



# Perception of Stakeholders about Education of Students from Slum Area: A Case Study at Elementary School Level

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## ABSTRACT

This research paper is based on a case study of issues in education of students from slum areas at elementary school level. It was conducted to explore issues, if any, in education of students from slum area. The objectives of the study were to study the perception of teachers working in the elementary school, perception of parents of children, and perception of students studying in the schools in slums about education and educational issues, if any, on educational, social and economic aspects associated with the education of such children. Case study method was adopted to conduct this study. The informants in the case were teachers including Headmaster (05), parents (10) and two groups of students (16) were taken for focus group discussion. Tools such as, interview schedule for HM/teachers, interview schedule for parents, and a guideline for focus group discussion (FGD) with the students were used for collection of data. The dimensions covered in the tools were such as: educational issues (school infrastructure, student attendance, retention of the student, method of the classroom teaching transaction, peer group interaction, parent teacher interaction, pupil-teacher interaction, evaluation of the pupil's performance and curricular activities), social issues, and financial issues. Data were analyzed by using qualitative data analysis techniques. In order to cross-check and validate, the data collected through different sources and triangulation was used. The results revealed are: Mostly school facilities provided nearest place from the resident of the child. There was no provision of using computer, white board, and projector in the school. The Provision of sanitation facilities i.e. Water & drinking water facilities, separate toilet for girls and boys available in the school. Student attendance rate is increased when the mid-day-meal scheme is implemented in the school.

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Sometime children faced difficulties in regularly attending the school due to the various reasons i.e., heavy household activities, health problem, helping their parents in business, illness and disinterested toward the study. Regarding retention, students get promoted to the next class without consideration of performance in the examination. Peer group interaction as observed are that, students face difficulties in interacting with other due to the lack of interest for the study, indifferent attitude towards others, shyness etc. Parents are unable to attain PTMs due to involvement in house hold activities, lack of information about when the meeting etc. Social issues as found include, various factors that influenced the educational attainment of the child i.e. illiteracy, poverty, conservativeness and neglecting attitude of the parents, lack of parental guidance and involvement etc.

**Keywords:** Perception, Stakeholders, Slum, Elementary School Level, Case Study, Educational Issues

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The progress and the prosperity of a country mostly depend on its education. In India, the education system is so strong from all aspects starting from the constitution to implementation at grassroots level. Earlier Article 45 (present Article 21A) of the constitution spells about universalization of elementary education since 1950 till its new form 2002. Subsequently, state governments have framed the rules under the RTE Act. Both MHRD and State Governments have released several notifications related to RTE Act. The country since independence is committed to the fulfillment of educational goals by providing universal access and a satisfactory quality of basic education. The recently enacted 86th Constitutional Amendment recognizes elementary education (6-14 years age group) as a fundamental right (Aggarwal & Chug, 2003). Although the elementary education is being provided to all targeted population, still some sections of our society are yet to get its complete provisions.

Many children from slum areas do not have access to schools with adequate facilities and teachers who are tuned for teaching the under-privileged. If the remote and backward areas have natural geographical barriers like hills, mountains and adverse weather conditions, children of the slum areas have hindrances like busy road, railway track and temporary obstructions (Aggarwal & Chug, 2003).

The reasons may be many, but they should not be deprived of getting education. In this regard, it was intended to conduct a case study on issues in education, if any, of students from slum area at elementary school level. The issues of education as observed from the documents are: natural difficulties, political difficulties, social difficulties, financial difficulties, and difficulties in getting education.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) a flagship programme of the Govt. of India implemented in 2000-21 for achieving the goal of UEE, with regard to universal enrolment, access, retention and achievement. The goals of SSA are as follows: (i) All children in the age group of 6-14 age will be in School/ under Education Guarantee Scheme / through bridge course by 2003; (ii) All children in the age group of 6-14 will complete five years primary education by 2007; (iii) All children in the age group of 6-14 will complete eight years of schooling by 2010; (iv) Focus on elementary education for satisfactory

quality with emphasis on education for life; (v) Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 at elementary education level by 2010; (vi) Universal retention 2010.

