

**FAMILY, SOCIO-CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING
SCHOOL DROPOUT AMONG MUSLIM GIRLS IN ANDHRA PRADESH**

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Article Received: 27/08/2026

Article Accepted: 29/09/2026

Published Online: 30/09/2026

DOI: 10.47311/IJOES.2026.8.09.372

Abstract:

School dropout among Muslim girls is influenced by multiple family, socio-cultural, economic and educational conditions. The present study examines the factors associated with educational discontinuation among Muslim girls in the selected coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh. A descriptive research design was adopted, and data were collected from 300 Muslim girls who had discontinued formal education, with 100 respondents each from Krishna, Visakhapatnam and Prakasam districts. Convenience sampling was used for selecting the respondents. The findings reveal that household work and family responsibilities were among the most significant barriers to educational continuation, with 77.3% of respondents reporting that such responsibilities disturbed their studies. Caring for younger siblings affected regular attendance for 74.7% of respondents. Monthly family income was significantly associated with the primary factor affecting education, $\chi^2(9, N = 300) = 78.211, p < .001$. Economic barriers were more prominent among lower-income households, while family-related factors became more important among higher-income groups. Area of residence was also significantly associated with the primary factor affecting education, $\chi^2(6, N = 300) = 21.701, p = .001$. Rural respondents reported significantly higher access barriers than semi-urban and urban respondents. The study concludes that school dropout among Muslim girls is a multidimensional issue requiring targeted interventions based on household income, family responsibilities and residential context. Strengthening financial assistance, reducing domestic burdens, improving safe transport and adopting context-specific dropout-prevention strategies may support greater educational continuity among Muslim girls in Andhra Pradesh.

Keywords: Muslim girls, school dropout, educational discontinuation, family factors, socio-cultural factors, economic barriers.

Introduction:

Education is widely acknowledged as a fundamental instrument for social transformation, human development, and economic progress. It plays a crucial role in enhancing individual capabilities, promoting social mobility, and fostering inclusive growth within a society. Beyond its economic significance, education contributes to the empowerment of individuals, particularly women, by improving their access to opportunities, decision-making abilities, and overall quality of life. In developing countries like India, education has been a central component of policy initiatives aimed at reducing inequalities and achieving sustainable development. Despite considerable expansion in educational infrastructure and policy interventions, disparities in access, participation, and outcomes continue to persist across different social groups.

One of the critical challenges within the Indian education system is the issue of literacy and school dropout, especially among marginalized communities. Although overall literacy rates have improved over time, significant gaps remain between different socio-economic, regional, and demographic groups. Dropout from formal schooling continues to be a major concern, particularly at the secondary level, where a substantial number of students discontinue their education due to a combination of economic, social, and institutional factors. Marginalized communities, including religious minorities, are disproportionately affected by these challenges. Factors such as poverty, parental illiteracy, lack of access to quality schools, and socio-cultural constraints often limit educational participation and continuity among these groups.

The concept of **socio-economic factors** includes variables such as income, occupation, education level of parents, and family size, which influence educational participation and outcomes. Similarly, **cultural factors** refer to beliefs, traditions, and social norms that affect attitudes towards education, particularly for girls. **Educational factors** include availability of schools, quality of teaching, infrastructure, and institutional support.

Review of Literature:

Shaikh et al. (2025) investigated the factors that lead Muslim girls in a region of India that is considered to be undeveloped to drop out of school, focusing on the many structural and

socio-cultural hurdles that exist. According to the findings of the survey, the most significant variables that contribute to dropping out of school are poverty, parental illiteracy, early marriage, and a lack of access to educational institutions of reasonable quality. In addition to this, it places an emphasis on institutional problems associated with females, such as poor infrastructure and limited support networks. The study highlights the fact that dropping out of school is not a phenomenon that can be attributed to a single reason, but rather is the result of the interaction of economic, social, and educational restrictions. The study offers unique insights into the localised drivers of educational discontinuation among Muslim girls. This is accomplished by focusing on a regional context that is undeveloped.

