

Prevalence and Problems of Truancy among Secondary School Students in Hoshiarpur District A Case Study

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Abstract: The purpose of the present study was to find out the level of prevalence of truancy at present time among the secondary school students, to identify the various factors responsible for causing and to suggest measures that could help preventing truancy among school students. The study was a multi-case study which was conducted on 128 subjects i.e. parents, teachers, students and their peers. The data was collected by using purposive sampling technique from the Government schools of four administrative blocks of Hoshiarpur district of Punjab. i.e. Dasuya, Mukerian, Hoshiarpur and Garhshankar. To collect the relevant information for the present study, the investigator used open-ended interview schedules separately for each subject. Also to explore the level of prevalence of truancy the attendance record of the students was collected from the district education office of Hoshiarpur. It has been found that over all prevalence of truancy was 4.72% among the secondary school students of district Hoshiarpur. The block-wise results showed that the level of prevalence of truancy was higher in rural area (5.54%) as compared to the urban area (4.25) of district Hoshiarpur i.e. Prevalence of truancy was observed maximum in class 11th and 12th in Garhshankar block (5.9%) and minimum in Dasuya block (1.9%). Various factors responsible for causing truancy were detected as (i) Poverty (ii) Illiteracy of the parents (iii) Large size of the families (iv) Irresponsible behaviour of the parents towards their children (v) Over protection of children by parents. (vi) Parents' negative attitude towards education (vii) Single parent or without parents children (viii) Inadequate environment at home (ix) Fathers' immigration to foreign country (x) To take care of siblings at home. From all these results it can be concluded that the main cause of prevalence of truancy may be the lack of awareness among rural parents. Thus, to eradicate this problem the responsibility lies on the education department for organizing educational awareness programmes for general public in rural areas and establishing guidance and counseling cells to help students resolve their personal and educational problems. Such endeavours would certainly help in controlling the problem of truancy in rural as well as urban areas.

Keywords: Truancy, Prevalence, Problems, Secondary School Students, A Case Study.

INTRODUCTION

Education of an individual begins at birth and continues throughout life. Some believe that education begins even before birth. Education is life itself, and not only the preparation for life. It is the process of living throughout continuous reconstruction of experiences. Man develops his thinking, reasoning, creativity and decision making capabilities through education. Education is a never ending process and remains in process of evolution forever. Education is an idea which helps the person to develop his latent powers and enable him to enter into right relationship with life, mind and soul of humanity. Education is a true building or living evocation of powers of mind and spirit of human being. A new born baby gets biological heredity from his parents. But this alone is not enough to develop him fully. Education is the way that can provide him the direction so that he can develop necessary skills and information, concepts which enable him to adjust properly to his environment and to lead an effective life. Education actually provides all round development of personality in three domains: cognition, conation and affection i.e. development of knowledge, skills and aesthetics. The school admittedly has an extremely important role to play in the education of youth. It is the realization of this complex task, to develop healthy, efficient and useful future citizens that makes nation spend their scarce sources in the school. The school and home both have to join hands in shouldering this responsibility.

In context of Indian education, Elementary education is the base of formal education system. It not only provides bookish knowledge but also it is helpful in growing values, skills and capacities. Elementary education is followed by secondary

education and serves as a link between the elementary and higher education, and plays a very important role in this respect. A child's future can depend a lot on the type of education she/he receives at the secondary level. Apart from grounding the roots of education of a child, Secondary Education can be instrumental in shaping and directing a child to a bright future. The age between eleven to late teen years is considered to be age of adolescence. At this age children develop adult physical characteristics. As child turns to this time of his life many mood swings are noticed. At one moment he may act like his world is wonderful, then the next moment he may change and be actually angry. This is because child is changing and he is becoming an adult and also becoming independent. This is a natural and normal process. At this time he may not be sure of himself and may be searching for answers to lots of questions. It is sometimes hard for a person in this adolescence stage of life to understand himself and also very hard for him to express himself. The child needs co-operative guidance from the family members, elders and teachers because at this age the child can easily get diverted and can indulge in bad habits. But when they do not get co-operative guidance from their teachers and parents, they start to go on wrong way. Outside the school, they indulge in bad habits like smoking, drinking etc. So, they remain absent from school for long time without informing their teachers and parents.

