



Revisiting School Dropouts: A Study on the Influence of Social Environment on the Educational Profile of the Bauris in West Bengal

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Abstract: A social environment is a sort of environment in which an individual grows, interacts and adapts. The development of an individual and/ or a community solely depends on its social environment. Considering this, a study has been conducted among a prominent scheduled caste community in the Bardhaman district of West Bengal called 'Bauri'. The study was conducted in a small secluded portion of Mandaljana village, locally called Purba Mandaljana. Despite several state and central government developments in educational affairs, education is still unthinkable among the Bauris of Purba Mandaljana. The present paper sought to deal with the vacillating concept of education prevalent among them. Additionally, the paper takes up the woeful conditions they face daily, which affect the educational attainment rate. An analysis of their past and present issues has also been put forward.

Keywords: Education, Bauri, secluded caste, Mandaljana village, obstacles, daily lives

Introduction

The term 'education' denotes a life-long learning process. It is the key that unlocks the true potential of human development. It instils knowledge and wisdom in a child that enables her/ him to lead a better life in future. It helps to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In India, acquiring basic education was a dream

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a few decades ago. As such, literacy rates were extremely low at that time. Various government initiatives have made literacy rates rise to an effective level. However, there is still a long way to go. Despite numerous initiatives and policies by the government, higher education in India often encounters several challenges, such as limited access to quality education, outdated curriculum, digital divide, shortage of qualified faculty, regulatory bottlenecks, lack of employability skills, and others (Biswas, 2017). This often gives rise to negative delusions regarding education. As a result, most of the children in India are compelled to quit studies midway. 'School dropout' denotes the undesirable cessation of a student's educational journey without obtaining any proper higher degree/ diploma. A few of them leave their studies voluntarily, while others are compelled to leave under various circumstances. Despite countless endeavours by governments, non-government organisations (NGOs) and educational boards, it is a global challenge that happens across all age groups and genders. According to Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) reports of 2023-24, about 3.7 per cent from the preparatory level, 5.2 per cent from the middle school level and 10.9 per cent from the secondary level dropped out of their schools. One of the notable observations that could be derived from this report is that the overall dropout rates of female students at all educational levels were either equal to or less than those of male students. The dropout rates were evaluated as nil or less than 1 per cent during preparatory and middle school education in several states and union territories, such as West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, and Kerala. However, the percentage of dropouts in secondary education is high. The percentages were much pronounced in Ladakh (20.11%), Jammu & Kashmir (16.08%), Gujarat (16.74%), Madhya Pradesh (15.17%), Bihar (20.86%), Karnataka (18.73%), Assam (19.46%), Arunachal Pradesh (16.73%) and Meghalaya (17.53%). It is 12.01 per cent in West Bengal. Nevertheless, the situation was worse a decade ago or so. In accordance with NSS 71st round (2015), 343/1000 males and 342/1000 females in the country dropped out. Along the female line, 325/1000 from rural areas and 385/1000 from urban areas had either dropped out or discontinued their studies. On the other hand, 327/1000 males from rural areas and 382/1000 males from urban areas had dropped out. The statistics were lower in rural areas (i.e. 326/1000) than in urban areas (i.e. 383/1000). The statistics improved compared to the previous 64th round of NSS (2007-08), where 327/1000 from rural areas and 390/1000 from urban regions dropped out or discontinued their studies. The reasons for this fatal outcome could be personal, familial, school-related, social, or other reasons—all of which are listed under the umbrella term 'social environment'.

Social environment denotes the immediate physical surroundings, social relationships and cultural milieus, within which people learn to function, grow, interact and adapt (Barnett and Casper, 2001). On a simple note, there is a correlation between the social environment and human behaviour. Since children start to learn from their social environment, usually through imitation (Bandura, 1977), developing a positive social environment for future generations is essential. For proper comprehension, let us divide the social environment into three major categories: home environment, school environment, and neighbourhood, which directly or indirectly influence social relationships. The home atmosphere creates a child's psychological atmosphere (Ghosh, 2023). A home is usually considered a child's first school, where their parents are deemed the first teachers. However, there might be a serious issue if the parents are not literate or cannot teach their children what is good or bad for them. Support from the parents and other family members is crucial for a child's mental well-being, which eventually will help them move towards a brighter future. In several cases, illiterate parents are found to have low autonomy in making decisions in life. This often ruins the lives of their children in the long run. For instance, illiterate parents generally do not understand the importance of education. They do not bother to care for their children's education. The majority of the school dropouts were usually found to be deprived of parental care and monitoring (Rashidi and Malecela, 2025). While analysing National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-3 data, Gouda and Sekher (2014) claimed that school dropouts were four times higher among children of illiterate parents than those of literate parents. In addition, educational achievements are thought to be heritable (Pokropek and Sikora, 2015). Due to a lack of parental involvement in studies, the children often fail to develop an interest in gaining a proper education. NFHS-5 data revealed that about 35.7 per cent and 21.4 per cent of boys and girls, respectively, between 6-17 years dropped out due to lack of interest in education (Rampal, 2022). Avungi (2022) concluded in her study that the majority of the dropouts involved cases where parents rarely visit their wards' schools, and there was a constant lack of parent-teacher-student relationships. As such, parents often remained unaware of their children's activities, and they failed to guide them properly.