Deka et al. (2024) In the Baksa district of Assam, conduct an investigation of the educational challenges that Muslim female students are encountering at the secondary level. The research finds a number of obstacles, such as poverty, a lack of support from parents, early marriage, and inadequate school facilities, all of which contribute to a reduction in educational participation. In addition to this, it brings to light factors that disproportionately affect girls, such as the distance to schools and the shortage of female teachers. According to the findings, educational chances are diminished as a result of the combined operation of socio-cultural limitations and economic difficulties. Through its emphasis on a localised context, the study highlights the significance of region-specific factors in determining educational results. It also provides pertinent insights for understanding dropout patterns among Muslim girls in situations that are comparable to those experienced by other Muslim girls.

Midya and Islam (2024) Through a case study conducted at the village level, investigate the gender discrimination that occurs in the educational system among Muslims. Identify the key socio-cultural and economic elements that contribute to these discrepancies. The findings of the study indicate that patriarchal attitudes, low parental education, and economic hardship all considerably restrict the educational opportunities available to girls. It also highlights intra-household bias in resource allocation, where boys' education is prioritized over girls'. The findings of this study highlight the fact that prejudice based on gender is firmly ingrained in societal institutions and is further perpetuated by a lack of knowledge. Through the provision of micro-level empirical evidence, the study provides unique insights into the ways in which localised socio-cultural dynamics impact educational results. As a result, the study is relevant for understanding literacy disparities and dropout rates among Muslim girls.

Kumar et al. (2023) Utilising longitudinal data, conduct an analysis of the factors that influence the decision to stop attending school among teenagers in India. This will provide a thorough understanding of the factors that influence educational discontinuation. Several factors, including socioeconomic position, parental education, gender, and school-related issues, were found to have a substantial impact on dropout rates, according to the study. It underscores the fact that girls are more likely to drop out of school due to the duties of staying at home, getting married at a young age, and gender conventions. The findings of this study highlight the significance of early interventions and ongoing assistance in order to successfully prevent students from dropping out of school. The findings give strong empirical data on dropout determinants, which can be applied to understanding comparable trends among Muslim girls. Although the findings are not limited to Muslims, they do provide this important evidence.

Irfan (2012) The purpose of this study is to analyse the educational exclusion of minority girls in Andhra Pradesh and to highlight the systemic constraints that limit their access to secondary education. Among the primary factors that contribute to exclusion, the study lists poverty, social marginalisation, gender norms, and inadequate educational infrastructure as the most important variables. In particular, it highlights the fact that girls from Muslim communities, who are members of minority groups, experience compounding disadvantages as a result of the socio-economic and cultural setting in which they live. In addition, the research highlights deficiencies in the execution of policies and a deficiency in effective interventions. As a result of the study's concentration on a regional context, it has direct relevance to the understanding of literacy disparities and dropout rates among Muslim females in Andhra Pradesh.

Research Methodology

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the factors associated with educational discontinuation among Muslim girls in the selected coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh.
2. To analyze the relationship between parental education, socio-economic conditions, and the educational attainment of Muslim girls who have discontinued their education.

Hypotheses of the Study

Hypothesis for objective 1:

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant variation in the reported factors associated with educational discontinuation among respondents across selected socio-economic and demographic characteristics.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): There is significant variation in the reported factors associated with educational discontinuation among respondents across selected socio-economic and demographic characteristics.

Hypothesis for objective 2:

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant relationship between parental education, socio-economic conditions, and the educational attainment of Muslim girls who have discontinued their education.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): There is a significant relationship between parental education, socio-economic conditions, and the educational attainment of Muslim girls who have discontinued their education.

Research Design

The present study adopts a descriptive research design to examine the status of Muslim literacy and girls' dropout in the selected coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh. A descriptive research design is considered appropriate as it facilitates the systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data relating to the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the Muslim community, literacy levels, educational attainment, and dropout patterns among Muslim girls.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The present study adopts a **convenience sampling method** for selecting respondents. A total of **300 Muslim girls who have dropped out of formal education** have been identified and included in the study.

The sample is distributed equally across the three selected districts:

- **Krishna - 100 respondents**
- **Visakhapatnam - 100 respondents**
- **Prakasam - 100 respondents**

Statistical Techniques Used

The collected data has been analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques with the help of **SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences)**.

