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A SURVEY  
THE CAUSE  
AMONG  
PRIMARY S

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SUBJECTS	1 School attendance --
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University of Belize Lib.  
Faculty of Education

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## Introduction

This investigation into the rate of people dropping out of three selected primary schools in Dangriga was done in a town in southern Belize.

The study was done because the researcher felt that educator and parents is stakeholders in education should be made aware of the possible causes for the rate of people discontinuing their education.

Education in Belize began as early as 1816 when the lieutenant- governor Mac Author and his wife offered free schooling to the children of the colony. The Stann Creek district where this study was made had the first primary school at Sittee Village as early as 1850. Dangriga is a coastal town, well known for its fishing, citrus and banana industries. It does not have enough opportunities for graduates from the primary, secondary, and the tertiary level schools. There is large proportion of young school attending age who are ill-engage in the streets, rather than being in a school to acquire an education. Many sixth form graduates migrate to other district to acquire a job.

The town of Dangriga has a majority of Garifuna people as inhabitants; who ever since the 1980's the society shares a mix of Mayas, Mestizo, Chinese, Creoles and East Indians. This ethnic diversity is rapidly

transforming the town into a melting pot society. The increase in population from 5,000 to 15,000 (1950 to 2000) has demanded the need for more spaces in primary schools. They are five denominational schools: Zion Seventh Days Adventist, Epworth Methodist, Christ the King Anglican, Sacred Heart and Holy Ghost (Roman Catholics) and the Assemble of God Solid Rock Academy. The schools collectively have a population of some 5,000 pupils or 33% of the population of the town. They are about one hundred employed to teach these students.

The schools admission register may reflect a total enrolment of 5,000 students annually; however the records of attendance that there is a cause for alarm about the truancy rate of the schools.

It has been absorb that peoples of primary school age are seen in the streets during school hours selling home made products (example panades, tamales, ideals) or doing errands for parents or simply loitering in the neighborhood. They usually have no rational reason to explain why they are not attending schools. This cause the researcher to develop interest to find out the reason for so many young school attending age people to be out of school.

## Background

In SPEAR's publication "Education in the year 2000" Assad Shoman (1991) noted that primary education is compulsory and available free to all."

Based on government's policy concerning compulsory, the researcher found it of interest to investigate into the rate of truancy of schools in Dangriga.

Since primary school education is free for all then people should take advantage of the situation to attend school. There are enough places in the primary schools in Dangriga for pupils to attend schools. It is believed that in all the schools in Dangriga, many pupils are absent from classes for several reasons.

Cynthia Thompson (1991) stated that from 1975 to 1988 there were about 45,000 pupils in the primary schools in Belize in each annual cohort. The completion rate of pupils from infant one to standard six average about 65%. She further noted that only 56% of the pupils who began primary actually completes the eight year of school. This showed that the rate of drop outs of primary schools in Belize is as high as 44% of the whole cohort of pupils in any given area.

## **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study is to determine whether schools in Dangriga experience a specific rate of pupils drop outs caused by socio- economic factors and whether the selected schools surface as having a high rate than the others in the same community of Dangriga.

Additionally, the study will make recommendation to parents, teachers and the Ministry of Education so that these stake holders mentioned will alleviate the situation concerning school drop outs in our municipality.

## **Significance**

The researcher identified a need to investigate into the school drop out rates of pupils in schools in Dangriga, and the felt that once the various causes are identified the stake holders in education should be informed to hopefully acquire their inputs to create changes towards decreasing such rate, and even to erase pupils dropping out of school all together. The finding will be of great significance to:

- (1) The Ministry of Education as chief custodian and designer of education policy for Belize. The Ministry can take the finding as a model to use to various causes are responsible for pupils to drop out of school, and

to address the problem hence should bring them to the attention of parents and teachers.

- (2) Parents/Guardians: though the impact of this study will get to know what reasons caused their children to leave school at an early age than the normally expected time, and they act in these problems to create these changes for these children.
- (3) Parents and teachers will realize that what problems exist at their school and identify the very many inadequacies and the shortcomings in their curriculum, classroom management and the teachers/students relationships. Further teachers and principals will see the need to work at ways to gain the motivational interest of the pupil so that the drop outs rate will decrease at their schools.

## **Research Questions**

- (1) What are the causes or factors which lead to children dropping out of school before reaching the class of standard six.

## Hypothesis

The researcher believes that several socio-economic factors influence the rate of pupils dropping out of primary school in Dangriga before reaching standard six.

## Definition of Terms

- (1) Admission Register= A book or journal which record details about each pupil who enters the population of a school.
- (2) Absenteeism= the process of pupils not attending schools on specific dates.
- (3) cohorts= The group or set of pupils attending school in any given class or grade.
- (4) Ill-engaged= Occupied in physical or mental activity not fruitful in the benefit in an individual.
- (5) Relevant Data= Information gathered specifically towards answering a desired outcome.
- (6) Records of attendance= The record or log used to keep accounts of the frequency with which a pupil attends school or is absent from school.

(7) Socio-economic factors= The sociological and economic conditions such as race, gender, salary and standard of living of a person in a society.

(8) Stakeholders= The key person involved in an institution or organization or process.

# Chapter 11

## Literature Review

Historically, there has been a trend in Belize that an alarming number of students especially in the primary school level have been guilty of truancy. Cynthia Thompson (1991) showed in a research that of the annual cohort of 45,000 primary school pupils some 56% in the sojourn from Infant I to Standard VI drop out of school and never remain in school to write the (P.S.E.) Primary School Examination.

The trend cited elsewhere is true for schools in Dangriga where the researcher has found that a significant number of students drop-out without completing the primary school programme. There are many reasons which contribute to the high rate of drop-out from the schools. Some children are found to drop-out of school for a single reason while some children may have several reasons which overlap related to a socio-economic background. While reasons may vary from case to case, the causes are not so difficult to trace. These cases are traceable from their sources, either from the pupils themselves or from their parents/guardians or from information from the school.

A previous investigation of the truancy rate in three selected primary school in Dangriga shows that socio-economic problems arise and are varied

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in their nature and are quite considerable in number. Summatively, one basic finding that relates to many others is the pupil's inability to cope with what is expected both at home or at school, so he/she become unmotivated and take up other interests and fall out of school. Elsa Walters (1972) mentions that "work that is too easy is boring and offers no incentive to effort, work that is too difficult, where a child is sure to fail however hard he/she tries, is equally useless, so a wise teacher grades the work so that each child is able to achieve something if he/she tries (pp.65)."

