

Do Government And Private School Students Have Same Learning Levels And Parental Involvement? Indications From Rural Rajasthan, India

Manoj Mathew P¹, Nishtha Mishra², Annamma George³, Jyoti Sharma⁴, A.P Senthil Kumar⁵, Ahmed Mohamud Bade⁶, Mustafe Abdi Ibrahim⁷

1. ICSSR – Post-doctoral Fellow¹, Department of sociology and population studies, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India.
2. Research Scholar, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.
3. Principal, Love Dale Residential School, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India.
4. Assistant Professor, Amity University Haryana.
5. Associate Professor, School of social work, Jigjiga University, Ethiopia.
6. Lecturer, School of social work, Jigjiga University, Ethiopia.
7. Head and Lecturer, School of social work, Jigjiga University, Ethiopia.

Abstract

Recent past has marked significant changes in India's educational arena. Although the enrollment ratio has raised and dropout has decreased considerably, the question of quality is still a concern. The increased accessibility of education at the primary, secondary and tertiary level has not reflected at the quality. Empirical shreds of evidence show that learning levels of students are not par with the standard (class) they are studying. The case is more complex among the rural population, urban poor and other deprived sections. Academic performance and outcome are depending on a number of interrelated factors. The school and parental involvement remain important. The present study attempted to investigate the similarities and differences of learning levels and parental involvement in the government and private schools. The school-related factors of learning levels were also investigated. The study was conducted in the three villages of Central Rajasthan, India. Three government and private schools were randomly chosen for the study. From each school, a sample of 10 students of class 6th and 7th were selected randomly and information was collected from them and their parents. Hence the total sample size of the study is 120, i.e. 60 parents and 60 students. The study unveils that learning levels of students are not promising and parental involvement in the education of children is poor. The school-related factors are significantly contributing the poor performance of students at the elementary level. Policy level changes also required to enhance the learning outcomes.

Keywords: Learning Levels, Private, Government, Schools, Parental Involvement, Academic Achievement.

Introduction

Education is a vital variable which has significant capacity to influence almost all the dimensions of human life. It is widely accepted as a tool and strategy for the positive and

sustainable development. This has been widely reflected in the policies around the globe i.e Millennium Development Goals, Sustainable development goals and Right to Education Act in India are typical examples. The efforts for achieving universal primary education are on its

positive direction. Improvements in the enrolment ratio, decrease in the dropout rate and increased access to higher education are appreciable. In the recent past, India too significantly performs better in the education-related indexes. Although the quantitative indicators were considerably improved, quality remains unanswered and unaddressed. Qualitative measures are not evident even with the improved access to education, legal provisions for the compulsory education and policy framework for strengthening educational system.

The recent Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) (2016) indicates disheartening facts about primary and elementary education in India, although there is a slight improvement in certain domains. A large majority of the students studying in middle schools are not in a position to read/write or do simple arithmetic of the primary level standards. The learning levels are significantly influenced by a number of socio-cultural and psychological factors apart from the very intellectual ability of the students. Sarkar et al. (2009) indicate that poor infrastructure, teacher-student ratio, lack of trained staff and parental involvement plays a very crucial role in the quality of education. Family, school and teachers play a very crucial role. The school related factors including teacher's absenteeism are a crucial issue for quality teaching-learning process (Kremer et al. 2005). The absenteeism of children from schools also remains a major problem and it is been contributed by the child-family related and school related factors (Drèze and Kingdon, 1999, Epstein & Sheldon, 2002, Mishra & Azeez, 2014). Bhattacharjea, Wadhwa & Ramanujan (2013) indicates that enrollment ratio at the schools necessarily not reflective in the attendance ratio.

The parental involvement has also been widely seen as an influencing factor for learning levels in the current empirical evidences (El Nokali., Bachman., Votruba-Drzal, 2010; Fan, 2010; Henderson, 1991; Coulombe, 1995; Ingram., Wolfe., & Lieberman, 2007; Singh et al, 1995; Barnard, 2004; Hill., Taylor, 2004). The lower involvement of parents is common in India, especially educationally backward areas, rural

localities and among uneducated parents. Along with other negative factors prevalent in the society, lowered parental involvement makes the situation very crucial and complicated. A sensitized parental community is a necessity for the quality education and academic achievement. The educational outcomes of the student are the results of collaborative efforts of school, teachers, community and parents.