Broken families or constant issues in a family are also considered a significant factor in school dropouts. Parental divorce or separation could cause a high risk for school dropouts, as marriage dissolution or conflict causes emotional clashes among the circle of relatives, and this often endangers the psychological growth of a child (Bhaswat, 2024). Economic well-being is also needed to allow parents to think about their children's education. When a particular community is subjected to the

worst economy, it can neither survive properly nor pave a better path for the next generations. Poverty is the root cause of all suffering as it creates barriers to access education, schools, or other institutions (Kasapçopur, 2023). Poor health outcomes such as malnutrition, chronic illness, and anaemia owing to economic hardships are also leading factors in school dropouts (Zerga et al., 2022). Gouda and Sekher (2014) claimed that household size also influences school dropout. The risk of dropouts increases with the number of living children, especially in a poverty-stricken family. Poor parents often fail to buy their children's educational resources, such as notebooks, pens, pencils, erasers, sharpeners, etc. In addition, they sometimes cannot afford to employ tutors for their children, failing which the latter find it difficult to handle their studies. This may accelerate the rate of early dropouts. A study by Gan and Biswas (2020) observed how the poor Rajbanshi children of the Balasan river basin of West Bengal carry economic responsibilities on their shoulders. Owing to poverty, they were subjected to child labour from a tender age. In addition, the article excellently linked social environment with poverty, class and personality, which in turn affects child development. Usually, poor and illiterate parents develop negative attitudes towards education and consider sending children to school a wasteful idea and hence prefer to send their children to work. The girl children often fall prey to gender biases. In India, a daughter is generally thought of as '*parayadhan*' (others' wealth) as she would be married and sent to her husband's house. This fuels a sick mentality among most of the parents to spend less money on their daughters' education. Instead, they save money for their daughter's marriage. From childhood, specific gender identities and roles are ascertained for the son and daughter in a family, thus killing women's value and contribution both economically and socially (Sharma et al. 2023).

A school represents a community where an efficacious social relationship is crucial in fostering positive peer relationships. Since the caste system is usually prominent in the rural regions of the country, social discrimination prevails in the school complexes too. Public schools in rural areas are generally managed based on the caste system (Bailwal and Paul, 2021). Owing to this, marginalised social groups such as scheduled castes (SC), scheduled tribes (ST), other backward classes (OBC) and even the Muslim minority group have a greater tendency to drop out before completing their school education (Garg et al. 2023). Sometimes, the far-fetched location of the schools makes the parents reluctant to send their children to school. Female students face this problem mostly (Majhi, 2022). Dropouts due to such reasons are also prominent in hilly and remote regions. An analysis by Shukla and Tiwari (2024) found that dropout rates in the rural areas were higher in secondary schools than in primary schools. This

is generally because one can find primary schools within 1-2 km of rural households, whereas secondary schools are located quite far away. Often, students lack interest and motivation towards academics and the school curriculum. Sports and other co-curricular activities in schools stimulate a sense of unity and belonging among the students, often reducing school dropouts (Mahoney and Cairns, 1997). Most of them think that education is boring, and due to a lack of guidance from home, they fail to understand their lessons properly. As a result, repeated failures in a single class often compel them to quit their studies (Gouda and Sekher, 2014). Lack of proper school facilities also impels the students to discontinue their studies. To cite an example, most of the Indian schools lack Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities, which stands as a problematic situation for school girls after they hit puberty (Pednekar et al., 2024).

