

Academic Problems Encountered by Rural Students

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Abstract

Report (ASER), shows that even though the number of rural students attending schools is rising, but more than half of the students in fifth grade are unable to read a second-grade textbook and are not able to solve simple mathematical problems. Not only this, the level of Mathematics and reading is further declining. Though efforts are being made, they are not in the right direction. The reasons cited for this problem in surveys are discussed here.

Keywords: rural students, learning problems, causes analysed

Education for Rural Students

Education is the aggregate of all process using which a person develops ability activities and other forms of behaviours of positive value in the society in which he lives. Education may be defined as a systematic process of determining the extent to which instructional objectives are achieved by the public. Education is an essential factor in the organization of living state. Plato says that education produces good men to at nobly. The proper education consists of four things virtue, wisdom, breeding and learning. In this statement is to be found the heart of Locke's educational theory.

Majority of India still lives in villages and so the topic of rural education in India is of utmost importance. A survey named called the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), shows that even though the number of rural students attending schools is rising, but more than half of the students in fifth grade are unable to read a second-grade textbook and are not able to solve simple mathematical problems. Not only this, the level of Mathematics and reading is further declining. Though efforts are being made, they are not in the right direction. The reasons cited for this problem in surveys are discussed here.

Problems Encountered by Rural Students

The reasons for the poor quality of education in rural students may be attributed to the increasing number of single classroom to educate students from more than one grade. In some states, the attendance of teachers and students is also declining. These are a few reasons why schools have failed to educate rural India.

Quality and access to education is the major concern in rural schools as there are fewer committed teachers, lack of proper textbooks and learning the material in the schools. Though Government schools exist, when compared to private schools their quality is a major issue.

Majority of people living in villages have understood the importance of education and know that it is the only way to get rid of poverty. But due to lack of money, they are not able to send their children to private schools and hence depend upon government schools for education. Above that, in some of the government schools there is only one teacher for the entire school, and if they don't show up at work, then it is a holiday. If the quality along with the number of teachers and, those too committed teachers, can be improved in these schools, then aspiring rural children and India can fulfil their dreams of doing something great.

Some government schools in rural India are overly packed with students, leading to a distorted teacher-student ratio. In one such remote village in Arunachal Pradesh, there are more than 300 students in class X which makes nearly 100 students in each classroom. In such a situation it is impossible for teachers to pay full attention to every student, even if they are willing to help.

Every village is not provided with a school which means that students have to go to another village to get an education. Owing to this parents usually do not send their daughters to school, leading to a failure in achieving rural education in India.

Poverty is another setback. Government schools are not as good, and private schools are expensive. This results in a very low number of students clearing their secondary education and taking admission in colleges for further studies. So the drop-out-rate at the secondary level is extremely high in villages. Only parents who can afford college education send their kids to secondary schools. If parents are not able to send their wards for higher education then all their previous efforts get wasted as completing just secondary education means a low paying job and the person is again struck in the same never-ending cycle of money, life and poverty.

Most textbooks are in English and since people in rural areas either speak their native language or Hindi, but not English that defeats the purpose. This results in lack of their interest in studies. Though some of the students from villages are brilliant, as they have a wealth of practical knowledge and know how to survive even in very harsh conditions of life, difficulty in understanding their textbooks, lack

of facilities and their poverty are a hurdle in their education.

Quality related issues are far powerful than poverty. Students are not at all encouraged to think, but they are asked to memorise pre-defined questions for exams. So for many students clearing examination at the end of the session, passing their exam becomes more important than gaining knowledge. Also as per the new CBSE rule, every student is supposed to be promoted to the next class irrespective of marks in their examination. Hence the majority of students do not bother to study, which means a decline in their education level. Neither students nor teachers take any interest in studies which is why the level of education is declining in India despite many efforts.

There is a difference between city and village student not in terms of brain or development but their initial environment, skills, learning ability, availability of infrastructure, and access to different facilities. All of these must be considered while making the curricula which should not be different but how it is going to be taught would make the difference. Encourage genuine rural students who are interested in education and make them competent.

In the given context, any individual or a student, especially a rural folk, have to practice aspects such as Interpersonal Relationship, Self-Confidence, Communication Skill, Educational Technology etc. to face the society and lead a successful life.

Significance of the Study

Mostly rural children remain less motivated, lack enthusiasm, initiative and are exposed to the non-conducive home climate with less aspiration, low achievement and over-dependence. These learners have problems related to psychological, personal, economic and social spheres. A good education is almost a sure guarantee of empowerment. When a person is educated, he moves freely and confidently in society. That individual has the hope of finding a job and confident that he can cope with the problems that are to be faced. In this context, the investigator thought it fit to engage in a study related to the problems encountered by rural students.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study pertain to:

1. Ascertaining the academic problems faced by the High School Level Students hailing from the rural area.
2. To find out the significant difference in the academic achievement of the rural students in terms of different demographic variables.

Population and Sample

The population for the present study comprises of High School Level Students hailing from rural areas in Theni District. The sample for the study consists of 120 Students of VIII and IX Standard studying in Schools run by Government and Management. The sampling technique used for the study is a random sampling. Survey Method has been adopted for the study.

The sample includes both genders drawn with varied characteristics or sub-variables viz., Type of Institution, Medium of Instruction, Group, Socio-Economic Status, Parental Education etc.

Tools Used

The Tool employed for the study is "Questionnaire on Academic Problems of Rural Students". It is a Standard Tool constructed by Gabriel D and Muthuchamy I with Yes or No Type Questions. The tool consists of 25 statements. After the administration of the instrument, it was scored by evaluating the answers.