It is common notion that the type of school also plays a significant role in education. People believe that these are very common in government schools, but in reality, the poor quality of education is evident in private schools too, except the affluent class private schools. There is a mushroom growth of schools in the private sector, even in the rural villages. It is a common notion that education in the private schools has better quality than their counterparts in the government sector. The same is attributed to the name of the better learning environment of private schools and unsatisfactory quality of education in government schools (Jain, 2016). Save the children (2014) in its study indicates that parents are dissatisfied with the provisions of government schools and doubtful about its accountability.

In the rural belts, there is a growing trend of sending students to private schools by expecting higher quality. In this context, the present study put forward the following research questions. What is the learning level of students at the private and government school at the elementary level? Further, what is the state of parental involvement in the student's education? And finally what are the school-related factors affecting the learning levels of students? The answers to these questions would be helpful in finding out the etiological factors of educational outcomes and learning levels.

Methods and Materials

The study was conducted in rural belts of Ajmer district of Rajasthan. Villages with a government and private middle schools were selected for the study. A list of such villages was prepared prior to the study and 6 villages were chosen

randomly. Further, 10 students from both government and private schools were randomly selected for the study who were studying in the 6th and 7th standards. A detailed assessment was done on the key areas to assess the learning levels. The same was done with the help of the tool used for the ASER survey. The toolkit was comprehensive and touches the dimensions of arithmetic's, English and Hindi languages.

The assessment of the children was followed by a detailed interview with the parent/s of the selected children. A tool was developed to assess the parental involvement in the learning of children. The tool is of 16 items in a Dichotomous Questions with the binary response of Yes and No. The tool was validated through face validity and reliability of the same was checked and the internal consistency reliability of items was found to be 0.80 Cronbach's alpha.

Apart from the parents and children, in-depth interviews were conducted among selected teachers of the school to have a better understanding of the parental involvements and its outcome. The physical infrastructure and other facilities of the schools were also observed and recorded in detail. The total sample size if the study is 120, i.e. 60 parents and 60 students.

Results

I. Socio-demographic Characteristics

The study was conducted in a rural belt. Most of the respondents were from the agrarian

background. These areas are predominantly resided by Hindus and a few Muslims. Majority of the respondents participated in the study belongs to Other Backward Classes (OBC) with small proportion belongs to scheduled castes. Underlining the familial background prevailing in the study location, around 64 percent of the respondents participated in the study were living in a joint family while 36 percent were in a nuclear family system. It is reported that most of the parents who were participated in the study had a primary education (48.3%) while around 25 percent of the respondents were illiterate. Respondents with secondary and higher secondary qualification constitute 26 percent. The socio-economic scenario prevailing in the study locality is visible in the characteristics of the samples chosen, more than 70 percent of the parents participated in the study were engaged in agriculture as their prime occupation followed by laborers (20%) while a few parents were into self-employment (10%). Boys and girls constitute equal proportion student participants.

Learning Level

The study underlines the current trends in the learning levels of rural students. We tried to investigate whether the class- 6th and 7th students are able to read those of the standard 3rd and 4th. It is found that the reading ability remains poor among the rural students. The interesting fact is that there is no significant difference found between the learning levels of private and government school students, although there is a growing trend in the villages to send their children to private schools.

Table- 01 – Reading levels (N=60)

Reading level (Hindi)	Govt.	Private	p-value
Beginner	45	25	p > 0.05
Letter	35	20	
Word	20	55	
Paragraph	15	20	
Story	35	30	
Reading Level (English)	Govt.	Private	p-value
Letter- Capital	25	10	p > 0.05
Letter-Small	30	35	
Word	75	70	
Sentence	20	35	

Significant at $p < .05$

It is astonishing to acknowledge that around 24 percent of the students are still beginners in reading Hindi while 18 percent of them were just able to identify the letter, not even a word. It was just 21 percent who were able to read and

comprehend a story in Hindi. The scenario is even worst in the case of English reading ability. The ability to discrete between capital and small letters were not present in many students while around 33 percent of the students were not in a position to read at least a single word in English.

