



Parental Involvement in Improving Children's Learning in Social Work Perspective

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March 9, 2021

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Abstract

This research article explicates the learning importance, barriers and benefits of parental involvement and Improvement in child's education. However, to make this right a real success two most essential components need to be given utmost importance. The authors exemplify the fact that parents' involvement in their child's learning process offers many opportunities for success-improvements on child's morale, attitude, and academic achievement across all subject areas, behaviour and social adjustment. Researchers have also showed that when parents participate in their children's learning, it results in enhanced pro-social behaviour, increased attendance ,higher academic achievements and corroborate this contention and other claims on the importance and benefits of parental participation in the child's holistic development.

Key Words: Parenting, Children's' Learning , Involvement and Improvement ,social work

Introduction

Education is a matter of right, as rightly proclaimed in Right to Education Act 2009, and not an affair of luxury and choice. However, to make this right a real success two most essential components need to be given utmost importance. These two components include school, on the supply side and the parents & children at the other end. Indian education system can be considered to be the largest in the world with around 1.5 million schools, more than 8.7 million teachers (both primary and secondary) and almost 260 million students.¹The successive governments post-independence worked on education policies that made progress towards universal primary education. Also, initiatives like the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) or Education for All, and Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education under RTE Act, 2009 were introduced. Although significant improvements have been made in the education system in the country, however, there are many areas that still need attention. For

¹ <http://mospi.nic.in/>

example, the student dropout rate in 2016 in government schools (primary division) was 12.3% and which is significantly high.² Around 50% of those who got enrolled could not continue their studies beyond 8th grade because of various socio-economic reasons.³

The changing trends in education across the world lay considerable stress on the learning outcomes of school education than simply the inputs for varied reasons. The researchers have been working with enhanced interest recently to the role parents, in the learning achievements of children. The literature concerning this topic has developed in two separate but related research streams. The first one revolves around the enquiry on parents' involvement with the school as an institution and the second one looks into enquiry of behaviour of parents at home concerning academic issues of children. The present study focusses on the second stream of parents' behaviour at home.

Researches have also showed that when parents participate in their children's learning, it results in enhanced pro-social behaviour, increased attendance and higher academic achievements.^{4,5} What constitutes parental participation or involvement may not be a direct engagement with the child but involves sensitivity, compassion, expression of love and high expectations.⁶ More parental involvement at home influences the academic success of the child to a great extent.⁷ It is suggested that learning in school matters as it also influences productivity and earnings of an individual in later years.⁸

In this regard, Epstein came up with a comprehensive model for parental involvement. The framework included six types of involvement: [i] Parenting (helping families to create environments at home that support school going children); [ii] Communicating (designing effective two way communication between home and schools); [iii] Volunteering (providing

² <http://data.uis.unesco.org>

³ www.icssrdataservice.in/datarepository/index.php/catalog/14

⁴ Anderson, R.C., Hiebert, E., Scott, J.A. & Wilkinson, I.A.G. (1985). *Becoming a nation of readers: The report of the commission on reading*. Washington, DC: The National Institute of Education. Retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED253865.pdf>.

⁵ Edwards, P.A. (2004). *Children's literacy development: Making it happen through school, family, and community involvement*. Boston: Pearson.

⁶ Jeynes, W.H. 2010. The salience of the subtle aspects of parental involvement and encouraging that involvement: Implications for school-based programs. *Teachers College Record*, 112(3), 747-774.

⁷ Auerbach S. and Collier S. 2012. Bringing high stakes from the classroom to the parent center: Lessons from an intervention program for immigrant families. *Teachers College Record*, 114(3).

⁸ (Hanushek (2005), 'The Economics of School Quality', *German Economic Review*, 6(3), 269-86.

parents with help and support); [iv] Learning at home (sharing information and ideas with family so that they can help the students better with school related activities); [v] Decision making (parental involvement in schools decisions); [vi] Collaborating with community (identifying and integrating resources and services from the community for better strengthening of school programs, parenting and learning).⁹

However, research also suggests that such models from the West may not completely address the needs of regions with cultural differences, traditional methods of schooling and parental involvement, and socio-economic disparities¹⁰ like India. Therefore, culturally relative models and pedagogy becomes important.

In Chhattisgarh, as in India, very little work has been done in exploring the role that parent especially less educated play in supporting the education of their children. Compared to the literature with respect to parental and community participation in education, there appears to be much less experience available in the Indian context on the specific aspect of parental and community involvement in supporting and improving children's learning achievement. However, from the existing literature, it is apparent that this is an area that needs more work.

A critical challenge in school education in the state of Chhattisgarh is that of poor learning outcomes, as survey after survey such as the NAS, ASER and others, show. While it is important to continue strengthening teaching learning practices in schools along with other aspects such as academic monitoring and onsite support, there are other spaces and opportunities outside of school such as those of the family and local community, which have not yet been tapped when it comes to improving learning outcomes in children.

