



A STUDY OF ABSENTEEISM AMONG STUDENTS AT HIGHER PRIMARY LEVEL WHILE ONLINE LEARNING.

Mrs. Pratibha Ural

Assistant Professor, PVDT College of Education for Women, Mumbai.

Abstract :

Absenteeism is an issue plaguing school across the nation. Due to Covid 19 pandemic situation all students in India were studying online mode. A disruption in learning occurs when students missed valuable instruction due to internet issues, illness, parents' economic condition etc. The aim of the study was to investigate the extent of student absenteeism in higher primary level at Parel English medium school, explore the reasons why student absent themselves from online classes and examine the implications of student absenteeism. The study adopted the mixed methodology and used a survey research and experimental research design. Data were collected by self-administered questionnaires and interviews with 30 students at higher primary school. The study revealed that student absenteeism is due to reasons such as: lack of subject interest, poor online teaching strategies by teachers, unfavorable online learning environment, network issues and health problems of the students.

Key words : *Higher primary level, absenteeism, online teaching -learning.*

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Introduction :

In our country, Covid-19 pandemic's first case was reported on 30th January 2020. As the number of cases went on increasing, our prime minister ordered a nationwide lockdown. Hence school were closed, and online classes started. The study of absenteeism is very important for any school. The word absenteeism means the absence of student from the class when he or she is scheduled to be present at school. When teacher has no information in advance that the student will not be reported for class if he has taken leave to which he is entitled on ground of sickness or in case of accident.

Thus, absence may be authorized or unauthorized caused by circumstance beyond teacher's control.

Absenteeism from lectures by the student appears to be serious problem that seem to transcend and defile all the strategies by the school authority and lecturers' effort to curb it.

Investigation reported the magnitude of this phenomenon and its consequences on the student's immediate academic achievement and further application of skills since students are active participants in their learning experience and must take responsibility for achieving their potentials through successful competition of each stage of their studies.



It is common therefore to see many schools coming up with various measures to ensure students attendance at lectures in accordance with their commitment to encourage and help students to achieve their potential to the maximum capability in their studies and developing lifelong skills and competencies.

Attendance is a key component of students. Many factors can contribute to student's absenteeism. Health, family problems, poverty, friends influence being bully by peer group, use of internet late night, Lack of electronic facilities, lack of interest in studies, that are often associated with the student frequent absence from class.

Need of the study :

Student's absenteeism is a major issue in the school. Concerned efforts have been expanded aimed at escaping students and promoting active learning but many students regularly skip the class.

Student's absenteeism is a major concern for lecture at school for learning.

Absence creates a dead and tiresome, unpleasant classroom environment that makes students who come to class uncomfortable.

Absenteeism disturbs the dynamic teaching learning environment and adversely the class. Absenteeism is a waste of education resource, time, and human potential.

Student absenteeism causes re-work and extra time spent going all over the absentee's homework and class assignments, takes time away from lecture planning periods and time needed to provide individual assistance.

When students are absent from the class, they missed valuable information resulting from peer lecture interaction and the benefits of the specific example lecturers use to clarify difficult concept.

Absenteeism leads to depression and result in poor quality of education.

Importance of Research :

The attendance rate of students is important because students are more likely to succeed in academics when they attend school consistently. This action research is aiming to identify factors to help decrease absenteeism in students. So, they may experience throughout life.

Objectives of the study :

1. To identify students who remained absent for a long time while attending online classes.
2. To find out reasons of absenteeism while attending online classes.
3. To implement some remedies to improve students' attendance in online classes.
4. To make online learning interesting to avoid absenteeism.

Null Hypothesis :

There is no significance difference between absenteeism of students before activity and after taking activities.

Operational definition :

Absenteeism- Refers a temporarily leaving institution by the pupils without teacher's acceptance and engaging in alternative activities more interesting or profitable.

Higher primary level- Students those who are studying in between lower primary level and secondary level.



Scope and Limitation of Research :

Scope: The problem of absenteeism at every level at school. It is necessary to find out reasons behind the absenteeism. In the Covid-19 pandemic situation it was increased. Researcher wanted to find out that problem. There is impossible to find out problems of absenteeism at all school level. So, researcher selected only higher primary level.

Limitation :

The present research is limited to the 30 students of standard VIII of Parel English School, Parel.

The present research is limited to the 30 students of English medium of Parel English School only.

The present study is related only the 30 parents of students those who have not attended online classes.

Sample- Sample selected for this research by using purposive sampling. 30 students were selected for this study.