Table- 02- English Writing & Comprehension (N=60)

Writing Ability (Spelling)	Type of school		p-value
	Govt.	Private	
Yes	19	09	p < .05.
No	11	21	
Total	30	30	
Comprehension	Comprehension		p-value
	Govt.	Private	
Yes	7	16	p < .05.
No	23	14	
Total	30	30	

Significant at $p < .05$.

The English writing and comprehension ability is comparatively better among private school students, although it is not promising and not makes much difference from government school

students. It was found that around 53 percent of the students were not able to write an English word which is of class 4th standard while the state of English comprehension ability was very poor as more than 90 percent of the students were not able to do anything.

Table-03 Arithmetical Ability

Grade	Identify No- 10-99		Addition		Subtraction		Division	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Govt.	28	2	26	4	16	14	19	13
Private	27	3	27	3	18	12	13	15
Total	55	5	53	7	34	26	32	28

The arithmetical ability was another major area we have tested. The reflection was also not promising as the arithmetical abilities remain poor among the students. The basic arithmetic skills that students supposed to inculcate in the primary classes were not reached to them. There were students (8%) who were not able to identify the random numbers from 10-99 when asked to identify and around 11 percent of them were

completely unaware of doing basic additions. Subtraction levels of students also remain found to be very poor as around 43 percent of the students were not able to do the basic subtraction of the class 4th standard while 53 percent of them were not able to do division. None of the arithmetical abilities have shown a significant statistical difference between the private and government schools.

Table-04- Student Attendance (N=60)

Grade	Govt. School	Private School	Total
Below- 50 Percent	9	00	9
51-60 Percent	6	00	6
61-70 percent	8	6	14
71-80 percent	4	13	17
80 and Above	3	11	14
Total	30	30	60

One of the crucial differences found among the government and private school student was the attendance level. The average attendance of private school students was high. Around 18 percent of the Private school students who were part of this study have reported an attendance of 80 percent or above while it was just 5 percent of the government school student who had this proportion of attendance. The students with low level of attendance perform poor in the learning levels.

Parental Involvement

It was found that parents of government schools going students were poorly engaged in the learning process of their children while comparing to the parents of children who are enrolled in private schools. Around 30 percent of the parents of government school going children reported having poor involvement in their children's education while only 3.3 percent reported high involvement.

Table- 05- Parental Involvement (N=60)

Parental Involvement	Govt. School	Private School	Total
Low	17	5	22
Moderate	11	13	24
High	2	12	14
Total	30	30	60

The different components of parental involvement were investigated. The awareness level of parents pertaining to the education of child remains poor among the majority. Many of the parents even don't aware that in which class their child is studying. The interaction with the

school was reported low by many parents. The parents of private school going children reported high interaction with the school as parental meetings were organized at the very regular basis. Although government schools also organize such events, few turn to participate in it.

Table-06-Parental Involvement and Learning levels

English Reading	Parental Involvement				p-value
	Low	Moderate	High	Total	
Letter- Capital	6	1	0	7	p < .05.
Letter-Small	11	1	1	13	
Word	4	19	6	29	
Sentence	1	3	7	11	
English	Yes	3	12	13	p < .05.
	No	19	12	32	

Subtraction	Yes	5	18	11	34	p < .05.
	No	17	6	3	26	
Division	Yes	6	15	11	32	p < .05.
	No	16	9	3	28	

Significant at $p < .05$.

It is evident from the above table that there is a significant relationship exists between learning levels and parental involvement. Students with higher parental involvement reported with higher learning levels irrespective of the types of schools. The parental involvement and its influences are underlining from this evidence. The frequent interaction with teachers and schools along with their involvement in home assignments makes a significant influence on the children.