Parents' educational involvement has been linked to children's academic outcomes in a variety of ways, including higher academic achievement and more positive attitudes toward school. One way that parents can influence children's academic outcomes is through active participation in and management of learning in the home. This typically involves activities such as engaging in cognitively stimulating tasks, like reading together and managing

⁹ EPSTEIN, JOYCE L. [1986], Parents' Reactions to Teacher Practices of Parent Involvement.

The Elementary School Journal, **86**(3), 277-294.

¹⁰ Bower HA. 2011. Can the Epstein Model of parental involvement work in a high-minority, high-poverty elementary school? a case study. American School Counselor Association.

children's school-related behaviours, such as organizing and monitoring children's time . Such active management from parents in the home environment can support children's educational endeavours and provide motivation to learn.

This paper tries to look into the role and involvement of parents, in Chhattisgarh, in the learning level of their children. The data used in this paper is taken from the baseline mapping by UNICEF and SLMA for their SEEKH/GOOD PARENTING programme in 20 districts of Chhattisgarh.

Methodology:

Sample:

The Midline assessment was carried out in 20 districts. The method used was stratified (multi layered) random sampling. It covered 56 blocks out of total 146 in state. In these 56 blocks 600 Panchayats were randomly selected and in these Panchayats 12 students from class 1, 2 and 3 (4 students from every class) were picked randomly from Primary School register.

The students were divided into three cohorts for the purpose of study. The first cohort comprised of students who were in class 1 during baseline and moved to class 2 at the midline. Similarly, cohort 2 was in class 2 during baseline and moved to class 3 during midline while cohort 3 was in class 3 during baseline and moved to class 4 during

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Using the enrolment register of the primary school in these villages, 3 boys and 3 girls each from Class 1, 2 and 3 were selected. Primary data was collected by interviewing the parents of these children on parental involvement and participation. The children were tested with the help of a language tool specially designed according to their grade. This was done to test their learning outcomes in "Hindi". The tool of data collection was a questionnaire,

which was curated into a mobile phone-based application for use. A total of 7200 student were thus examined/interviewed.

Time and duration mapping:

The data collection was done during January – February 2019.

Data Entry and Cleaning:

The data was collected through a specially designed App; after cleaning 6901 samples were finally analysed. The Data Collected on the mobile phones was aggregated through server. It was analysed through categorization, interpretation with graphs and charts on Microsoft Excel tool.

Table 1 : District wise Sample Analysed

S.No.	District	Sample	S.No.	District	Sample
1	Balodabazar	157	11	Korea	94
2	Bastar	240	12	Mahasamund	316
3	Bijapur	293	13	Mungeli	354
4	Dantewada	370	14	Narayanpur	207
5	Gariyaband	317	15	Raigarh	307
6	Jashpur	326	16	Raipur	638
7	Kabirdham	323	17	Rajnandgaon	401
8	Kanker	324	18	Sukma	240
9	Kondagaon	235	19	Surajpur	776
10	Korba	334	20	Surguja	649

Results/ Observations:

The first important result is of Parents' education level, where it was found that 47% fathers have less than class V education including 18% who are illiterates while in case of mothers the same figure stands at 69% of which 32% are illiterate.

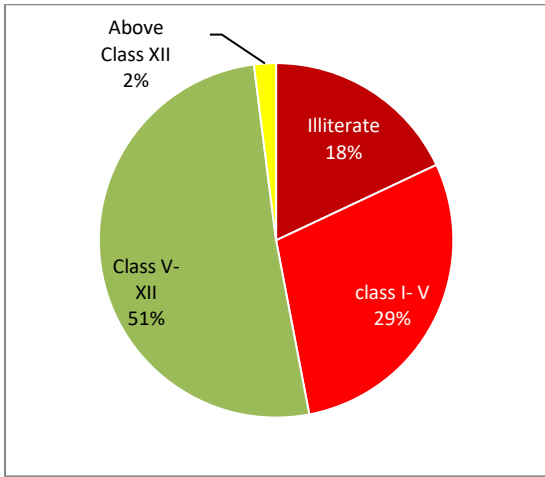


Fig 1 : Fathers' education

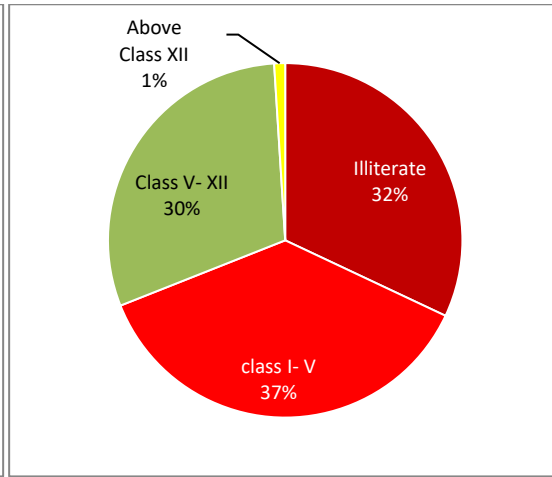


Fig 2 : Mothers' education

An interesting observation vis a vis parents' education and their child's reading ability was that the correlation in case of father (0.6) is higher than that of mother's (0.4). It means that fathers' education has higher implication on child's academic performance.