The previous research also indicated that the inability of parents to finance their child's education, the need for children to find jobs in order to contribute to the economic life of the family, inadequate parenting skills and teen-age pregnancy. There are issues which arise at the domestic level of the child's life. This is also identified by J.S. Farrant (1990) stated that in every school system, there are deprived children. Some may be deprived physically because parents are poor; others are deprived emotionally because they come from broken homes, while others are deprived culturally because they have been encouraged to despise their own culture.

It is sad to learn that some parents ignore their responsibilities of seeing to it that their children attend school. Very often it has a culture bias but some cases are based on the fact that no finance is available to buy uniforms

and books and sadly sometimes there is no food to feed the children, so that they can go to school. Many parents believe that the success of their children in school has nothing to do with them, and they find a scapegoat to blame.

Likewise, teacher and school should take added interest in the pupils, so that they will want to stay in school. Elsa Walters (1972) mentioned that the encouragement at school of the special aptitudes children develop in childhood and adolescence is an essential foundation for the development of special abilities in life.

However, the child needs to attend school in the first place, so the home needs to prepare the child, and send him/her to school so that the school can do its part later on. Sharrock (1990) refers to the parental responsibility by saying that two often parents believe that teachers should do the parenting at school.

For all intent and purposes a child of school age lives his or her life at two distinct but interrelated levels. They are the home or domestic level and the scholastic level. It is to this dichotomy that Adams (1954) refers when he quotes Herbert Spencer as saying that the aim of education is preparing for complete living.

It is so true in saying that education is preparing children for life because if a child is given the opportunity to complete the eight years of school life, he/she would become a useful or a resourceful person in his or her community. If Education is not given to the child in the way a child should be treated then the child will not be a productive citizen in the future but another disgrace to his or her society. What the right choice for these children? The choice they make is preparing them for life, for sometimes attitude are not thought but often caught around the environment they belong.

Truant children who later drop out of school suffer from one or some of these problems: feeble-mindedness, slow-learners, abuse from parents or from teachers, peer-pressure, over crowding in the class room, poor teacher/pupil ratio, lack of text book, poor sanitation resulting in sickness, asthmatic pupils who absent often followed by failure, discouragement and finally fall away from school.

It has been discovered that over crowded classrooms lead to many set backs in the process of education such as copying of work during test, nearness cause undue chatting among the pupils, discipline is difficult to maintain, students develop irritability because of the nearness to each other. The over crowded environment leads itself to students taking the advantage

of the situation over which the best teacher often has no control. S.J. Farrant (1990) stated that unless informal teaching method is adopted in large group teaching, class control can be very difficult.

The weakness of the method is that it encourages a good deal of passive learning. The teacher is the active member of the unit and, in a normal class, the pupil have only one chance in forty of getting the opportunity to contribute positively to the lesson in any moment. This is far from being an ideal educational practice.

Classroom management is an essential factor which creates the congenial condition in which a child learns and which can attract him/her to remain in school or cause him/her to get discourage about school. Putting it in more concise terms Stevens and Crawley (1994) noted in the publication by the British Department of Education that by whole class or other teaching arrangements as well as by incentives and impose rules are successfully engaged and in which effected learning is given scope to flourish.

Another factor which takes issue as a cause for primary school drop-outs in Dangriga is teenage pregnancy. This usually happens because of ignorance on the part of parents who refuse to relate to their adolescence daughters about the basic facts of adolescent sexuality. It is also caused by the inability and often the unwillingness of parents to teach what they know

about sex and sexuality to their young children. These children often experiment with their bodies and later find themselves in trouble having gotten pregnant.

Cameron (1997) said it is evident that from the first time they have sex many young Belizean woman expose themselves to the risk of an unwanted pregnancy as well as the risk of contracting (STD) Sexually Transmitted Diseases. Cameron (1997) also noted that some young girls who get pregnant and fall out of school do so because of adolescent frustration within the home and also in the school situation. In some homes the absence of male authority figure causes the girl to seek such a figure in someone outside the home, who later gets her pregnant.

Some of these teenagers have sex for the fun of it, while others do so for the economic gain that they need to attend school example: clothes, shoes, food and school fees. The insufficient active role play by the church and the schools in addressing the problem of adolescence cause the young people to become unguided and frustrated.

In addition to views expressed by Cameron (1997) others studies by Jagdeo (1984) and Huges (1997) claimed that primary among these are the facts that pregnancy is the single most important reason why girls drop-out of school. He farther stated that it is a lack of knowledge of the relationship

between sex and pregnancy... and many of our teenagers in the Caribbean have a woeful lack of knowledge of themselves, their bodies and their sexualities... and become pregnant victims of their ignorance. This can be so true because some girls that drop-out of school at an early age are those that can hardly read well or reason.

The habit of absenteeism among pupils in the primary schools stems from several reasons. According to Farrant (1990) the goal of the education system of any society is to produce people with desired personality traits such as competitiveness and altruism. Therefore, behavior such as absenteeism should be dealt with by the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders. Sometimes young people are not motivated to attend school or are made to be bored by the school environment, the teacher's methods or the environment of the classroom in a particular school.

Teachers need to get children in the learning process. Elsa Walters (1975) also noted that children need the opportunities and individually and in groups, for taking responsibility in planning, making choices, coming to decisions and carry out what they have planned. This must be taken into account in the teachers own planning.

The pupils who are not involved in their learning eventually fail and they drop-out of school. Not only will a person hinder his/her own progress

when he/she drops-out of school, but he/she may be adding to the economic burdened to his/her home and later to society burdened, to the country.

Many students who have dropped-out of school have expressed their regret.

Based on previous research on this topic most of the children strongly agreed that if they have remained in school they would have graduated.

Some educators believed that these children dropped-out of school for reasons beyond their control, but according to Solity (1992).

Possible factors contributing to truancy are as follows: withdrawal of the child from school as he/she can work, lack of interest by parents in the pupil either at home or at school, Some pupils feel that they were unfairly treated by the teacher, or some teachers tend to concentrate their effort on students that are above and more rewarding to work with. This points to the fact that less fortunate student may develop a feeling of hopelessness, jealousy and insecurity and later drop-out of school.

# Chapter 111

## Research Method

The researcher was motivated to conduct an investigation leading to a possible explanation of the issue surrounding the rate of children dropping out of three selected primary schools in Dangriga Town.