Truancy, in all its kind and shapes, is a behavioral problem and is thus the outcome of one's maladjustment and mal-adaptation with the environment. The issue of truancy in schools has repeatedly come up over the years. National attention is being focused on truant students who are failing to complete their education. Those children who willingly make themselves absent from the class room or outside classroom activities of the school without the prior permission of their parents, teachers or school authorities are termed as truants and their absenteeism related behavior is termed as truancy. The cause of truancy are physical health of the child, mental health of the child, level of physical and mental abilities, behavior of the teacher, curriculum and teaching methods, lack of co-curricular activities and hobbies, poor school administration, bad company, home environment, dissatisfaction of basic needs, escapism from work, social and emotional maladjustment, superiority and inferior complex .

Truancy has become one of the most concerns with school activities and a common pattern of behavior among students. Its objective analysis has a great clinical value. Truancy is such type of problem which has vital importance for the problem of the child, and the future of the society depends on the children as what they are today. The problem of truancy is universal and is gradually asserting the attention of the educationists and other members of the society alike. Truancy is contagious which spreads from one student to another. The tone of the discipline in school is lowered down and the school atmosphere is degenerated, school attainments are also lowered down. These truants not only find it difficult to make up their deficiency but also fail to keep pace with the regular classes and consequently they indulge in other delinquent acts in learning. Students at secondary level are teenagers and they have to face many problems because of physical, mental and psychological changes. So, it becomes very difficult for them to continue their studies smoothly and they remain absent from school. So it also becomes necessary to sort out the problems of the adolescent truants by this research.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Truants do not prove to be good citizens and thus whole purpose of democracy is threatened. Therefore, investigation into the domain of truancy has immense significance and the factors responsible for causing and encouraging truant behavior could be known through such investigation. Such research endeavours may help in finding out the appropriate measures to check such malinger behaviours among the young students. Then not only the problem of indiscipline will be eradicated but also a great service will be done to the nation as a whole by bringing desirable change in character pattern and inculcating socially desirable habits among such individual.

Many studies have been conducted on the problem of truancy in India as well as in abroad. Chauhan and Dixit (1965), Joshi and Sohal (1966) found that boys became truant due to the unfavorable circumstances at home Whereas, Goyal (1974) investigated that truancy could be habitual as well as casual and occur mostly after thirteen due to the stress and strain of adolescence. Shyamsunder (1988) reported that the students who were found truants were backward and uninterested in studies dissatisfied with the school. Obondo and Dhadphale (1990) reported that truancy was caused due to lack of education of parents and lack of appropriate guidance to their children. Smith (1998) found that main contributors of truancy were divided into school, family and personal factors. Miller and Martin (1999) found truants to be more aggressive and having psychiatric symptoms. Berger (2000) found that the majority of students skipped school because they missed their school bus. Also the percentage of absenteeism is more among the girl's students due to lack of proper sanitation system for girls in co-educational schools. Heilbrunn (2004) reported that truants have also been victims of abuse. A large number of truant youths were also victims of crime and neglect. Peltzer (2009) observed that truancy among school going students was resulted due to tobacco use, risky alcohol use and drug use.

They found many causes of truancy and suggested ways and means to control the problem of truancy. But in our country, there are a very few studies which have been conducted to explore this field. No study has been done on the problem of truancy in Punjab. So, the investigator became interested to conduct a study in Hoshiarpur district of Punjab on the problem related to truancy among students. In the present study, the investigator became interested to explore the prevailing causes of truancy and the extent to which the problem of truancy exists. The result of this study would also provide help to the further investigators of the related field and would open new dimensions to resolve the causes and prevalence of truancy. Through such investigations and by their proper implementation, we can hope to realize the aims and objectives of education and can really create a class of citizens who will never hesitate to shoulder the responsibilities of the country. Thus a research on truancy is of paramount importance and need of the hour; that is why such type of problem was selected by the investigator. This problem has been selected because of its importance and utility to the policy makers. The result of this study would be helpful in making decisions related to problem of truancy, changing and improving the ways to make classroom process more effective.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Prevalence and Problems of Truancy Among Secondary School Students in Hoshiarpur District – A Case Study

Objectives

The objectives of the study were as below:

- (i) To find out the level of prevalence of truancy among the secondary school students.
- (ii) To identify the causes of truancy among the secondary school students.
- (iii) To explore various factors responsible for causing truancy.
- (iv) To study the different kinds of problems faced by the truants in secondary school.
- (v) To suggest measures to help prevent truancy among secondary school students.

Delimitations

- (i) The present study was delimited to 32 students along with their parents (32), teachers (32) and peers (32) only due to paucity of time and money.
- (ii) The study was delimited to the Hoshiarpur district of Punjab only.
- (iii) The study was delimited to the students of 10th class of Government schools only.

METHODOLOGY

The investigator had adopted the descriptive survey method to study the prevalence of truancy among secondary school students. In order to find out the causes of truancy among school going students, case study method was used. In case study, a wide range of intensive information was gathered from the limited sample of truants.