However, it's the mother in 54% cases who spends more time with children while only in 13% cases where spends more time with children.

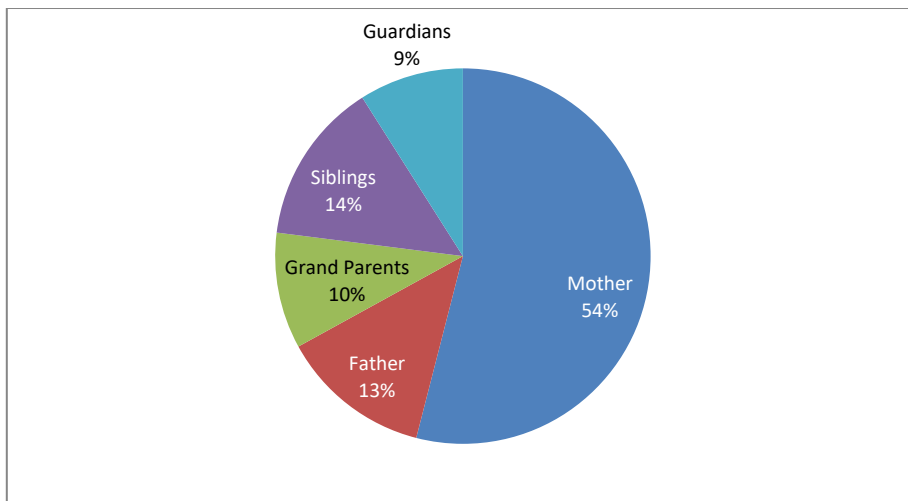


Fig 3: Spending time with children

When it comes to sharing educational responsibilities, of their child, it's mother-father combination, which received the maximum tick. More important and worrying factor is that in 14% household no one owns the responsibility of child's education.

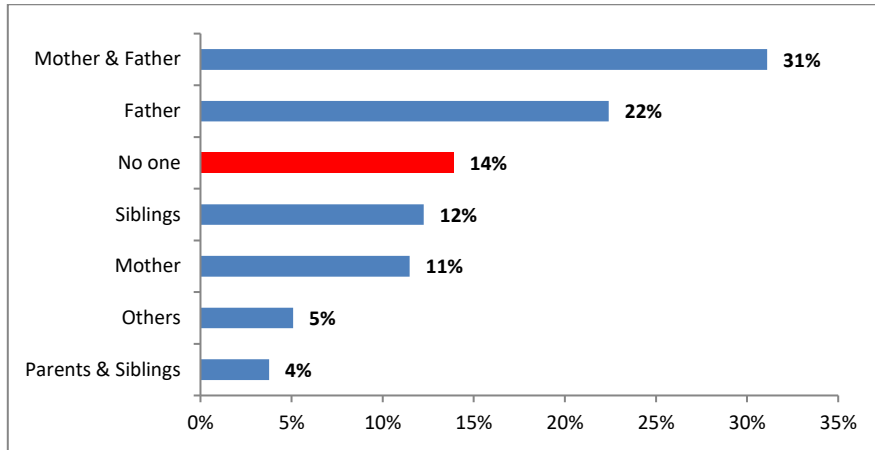


Fig 4: Educational Responsibility

It was further observed that as the fathers' education improves time spent with the child also increases, however, in case of mother her education has almost no affect in the time spent with her child.

Table 2: Parents' Education & Time spent with children

Education	Mothers spending more than 1 hr to total mothers Surveyed	Fathers spending more than 1 hr to total fathers Surveyed
Less than Class V	72%	78%
Class 6-12	73%	79%
Class 12 & ABOVE	74%	84%

In response to another question it was found that 59% parents regularly check/observe their child's note books.