The investigation was designed along an area of quantitative method, using questionnaires issued to drop out participants, their teachers and their parents. The demographical data gathered allowed the researcher to arrive at reasonable quantitative or numerative values based on a set of (SA) strongly agree, (A) agree, (SD) strongly disagree and (D) disagree.

The questionnaire was the most efficient and practical instrument which was easily distributable to the respondents and was told that it will be collected over a two weeks period. Once the respondents completed the questionnaire the responses were tabulated and the researcher was ready to correlate them.

## Research Samples

The sample schools selected was based on a survey made at all five schools in Dangriga. After a close examination of the previous research discovered that three schools: Sacred Heart Primary School, Epworth Methodist Primary School and Holy Ghost Primary School had a high number of pupils drop-out rate.

The population of the study includes 30 drop-outs children from these primary schools in Dangriga town. The cross-section of students included both males and females. The names of these students obtain from the drop-out records which were made available by the principals of three participating schools.

Using random sampling procedure (10) ten children were taken from each schools, (5) five boys and (5) five girls making a total of (15) fifteen making a total number of (15) fifteen boys and (15) girls as illustrated in table 1.

To obtain the ten children from each individual school the names of the boys were put in a box to select five names. The same procedure was followed with the two other schools. The samples were then completed to be fifteen boys and fifteen girls, making a total of thirty children.

## **Research Instruments**

Three sets of questionnaire were developed to collect vital information from three sets of participants.

The student's instrument was comprised of twenty (20) items. While the instrument for parents and teachers consisted of ten (10) items. Each respondents were instructed to respond to all items using the rating scale as follows: (SA) Strongly Agree, (A) Agree, (SD) Strongly Disagree, and (D) Disagree.

## **Procedure**

After the questionnaires were prepared, the researcher went to the individuals home of the selected drop-out students to deliver the questionnaires to them, and to also to the selected parents. The questionnaires for teachers were likewise delivered to them personally to them at their various schools. All three clusters of respondents were told not to put their names on the questionnaires and that the information would be kept confidential.

The researcher explained to the respondents that in two weeks time she would personally collect back the completed questionnaires. The method of distributing the questionnaire personally to respondents and

collecting them back worked out well because a 100% rate response was realized. The questionnaire was reviewed with students during the week of 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> February 2002. During the brief session used to collect feed back from the drop-out students, parents and the teachers. The researcher took liberty to discuss the questions with them to acquire how they felt about the research being done about truancy of children in the primary schools.

### **Data Analysis**

The data collected from drop-out students, their parents and teachers were carefully analyze to arrive at total responses that were (SA) Strongly Agree, (A) Agree, (SD) Strongly Disagree and (D) Disagree.

These responses were placed in tables and the results quantified using descriptive statistics.

Base on statistical responses the researcher drew a conclusion about what social variables affected the drop-outs in the three urban schools in Dangriga Town.

**Table 1****Schools and Sample of Students.**

Schools	Number of boys	Number of girls
Sacred Heart School <sup>1</sup>	5	5
Holy Ghost School <sup>1</sup>	5	5
Epworth Methodist School <sup>1</sup>	5	5
Total	<u>15</u>	<u>15</u>

Note 1 Large Urban Schools.

As shown in table 1 three large urban schools and thirty pupils were included in the study. The three schools were selected from the five schools in Dangriga. A sample of 5 boys from each school made up a cohort of 15 boys used in the investigation. Likewise, a sample of 5 girls from each school made up a cohort of fifteen girls used in the investigation. A simple random sampling procedure was used to enable the researcher to successfully administer and collect all relevant data.

**Table 2****Age Range of Students Dropping Out of School.**

Age	Frequency	Percent
11 to 14	18	60%
15 to 17	12	40%

Table 2 indicates that of the (30) thirty despondence (18) eighteen or 60% of these students dropped out of school at an early age. The other (12) twelve or 40% of these children were much older. This table indicates that the majority of them are of primary school age.

**Table 3****Gender of Children**

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	15	50%
Female	15	50%

Table 3 indicates that out of the (30) thirty despondence (15) fifteen or 50% are male and the other (15) fifteen or 50% are female and as previously

stated. They were selected at random from three different schools namely the Sacred Heart Primary School, Holy Ghost Primary School and Epworth Methodist Primary School.

**Table 4**

**Class Children Reached.**

Class	Frequency	Percent
Standard III	2	6 2/3%
Standard IV	2	6 2/3%
Standard V	15	50%
Standard VI	11	36 2/3%

Table 4 indicates that of the (30) thirty respondent (4) four or 13 1/3% reached the class of standard III or standard IV. While the other (26) twenty six or 86 2/3% reached the class of standard V or standard VI, but have not completed the class for graduation, because of one reason or another.

**Table V****Person Responsible for Children Education.**

Person	Frequency	Percentage
Mother	16	53 1/3%
Father	9	30%
Guardian	5	16 2/3%

Table 5 indicates that of the (30) thirty respondent (16) sixteen or 53 1/3% of the children were supported by their mother only. The other (9) nine or 30% were supported by their fathers. While the other (5) or 16 2/3% were supported by their guardian. This indicates that majority were single parent, mothers are responsible for the welfare of their children. This indicates that mothers play a vital role in the development of their children.

**Table 6****Types of Job of Parents/Guardians.**

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Housewife	16	53 1/3%
Teacher	1	3 1/3%
Common Laborer	8	26 2/3%
Others	5	16 2/3%

Table 6 indicates that of the (30) thirty of the respondents (16) sixteen or 53 1/3% are housewives. This data reflected that in table (5) five also points to the fact that mothers are responsible for their children's education. This chart also indicates that one or 3 1/3% is a teacher. (8)Eight or 26 2/3% are common laborer and (5) five or 16 2/3% had other types of occupation. This indicates that all respondents, parents/guardians are earning an income.

**Table 7****Number of Children in Family.**

Number of Children	Frequency	Percent
1 to 3	8	26 2/3%
4 to 6	20	66 2/3%
Over 7	2	6 2/3%

This table indicates that of the (30) thirty respondents (8) eight or 26 2/3% of them have three or less siblings. The other (20) twenty or 66 2/3% have (4) four or more siblings. This indicated that the majority of the respondents have an average size family except for (2) two that have (7) seven or more siblings. This can be a possible reason why children at the higher class are not given enough support, because of the size of their family. Therefore, these standard V and standard VI children become discourage and frustrated so discontinue their schooling.