In India, we dwell on the dynamics of society, which are generally shaped by caste and class hierarchy. Interaction among different social groups could be observed based on such a social ladder. A friendly neighbourhood is directly proportional to the positive socio-emotional, cognitive and psycho-physiological outcomes in children as well as in youths (Evans, 2006). There is a general tendency for children to spend more time in their neighbourhood; hence, its influence is generally dominant and persistent (Carlson and Cowen, 2015). A privileged neighbourhood is usually endowed with better facilities such as schools, health services, religious institutions, proper housing facilities, better road systems, transport and communication facilities. At the same time, individuals in an advantaged neighbourhood should enjoy cordial social relationships with each other. However, this is completely vague in a country like India, where a strict caste system has prevailed since ancient times. Though this has faded a lot in the present era, it is still prominent in rural areas of some states of our country. Based on the caste system, residential segregation (Ghurye, 1969) could be expected in rural India, where the residences of lower castes are generally found on the outskirts of a particular village. Children also get accustomed to this system, where social relationships are formed on the basis of caste and class. Accordingly, peer selection and socialisation processes occur, leading to the formation of their respective peer social networks. Intrinsically, the lower caste or lower-class children and youths get trapped in their own circle of hopelessness and gloominess. They feel 'good things' are meant only for people of a higher caste or higher class. Due to the absence of cultural capital, getting higher degrees and doing jobs or businesses to improve the situation seems next to impossible, leading to school dropouts (Chand, 2017). This could be seen in a study by Biswas (2016) that showed how the disturbing atmosphere puts the mental, physical and social

development of a child at risk. Regular environmental degradation at the Sagar Islands of West Bengal negatively impacted their rights and security in terms of food, shelter, dress, education, etc. This eventually destabilised their childhood, socialisation process and personality development. As a result, the future seemed hopeless for the children of the Sagar islands. In regard to the above discussion, the present study ventured into finding how the social environment moulded the lives of the Bauris of Purba Mandaljana. Thus, the prime objectives of the study were (1) to know the educational profile of the studied Bauris; (2) to understand their perception regarding education; (3) to note down the factors directly or indirectly linked to their poor educational profile; (4) to seek out changing scenarios (if any). To delve into this matter, the study was conducted on 44 Bauri families bearing a total of 201 Bauri individuals, of which 102 were males and 99 females. As a part of the methodology, interviews, observations, and data collection regarding their social structures, education status, and economic profiles were conducted. Elderly Bauri individuals, school-going children, and even school authorities were enquired about.

Area and People Under Study

The Bauris represent a scheduled caste community in states like West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar and Jharkhand. Being one of the eminent scheduled caste communities of West Bengal, the Bauri scheduled caste occupies the fifth position as per its numerical strength in the state. Their population surpasses 3.5 lakhs in districts such as Bardhaman and Bankura (Census, 2011). About 80.26 per cent of the total Bauri population of the state is concentrated in the rural areas only. Speaking of Bardhaman district, 55.09 per cent of the Bauri population of the district resides in rural areas (Census, 2011). Having this in mind, the researchers preferred a small rural region in the Bardhaman district. Mandaljana (GPS coordinates: 23.1972° N; 88.1474° E) village was selected for the present study. It is situated under the Memari-I block of Bardhaman district of West Bengal. One of the State Highways, i.e. SH-15, passes through its adjacent village, Gantar. The total area of Mandaljana village is about 203.5 hectares. Purba Mandaljana is a small portion of Mandaljana village, which stands secluded from the rest of the village. This section is located at one edge of the village and is the least connected with the other habitations of the village. This secluded portion seemed like an offshoot of Mandaljana village, which bloomed 1 km away from the village's main road. As a result, one has to step down from the village's main road and pass through a long, narrow, weathered passage running along the *Kobor Danga* (Bengali term for burial grounds of Muslims) to reach this particular location. A dried abandoned river

named Gangur (i.e. a distributary of the Damodar River) bifurcates this area further into two sections, namely Baje Mandaljana and Ichhapur. Purba Mandaljana is basically a Muslim-dominated area with very few Hindu communities. The Bauris were perhaps the last Hindu community to settle in this area.

