

Executive Summary of Minor Research Project (2019-2020)

Minor research project entitled- ***"Factors Influencing Academic Performance and Retention of Elementary Level Students of Hurda Block (Bhilwara District)"*** was conducted in the year 2019-20. Bhilwara is famous for its 'Fad Paintings' which are depictions of traditional stories on cloth using naturally available colours. Hurda Tehsil of Bhilwara District is located 72 KM towards north from District head quarters Bhilwara. Hurda is one of the 12 Tehsils of Bhilwada district. In India, the district and sub-district structures are supporting the schools to achieve the goal of quality education for all children in elementary schools. The major interventions in this area focus on issues like enrolment of all children of age 6 – 14 years, special training of children enrolled in age appropriate classes, inclusive education, children with special needs, girls' education, teacher capacity building, involving school management committees in monitoring of school functioning, students' attendance, teacher pupil ratio, teaching and learning material, classroom process, learning achievement, onsite support to teachers and monitoring. In the same direction, it was very important to bring out the underlying factors which may not working positively as well as which are effective for achieving the desired performance of students at Elementary level in Hurda block.

The study mainly intended to examine the factors that influence academic performance of elementary school students of Hurda block and to establish strategies of improving enrolment and retention rates of elementary school students of Hurda block. A tool was developed by project investigators and workshop was conducted for vetting the draft of tool. The various domains of the tool were physical environmental, socio-economic, transportation, teachers absenteeism, home or family environment, facilities of toilet, drinking water, hygiene and sanitation for girls, implementation of mid-day meal facilities, general attitude towards facilities of government school, teachers support for academic and non-academic issues and influences and/or support from community people, support from SMC members. 12 schools were identified for data collection. There were three ways to collect the data. (i) researchers themselves interacted with students, teachers and head/in-charge of the school (ii) data sheets were given to the teachers and heads of the institution to fill and it was collected another day (iii) students of primary level (20 to 30) were made to sit in a classroom and they filled the data in presence of research team member.

whenever method-1 is followed for data collection, research team based on the interaction noted down the important points. The data sheets were filled by 418 students, 166 teachers and only eight headmistress/headmasters. Based on the available data, it was investigated that whenever a teacher is competent with subject matter and she is regular and affectionate, the outcome is always better and students like such teacher. 7th and 8th class students of Government girls high school, Taswaria reported that head of their school is always caring and active to solve their problem although their school does not have same infrastructure when compared to nearby high schools of the area. Further it was investigated that students of this area has positive attitude towards teachers and most of them are satisfied with classroom activities however they are not satisfied with the feedback given after evaluation. Some of them rarely received feedback after evaluation/examination. Many students themselves accepted that they do not use school toilet and some toilet areas are not suitable for girls. Many school teachers have accepted that friendly and caring behaviour of headmistress/headmaster and support from other staffs is a strong factor of teacher's regularity and devotion towards school work. some teachers accepted that they are not able to prepare and use teaching learning materials because they have other work in the school.



Sample photographs of data collection in two different schools (Taswaria and Gageda of Hurda Tehsil)

In most of the schools, the building and premises were maintained and students were found participating actively in cleaning (for e.g. at GSSS, Gageda, SMS, Taswaria and GGHS, Taswaria during data collection). Some of the important factors which need to be focused upon for retention and performance from pupils at elementary level are the construction and maintenance of gender-friendly and disabled- friendly and child-friendly toilets, enriching the library with multiple copy of books with sitting arrangements, facility of ICT and e-learning, sufficient number of sports materials with regular fitting and repair for both boys and girls, regular use of teaching learning materials for both science and social studies with regular planning. It is recommended that for each cluster at least one special educator and one guidance counsellor must be appointed with the facilities of different types of teaching learning materials.

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