## **Ethical Consideration**

The principal of all five primary schools in Dangriga, use in the original survey to select three schools out of five, were informed by ways of letter about the purpose and significance of the research and the role that it will play in the primary school education.

Each principal co-opted in the study was duly informed that the questionnaire result will be confidential and that no names were to be placed on them.

The Parents of the thirty pupils were contacted to acquire their consent for the children to participate in the survey.

The sample group was informed that their participation in the exercise was fully voluntary and that they could withdrawal at any given time.

Participants in my survey were told that they would have the opportunity to receive feed-back about the result of the study.

**Section A**

To account for content validity the instruments were reviewed by the following individuals: Ms. Audrey Williams District Supervision, Central Statistical Office Stann Creek Ass. Degree in Ed., Mrs. Althea Joseph Admin. Clerk at the Belize Bank, and Treasurer of the Sacred Heart School Parents/Teacher Association. Who holds an associate in Education. Mr. Mario Gonzales, teacher Holy Ghost Primary School.



# Chapter 1V

TABLE 1

MY PARENTS HAD TO FORCE ME TO GO TO SCHOOL.

	SA	A	D	SD	Total
No. of respondent	5	9	11	5	
Total	14		16		30
Percent	46 $\frac{2}{3}$ %		53 $\frac{1}{3}$ %		100%

**Table 1.** This indicates that of the thirty (30) respondents fourteen (14) or 46  $\frac{2}{3}$ % of them agreed that they had to be forced to go to school. While the other sixteen (16) or 53  $\frac{1}{3}$  of them disagreed to the statement but nevertheless when looked at both sections on agree and disagree; the percentage is not too far. This probably gives a reason why almost half of the children did not finish their schooling.

**Table 2**

**I preferred to be somewhere else rather than in school**

	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
No. of respondent	13	3	10	4	30
TOTAL	16		14		
Percent	53 1/3%		46 2/3%		100%

**Table 2** indicates that the thirty -(30) respondents sixteen 16 or 53 1/3 % of them agreed that they preferred to be somewhere else rather than in school. The other fourteen (14) or 46 2/3 % of them disagreed with the statement. This high percent clearly indicates that this a reason why these children did not finish their schooling.

**Table3**

**I enjoyed being in school, but my parents went aboard.**

	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
No. of respondent	4	7	10	9	
TOTAL	11		19		
Percent	36 2/3 %		63 1/3 %		100%

**Table3** indicates that of the thirty -(30) respondents eleven (11) or 36 2/3 % of the children agreed that they do enjoyed being in school but their parents went aboard. The other nineteen (19) or 63 1/3 % of the children disagreed with the statement. This than was a reason as to why these children dropped out of school. The table indicates that the majority had different reasons for their dropping out of school. The statement applied to some and it made some kind of effect on their schooling.

**Table 4**

**I left school because my parents were unable to pay the fees.**

	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
NO. of respondent	11	5	5	9	30
Total	16		14		
Percent	53 1/3 %		46 2/3 %		100%

**Table4** indicates that of the thirty- (30) respondents sixteen (16) or 53 1/3 of them agreed that their parents were unable to pay their school fees. The other fourteen (14) or

56 2/3 % disagreed that their parents were unable to pay their school fee. This indicates that majority of these children were unable to meet the demand for school fees. Hence this is a reason why children dropped out of school at an early age.

**TABLE 5**  
**I LEFT SCHOOL BECAUSE I HAD TO FIND A JOB TO HELP SUPPORT MY FAMILY**

	S A	A	D	S D	TOTAL
No. of Respondents	8	5	9	8	30
TOTAL	13		17		
PERCENT	43 1/3%		56 2/3%		100%

**TABLE 5** indicates that of the thirty -(30) respondents thirteen or 43 1/3% of the children agree that they left school because they had to find a job to help support their family. The other seventeen (17) or 56 2/3% of these children disagreed, with the statement. Even though the table indicates that the majority did not find the statement to apply to them, it is clearly seen that almost ½ of them agreed so this tells that this statement is a possible factor that causes this problem to occur and have these children out of school at an early age.

**TABLE 6**  
**I LEFT SCHOOL BECAUSE THE PRINCIPAL PUT ME OUT.**

	S A	A	D	S D	TOTAL
No. of Respondents	3	5	19	3	30
TOTAL	8		22		
PERCENT	26 2/3%		73 1/3%		100%

**TABLE 6** indicates that of the thirty -(30) respondents eight (8) or 26 2/3% of them agreed that they left school because the principal put them out. The other twenty-two or 73 1/3% disagreed with the statement. This indicates that this is not the reason why they left school.

**TABLE 7**

**I LEFT SCHOOL BECAUSE MY FRIEND LEFT**

	S A	A	D	S D	TOTAL
No. of Respondents	2	4	18	6	30
TOTAL	6		22		
PERCENT	20%		80%		100%

**TABLE 7** Indicates that of the thirty -(30) respondents six (6) of 20% of them agreed that they left school because their friends left. The other twenty-four -(24) or 80% of them disagreed about the statement because they had other reasons. The table shows that only a small percent of the sample left school because of their friend' influence.

**TABLE 8**

**I WASN'T PROVIDED WITH THE NECESSARY SCHOOL**

**MATERIALS.**

	S A	A	D	S D	TOTAL
No. of Respondents	5	11	9	5	30
TOTAL	16		14		
PERCENT	53 1/3%		46 2/3%		100%

**TABLE 8** Indicates that of the thirty- (30) respondents, sixteen or 53 1/3% of them agreed that they were not provided with their necessary school materials. The other fourteen or 46 2/3% of them disagreed with the statement. This table is clearly indicating that this statement is a reason why these children had to drop out of school or discontinued their schooling since parents did not provide them with their necessary school materials.

**Table 9**

**The teachers usually encouraged me.**

	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
NO. of respondent	9	12	5	4	30
Total	21		9		
Percent	70 %		30 %		100 %

**Table 9** indicates that of the thirty- (30) respondent twenty-one (21) or 70% of the children agreed that they had teachers that usually encouraged them. The other nine (9) or 30 % of the children disagreed with the statement. They suggest that their teachers did not usually encourage them. This, even though small, the evidence is there that suggests that children do need lots of encouragement by their teachers. Perhaps this was a reason why these nine- (9) subjects or 30 % of the respondents disagreed with the statement.