Appropriate statistical techniques were employed to achieve the objectives of the study and to test the formulated hypotheses.

The following statistical tools were used:

- Frequency Distribution
- Percentage Analysis
- Cross-tabulation
- Chi-Square Test
- ANOVA

Data analysis and interpretation:

Table 1: Low family income is a major reason for discontinuing education.

Low family income is a major reason for discontinuing education.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	20	6.7	6.7	6.7
	Disagree	34	11.3	11.3	18.0
	Neutral	59	19.7	19.7	37.7
	Agree	87	29.0	29.0	66.7
	Strongly Agree	100	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	100.0	

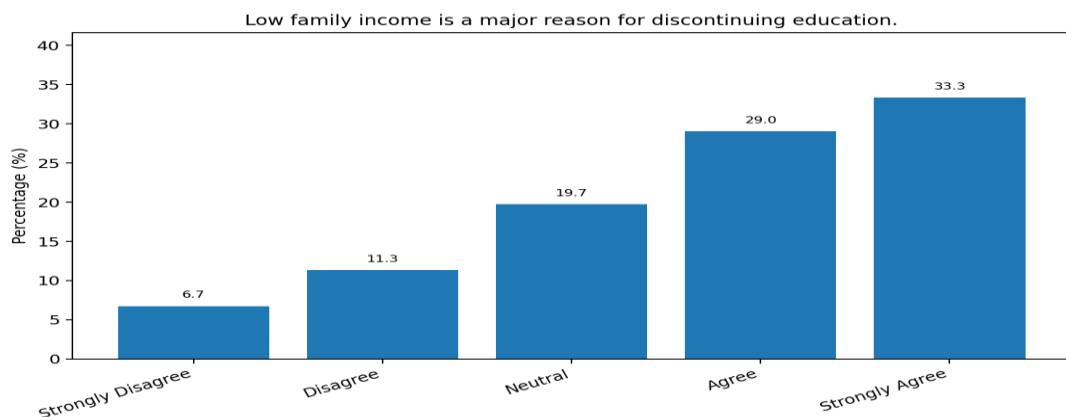


Figure 1: Low family income is a major reason for discontinuing education.

Interpretation: A substantial proportion of respondents agreed that low family income contributed to educational discontinuation. Overall, **62.3% either agreed or strongly agreed** with the statement, including 29.0% who agreed and 33.3% who strongly agreed. In comparison, 18.0% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 19.7% remained neutral. The distribution shows that low family income was widely perceived as an important factor affecting the continuation of education.

Table 2: Cost of fees, books, uniform and travel affects girls' educational continuation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	17	5.7	5.7	5.7
	Disagree	42	14.0	14.0	19.7
	Neutral	58	19.3	19.3	39.0
	Agree	83	27.7	27.7	66.7
	Strongly Agree	100	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	100.0	