## **Rationale of the Study**

The recent rapid urban population growth and urban poverty has possibly worsened multi-dimensional deprivation including deprivation of education since long. Urban poverty or low income adversely affects the quality of life and quantity of Education. As revealed from various print and social media, the people living in slum areas face problems of basic amenities like clean and safe water, proper sanitation, and electricity and live in huts. Main occupation of these communities is garbage lifters, rag picking etc. The children belonging to these areas are school dropouts because of not having proper education and they discontinue education. Poverty, social and religious stigmas, family responsibilities and biological reasons are equally important in the decision making process of families whether to send their girls to school or not. In this context, the role of quality education is of utmost importance for girl children to attend schools (Satapathy, 2018).

There are a number of factors stand as a barrier on the way of the attainment of education of the children residing in slum areas. The investigator is keen to investigate to what extent the social, economic, and parental educational factors influenced the educational attainment of the children. The investigator was interested to make an in-depth study of an urban slum area i.e. its socio-economic status, educational background, perception of the parents toward the education of their children etc. Keeping it in mind the research question was posed as:

1. How do the Stakeholders (teachers, parents and students) perceive about education students belonging to slum areas at elementary school level with reference to social and economic aspects?

## **Objectives of the Study**

1. To study the perception of teachers, about education of students belonging to a slum area at elementary school level with reference to social and economic aspects.
2. To study the perception of parents, about education issues of students belonging to a slum area at elementary school level with reference to social and economic aspects.
3. To study the perception of elementary school students belonging to a slum area, about their educational issues with reference to social and economic aspects.

## **Methodology of the Study**

Case study method was adopted to conduct this study. The informants in the case were teachers including Headmaster (05), Parents (10) and two groups of students (16) were taken for focus group discussion. Tools such as interview schedules for HM/ teachers and parents; and a guideline for focus group discussion (FGD) with the students were used for data collection. The dimensions covered in

the tools were such as: educational issues (school infrastructure, student attendance, retention of the student, method of the classroom teaching transaction, peer group interaction, parent teacher interaction, pupil-teacher interaction, evaluation of the pupil's performance and curricular activities), social issues, and financial issues. The data were analyzed qualitatively. In order to cross-check and validate, the data collected from different sources, triangulation approach was followed.

## **The Case Profile**

In the present research, the investigator has selected a case of Cuttack city, Odisha (Name of School is not disclosed due to research ethics).

The selected Case was one kilometer from the railway station, the total number of houses was 40, total number of schools going children was 25, and out of this the 16 were selected students for this study. The selected school situated within the two kilometers from the resident of the children. Total strength of student was 166, at the Class VI (80) and at the Class VII (86). At the Class-VI, the total number of girls was 36 and boys were 44. The parental education, economic condition and unhealthy living conditions of the family definitely influenced the education of the children belonging to the slum.

## **RESULTS**

### **Perception of Teacher about the Educational Issues**

The results based on perception of teachers towards educational and social issues of children in slum area are depicted below:

1. The teachers reported that the school facilities are provided with in the nearest place of resident of the child, so that they can regularly attend school.
2. The provisions of adequate number of teachers, classroom, teaching learning materials, playground, drinking water and separate toilet facilities are available except facilities related to hostel, use of computer, projector, and whiteboard in the school.
3. Teachers reported that the increase in attendance of children is due to mid-day-meal, free text book, uniform provisions; whereas girls of slum area are facing problems due to heavy pressure of house hold activities, caring of younger children, helping his father in family business, and apathetic attitude of the parents.
4. Teachers reported low performance of students in the examination due to lack of interest for study, curriculum load, lack of educational guidance and facilities in the home, poor intellectual power of the student, poor teaching in the school. These reasons found similar for the transactional difficulties of teachers.

5. Teachers reported that for school developmental activities and student development many activities are conducted such as parent teacher meeting, mother teacher association, school management committee, sports, function, science exhibition are organized in maintain healthy contact between the teacher and parent in the school.
6. Teachers also found that parents faced difficulties in attending the meeting and function organized in the school due to their heavy pressure of household activities, lack of information, lack of interest for attaining the meeting.
7. The teachers encourage the student for actively participating in the classroom activities and expressing their views in the discussion session. Teacher should give equal chance to all students in expressing their views freely in the classroom.
8. Teachers observed less participation of students in class activity due to lack of interest, fear and shy.
9. Sometime, teacher faced difficulties in evaluating the pupil's performance because some students are not participating in any activities and disinterested to learnt a particular topic, at that time teacher should motivated them to participate and learnt the lesson.