**Table 10**

**I usually get help with assignment at home.**

	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
NO. of respondent	4	8	12	6	30
Total	12		18		
	40 %		60 %		100 %

**Table 10** indicates that of the thirty (30) respondents twelve (12) or 40 % of the children agreed to the fact that they usually get help with assignment at home but eighteen (18) or 60 % of these children disagreed that they usually get help with assignment at home. The table shows that majority of these children find this statement not applicable to them. This suggests that the majority of the children did not receive help or assistance with assignments at home. This can be seen as a reason or a cause why they were discouraged and so eventually led them to drop out of school.

**Table 11**

**I always passed tests given to me.**

	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
NO. of respondent	4	7	16	3	30
Total	11 36 2/3 %		19 63 1/3 %		100 %

**Table 11** indicates that of the thirty- (30) respondents eleven (11) or 36 2/3 % of the children agreed that they always passed tests given to them. The other nineteen 63 1/3 % of them disagreed that they always passed tests. It is clear that this is a reason why children get discouraged and decided to leave school at an early age.

**Table 12**

**I HAD A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH MY TEACHER AND CHILDREN IN SCHOOL**

	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
NO. of respondent	7	12	5	6	30
Total	19 60 %		12 40 %		100 %

TABLE 12 indicates that of the thirty -(30) respondents eighteen (18) or 60% of these children agreed that they had a good relationship with their teacher and other children in school. This therefore cannot be a reason why they left school at an early age. However, twelve (12) or 40% of the subjects disagreed with the statement. This then suggests that because they did not have a good relationship with teachers and peers this can be a possible reason that count them drop out of school

**Table 13**

**THE WORK IN CLASS WAS TOO DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND**

	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
NO. of respondent	7	8	8	8	30
Total	14		16		
PERCENT	46 2/3%		53 1/3%		100 %

TABLE 13 indicates that of the thirty -(30) respondents fourteen or 46 2/3% of them agreed that the work in class was too difficult to understand. While on the other hand sixteen (16) or 53 1/3% of them disagreed that the statement was not their reason for leaving school at an early age. This table indicates that the majority disagreed with the statement however since almost 50% of them agreed; this tends to indicate that the level of work in the classroom was too difficult so this can be a possible reason that leads children to drop out of school.

**Table 14**

**I LEFT SCHOOL BECAUSE OF MY PARENTS/GUARDIAN CARE LESS OF ME**

	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
NO. of respondent	8	8	7	7	30
Total	16		14		
PERCENT	53 1/3%		46 2/3%		100 %

TABLE 14 indicates that of the thirty -(30) respondents sixteen or 53 1/3% of them agreed that they left school because their parents care less of them. While on the other hand fourteen (14) or 46 2/3% of them disagreed that the statement was not their reason for leaving school at an early age. This table above clearly shows that this strong evidence that affected the lives of these children that they were unable to complete their schooling. This therefore is a reason or cause why children dropped out of school at an early age.

Table 15

I WAS ALLOWED TO BE OUT OF HOME AFTER 10:00 A T NIGHT

	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
NO.OF RESPONDENTS	3	5	12	10	30
TOTAL	8		22		
PERCENT	262/3%		731/3%		100%

Table 15- Indicates that of the thirty (30) responding eight (8) or 26 2/3% of the children were allowed to be out of home after 10:00 pm at night. The other 22 or 73 1/3% of the children disagreed with the statement. Therefore there cannot be a reason why they had to leave school at an early age. The table indicates that the majority had different reasons but however, there were some that were affected.

Table 16

I LEFT SCHOOL BECAUSE I GOT PREGNANT

	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
NO OF RESPONDENTS	8	2	11	9	30
TOTAL	10		20		100%
PERCENT	33 1/3%		66 2/3%		

Table 16- indicates that of the thirty (30) respondents ten (10) or 33 1/3% of the children agreed that they left school because they got pregnant. The other twenty or 66 2/3% of them disagreed that the statement was not their reason. However, the statement indicates that it still applies to some even though it was just a margin but it still affects some.

Table 17

I LEFT SCHOOL BECAUSE I WAS INVOLVED IN DRUGS

	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	2	6	11	11	30
TOTAL	8		22		
PERCENT	26 2/3%		73 1/3%		100%

Table 17 indicates that of the thirty (30) respondents eight (8) or 26 2/3% of these children agreed to the fact that they left school because they were involved in drugs. This table indicates that 26 2/3% or almost 1/4 of the thirty (30) subjects are involved in drugs. While the other 22 or 73 1/3% of the children disagreed that the statement was not the reason/cause of them not to complete their schooling. Although 1/4 of the subjects dropped out of school because of drugs, this does not seem to be a reason why the majority of the children dropped out of school.

Table 18

I LEFT SCHOOL BECAUSE I HAD A PROLONGED ILLNESS

	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
NO OF RESPONDENTS	2	2	11	15	30
TOTAL	4		26		
PERCENT	13 1/3%		86 2/3%		100%

Table 18- indicates that of the thirty (30) respondents four (4) or 13 1/3% of them agreed that they left school because they had a prolonged illness.

While the other 26 or 86 2/3% of them disagreed that this statement is not the reason why they dropped out of school. This table clearly indicates that this is not a reason for these children to leave school at an early age.

Table 19

I LEFT SCHOOL BECAUSE OF ILLNESS OF ONE OR BOTH PARENTS

	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
NO OF RESPONDENTS	4	2	14	10	30
TOTAL	6		24		
PERCENT	20%		80%		100%

Table 19- indicates that of the thirty (30) six or 20% of the children agreed that they left school because of illness of one or both parents. The other 24 or 80% of them disagreed that the reason did not apply to them or their reason for completing their schooling.