Sampling

The sample has been selected from the Government senior secondary schools and from Govt. high schools of Hoshiarpur District in Punjab state. The sample for the present study consisted of 24 truants (both boys and girls), their parents, teachers and peer group. There are four administrative blocks in Hoshiarpur district that are Dasuya, Mukerian, Hoshiarpur and Garhshankar. From each block, 6 truants have been selected. Further division of the blocks has been done as rural and urban area. Three truants each from rural area and urban area has been taken. The purposive sampling technique has been used for the collection of required sample and useful information has been collected for the present study.

Tools

To collect the relevant information for the present study, separate open-ended interview schedules have been prepared by the investigator as:

- Interview schedule for truant
- Interview schedule for parents
- Interview schedule for teachers

- Interview schedule for peers

Reliability and validity had also been established out of these interview schedules.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

It can be seen from Table-1 that in selected schools of Hoshiarpur block, total numbers of students in class 9th were 535. Out of which, 48 were truants and 8.10% truancy has been prevailed. In class 10th, total numbers of students were 430. Out of which 16 were truants and 3.7% truancy has been found. In class 11th, total numbers of students were 510. Out of which 28 were found truants and 5.49% truancy has been prevailed. In class 12th, total numbers of students were 406, out of which 14 were truants and 3.44% truancy has been found. Maximum prevalence of truancy was found in 9th class and minimum in 12th class of block Hoshiarpur.

Table-1: Block-Wise Prevalence Of Truancy In Hoshiarpur District Of Punjab

S. No.	Class	Hoshiarpur Block			Garhshankar Block			Dasuya Block			Mukerian Block		
		No. of Students	No. of Truants	Percentage of Truants	No. of Students	No. of Truants	Percentage of Truants	No. of Students	No. of Truants	Percentage of Truants	No. of Students	No. of Truants	Percentage of Truants
1	9 th	535	48	8.10%	405	27	6.7%	524	15	2.9%	194	9	4.7%
2	10 th	430	16	3.7%	413	19	4.6%	425	15	3.52%	155	6	3.9%
3	11 th	510	28	5.49%	477	28	5.9%	366	16	4.37%	229	12	5.24%
4	12 th	406	14	3.44%	489	21	4.29%	318	6	1.9%	198	7	3.5%

It can be read from Table-1 that in selected schools of Garhshankar block, total number of students in class 9th were 405, out of which 27 were found truants i.e. 6.7% truancy is prevailing. In class 10th, total numbers of students were 413, out of which 19 were truants and 4.6% truancy has been found. In class 11th, total numbers of students were 477; out of which 28 were truants and 5.9% truancy has been prevailed. In class 12th, total numbers of students were 489, out of which 21 found truants and 4.29% truancy has been recorded.

It can be interpreted that in selected schools of Dasuya block, total numbers of students in class 9th were 524, out of which 15 found truants and 2.9% truancy has been prevailed. In class 10th, total numbers of students were 425, out of which 15 were truants and 3.52% truancy has been found. In class 11th, total numbers of students were 366, out of which 16 were truants and 4.37% truancy has been prevailed. In class 12th, total numbers of students were 318, out of which 6 found truants and 1.9% truancy has been found. Maximum prevalence of truancy was recorded in class 11th and minimum in class 12th.

It is very clear from Table-1 that in selected schools of Mukerian block, total number of students in class 9th was 194 and out of which 9 were found truants that infers prevalence of truancy as 4.7%. In class 10th, total number of students was 155, out of which 6 were truants and 3.9% truancy has been found. In class 11th, total numbers of students were 229, out of which 12 were truants and 5.24% truancy was noted. In class 12th, total numbers of students were 198, out of which 7 were found truants and 3.5% truancy has been prevailed. Maximum prevalence of truancy was found in class 11th and minimum in class 12th.

Block And Area-Wise Truancy In Hoshiarpur District Of Punjab

It can be seen from Table-2 that in selected schools of Hoshiarpur block, total numbers of students in secondary classes were 1881, out of which 106 were found truants and 5.63% truancy has been prevailed. In all secondary classes of Garhshankar block, total numbers of students were 1784, out of which 95 were found truants and 3.18% truancy has been prevailed. In all secondary classes of Dasuya block, total numbers of students were 1633, out of which 52 were found truants and 3.18% truancy has been prevailed. In all secondary classes of Mukerian block, total numbers of students were 776, out of which 34 were found truants and 4.38% truancy has been prevailed.