Review of literature :

Review of literature helps in understanding the topic in more detail. We come to know about research by others in different subjects in different topics, methods, and tools helpful to our study. It guides the researcher for significant investigation.

1. Aditi Vashisht, et.al (2018) School absenteeism during menstruation amongst adolescent girls in Delhi, India. A mixed method research of combined cross-sectional study and qualitative research was conducted in six government schools of Delhi by means of a questionnaire survey and focus group discussions. The sample size was 600 adolescent girls. Out of 600, 245 (40%) girls remained absent from school during their menstruation. School absenteeism was significantly associated with the type of absorbent used, lack of privacy at school, restrictions imposed on girls during menstruation, mother's education, and source of information on menstruation. Nearly 65% reported that it affected their daily activities at school and that they had to miss their class tests and classes as a result of pain, anxiety, shame, anxiety about leakage, and staining of their uniform.
2. Tirmal Singh, (2017) Impact & Reasons of Absentees in Secondary Schools of Uttar Pradesh
The major objectives of the present study were to analyses the magnitude of absenteeism among the government high school of Uttar Pradesh, India. No doubt, an attempt was made to address the phenomenon of absenteeism in government schools in the present context. A questionnaire was used as a research tool. For the analysis of data percentages were find out. By observation it has been observed that 68.8 % student randomly attend the school while 31.20% remains absent. When the observation has been made on the reason of absentees 16.2% remains absent due to sickness of student and 8.6 % remains absent due to sickness of their parents while 6.22 % student absent due to low income of their parents. Further, the students at government schools have better facilities than the students at private schools. All students at government schools have very big number of facilities and pocket money and while 22.5 % students at private schools withdraw bunk out within the range of 6-10 lacks without completing their secondary education and remaining 8.5% also receive their degree after completing the course within the tight time deadline. Here some of the major causes of student's absenteeism at



secondary level: 1. Students remain absent due to sickness. 2. Students remain absent due to sickness of parents 3. Student remains absent due to low economic status of his parents to help them to earn money for their livelihood. 4. Educational backwardness of parents.

3. Harisha Gopal, and Bhaskar S. (2017) School absenteeism effects on scholastic performance- reality check in India. This study was carried out to estimate the magnitude and its causes and its relation to school absenteeism. Objectives: 1. To study the medical causes & social factors affecting school absenteeism. 2. To know the effect of school absenteeism on scholastic performance. Method: It is a cross sectional study done in randomly selected in the age five to fifteen years. The study sample included 754 children. Socio-demographic profile and pre-designed questionnaires as well as school records were obtained. The marks cards of the entire year were taken to assess the scholastic performance. Significant absenteeism was taken when absenteeism was more than 15 percent. Results: The incidence of school absenteeism was 3.1 percent. Increased incidence was found in children aged 11 to 14 years. There is increased incidence of absenteeism seen in male with the increase in the birth order and family size, with low education status of the parents and in Hindu religion. Majority of the school children were anemic. Illness is the most important cause of school absenteeism. Poor academic performance is significantly associated with incidence of absenteeism.
4. Ramakanta Mohalik and Rasmirekha Sethy (2018) Low Attendance of Students in Government Elementary Schools of Jharkhand: A Study. This study aimed to find out the causes of low attendance of students in Government elementary schools of Jharkhand. Survey was conducted on 30 HMs and 54 teachers from 30 elementary schools selected purposefully from Dhanbad and Lohardaga district of Jharkhand. The study indicated that family and school related causes are responsible for the low attendance of students in elementary school. Majority of students are not attending school regularly as they are involved in domestic work and taking care of siblings during school hours. Students go to work for earning money for the family is another cause of low attendance. The schools having low attendance have limited infrastructure facilities and teaching learning resources which may be one of the causes of low attendance. There is a poor leadership at school level as majority of HMs were In-charge HM for which they are unable to take major decisions for the school. The study has suggested for cooperative effort from all stakeholders to increase attendance of students.

In India studies were only concentrated on offline school students' absenteeism of demographic and geographical variables.

Review of related studies indicates that research in online learning and absenteeism in higher primary students are very meager. Therefore, the present study is undertaken by the researcher.

Research methodology :

A research design is the set of methods and procedures used in collecting and analyzing measures of the variables specified in the problem research.