School Atmosphere

It was very interesting to understand that learning levels don't have much difference among government and private school students but parental involvement has. The underlying question arises here is what are the other factors play a crucial role on the learning level apart from parental involvement? The probable answer emerges here is the factors related to schools. It is evident from the field that certain learning levels of certain areas have variations in private and government schools, although not statistically significant, it has a connection with the school atmosphere.

It is found that most of the schools were equipped with less human and other resources. The proportion of classrooms and subject teachers were less in number. The infrastructural limitations were impacting the learning and teaching process. Out of the three government schools analyzed, it was found that none of it has enough number of classrooms proportionate to the division/classes the schools have. It was a common practice in the belt that more than one class/division were made to sit in hall/room. And a teacher is dealing more than one or two

standards at the same time. The situation was little better in private schools, although not very promising. The lack of subject teachers was a prominent problem reported by many school authorities. In the government schools it was found that subjects like English and mathematics were taught by teachers from different background and in private schools, people without substantial qualifications were teaching. Among the three private school analyzed, none have enough number of teachers with prescribed qualifications. It was seen that students perform well in those subjects in which a subjects teacher was available for a long time.

The avenues for parents- teachers' interaction had differences in the private and government schools. Private schools have the mechanisms for regular meetings with parents while government schools don't effectively practice such, although they have policies for the same. The mechanism for monitoring and ensuring student's attendance was found poor at government schools while the scenario of the same is somewhat satisfactory at private schools. The teachers of government schools reported that ensuring the student's attendance required a lot of persuasions and always they are not in a position to do it. The opinion of private school teachers was contradictory to this, as they reported that no much persuasion is required to ensure the attendance, only a minuscule percent of the students were found with irregular in the schools. It was reported by the teachers of government schools that during the agricultural season most of the students remain absent. This absenteeism is not very prevalent in the private schools.

Another cited factor for the poor learning levels was lethargy of teachers. During the visits to the school, it found that some of the teachers of

government schools were not present or reported late. When asked about the reasons, they reported that they are commuting from long distance place and the same happened due to the poor policy implementations.

Discussion

The present study is underlining certain important issues pertaining to elementary education in rural India. The learning levels of students don't have much difference in the private and government schools except a few cases. The availability of teachers for a particular subject and the performance of students in that subject have the significant relationship. The government schools don't have enough human resources and infrastructure necessary for the teaching-learning process while private sector schools analyzed in this study don't have qualified teachers. Both of these, minimal resources and substandard resources significantly impacting the academic achievement of the students. Another important aspect that affects the learning levels of the student found in the study was the parental lethargy. Most of the parents were reported with a considerably low level of involvement in the academic activities of the students. The parents who are sending their children to private schools have comparatively high parental involvement, although not very promising. The government schools have mechanisms for parent-teacher interaction through school management committees and parent-teachers association but the parental involvement in those activities was found poor. At the same time, parent-teachers interaction in private schools is comparatively high as they mandated the participation. And the parents were reportedly having higher involvement due to the feeling that they are spending money on the education of their children.

The interesting implication of the present study is students whose parents were involved in the studies are found with comparatively higher learning levels irrespective of the type of schools they are studying. The frequent contact of parents with teachers and involvement in the

students learning and homework leads better outcomes. The parental sensitiveness lowers the chances of missing the classes and motivates the children to concentrate on studies. The attendance also found playing a crucial role. The students of government schools have reported the higher probability of low attendance while the attendance ratio is comparatively found high among private schools students. The government schools are adopting the poor mechanism to deal with the student's absenteeism while private schools were found following very systematic follow-up. It is found that students with low level of attendance perform poor in the learning levels and students with higher attendance and low parental involvement also come from poor performers. There is strong interrelationship exists between parental involvement, attendance and learning levels.

The parental unawareness and insensitivity are highly correlated with their involvement in the education of their wards. It is widely reflected that student's attendance is largely influenced by the lethargy of the parents. The educated parents and parents who have highly involving in the education have shown fewer chances of missing any classes. The very nature of agrarian society is also impacting the attendance and learning levels. It was reported by the teachers and parents that attendance goes down during the agricultural seasons but this is not very true for the case of parents who are highly involved in the education of their children.