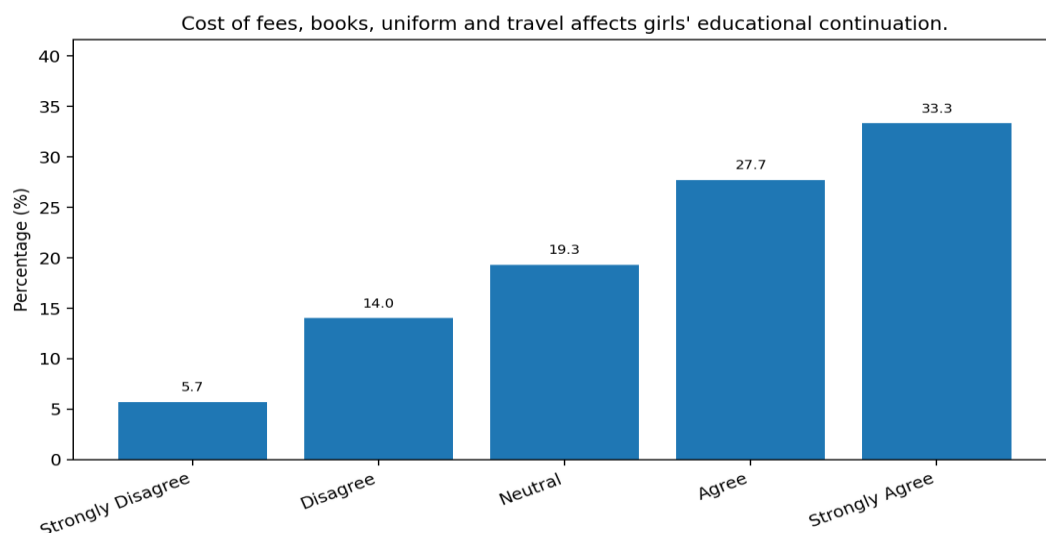


Figure 2: Cost of fees, books, uniform and travel affects girls' educational continuation.

Interpretation: The responses show that **61.0% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed** that education-related expenses such as fees, books, uniforms, and travel affected girls' educational continuation. Specifically, 27.7% agreed and 33.3% strongly agreed, while

19.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 19.3% remained neutral. The distribution indicates that the financial cost of schooling was perceived as an important barrier to educational continuation.

Table 3: Household work and family responsibilities disturb girls' studies.

		Frequenc y	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	4	1.3	1.3	1.3
	Disagree	14	4.7	4.7	6.0
	Neutral	50	16.7	16.7	22.7
	Agree	108	36.0	36.0	58.7
	Strongly Agree	124	41.3	41.3	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	100.0	

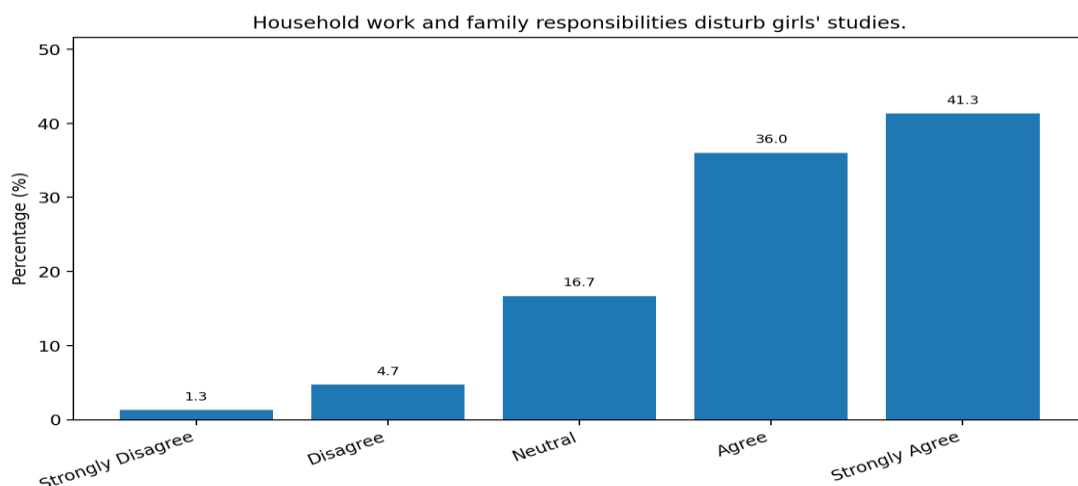


Figure 3: Household work and family responsibilities disturb girls' studies.

Interpretation: Household work and family responsibilities emerged as one of the most strongly endorsed factors, with **77.3% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing** with the statement. Of these, 36.0% agreed and 41.3% strongly agreed, while only 6.0% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 16.7% remained neutral. The distribution indicates that domestic and family responsibilities were widely perceived as interfering with girls' studies.