A Brief Note on the Studied Bauri Settlements

It is asserted that the Bauris of the studied area, as well as of the neighbouring villages, were migrants, though the time of their migration and subsequent settlement varies from one another. It could be assumed that they came in batches and settled at different locations nearby. The Bauris of the proper Mandaljana village were perhaps the first to migrate, probably in the 1930s or before, as recalled by a few elderly people of the village. The then landlords belonging to the Singha Roy (a typical group of Bengal Brahmins) families happened to employ them. The Bauri migrants were provided with work and small pieces of land near the agricultural fields to settle. Decades passed by, and gradually a hamlet named Khetrupal *para* developed. After the early batch of Bauris had settled, another batch of Bauris happened to migrate in the 1970s or 1980s. However, the situation had already changed by then. The later generations of the Singha Roy families were then least preferring the untouchable Bauris for work. The influx of other Hindu communities that were hierarchically higher than the Bauris aggravated the situation. Owing to this, the next batch of Bauri migrants had to face a lot of adversities. They were compelled to settle in the vested lands in Baje Mandaljana. There is a general tendency for economically poorer people to settle in poorly developed neighbourhoods (Raushan, 2015). A few well-off Bauri families recently bought small pieces of land at Ichhapur to build their houses, forming a small hamlet called Bauri para (Bauri settlement).

Educational Situation of the Bauris- Past and Present

As mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, the Bauris of Purba Mandaljana were the migrants. Their migration took place about 40-50 years ago, i.e. in the 1970s-1980s. They were the actual residents of Kalna (a town in the same district) who came here hoping to get some work and a better livelihood. Unfortunately, they were ignored by the landlords of Mandaljana village. In Purba Mandaljana, the main Hindu communities, which included Hazra families and Ghosh families, were not affluent, just like the Singha Roy families of Mandaljana, and hence they never could provide the Bauri migrants with any work as such. Moreover, the Muslim community preferred

to hire men of their own religion for work. Altogether, this had worsened the economic condition of the Bauri migrants, initially making them the poorest of the poor. Their life became completely uncertain. The Bauri families used to go hungry for days. Small kids were kept under the custody of bigger siblings when the parents went out in search of some work, though most of them used to return empty-handed. Moreover, to reduce the economic burden on the family, the Bauri daughters were married at a very tender age of 12-13 years. Though a primary school (i.e. Ichhapur Baje Mandaljana Free Primary School, established in 1974) was set up in Purba Mandaljana during the time of their migration, they hardly had time, energy or desire to enrol. Earlier, there used to be one free primary school (i.e. Mandaljana Free Primary School) in the entire Mandaljana village, which was established just after independence in 1948. In fact, education was not considered a basic necessity even by the other local communities. The other Hindu and Muslim communities were sending their children for primary education at a lower frequency initially. The frequency rose gradually over the years. Among the Bauris, enrolment in primary school was observed a decade after their migration. Initially, the enrolment was seen only among the Bauri male children, and that too had the lowest frequency of just one or two. The Bauri female children were entitled to household chores only. Education was not meant for them. However, the enrolled Bauri male children used to drop out soon after a few months or at most a year. Such an issue was subjected to several social factors. Being one of the lowest caste communities, the Bauri children used to face criticism from the teachers and school authorities at times. Children of the upper caste communities used to bully them. They used to make fun of their torn clothes and even sometimes of their dark skin colour. The Bauri parents could not afford to buy their sons books and notebooks. Nor could they guide them in their studies, as they were illiterate too. Food was sometimes unavailable at home, and mid-day meals were not provided earlier at schools. Studying on an empty stomach was just impossible to imagine.

As mentioned before, the Bauri migrants were least supported by the area's local residents. They were not well-off enough to provide the Bauris with work on a daily basis. As such, the Bauri migrants initially went to nearby villages in search of work. However, as days passed by, the situation got more competitive as more people from different communities were migrating in and around the villages of Memari-I block. As a result, the Bauri men started to look for work in neighbouring towns and even in neighbouring states like Odisha and Bihar. During the study, about 90 per cent of the Bauri adult males of Purba Mandaljana stayed outside, leaving behind their families at home. Most of them either worked as wage labourers or were self-employed, such

as carpenters, plumbers, masons, etc. They visited their houses once or twice a month. Most of them rarely come.

Several Bauri women admitted that their husbands neither come home nor send money for household expenses. Few had admitted that they might have a co-wife. Polygyny is quite common among the Bauri community. Several instances were reported earlier (Bhowmick, 1968) and even today (Roy, 2025). Due to the absence of the male head of the family, the Bauri women had to carry out all the household chores. As a result, they had less time to look after their children. Moreover, a split in a Bauri family owing to polygyny was also observed. In such cases, the married women whose husbands had left happened to express their frustrations by blaming their in-laws or by abusing them and others. This eventually created an environment of tension and conflict in the Bauri houses, causing ill effects on the mental well-being of the Bauri children. As such, the majority of the Bauri children did not get the moral support of the family. Due to a lack of guidance and support from their fathers, uncles and grandfathers, they lacked career plans. Most Bauri boys would be seen quitting their studies and sitting in the courtyard of their houses with their peers playing cards, gossiping, teasing local girls, etc. Their mothers and grandmothers often failed to make them understand what is good and what is bad for them. The Bauri youths complained about work unavailability in the area and expressed hopelessness for the future. In another context, due to the absence of male heads in most of the Bauri families, the Bauri mothers often tended to marry their daughters at an earlier age of 13-14 years. Incidents of early marriage of the Bauri girls were still prevalent in the area. The reasons asserted were feelings of insecurity and economic burden.