Conclusion

The poor learning levels and academic achievement potentially makes the education scenario more complex. Intergenerational transfer of ill-being has a strong relationship with the poor quality of education. Children of parents and families who have an educational base are comparatively higher chances of performance not at education but the other spheres of human life too. Hence the educational policies must have focused on the quality domains. The public educational institutions have to be strengthened and attract students from a different socio-economic background. The parental community

has to be sensitized and participate in the education and school-related activities for a better educational outcome and academic achievement. The strong implementation of existing policies and initiation of innovative programs for the improvement of the learning levels are needs of the hour.

Reference

- ASER (2016). Annual Status of Education Report- 2016. Pratham Resource Centre. Mumbai
- Barnard, W. M. (2004). Parent involvement in elementary school and educational attainment. *Children and Youth Services Reviews*, 26, 39-62.
- Coulombe, G.(1995). Parental involvement: A key to successful schools. *NASSP Bulletin*. 79(567), 71-75
- El Nokali, N., H. Bachman & E. Votruba-Drzal (2010). Parent Involvement and Children's Academic and Social Development in Elementary School." *Child Development* 81(3): 988-1005.
- Fan, X. (2001). Parent Involvement and Students' Academic Achievement: A Growth Modeling Analysis. *Journal of Experimental Education* 70(1): 27-61.
- Henderson, A (1991). *The Evidence Continues to Grow: Parent Involvement Improves Student Achievement*. Washington, D.C.: National Committee for Citizens in Education.
- Hill, N. E., & Taylor, L. C. (2004) Parental school involvement and children's academic achievement: Pragmatics and issues. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 13 (4), 161-164
- Ingram, M., Wolfe, R. B., & Lieberman, J. M. (2007). The role of parents in high achieving schools serving low-income, at-risk populations. *Education and Urban Society*, v39(4),pp 479-497.
- Jain D (2016). Yes to a government college, but no to government schools. Retrieved from <http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/bqL7u6IjwkqU0BDA0Gy4oK/Yes-to-a-government-college-but-no-to-government-schools.html>
- Sarkar, A., Banerjee, S., Nandy, P., Srivastava, N. (2009). Perceptions and myths concerning Indian parents' interest in their children's education. Retrieved from https://www.cry.org/resources/pdf/va/Education_as_a_fundamental%20Right_through_the_eyes_of_parents_2013.pdf
- Save the Children (2014). Parents' perspectives on quality of schooling in Andhra Pradesh, India. Retrieved from https://www.younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/Parents_perspectives_on_quality_of_schooling_in_AP_March2014.pdf
- Singh, K., Bickley, P.G., Keith, T.Z., Keith, P.B., Trivette, P., and Anderson, E. (1995). The effects of four components of parental involvement on eighth-grade student achievement: structural analysis of NELS-88 data. *School Psychology Review*, v 24(2), pp. 299-317
- Kumar, S. (2022). A quest for sustainium (sustainability Premium): review of sustainable bonds. *Academy of Accounting and Financial Studies Journal*, Vol. 26, no.2, pp. 1-18
- Allugunti V.R (2022). A machine learning model for skin disease classification using convolution neural network. *International Journal of Computing, Programming and Database Management* 3(1), 141-147
- Kremer Michael, Muralidharan Karthik, Chaudhury Nazmul, Hammer Jeffrey S., Rogers Halsey(2005). Teacher absence in India: A snapshot. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 3(2-3):658-667
- Epstein, J.L. and Sheldon, S. B. (2002). Present and Accounted For: Improving Student Attendance through Family and Community Involvement. *The Journal of Educational Research*,95, 301-318
- Drèze, J. and Kingdon, G. G. (1999): School Participation in Rural India, *Review of Development Economics* 5 (1), 1-24
- Mishra, P.J., & Azeez, A. (2014). Family etiology of school dropouts: A psychosocial study. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Approach and Studies*, 1 (5), 136-146