Research method :

Researcher used mixed method for the study. Researcher used survey method to find out absenteeism at higher primary class and implement program to remove absenteeism among primary students with experimental method for this study. By survey method research observe that at what extent of absenteeism is there in primary school students. Single group design is used for the study. Controlled and experimental group is same for the study. A research design is a framework that has been created to find answers to the research questions. The researcher has used the single Group Design which includes the following: Research questions-

1. What are the reasons for students' absenteeism?
2. Whether the students are in Mumbai while online learning?
3. Do they have electronic facilities?
4. Is there any strategies for reducing absenteeism among the students?

Programme:

Steps to improve the attendance of the students.

1. Communication with the parents and students
2. Motivational speech
3. Counselling students
4. Forming Attendance team
5. Power point presentation and Audio-visual aids

Observation :

It was done after one month to check the improvement. There was a definite improvement in some students.

Research Variables :

Independent Variable - Impact of Programme to improve attendance

Dependent Variable-Student's absenteeism.

Tools and Techniques of Research :

In the present study the researcher has used the Questionnaire, Interviews, and Check list as tools for collecting the information.

The researcher selected the sample by purposive sampling. Through the check list absent students were selected. A programme involving a set of various activities was initiated.

These activities are as follows

1. Communications with parents and students by phone calls and chat with the help of.
2. Motivational speech emphasizing the benefits of attending the class to students
3. Developing incentive based programmed to promote and reward good attendance.



4. To form attendance team to look at the regular absentees and interviewing them as early as possible.
5. Provide support to students facing problems and reduce stress of studies.
6. Try to give feedback as early as possible.
7. Making the online class a welcoming place for the students by using Audio Visual aids

The objective was to help the students to improve their attendance in an enjoyable way.

Then observation was conducted to observe whether the programme was implemented on this group brought about improvement or not.

Data Collection, Analysis, and Interpretation :

Data collection :

The data regarding the absenteeism for sample of 30 students of standard VIII was collected by using check list. It was collected from the attendance register for the month of December up to 24.12.2020.

Students' absentee :

Gender	No of Students	Percentage
Male	20	67%
Female	10	33 %
Total	30	100 %

Age group of students :

Age	Boys	Girls
12	9	6
13	9	4
14	2	0

Students' absenteeism in December 2020 :

No of days per month (December)	No of students	Percentage (%)
1-4 days	8	27%
5-6 days	10	33%
More than 6 days	12	40%

Average attendance of the students in the month of December 2020 :

Average attendance of the Girls	07
Average attendance of the Boys	14
Average attendance of the Class	21


Reasons of Absenteeism :

Sr. No.	Reasons or causes of absenteeism	No. of students	Percentage (%)
1	Students having behavioral or emotional problems interfering with learning	02	07%
2	Negative events at home interfering with learning	03	10%
3	Students not interested in a particular subject	06	20%
4	Students not liking the timing of the online class	07	23%
5	Health issues (illness)	06	20%
6	Excessive homework and project work	04	13%
7	Lack of electronic facilities	02	07%

On average, how often students are absent from the class in January 2021 :

Number of days in January 2021	No. of students	Percentage (%)
1 to 4 days	21	70 %
5 to 6 days	7	30 %
More than 6 days	0	Nil

Average attendance of the students in the month of January 2021 (after activity) :

Average attendance of the Girls	09
Average attendance of the Boys	17
Average attendance of the Class	26

Data Analysis :

Though the attendance collected from the register before survey (by using Questionnaire and Interviews) and after the programme, there is a difference in the results.

After the survey, a programme was initiated. The students were counselled, motivated and interest was created to attend the online class.

After the programme, some problems of absenteeism were solved by the researcher.

The absenteeism rate decreased than what it was earlier.

Findings :

After analysis, the research found some main problems which are written below.

1. Students do not like timing of the class
2. Students are not interested in a particular subject.
3. Students having negative events at home.
4. Students having excessive homework and project work.



Suggestions :

1. Normally the timing of the class is 7.30 to 11 .00 AM. If we change the timing, the absenteeism will decrease.
2. Many students are not good in a particular subject. So, the institution should provide extra remedial class for that subject.
3. For solving health problem, students' parents are to be advised to consult a good doctor. So, their illness does not disturb their studies.

Conclusion :

The researcher conducted research on why many students absent from the online class and how it could be overcome. The researcher observed that the students did not think that attendance is a major key for academic performance and future life. They were unaware how much it could help them in improving. We cannot fully control the student's absenteeism, but we can decrease it. But Everybody knows that attendance s must appear for the examination as well as promotion to the next class.

It is compulsory for the students to be regular in class because attendance is important for getting good marks in the examination. But some students said that the timing of the online class is not suitable for them.

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