In general, the Bauris are shy in nature. In addition, they feel alienated as other local castes and communities avoid interacting with them on a normal basis. No such friendly interaction with other communities could be seen. They generally remained confined to their hamlets. Even the Bauri children were rarely seen to play outside their own hamlet. Interaction could be expected only for work purposes, and that too had developed very recently. This eventually prevented the inculcation of positive attitudes toward acquiring education among the Bauris. Although one can see that the enrolment of Bauri children in schools took almost a decade longer than that of other local communities, dropouts were also seen at a speedy rate. The illiterate Bauri parents rarely visited schools. Unfriendly interaction with other communities distanced them further. Fortunately, the establishment of the *Anganwadi* centre at Purba Mandaljana improved the condition of the area. The government established *Anganwadi* centres with the main aim of looking after the health requirements of

pregnant women, new mothers, and their children up to the age of 6. To take advantage of the facilities available, the Bauris (especially the women) gradually came in contact with the *Anganwadi* authorities. Since there are no other health facilities nearby and the facilities provided by the *Anganwadi* centres are absolutely free of cost, pregnant women of all communities of Purba Mandaljana prefer to enrol their names at the *Anganwadi* centre. The amicable interaction with other communities could be highly expected to develop when the Bauri pregnant women regularly visited the centres and enquired about various medications, vaccinations and health check-ups. Even after the delivery, the new breastfeeding mothers come daily to the centre to collect their meals. During the study, it was observed that the Bauri children, along with the children of other communities of 2-6 years, gathered for lessons in the courtyard of the centre. After 2 hours or so, the mothers and grandmothers of the children come with lunch boxes or other utensils to collect the meal. The meal is allotted even during holidays when no classes are held. The *Anganwadi* supervisors suggest that the Bauri parents enrol their children in primary school as soon as they reach the age of six. Regular interaction with the authorities boosted the confidence among the Bauris, and as such, they are learning how to interact freely. Even the Bauri children nowadays were seen to be extremely excited for their classes as well as for the mid-day meals. This eventually led to increased enrolment and completion of primary education among present-day Bauri children. For further education, the Bauri children had to travel a distance of about 1.8 km to reach Mandaljana Kshama Singha Smriti Madhyamik Sikhsha Kendra (abbreviated as Mandaljana KSS MSK) located at the centre of Mandaljana village. It is noteworthy to mention that Mandaljana KSS MSK was the first middle school established in 2003. Until then, there were no middle schools in the entire village or even in the nearby villages. After primary education, the children of the villages had to opt for Gantar B. M. High School. This school is about 4 km from Purba Mandaljana. Hence, it could be inferred that education for the children of Purba Mandaljana after the primary level was almost unthinkable until 2003. Even today, the situation is not so feasible for them. Mandaljana KSS MSK is situated roughly 1 km away from the *Kobor Danga*. One could avail regular transport facilities from *Kobor Danga* only. Public autos had recently been launched on the village's main road, which comes every 45 minutes. However, as mentioned before, Purba Mandaljana is not located adjacent to the village's main road. The roads inside its area were completely wretched. There is no regular public transport available inside the area. The situation often gets worse during the rainy season when the water stagnates in the area, making it more difficult for the people to move in and around the area. The Bauri children complained of the

long distance they had to walk daily to reach the middle school, which was tiring for them. *E-rickshaws* could be hired; however, they could not afford to hire such modes of transport on a daily basis due to the poor economy. Moreover, the area was completely devoid of any stationery shops where the kids could buy pencils, pens, notebooks, erasers, and other things. No tutors were available nearby, and the Bauri parents could least afford to send their children to tutors available outside the village. Altogether, these were creating hindrances in their educational achievement. As such, maximum cases of dropouts and discontinuation could be observed during middle school. About 61.43 per cent of the Bauri literate males of the area dropped out during their primary education or middle school education. Only three Bauri boys passed the *Madhyamik* (Class X) exams, and only one Bauri boy passed the *Uchha-Madhyamik* (Class XII) exams. The situation was still abysmal for the Bauri girls. Hardly any Bauri girls in this area had studied in middle school till now.