Chi-square test:

Table Error! No text of specified style in document. : Monthly family income * Which factor most affected your education? (primary factor)

Crosstabulation							
			Which factor most affected your education? (primary factor)				Total
			Economic factors	Social / cultural factors	Family-related factors	School-related factors	
Monthly family income	Below Rs.10,000	Count	31	9	15	9	64
		Expected Count	12.6	11.3	24.3	15.8	64.0
		% within Monthly family income	48.4%	14.1%	23.4%	14.1%	100.0 %
	Rs.10,001- Rs.20,000	Count	26	14	25	26	91
		Expected Count	17.9	16.1	34.6	22.4	91.0
		% within Monthly family income	28.6%	15.4%	27.5%	28.6%	100.0 %
	Rs.20,001- Rs.30,000	Count	2	17	32	24	75
		Expected Count	14.8	13.3	28.5	18.5	75.0
		% within	2.7%	22.7%	42.7%	32.0%	100.0 %

		Monthl y family income					
	Above Rs.30,00 0	Count	0	13	42	15	70
		Expecte d Count	13.8	12.4	26.6	17.3	70.0
		% within Monthl y family income	0.0%	18.6%	60.0%	21.4%	100.0 %
Total		Count	59	53	114	74	300
		Expecte d Count	59.0	53.0	114.0	74.0	300.0
		% within Monthl y family income	19.7%	17.7%	38.0%	24.7%	100.0 %

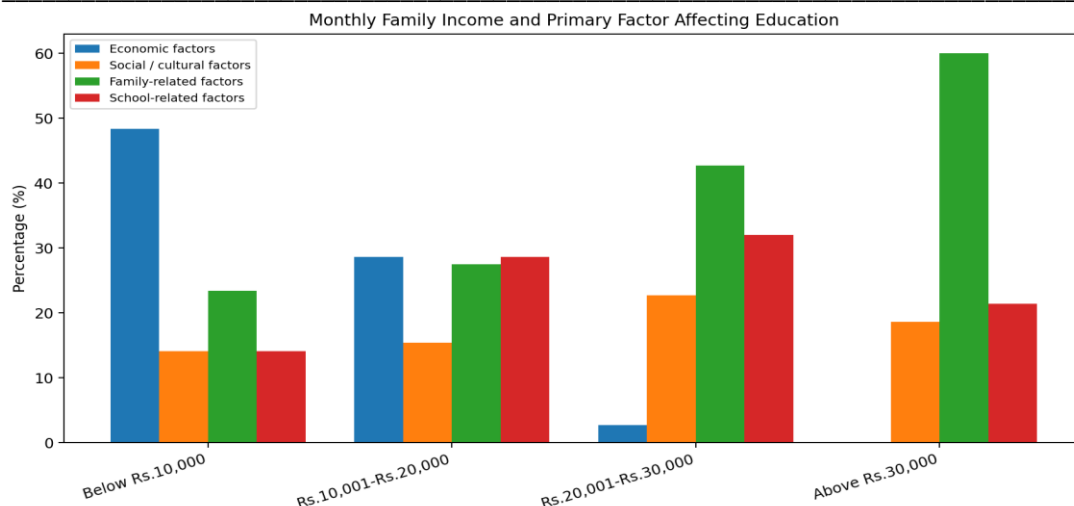


Figure Error! No text of specified style in document. : Monthly family income and primary factor affecting education

Table 5: Chi-Square Tests

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	78.211 ^a	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	89.966	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	36.491	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	300		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 11.31.			

Table 6: Symmetric Measures

Symmetric Measures			
		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.511	.000
	Cramer's V	.295	.000
N of Valid Cases		300	

Interpretation: The association between monthly family income and the primary factor affecting education was statistically significant, with $\chi^2(9, N = 300) = 78.211, p < .001$. Cramér's V was 0.295, indicating a small-to-moderate association between family income and the primary reported factor affecting education. The pattern shows that economic factors were much more prominent among respondents from the lowest-income group, whereas family-related factors became more prominent in the higher-income groups. Since the Chi-square assumptions were satisfied and the p-value was below 0.05, the null hypothesis of no significant association between monthly family income and the primary factor affecting education is rejected for this comparison.

Area of residence * Which factor most affected your education? (primary factor)

Table 7: Chi-Square Tests

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	d f	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	21.701 ^a	6	.001
Likelihood Ratio	21.925	6	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	.742	1	.389
N of Valid Cases	300		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 12.72.			