### **Perception of Teachers about the Social Issues**

1. Teachers found that, due to the illiteracy, parents can't understand the important of education and reluctant to send their child to the school. Teachers' encouragement can act as a solution measure as perceived by the teachers.
2. There are various factors responsible for the educational backwardness of girls student which are heavy household activities, nurturing of younger brother/ sister, negative, apathetic attitude and superstitious belief of the parents.

### **Perceptions of Parents about the Educational Issues**

Parent's perception towards educational issues are based on facilities, accessibility provided in school community relation and related to their personal factors.

1. Parents perceive that the provisions of school facility should be provided at near place from the resident, so it won't create problems in attending the school regularly especially in the rainy day.
2. As perceived by parents: various factors related to family such as illness, fatigue, household activities, caring of other the children, health problem, helping their parents in business, poor physical health leads to less attendance of the child and also influence the achievement level of the child.

3. Parents perceive peer interaction as important aspect for the achievement of their children.
4. The parents said that they are not attending regularly PTMs organized in the school due to the various reason i.e. heavy household activities, lack of information regarding when the meeting organized, shortage of time. But whenever attend, they discuss about their child's learning difficulties and progress.
5. The parents encourage their children to interact with teachers for solving their learning difficulties without having any fear / shyness and also encourage them to participate in the curricular activities.

### **Perceptions of Parents about the Social Issues**

Social issues were discussed in terms of the parental education, parental involvement in child's education, and parental motivation toward the study. It considered what extent the parents understand the important of the education for their child.

1. Most of the parents reported that education is essential for the child's future life because education as a means for the child's fullest development; education help the child to become self-dependent; it makes them a perfect individual being and enabled the child to adjust in all situations
2. Due to the heavy pressure of the household activities, the girls do not attend classes regularly, which affect their education.
3. They opined that provision of free text book, uniform, mid-day-meal, stipend and scholarship encourage the child for study.
4. Some children lack their interest toward the study due to the lack of encouragement from the parents, because the parents of the child are illiterate, they can't understand the important of education for their child's life.

### **Perceptions of Parents about the Economics Issues**

Due to the poor economic conditions of the families in slum area, parents engage their child to work and force them to discontinue their education. Economic conditions of the family mainly influence the education of the child but exceptions are also found.

1. The parents never suggest their child to discontinue their education due to the financial constraints of the family.
2. The parents want to provide every sort of incentives and encouragement and enable them to learn without considering the family economic condition.

## Outcomes of FGD with students

The results based on FGD with students in form of responses of students are depicted below:

1. Student said that due to insufficient teacher and inadequate classroom they are facing problems in learning.
2. There is provision for free uniform, textbook, mid-day-meal for all students which encourage them to attend the school more, whereas computer facility is not available in the school
3. They can't regularly attend the school due to various reason i.e. heavy household activities, caring of younger child, disinterested toward study, conservative attitude of the parents.
4. When student face difficulties in learning mathematics and science, extra classes were taken for clarifying the student's doubts.
5. They freely interact with each other and also with teachers regarding their learning difficulties, where as some face difficulty in interaction due to lack of interest and shyness.
6. Different curricular activities such as annual sports and functions, debate and drama competition etc. were organized in school in which they participate actively.
7. Some of the student hesitates to participate in these activities; main reason is they feel fear and shyness in participating these activities. They never interested to participate in these activities.
8. Due to the illiteracy of some parents, they show less interest to send their child to the school. Teachers convince parents about the importance of education in order to solve this issue.

## Educational Implications

### *Present Status*

- Majority of the stakeholders such as teachers, parents and students reported that socio-economic back ground of the child such as family income, educational qualification of parents plays a vital role in academic performance and attendance of child.
- Most of the stakeholders reported government facilities such as free uniform, textbook, mid-day-meal facilitate the attendance of child.

### *Action Plan*

- Teachers need to inculcate culturally responsive educational climate in school.
- Educational planner needs to redesign curriculum based on socio-economic background of the child.
- Government needs to promote awareness programs regarding the significance of education.

## CONCLUSION

Education of the children in slum areas still needs to be achieved in a satisfactory manner. The academic performance and attendance of the students are highly driven by family problems based on financial crisis and less awareness of parents on education. It is also found that government policies found to be effective for improving student's attendance. But it is yet to be find out that if it can really help the standards of education or not.

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