Table-2

OVERALL BLOCK-WISE TRUANCY					AREA-WISE TRUANCY				
S. No.	Name of block	No. of Students	No. of Truants	Percentage of Truants	S. No.	Area	No. of Students	No. of Truants	Percentage of Truants
1	Hoshiarpur	1881	106	5.63%	1	Rural	2239	124	5.54%
2	Garhshankar	1784	95	5.3%	2	Urban	3835	163	4.25%
3	Dasuya	1633	52	3.18%	3	overall	6074	287	4.72%
4	Mukerian	776	34	4.38%					

Table-2 shows that in rural area of district Hoshiarpur, total number of students were 2239, out of which 124 has been found truants and 5.54% truancy has been prevailed. In urban area, total numbers of students were 3835, out of which 163 have been found truants and 4.25% truancy has been prevailed. Overall prevalence of truancy among secondary school students has been found 4.72%. So, it can be interpreted that the prevalence of truancy in rural area is more than that of urban area.

Prevalence of Truancy Among Secondary School Students

- (i) Over all prevalence of truancy is 4.72% among the secondary school students of district Hoshiarpur.
- (ii) Prevalence of truancy is higher in rural area (5.54) prevalence of truancy in class 11th and 12th is maximum in Garhshankar and minimum in Dasuya block) as compared to the urban area (4.25) of district Hoshiarpur.

Brief of Case Histories

Case studies of the different truants have been discussed below:

Case No. 1

Kuldeep Singh was a student of 10+2 class, lived in Hoshiarpur. His parents were illiterate and father was a tailor. He had two brothers who were working as carpenter in a shop. The economic condition of his family was not good. So, many times he helped his father in his work because there was no helper on the shop. Sometimes, he helped his brothers in their work so that they can earn more. Due to less income, he also had to work as waiter in marriage parties. So, he remained absent from school for many days.

Case No. 2

Vikram was a student of class IX and lived in a joint family with his patents. His father was a driver. He was not serious towards his studies. He was very careless and disobedient child. The main causes of his truancy were lack of father's involvement in supervising his son, large family size and lack of teachers' motivation.

Case No. 3

Manjeet was studying in class X and belonged to a very poor family. Her parents were illiterate and doing labour. The main causes of her truancy were poverty, illiteracy of her parents, unfavorable environment for studies at home, caring of siblings at home and her involvement in home tasks.

Case No. 4

Jaspreet singh was a boy of class X. His father was in Italy and mother was a house wife. He did not take interest in studies. He had no fear of his mother and wandered with friends aimlessly. So, main causes of his truancy were lack of proper guidance, indulgence in bad company and his careless attitude for studies.

Case No. 5

Inderjit was a student of class X. He told that his parents were illiterate and both were doing agriculture. He had to do labour to earn money. Sometimes, he did not complete his homework and due to fear of teachers' punishment he remained absent from school. The main causes of his truancy were his involvement in labour and lack of financial support from his parents. Poverty was the major cause of his truancy.

Case No. 6

Sunil Kumar was studying in 10+2 class. His parents were not educated. His father was an electrician and mother was a house wife. Sunil was more concerned with his father's business. His father also indulged him in his business and never encouraged him to do his studies. He had never got guidance regarding education from his parents and became very careless for his studies. In this way, he remained absent from school and became truant.

Case No.7

Kiran was a student of class 10th. She belonged to an average family. Her father was an educated person and teaching in a school. She told that teachers did not teach effectively in the class and she did not understand the concept clearly. Some times due to incomplete home work, she remained absent from school. Teachers of her school also remained busy in seminars and classes remained free for many days. She also used to attend all celebrations in her family and in her neighborhood. So she remained absent from school.

Case No. 8

Gagandeep was a boy of class 10th. he belonged to an illiterate family. His father was rickshaw puller. The main causes of his truancy were his parents' illiteracy, improper guidance, helping her mother at home and lack of parental care.

Case No. 9

Mandeep Kumar was a student of class 9th. His parents were died in an accident. He had no sibling and living with his grandparents. Due to lack of parental love and affection, unfulfilment of necessary things, caring of grandparents, lack of proper guidance, he remained absent from school.

Case No. 10

Ramanjeet Singh was a boy of 10th class belonging to a joint family having eighteen members. His father was a driver. His parents' negative thinking towards education and poor school environment were the main reasons of his long absence from school. Lastly, it can be said that lack of education and awareness of parents had compelled the boy to be a truant.

Case No. 11

Kamal was a boy of 10+2 class. His father was retired as a police constable and was running a flour mill (atta chakki). He had no interest in studies. He had to look after the flour mill for the whole day as his father was suffering from dust allergy. His parents' attitude about his studies was not good and thus he remained absent from school.