Table 20

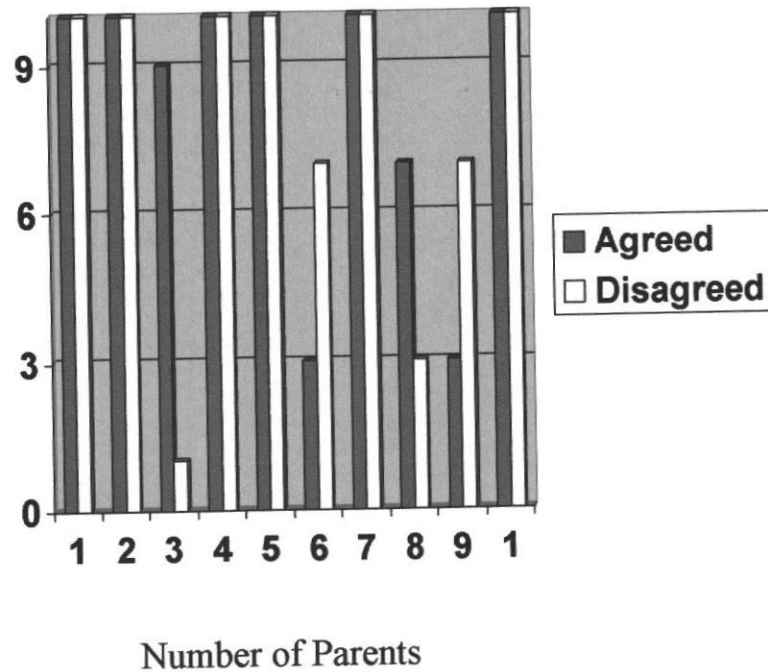
IF I HAD STAYED IN SCHOOL I WOULD HAVE GRADUATED

	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	13	12	5	0	30
TOTAL	25		5		
PERCENT	83 1/3%		16 2/3%		100%

Table 20- indicates that of the thirty (30) respondents 25 or 83 1/3% agreed that if they had stayed in school they would have graduated. The other 5 or 16 2/3 % disagreed to the statement. This however indicates that they now regret that they dropped out of school prematurely. The other 5 or 16 2/3% of them seem not to care.

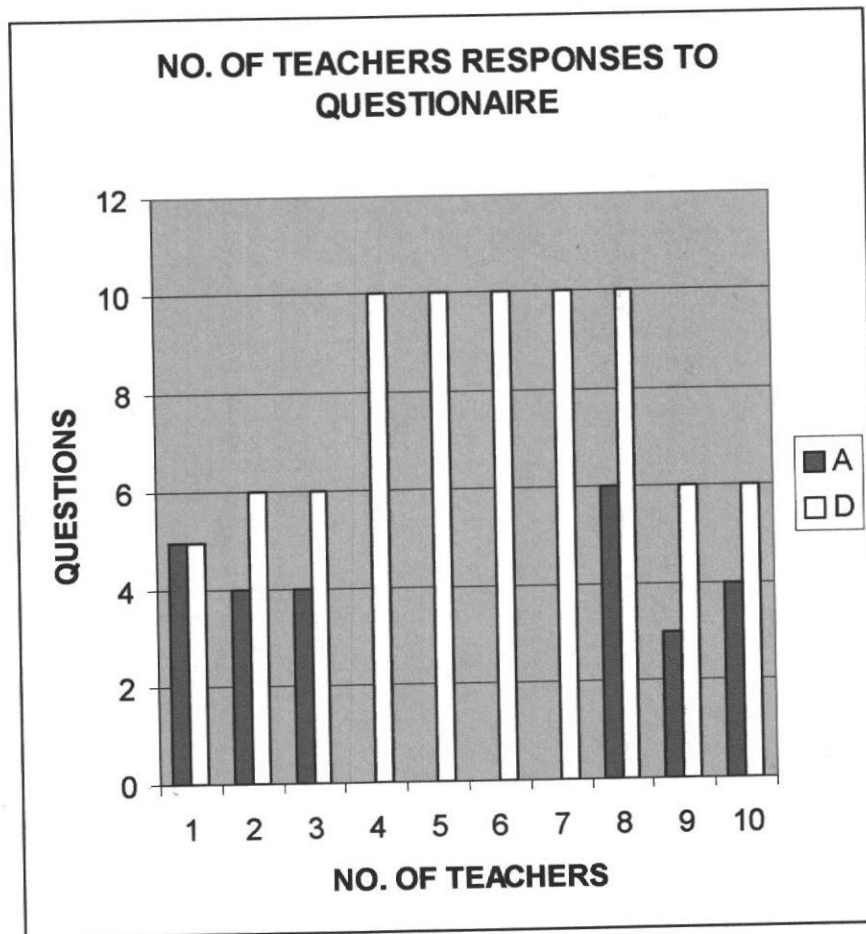
This section deals with the result of the analysis pertaining to The parents' responses to the questionnaires which is presented on a bar graph, discussed and narrated.

Number of parents responses to the questionnaire:



A questionnaire carrying ten questions was delivered to ten parents of pupils who had dropped out of the three selected primary schools in Dangriga. Parents' responses to the ten questions showed that overall parents are in agreement that the socio-economic problems such as lack of finance, peer pressure, failing tests at school are variables which pupils drop out of schools.

Parents strongly disagreed only in two areas teenage pregnancy and inability to cope with the level of school work. This suggests that parents will not agree with these two causes because parents will not succumb to the reality concerning pregnancy of their children's possible inability to cope with the level of school work.



A questionnaire consisted of ten questions was delivered to ten teachers of pupils who had dropped out of three selected primary schools on Dangriga.

Teachers' responses to the ten questions showed that overall teachers are not in agreement with many of the claims made by the researcher, pupils and

## Summary:

Based on the responses gathered from thirty (30) pupils, ten (10) parents and ten (10) teachers by means of questionnaires issued to them over a two-week period, it has been discovered that they are in agreement with the researcher's hypothesis which states that: believes that several socio-economic factors influence the rate of pupils dropping out of primary school on Dangriga before reaching StdVI."

The research done concerning the students proved that they are basically from economically deprived homes and are in the streets selling wares during school hours. These same children do not have money to purchase Books and often discontinue to work to "make ends meet" in the homes where they live. They very often are involved in gangs, fall prone to teenage pregnancy and lack proper parental supervision. Peer pressure often leads the boys to gangs and drug addiction. These marginal pupils do not spend quality hours doing their assignments for school because parents are usually absent form the homes.

The school leaving performance of such pupils usually reflect a poor attention span, poor attention span, poor performance in daily school work, failure in tests, and examinations such as pupils are already frustrated with their socio-economic lifestyle and are prone to discouragement to perform in

school. They are not motivated academically; they see no immediate gratification for meritocracy in school work.

As these children continuously fall behind in their school work, they attend class less and less. Their absenteeism causes them to be alienated from school, the academic work and their friends. Alienation from their school environment is substituted by assimilation into the world of play, work and adult life. These pupils are observed by society in one way or another, usually in a negative way, to become a deviant population to our society.