Table 8: Symmetric Measures

Symmetric Measures			
		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.269	.001
	Cramer's V	.190	.001
N of Valid Cases		300	

Interpretation: The cross-tabulation shows clear variation in the primary factor affecting education across residential categories. Among **rural respondents**, school-related factors were reported most frequently (30.4%), followed closely by family-related factors (28.9%) and economic factors (27.4%), while social/cultural factors accounted for 13.3%. Among **semi-urban respondents**, family-related factors were dominant (47.3%), followed by school-related factors (19.4%), social/cultural factors (17.2%), and economic factors

(16.1%). Among **urban respondents**, family-related factors were again the most frequently reported (43.1%), followed by social/cultural factors (26.4%), school-related factors (20.8%), and economic factors (9.7%). Pearson's Chi-square test showed that the association between area of residence and the primary factor affecting education was **statistically significant**, $\chi^2(6, N = 300) = 21.701, p = .001$. The assumptions of the Chi-square test were fully satisfied, as no expected cell frequencies were below five and the minimum expected count was 12.72. Cramér's V was **0.190**, indicating a **small association** between area of residence and the primary reported factor. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant association between area of residence and the primary factor affecting education is **rejected** for this comparison.

Economic Barrier Scores Across Monthly Family-Income Groups

Table 9: Descriptives for Economic Barrier

Descriptives								
Economic Barrier								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Below Rs.10,000	64	4.6953	.43294	.05412	4.5872	4.8035	3.50	5.00
Rs.10,001- Rs.20,000	91	4.3077	.66986	.07022	4.1682	4.4472	2.50	5.00
Rs.20,001- Rs.30,000	75	3.3133	.79599	.09191	3.1302	3.4965	1.00	5.00

Above Rs.30,0 00	70	2.41 43	.97791	.116 88	2.18 11	2.64 75	1.00	5.00
Total	30 0	3.70 00	1.1406 2	.065 85	3.57 04	3.82 96	1.00	5.00

Table 10: Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Test of Homogeneity of Variances			
Economic Barrier			
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
13.651	3	296	.000

Table 11: ANOVA

ANOVA					
Economic Barrier					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	223.934	3	74.645	133.855	.000
Within Groups	165.066	296	.558		
Total	389.000	299			

Table 12: Robust Tests of Equality of Means

Robust Tests of Equality of Means				
Economic Barrier				
	Statistic ^a	df1	df2	Sig.
Welch	135.482	3	157.937	.000
a. Asymptotically F distributed.				

Interpretation: The descriptive statistics show a clear decline in the mean Economic Barrier score as monthly family income increases. Respondents from families earning below ₹10,000 reported the highest economic-barrier score (M = 4.70, SD = 0.43), followed by those earning ₹10,001–₹20,000 (M = 4.31, SD = 0.67), ₹20,001–₹30,000 (M = 3.31, SD = 0.80), and above ₹30,000 (M = 2.41, SD = 0.98). Levene's test was statistically significant,

$F(3, 296) = 13.651, p < .001$, indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was not satisfied. Therefore, the robust Welch test was considered for hypothesis testing and showed a statistically significant difference in Economic Barrier scores across the four family-income groups, **Welch's $F(3, 157.94) = 135.482, p < .001$** . The conventional one-way ANOVA was also significant, $F(3, 296) = 133.855, p < .001$. The pattern of group means indicates that respondents from lower-income households reported substantially greater economic barriers to educational continuation, whereas respondents from higher-income households reported comparatively lower economic barriers. Therefore, the null hypothesis that mean Economic Barrier scores do not differ across monthly family-income groups is **rejected**.

Descriptives for Access Barrier Scores Across Areas of Residence

Table 13: Descriptives for Access Barrier

Descriptives								
Access Barrier								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Rural	135	4.1753	.64752	.05573	4.0651	4.2855	2.00	5.00
Semi-urban	93	3.3692	.65472	.06789	3.2343	3.5040	1.67	5.00
Urban	72	3.1435	.97034	.11436	2.9155	3.3715	1.33	5.00
Total	300	3.6778	.86804	.05012	3.5792	3.7764	1.33	5.00

Table 14: Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Test of Homogeneity of Variances			
AccessBarrier			
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
14.614	2	297	.000

Table 15: ANOVA

ANOVA					
AccessBarrier					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	62.826	2	31.413	57.423	.000
Within Groups	162.471	297	.547		
Total	225.296	299			

Table 16: Robust Tests of Equality of Means

Robust Tests of Equality of Means				
Access Barrier				
	Statistic ^a	df1	df2	Sig.
Welch	58.615	2	156.359	.000
a. Asymptotically F distributed.				