Case No. 12

Ravinder was a student of class 10th and he had three brothers. He told that his parents were illiterate. He belonged to poor family. The main causes of his truancy were the excess of pressure from his father to do work, fear of punishment from teachers, lack of guidance from parents, unsuitable studying environment at home.

Case No.13

Raj Kumar was studying in 9th standard. His Father was a farmer and just passed middle class. The main causes of his truancy were indulgent in bad company and habits like smoking and drinking, lack of parent's attention and command over him, long distance of school from home and his less interest in studies.

Case No.14

Rajdeep was a student of class 10th. He had four brothers and sisters and they lived with his parents. His father was a labourer and constructed house. He had been living in very poor conditions along with his grandmother. The main causes of his truancy were unavailability of school fees, lack of parental care, sickness of grandmother and other home responsibilities.

Case No.15

Suman Lata was a girl studying in class 10th. She told that her father was literate and he was working as peon in a bank. Her mother had died two years ago due to diabetes. After the death of Suman's mother, responsibilities on her shoulders increased. She had to look after her siblings. She had to involve herself in lots of work at home. She was the only matured member of family. Her father's bad habit of drinking, his attitude, lack of proper guidance, over burden of work and responsibilities were the main cause of her truancy.

Case No.16

Rohit was studying in class 12th. He had a sister and was studying in class 8th. His father had been settled in Germany for last seven years. The main causes of truancy were the irresponsible behaviour of parents, excess of pocket money and freedom, lack of interest in studies and future prospective in foreign country.

Case No.17

Gaurav was studying in class 10th. He had a younger brother, father and mother in his family. He told that his parents were illiterate and had no permanent job. The main causes of his truancy were to help his father in his work, his engagement in caring and feeding pet pigeons, lack of proper guidance regarding studies from his parents, his careless and irresponsible attitude towards studies.

Case No. 18

Sonia was a student of class 10th. She told that her parents were not educated and had to do labour for earning money. The economic condition of the family was not sound. The main causes of her truancy were her involvement in home affairs like cooking food, washing clothes etc., her father's attitude towards girls' education and fear of punishment from teachers.

Case No. 19

Atul was a student of class 10th. He had one brother and one sister. His father was educated and doing job as a clerk in State Bank of India. The main causes of his truancy were maladjustment with school and society, superiority complex, his aggressive attitude, indulgence in bad company and bad habits, lack of parental guidance and supervision and teachers' strict attitude.

Case No. 20

Ravinder Kumar was a student of class 10th. He told that he had two younger sisters who were also studying. His father had migrated to Dubai and came to India after two years. His mother was illiterate and was a house wife. He had no interest in

studies and remained busy with his uncle in videography. In class he remained inattentive and never completed his home work. Moreover, absence of his father made him very casual in nature. These were the main reason of his truancy.

Case No. 21

Navjot was a boy of class 10+2. He had two younger sisters and his father had died. Her mother was in Depression. He had an elder brother who was doing agriculture. Due to lack of parental affection and care, involvement in farms, looking after his mother, lack of proper motivation by teachers and less interest in studies, he became truant.

Case No. 22

Vipan was a student of intermediate class. His father was 8th passed and his mother was illiterate. His father had an STD and Photostat shop. His family environment was not suitable for studies, as his uncle drank a lot and created tensions at home. He also had to look after his father's shop and remained absent from school.

Case No. 23

Munish was a boy of class 10+2. He told that his parents were migrated to England as his elder sister sponsored her parents and they settled there for last two years. Due to lack of parental supervision, pocket money in excess and attraction towards opposite sex made him truant.

Case No. 24

Suraj was a boy of 10+2 class. His farther was suffering from disk problem and not doing any work. The main causes of his truancy were lack of proper transport facility, strict behaviour of teachers towards late comers and regular check-up of his father.

CONCLUSION

Causes of Truancy among Secondary School Students were found to be as; poverty, illiteracy of the parents, large size of the families, irresponsible behaviour of the parents towards their children, over protection of children by parents, parents' negative attitude towards education, single parent or without parents children, inadequate studying environment at home, fathers' immigration in foreign country, to take care of siblings at home. On the basis of results and discussions, the following recommendations were put forward by the investigator. Effective attendance policies should be made by the government to reduce truancy among students. Government should regularly collect the attendance record of students from schools to check truancy rate. Teachers should be honest in marking attendance of the students. Separate guidance and counseling cell should be opened in each school to diagnose and solve the problems of truants and finally, there should be regular supervision in the schools to check the attendance of students.

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