforts to promote gender equality and universal schooling. Dhanbad, known for its coal mining economy, also faces deep socio-economic challenges such as poverty, low literacy among parents, and gender-based discrimination. These factors often result in girls being pulled out of school early or never being enrolled at all. Families struggling with financial hardship tend to prioritize boys' education, while girls are expected to manage household chores or prepare for early marriage.

This study is important because it focuses on the real-life barriers that prevent girls from accessing education, including poor school infrastructure, lack of female teachers, and unsafe travel routes. By identifying these socio-economic determinants, the research aims to provide evidence-based insights that can inform better policies and community interventions. Understanding these challenges is essential for creating a more inclusive education system that empowers girls, promotes social equity, and contributes to the overall development of the region. The study seeks to bridge the gap between policy intentions and ground realities.

Objectives:

1. To identify the major socio-economic factors contributing to educational backwardness among girl children in Dhanbad district.
2. To examine the impact of these factors on girls' school enrollment, attendance, and retention, and to suggest measures for improvement.

Research Methodology:

This study uses a secondary data-based research methodology to explore the socio-economic determinants of educational backwardness among girl children in Dhanbad district, Jharkhand. The research relies on existing data sources such as government reports, census data, educational surveys, academic articles, and NGO publications. These sources provide valuable insights into patterns of school enrollment, dropout rates, literacy levels, and socio-economic conditions affecting girls' education in the region. The study involves a systematic review and analysis of data from the Ministry of Education, National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), District Information System for Education (DISE), and relevant research papers. It also includes comparative analysis of previous studies on gender disparities in education, especially in tribal and economically weaker areas of Jharkhand.

The discussion of this study centers on the two core objectives: identifying the socio-economic factors contributing to educational backwardness among girl children in Dhanbad district, and assessing their impact on school enrollment, attendance, and retention. The findings from secondary data sources reveal that poverty is a major barrier. Families with limited income often prioritize boys' education, believing that girls will eventually marry and leave the household, making investment in their education seem less valuable (Khalid, 2023). This economic pressure is further intensified by low parental literacy, especially among mothers, which affects their ability to support and encourage girls' schooling (Perveen et al., 2019).

Discussion:

Gender norms and cultural beliefs also play a significant role. In many communities within Dhanbad, girls are expected to manage household chores or prepare for early marriage, which limits their time and opportunity for education (Bharti, 2025). Even when girls are enrolled in school, poor infrastructure—such as lack of toilets, absence of female teachers, and unsafe travel routes—discourages regular attendance and contributes to high dropout rates (Khalid, 2023). These factors collectively create an environment where education is not seen as a priority for girls. The impact of these socio-economic determinants is evident in the low enrollment and retention rates among girl children in the district. Secondary data from government and NGO reports show that girls from economically weaker sections and tribal communities are disproportionately affected. The lack of targeted policy implementation and community engagement further widens the gap. While schemes like BetiBachaoBetiPadhao exist, their reach and effectiveness in Dhanbad remain limited due to poor awareness and execution. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-pronged approach. Community-based awareness programs, improved school infrastructure, and gender-sensitive policies are essential to change perceptions and create a supportive environment for girls' education. The study highlights that empowering girls through education not only benefits individual families but also contributes to broader social development, including reduced child marriage, better health outcomes, and increased economic participation (Perveen et al., 2019). So, the socio-economic determinants identified in this study—poverty, gender bias, infrastructure gaps, and cultural norms—have a profound impact on the educational journey of girl children in Dhanbad. Tackling these issues is crucial for building a more inclusive and equitable education system.

Table 2: Discussion of the Study

Theme	Findings and Insights
Objective 1: Identify socio-economic factors	Poverty, low parental literacy, gender bias, early marriage, and poor infrastructure are major contributors to educational backwardness.
Economic Barriers	Families with limited income prioritize boys' education; girls are often kept home for domestic work.
Cultural and Gender Norms	Traditional beliefs discourage girls from pursuing education; early marriage and household responsibilities are common.
School Infrastructure Issues	Lack of toilets, female teachers, and safe travel routes reduces attendance and increases dropout rates.
Objective 2: Assess impact on education	These factors lead to low enrollment, poor retention, and limited academic performance among girl children in Dhanbad.
Policy Gaps	Government schemes exist but are poorly implemented; lack of awareness and community involvement limits their effectiveness.
Social Consequences	Educational backwardness contributes to continued poverty, child marriage, and limited economic participation.
Recommendations	Community awareness, infrastructure improvement, financial support, and gender-sensitive policies are needed to address these challenges.

Recommendations:

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can help address the educational backwardness among girl children in Dhanbad district. First, targeted awareness campaigns should be launched to educate families about the long-term benefits of girls' education, challenging traditional beliefs that undervalue it. These campaigns can be led by local educators, women's groups, and community leaders to build trust and engagement. Second, improving school infrastructure is essential—especially ensuring safe transport, separate toilets for girls, and the presence of female teachers to create a more welcoming and secure environment.

Third, financial support schemes such as scholarships, free uniforms, and midday meals should be expanded and made more accessible to economically weaker families. This can reduce the financial burden and encourage regular attendance. Fourth, local governments and NGOs should collaborate to monitor dropout rates and provide counselling or bridge programs for girls at risk of leaving school. Finally, policies must be designed with a gender-sensitive lens, focusing on the unique challenges faced by girls in tribal and rural areas. Together, these steps can create a more inclusive and empowering educational system for girls in Dhanbad.

Conclusion:

So, this study highlights the critical socio-economic factors that contribute to educational backwardness among girl children in Dhanbad district, Jharkhand. Despite national policies aimed at promoting gender equality in education, many girls in this region continue to face barriers that prevent them from accessing

and completing their schooling. Poverty, low parental literacy, gender discrimination, early marriage, and poor school infrastructure are among the most significant challenges. These factors not only limit girls' enrollment but also lead to high dropout rates and poor academic performance.

The study shows that cultural beliefs and traditional gender roles play a major role in shaping attitudes toward girls' education. In many families, girls are expected to manage household chores or prepare for marriage, while boys are encouraged to pursue education and careers. Additionally, the lack of safe transport, female teachers, and proper sanitation facilities in schools further discourages regular attendance among girls.

Addressing these issues requires a multi-level approach involving government, community, and educational institutions. Awareness campaigns, financial support schemes, infrastructure improvements, and gender-sensitive policies are essential to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for girls. By tackling these socio-economic determinants, we can move closer to achieving educational equity and empowering girl children to reach their full potential. This study serves as a call to action for stakeholders to work together in building a future where every girl in Dhanbad has the opportunity to learn, grow, and succeed.

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