Interpretation: The descriptive statistics show a clear difference in Access Barrier scores across areas of residence. Respondents from **rural areas reported the highest mean Access Barrier score** ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.65$), followed by those from **semi-urban areas** ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 0.65$), while **urban respondents reported the lowest mean score** ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 0.97$). This pattern indicates that distance, transport, and safety-related barriers were more strongly experienced or reported among rural respondents than among semi-urban and urban respondents. Levene's test was statistically significant, $F(2, 297) = 14.614$, $p < .001$, indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated. Therefore, Welch's robust test was considered for hypothesis testing and showed a statistically significant difference in Access Barrier scores across residential categories, **Welch's $F(2, 156.36) = 58.615$, $p < .001$** . The conventional ANOVA was also significant, $F(2, 297) = 57.423$, $p < .001$.

.001. Since the p-value is below the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis that Access Barrier scores do not differ across areas of residence is **rejected**. The results indicate that residential location is significantly associated with the intensity of access-related barriers, with rural respondents reporting comparatively higher levels of such barriers.

Findings

1. Household work and family responsibilities were the most strongly reported barriers, with 77.3% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that they disturbed girls' studies.
2. Caring for younger siblings affected regular attendance for 74.7% of respondents, showing the importance of caregiving responsibilities in educational discontinuation.
3. Monthly family income was significantly associated with the primary factor affecting education, $\chi^2(9, N = 300) = 78.211, p < .001$; economic factors were reported by 48.4% of the below-₹10,000 group, while family-related factors accounted for 60% in the above-₹30,000 group.
4. Area of residence was significantly associated with the primary factor affecting education, $\chi^2(6, N = 300) = 21.701, p = .001$; school-related factors were highest among rural respondents (30.4%), while family-related factors were highest in semi-urban (47.3%) and urban areas (43.1%).
5. Rural respondents reported the highest access-barrier score ($M = 4.18$), compared with semi-urban ($M = 3.37$) and urban respondents ($M = 3.14$); the difference was significant, Welch's $F(2, 156.36) = 58.615, p < .001$.

Suggestions

1. Families should be encouraged to distribute domestic responsibilities more equitably and protect regular study time for girls.
2. Childcare and anganwadi support should be strengthened so that school-going girls are not required to assume regular caregiving responsibilities.
3. Interventions should be differentiated according to household circumstances rather than applying one common solution, because the dominant factors differ across income groups.
4. Dropout-prevention strategies should be adapted to residential context, since rural respondents reported school-related factors more frequently while family-related factors were more prominent in semi-urban and urban areas.

5. Rural educational planning should give priority to distance, transport and travel-safety barriers, as rural respondents recorded significantly higher access-barrier scores.

Conclusion

The study concludes that school dropout among Muslim girls in the selected coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh is influenced by a combination of family, socio-cultural, economic and educational factors. Household work and family responsibilities emerged as the most prominent barrier, followed by sibling-care responsibilities. Economic conditions also played an important role, as respondents from lower-income households reported greater financial barriers to educational continuation. In addition, transport difficulties, distance to educational institutions and travel-related safety concerns were more pronounced among rural respondents, indicating that the nature of dropout barriers differs according to residential and socio-economic background.

The findings further suggest that dropout-prevention measures should be tailored to the specific circumstances of girls rather than applying a uniform approach. Families should be encouraged to reduce excessive domestic and caregiving responsibilities placed on girls, while economically weaker households require stronger financial assistance. Rural areas need improved transport, safer access to schools and better educational support. Overall, reducing dropout among Muslim girls requires coordinated efforts involving families, schools, communities and educational authorities so that financial, family-related and access-related barriers can be addressed together.

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