

## Factors Affecting Academic Achievement in School Children

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Education has been recognized throughout the world as a very powerful instrument for social, economic, and cultural development. In the history of mankind, education has provided a sure basis for the development of human society. The quality of education provided by a country can decide its level of development and hence the quality of life of its citizens and the strength of its social and political institutions. While education is a crucial input that determines the pace of national development in all societies, it has a special role in determining the well being of the citizens for a developing country like India.

Indian educational planners have stated time and again that if they have to transform the static society that the country has inherited, into one vibrant with a social commitment and change, and one that will stand up to the challenges of a fast moving, technology oriented, information rich society of the twenty first century, we have to radically restructure the system of education in the country

A country that has placed its full faith in its educational system and in its ability to transform the traditional society in to a modernized science-based society, cannot afford to permit its educational system to function at a sub-standard level. With the march of democracy and proposal for compulsory, free education at different levels, a different view of the scope and responsibility of educators has emerged. The task is envisaged as maximizing the achievement of all children. With due recognition of individual differences in ability, it is apparent that not all children are capable of reaching the same educational standard, but all children are capable of development. This view of education draws increasing attention to the causes underlying variations in achievement. Successful study of these causes may well assist in so modifying the teaching learning procedures as well as the organizational and administrative set up of the schools as to result in an overall increase in scholastic achievement by all children.

The educationists and leaders all over the world are concerned by the falling standards in education and the huge wastage in the field that goes on as a result of many unidentified reasons. According to Barki(1976) “ Failure is one of the greatest tragedies in the lives of many students, it is difficult to single out any one cause for the mass failure. To some extent it depends on factors like intellectual status, student ability, socio economic status, attitude towards course of study, methods of study, medium of instruction, system of examination, motivation, personality factors etc.

Academic achievement is a resultant of many forces working on the child and the research literature is replete with studies on the relationship of academic achievement with different

demographic, organismic and environmental variables which have been classified into various categories by different investigators. Identification of the dominant correlates of academic achievement has been a major theme of research in education right from the early years of the present century. Over the years it was accepted that differential achievement was too complex a phenomenon to be explained by individual factors. The findings of the earlier studies identified a number of critical factors. These factors could be categorized as pupil related, school related, family related, and community related factors.

Of the various agencies imparting education like, school, family, religion etc. the school is the most important and it plays a major role in the physical, emotional, intellectual and moral development of the child. A school which provides a conducive environment for meeting the needs and interests of pupils contributes much to the whole development of the personality of the child.

I conducted a study a few years ago on the relationship between various school factors and academic achievement. (Mathew 1997)

Out of many school related variables Pupil mix of the school has emerged as an important variable in school achievement for the study. Academic achievement of children from socio economically disadvantaged families is adversely affected when they are admitted to schools with a peer composition of low SES pupils. (Lowe,1950), (Pillai,1963), (Keenan ,1987), proved from their studies that classroom peer composition had a very high relationship with achievement

I observed lessons of Government school teachers and teachers in aided school managed by private bodies as part of my study. In a Government school I observed the lessons, I found the teacher were giving excellent lessons. The pass percentage of the school was 10% only. In another school hardly 1km distance from Govt school managed by a private body the percentage of result was 70% and the lessons I observed of teachers were average or below average. The pupil mix of the class was different. Aided school managed by private body had students from very high socio economic background and the Government school students were from a very low SES background.

A vital factor that emerged from the study was that a large proportion of pupils who enrolled in the secondary schools in Government schools were drawn from very poor socio-economic background and therefore this should be looked as an important factor which can bring down school achievement. By increasing the facilities in schools will not solve the problem. Recently I read an article suggesting that instead of building new schools and spending much money on infrastructure, the Government should spend more money on individual students. They should be

given financial assistance to join any of the schools of their choice. Government spent money on various school projects but the students do not get the real benefit.

The climate of a school has a powerful impact and influence upon pupil's academic achievement. Studies conducted by (William, 1972), (Copeland,1983) (Bratekt,1987), (Lincy,1990), (Nichols, 1991) and (Allison,1992) found positive relationship between school climate variables and achievement. Atmosphere in the school or the class play a crucial role in the development of a harmonious personality in children, which in turn leads to greater academic achievement.

School environment play a very important role in the academic achievement of children. The more congenial the school atmosphere, better the achievement on the part of the student. Enrichment in school atmosphere will surely serve as a stimulating force for the learner.

Many studies have reported high positive correlation between attitude of pupils towards school and achievement. (Rao,1965), (Dusewicz ,1972), (Pricer,1973), (Matthews,1974), and (Dyer,1985) found that pupil's attitude towards school was significantly related to their achievement.

Teacher effectiveness also plays an important role in the academic achievement of students. Studies conducted by (Bennet,1972) (Joshi,1984) (Goyal and Agarwal,1984) (Tolor,1973) (Veldman and Brophy,1974) (Smith, 1985). (Veeraraghavan and Bhattacharya,1989) confirm from their findings that teacher effectiveness is positively correlated with school achievement.

School facilities are found to be substantially influencing learner achievement. (Bowers and Burkett,1988), (Govinda and Varghese, 1991), found the importance of school facility factors in predicting student achievement. The major problem confronted by school authorities is that of providing proper accommodation facilities. Year by year the enrolment increases and the provision of accommodation and facilities do not get any corresponding improvement. Some Government primary schools are upgraded to high schools but they do not possess the required infrastructure. Physical study facilities provided in the schools play an important role in improving the teaching learning environment and consequently the academic achievement of the pupils.

## **Conclusion:**

To conclude the pupils' academic achievement is a complex behavior. Host of factors of diverse kind are intimately associated with academic performance. Educationists and psychologists are in constant effort to isolate these factors. Despite great advances in knowledge about student

learning and the investment of tremendous amount of money, time and effort our secondary schools have not moved very far toward the goal of increased learning for all students. So, it is very important that as committed teachers we need to be proactive and walk that extra mile to help our dear students.

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