Data Analysis

Data will be analysed using statistical techniques such as Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-Test.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study is limited to Students of VIII and IX Standard.
2. The study is limited to certain schools in Theni District.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Hypothesis 1

There exists a significant difference in the mean scores of Academic Problems encountered by High School, Level Rural Students in terms of Gender.

Table 1: Difference due to Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	"t" value	Significance
Boys	60	32.77	7.64	0.46	NS
Girls	60	31.67	6.64		

df=118; t(0.05) = 1.96; t(0.01) = 2.58

Interpretation

The calculated "t" value 0.46 is less than the table value. "t" value is not significant at any level. Hence the research hypothesis is not accepted. There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Academic Problems encountered by High School Level Students in terms of Gender.

Hypothesis 2

There exists a significant difference in the mean scores of Academic Problems encountered by High School, Level Rural Students in terms of Type of Institution.

Table 2: Difference due to Type of Institution

Type of Institution	N	Mean	SD	"t" value	Sig.
Government	60	33.15	7.95	1.78	NS
Management	60	3.085	6.12		

df=118; t(0.05) = 1.96; t(0.01) = 2.58

Interpretation

The calculated "t" value 1.78 is less than the table value. "t" value is not significant at any level. Hence the research hypothesis is not accepted. There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Academic Problems encountered by High School Level Students in terms of Type of Institution.

Hypothesis 3

There exists a significant difference in the mean scores of Academic Problems encountered by High School, Level Rural Students in terms of Socio-Economic Status.

Table 3: Difference due to Socio-Economic Status

SES	N	Mean	SD	“t” value	Sig.
Low	32	34.63	7.12	2.41	S
High	88	31.10	7.01		

df=118; t(0.05) = 1.96; t(0.01) = 2.58

Interpretation

The calculated “t” value 2.41 is more than the table value. “t” value is significant at 0.05 level. Hence the research hypothesis is accepted. There exists a significant difference in the mean scores of Academic Problems encountered by High School Level Students in terms of Socio-Economic Status. Students under low SES encounter more problems than the students under high SES.

Hypothesis 4

There exists a significant difference in the mean scores of Academic Problems encountered by High School, Level Rural Students in terms of Parental Education.

Table 4: Difference due to Parental Education

Parental Education	N	Mean	SD	“t” value	Sig.
Low	33	31.61	7.94	0.38	NS
High	87	32.20	6.91		

df=118; t(0.05) = 1.96; t(0.01) = 2.58

Interpretation

The calculated “t” value 0.38 is less than the table value. “t” value is not significant at any level. Hence the research hypothesis is not accepted. There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Academic Problems encountered by High School Level Students in terms of Parental Education.

Hypothesis 5

There exists a significant difference in the mean scores of Academic Problems encountered by High School, Level Rural Students in terms of Medium of Instruction.

Table 5: Difference due to Medium of Instruction

Medium	N	Mean	SD	“t” value	Sig.
Tamil	82	30.87	7.28	2.87	S
English	38	34.63	6.40		

df=118; t(0.05) = 1.96; t(0.01) = 2.58

Interpretation

The calculated “t” value 2.87 is more than the table value. “t” value is significant at 0.01 level. Hence the research hypothesis is accepted. There exists a significant difference in the mean scores of Academic Problems encountered by High School Level Students in terms of Medium of Instruction. Students were studying in Medium English experience more problems than the students of Tamil Medium.

Hypothesis 6

There exists a significant difference in the mean scores of Academic Problems encountered by Secondary Level Rural Students in terms of Group (Arts/Science).

Table 6: Difference due to Group (Arts/Science)

Group	N	Mean	SD	“t” value	Sig.
Arts	69	30.29	6.50	2.50	S
Science	41	34.02	8.16		

df=118; t(0.05) = 1.96; t(0.01) = 2.58

Interpretation

The calculated “t” value 2.50 is more than the table value. “t” value is significant at 0.05 level. Hence the research hypothesis is accepted. There exists a significant difference in the mean scores of Academic Problems encountered by High School Level Students in terms of Group. Science Group students face more problems than Arts Group students.

Findings of the Study

1. The calculated “t” value 0.46 is less than the table value. There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Academic

- Problems encountered by High School Level Students in terms of Gender.
2. The calculated “t” value 1.78 is less than the table value. There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Academic Problems encountered by High School Level Students in terms of Type of Institution.
 3. The calculated “t” value 2.41 is more than the table value. There exists a significant difference in the mean scores of Academic Problems encountered by High School Level Students in terms of Socio-Economic Status. Students under low SES encounter more problems than the students under high SES.
 4. The calculated “t” value 0.38 is less than the table value. There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Academic Problems encountered by High School Level Students in terms of Parental Education.
 5. The calculated “t” value 2.87 is more than the table value. There exists a significant difference in the mean scores of Academic Problems encountered by High School Level Students in terms of Medium of Instruction. Students were studying in Medium English experience more problems than the students of Tamil Medium.
 6. The calculated “t” value 2.50 is more than the table value. There exists a significant difference in the mean scores of Academic Problems encountered by High School Level Students in terms of Group. Science Group students face more problems than Arts Group students.

Conclusion

The foundation to turn India into a strong nation has to be laid down at primary and rural levels, and

so the quality of education right from the beginning should be excellent. Education and textbooks should be made interesting. For rural students textbooks related to their culture, their traditions and values should also be there to create their interest in studies. The reasons behind so many drop-outs in spite of free education should be found out as this is a hurdle on the road to progress. Improvement in the condition of government schools, education quality, committed teachers and more salaries to these teachers should be part of development.

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