Religion usually brings people of the local communities together. However, owing to extreme poverty, the Bauris of Purba Mandaljana were found to be least bothered to conduct any festivals. The influence of local communities is often considered a significant factor in shaping religious and cultural norms. However, nil acquaintance with the local Hindu communities prevented the Bauris of Purba Mandaljana from attending any bigger Hindu festivals or occasions occurring in the locality. One would find no pictures or idols of Hindu gods and goddesses, and even no *Tulsi* altars in the Bauri houses, as generally observed at any Hindu dwellings of the area. Also, the poor economy and lack of space in the houses prevented them from conducting daily worship rituals. Moreover, since the male members generally reside outside, the complete workload is solely confined to the female members of the family. As such, they get no time for daily worship. Hence, it can be concluded that they are religiously backward or rather could be described as primitive Hindus. On the other hand, their recent contact with Muslim employers of the area had aggravated the condition. Most of the Bauri men confessed to eating beef at their religious festivals or occasions. This made the local Hindu communities despise the Bauri community more, and as such, they try to avoid them as much as possible. This was seen as an excellent opportunity for Muslim employers to exploit the Bauri communities, making them work more for lesser wages. For instance, the Bauri women of Ichhapur were hired by a Muslim retailer who gave them ₹30/- only to make 144 *rakhis* (cotton bracelets). Another Bauri woman admitted that a Muslim family who lives in Memari town comes twice a month to their ancestral house at Ichhapur. She is asked to clean and mop the floors of their house, and in return, she gets only ₹15/- twice a month with a small pouch

containing puffed rice. In this situation, it could be observed that the Bauri woman was not hired on a daily basis and was paid very little for the cleaning job. However, despite knowing that, the Bauri women admitted that these little earnings meant a lot to them as their husbands stayed outside and they usually ran out of money for food.

Due to such exploitation, the local Bauri communities remained in desolate conditions and are still struggling to manage two square meals in a proper way. This, in turn, is disrupting the educational achievement of the Bauri children. The situation started to improve when mid-day meals were provided at the schools. Enrolment of Bauri children at primary schools went up to 100 per cent. Both Bauri girls and boys were observed to go for their primary education. Apart from mid-day meals, arrangements for free school uniforms and free study materials were made by the present West Bengal government. This eventually made the poorer Bauri parents, who had the least resources, free from any worries about cost and investment in their children's education. However, there is still a lot of ground to cover.

General Observation and Remarks

The social environment encountered by the Bauris of Purba Mandaljana has shaped their behavioural patterns, occupational approach, economic status, educational attainment and others. It vividly highlighted how the Bauris were exposed to poverty and negligence by the neighbouring communities, which further triggered several negative situations. Economic pressure made the Bauri migrants barely survive. Years took them to settle properly. Education seemed to be impractical to them. Although they could manage to build their dwelling areas, lack of work in the area and higher competition in the work field had compelled several Bauri families to split up. The men had to rely on neighbouring towns and sometimes on neighbouring states for work opportunities. Eventually, a Bauri family was not supposed to function correctly without a clearly defined family head. Such fractured relationships caused the disintegration of a family unit. The members lack support and guidance, which often causes conflicts over decision-making. Due to the absence of male members in the family, roles and responsibilities shifted, giving additional burdens on the female members and children. Prolonged lack of fathers or grandfathers often led to emotional distance and a strained relationship in a Bauri family. The children suffered from low self-esteem, insecurity and social isolation.

On top of that, the Bauris shared a cold relationship with the neighbouring communities. As a result of a lack of social and emotional connection, the Bauris often act with impulsivity. They do not think through the consequences and end up

making several wrong decisions in life. All these are giving rise to early school dropouts, early marriages of girls and increasing idle lifestyles among the Bauri youths of the area. On a simple note, it could be said that the Bauris of the studied area fell into a loop trap where they revisited limited opportunities, limited support, and limited financial resources. In order to break the cycle, social support, proper training via adult education and vocational courses, and financial assistance in the form of microfinance and financial counselling could help.

In terms of educational approach, it could be vividly observed that the studied Bauris still do not view education as a basic necessity. Instead, they are focused on the facilities provided to them by the educational institutions. However, long distances and weathered road conditions stop them from pursuing middle-school and high-school education. College education still remained a fantasy as none of the studied Bauris could achieve it to date. Altogether, a regrettable educational status could be predicted among them.

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