# Chapter V

## Conclusion:

The investigation researched into the situation of truancy of pupils in three selected primary schools in Dangriga to determine what factors were related to the high incidence of drop-outs from these schools.

The quantitative instruments used to investigate how the pupils felt about their discontinuing school prematurely proved effective. A valid conclusion can be drawn to determine the response to the research question "What are the causes or factors which lead to children dropping out of school at early age?" The data show that several factors were responsible for the pupils being absent from school and finally dropping out of school completely.

Pupils agreed by 53 1/3% of that they preferred to be somewhere else other than school. These same pupils agreed that their parents were unable to pay their fees for them to attend school. A group of 53 1/3% of the pupils agreed that they did not get material to operate well in school. Pupils in the number of 70% claimed that their teachers encouraged them in school, so it was not the teacher's fault why they dropped out of school.

A group of up to 60% of the pupils claimed that they had a good relationship with their teachers. However 53 1/2% of the pupils said that their parents did not care less about them and their schooling. Finally 83 1/2% of

the students said that if they had stayed in school rather than dropping out they would not have graduated.

Pupils likewise disagreed to certain questions that strengthens the case that it was actually certain socio-economic factors and not the school's fault or the teachers' fault that caused them to drop out of school.

73 1/3% of the thirty (30) pupils issued with a twenty (20) point questionnaire disagreed that the principal of the school. A large majority Of 80% claimed that they did not leave school because they were influenced by their friends. 60% disagreed that they received homework assistance from their parents at home, which points out the fact that the parents were not there for them to render help in their schooling. The children disagreed by 63 1/3% that they always passed test in school and this shows that if they were failing this discouraged them from remaining in school.

Of the thirty (30) pupils issued with a twenty (20) point questionnaire, fifteen (15) were girls and 33 1/2% of the thirty (30) of the pupils responded positive to having fallen pregnant and left school, so this is representative of ten (10) of the fifteen (15) girls samples used for the three pilot school. This reflects that many girls do leave school as they fall pregnant. 86 2/3% of the pupils disagreed that they left school due to prolonged illness of parents which means that other contributing factors lead them to discontinue school.

Summatively pupils agreed to questions which reflected a support for the researchers' hypothesis that certain socio-economic factors such as lack of finance, lack of school materials, poor home conditions, failing tests and examinations, inadequate support from parents which all lead to their discouragement to attend classes and finally their dropping out of school.

In analysis, the data for the pupils questionnaires and that of the parents and teachers the researcher discovered that the finding of this project fully supports the hypothesis namely that specific socio-economic factors influence pupils truancy and led to their dropping out of school as illustrated in APPENDIX F and G.

Overall, parents responses to the ten (10) questions showed that the parents agreed by 70% overall in seven (7) of the ten (10) questions that certain factors such as lack of finance, peer pressure, failing test and inadequate school materials, caused the pupils to be absent from school and finally discontinue their education.

Generally teachers did not agree that school factors such as overcrowding supported pupils under performance in school and lead to drop outs. They strongly agreed by 100% that pupils who keep dropping out of school are the

ones who fail tests and also the ones who do not have textbooks to do their work.

In conclusion the researcher draws an influence that the same basic socio-economic factors identified by the pupils are the same ones identified by the parents and teachers as the reason or cause that lead to pupils discontinuing school and adds to the drop out rate of students in Dangriga primary schools.

The researcher strongly believes that if pupils continue to fail tests something is wrong. If young girls keep getting pregnant in Std's IV V an VI in primary schools, something is equally wrong. If pupils are denied the right to an education because their parents do not work, refuse to give the basic school equipment to attend school then something is terribly wrong.

It is these socio-economic areas that the researcher by other educators and sociologists to suggest solutions to help those underprivileged children so that they can be guaranteed a decent education that fosters a foundation for a proper livelihood of any individual so that he/she will be a well balanced person to become an integral part of a good society.

### Recommendations:

To assist in alleviating the problem that the children are facing with the various primary schools in Dangriga, it is recommended that a relationship be encouraged with parents/teachers and principals and good rapport with each other. This will enable parents to get aid from government through the "Book loan scheme" for parents who are of great need.

All schools in Dangriga as well as schools country wide should have a counselor in order for these youths to express their problems and feelings. This can also be of help to children who are known to live in areas where drugs are used in large quantities. Children should learn to say no to drugs and to drug dealers, because drugs hurt families, homes, friends and school attendance.

All schools should have a canteen where children should be prepared with meals twice a day for at least three days a week. Parents should support the school by providing assistance by preparing the foods and cleaning the kitchen.

Looking at the socio-economic factors, truancy is on the increase. To alleviate this problem, teachers principal and pupils should work hand and hand. Teachers should have a classroom with an atmosphere that is friendly

and welcoming so the children feel accepted and motivated to come to school. A classroom should also be attractive to capture children's attention. Teachers must be skillful and creative to meet children's' needs. Principals should visit classrooms constantly to assist teachers when necessary and to give constructive criticism that will build up teachers' self-confidence as well as self-esteem. Principals and Managers should take note of over populated classrooms; get assistance form the Ministry of Education financially to build more classrooms.

Children should not be expelled out of school for small or meaningless reasons. In order for expulsions to occur, child, parents and local manger, should be informed and be aware of child\children behavior for least three times, then sent for counseling if the child does not change his/her attitude then some form of action can be done before he\she can be expelled form school.

Parents, Teachers and principals should all be aware of their student/students performance in school, in order for schools to produce literate people for the future generation. Children should be evaluated according to their potential and have these children with learning difficulty helped by giving them lessons at their level especially in areas where most

needed, or some kind of skill, and will capture their interest and become skillful citizens.

Peer pressure is another issue that needs much attention. Children face this in their environment. This is like a contagious disease. Parents, teachers and children should be aware of peer pressure. They should have good parents/children relations as well as good teacher/ parent relations so all people responsible for the child's well being should know what is taking place with the child's home life as well as the child's school life. Teachers should speak to children in a nice and positive way. Parents should treat children especially teenagers in a reasonable and friendly way so they can see the parents and teachers as role models and as positive examples.

Invite the needed one who is under pressure to talk, or invite a counselor to the class. Let her\him ask children to express their concerns directly or indirectly which means openly or privately, later. Have children feel confident whatever their problems are.

The researcher strongly recommends that the Minister of Education and the managers of schools, who are the gatekeepers of education, develop close ties with the P.T.A of schools to see how they can investigate and pinpoint causes behind the several variables that this project identified.

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# Chapter V1

## APPENDIX A

Letter to Principals

Dear Sir/Madam;

As a partial requirement for a trained Teacher's Certificate from the University of Belize, I am expected to do a research paper. I would be very grateful if you allow me to distribute questionnaires and to discuss issues relating to increased truancy among students in your school.

Please be informed that the information collected will be used only for the purpose of my research paper. All information will be kept confidential.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely Yours

Ms. G. Bull

APPENDIX B

Demographical Data

1) Age

2) Gender

3) Class reached            3            4            5            6

4) Person responsible for your education:

Mother

Father

Guardian

5) No of children on the family:

2

3

4

5

6

## APPENDIX C

Instruments to Children

SA A SD D

Tick under your best choice

SA=strongly agree

A=agree

SD=strongly disagree

D disagree

1. My parents had to force me to go to school.
2. I preferred to be somewhere else other than school
3. I enjoyed going to school, but my parents went abroad
4. I left school because my parents were unable to pay my fee.
5. I left school because I had to find a job to help support my family
6. I left school because the principal put me out.
7. I left school because my friends left.
8. I wasn't provided with the necessary school materials.
9. The teachers usually encouraged me
10. I usually got help with assignments
11. I always pass tests given to me.
12. I had a good relationship with my teachers and

children in school.

13. The work in class was too difficult to understand
14. I left school because my parents cared less for me.
15. I was allowed to be out of home after 10:00 at night.
- 16 I left school because I got pregnant.
- 17 .I left school because I became involved in drugs
- 18 .I left school because I had a prolonged illness.
- 19 .I left school because of an illness of one or  
Both of my parents.
20. If I had stayed in school I would have graduated.

## APPENDIX D

Questionnaires to Parents/Guardians

SA A SD D

Tick under your best choice

SA=Strongly Agree

A= Agree

SD=Strongly Disagree

D= Disagree

1. Is peer pressure a reason why the pupil dropped out of school?
2. Did your child drop out of school because she got pregnant?
3. Did your child discontinue school because he/she failed tests or examinations?
4. Do you think that overcrowding is a reason why any member of your family had to drop out of school?
5. Did the child drop out of school due to the lack of finance?
6. Would you say that many young boys in Dangriga dropped out of school because they were involved in drugs?
7. Did your child stop school because he/she got little help with his/her assignments?
8. Did your child discontinue school because he/she needed to work to maintain him/herself financially or assist family members?

9. Did your child discontinue school because

he/she was unable to cope with the level of school work?

10. Have any of your family members dropped out

of primary school before completing Std. VI

## APPENDIX E

Questionnaire to Teachers

Tick under your best choice

SA=Strongly Agree

A= Agree

SD=Strongly Disagree

D= Disagree

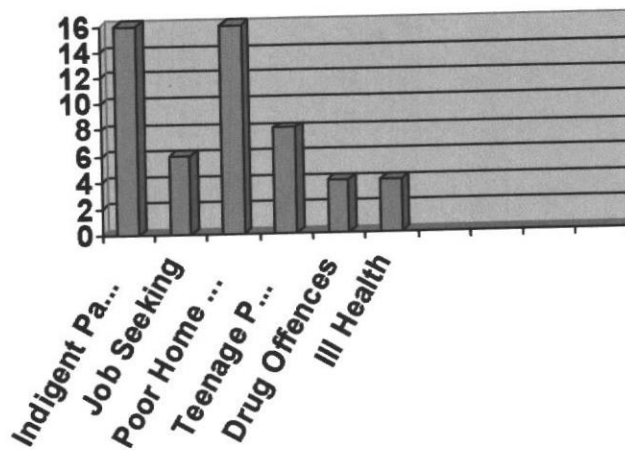
SA D SD D

1. Do you think that some children discontinue school because they dislike school?
2. Do you think that most of the drop out pupils had socio-economic problems at home?
3. Do you think that peer pressure affects primary school children leading to school drop outs?
4. do you think that overcrowding in the classroom also affects the drop out rate in school?
5. Would you say that pupils who drop out of school are the ones who keep failing tests and examinations?
6. Is drug addiction a possible cause for some boys and girls to drop out of school?
7. Is the lack of test books related to slow learning and leads to pupils dropping out of school?
8. Do you think these students who drop out of school get their parents help with their assignments?

9. Do you think that some females' who drop out of school do so because of teenage pregnancy?

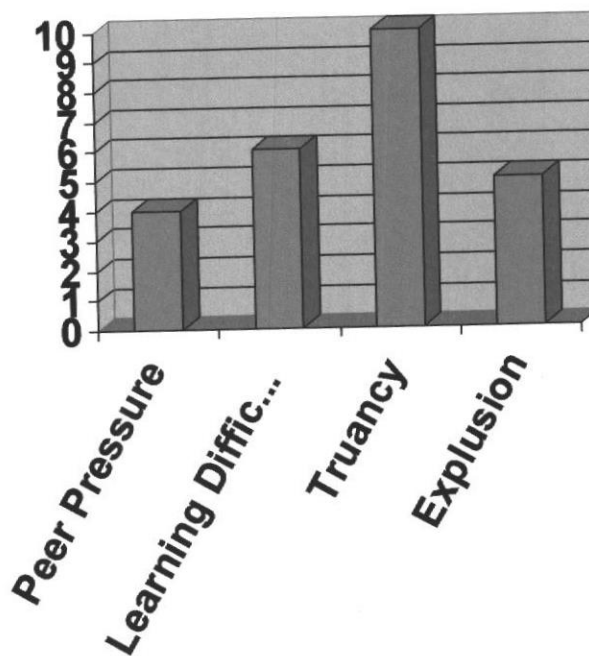
10 Do you think that some dropouts were unable to cope with the level of school work?

## APPENDIX F

Various Socio-Economic FactorsAffecting Children's' Home Life

This graph indicates the various factors or causes that which led children to drop out of school. First the indigent parents, then job seeking, then poor home relations, teenage pregnancy, drugs offenses finally ill health.

## APPENDIX G

Various Socio-Economic factors AdverselyAffecting children's School Life

This graph indicates more factors or causes which led children to dropout of school prematurely. Truancy as the highest on this graph followed by learning difficulty, then expulsion and peer pressure-all figures in descending order of magnitude.