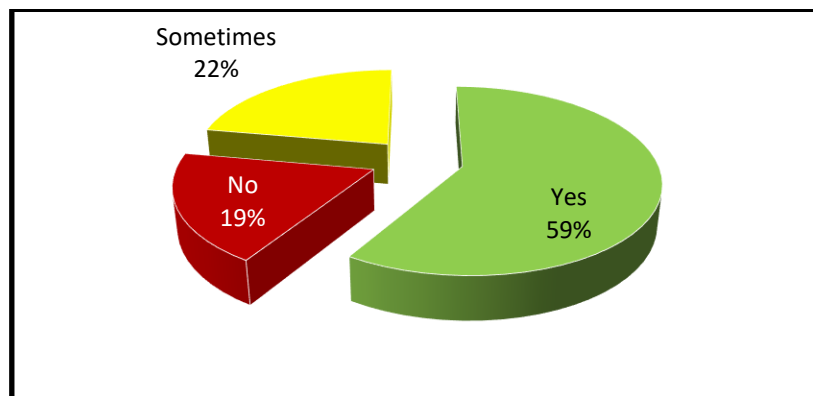


Fig 5: Observing child's note book

An astonishing 72% of parents were found to be satisfied with the learning level of their children, they felt their children can read according to their class. However, this was in

complete mismatch with the reading ability test conducted (in front of parents itself) to the children.

Table 3: Reading Ability Test

Parameter	Class I students Scoring (%)				Class II students Scoring (%)				Class III students Scoring (%)			
	<25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%	<25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%	<25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Varn Pathan	25	10	12	53	13	7	10	70	22	4	4	70
NirarthakShabd	77	8	7	8	37	12	16	35	17	8	15	60
SaathakShabd	91	4	3	2	59	9	13	21	21	9	19	51
Gadya Pathan	89	2	2	7	54	7	4	31	21	4	6	69
GadyaPrashn-Uttar	91	3	3	3	68	7	9	16	33	10	15	41

There was no significant difference found between the reading abilities of boys and girls. However, if one looks with the children contributing in the household work with a gender perspective, it was found that in as high as in 68% household girls contribution was more than that of boys.

As far as Parents' relation with school is concerned they are aware about the existence about School Management Committees (SMC). A high of 74% said that they visit their children's school, however 3/4th of all who visit schools do that for attending some kind of function or meeting. There was clear correlation found between the education of parents and their probability of visiting schools.

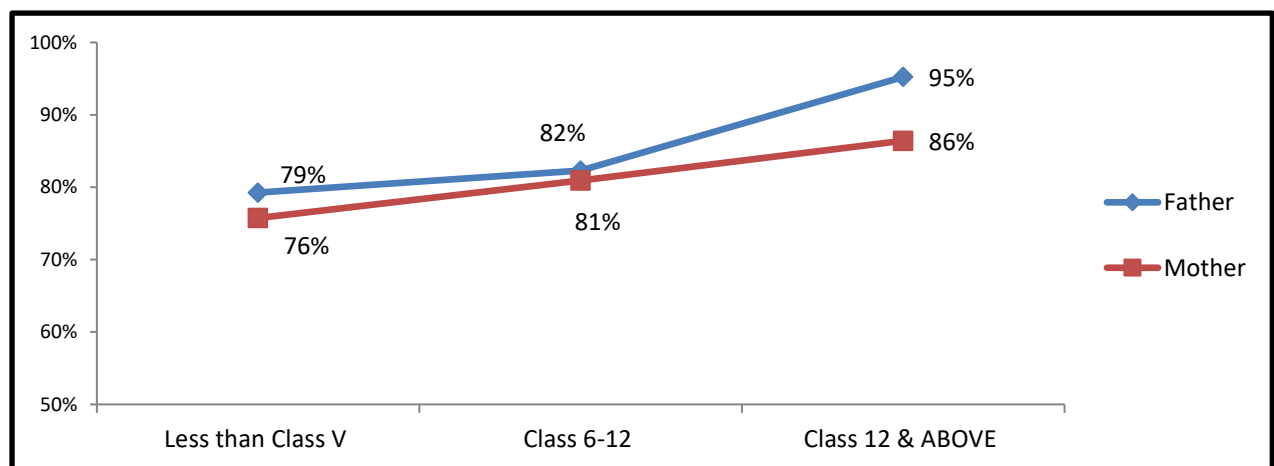


Fig 6 : Parents' Probability of visiting school

As the education of parents' increase the probability of visiting school also increases.

Discussion

Parental involvement is crucial as it acts as a bridge between the home and the school and aids in the socialization of the child.¹¹ However, the parenting style too has to be given due consideration. It is seen that socio-demographic and cultural factors such as the gender, literacy rate, region, income of the parent influence the parenting style to a great extent.¹² Research shows that a parenting style that is too controlling results in negative outcomes than the ones which involve indirect participation.¹³ The good thing is that parenting styles do not remain the same and change over time with the school transactions.¹⁴ This brings us to the conclusion that parenting styles and thus parental involvement is subject to change and therefore, the schools or the interventionists should be more communicative with the parents.¹⁵

It must be understood that the values and the expectations (academic socialization) that a family attaches with the education of the child, has a major role to play in parental involvement and thus the academic performance of their children.^{16,17}

So, based on different perceptions, parents might believe that their role ends with the admission of the child in the school.¹⁸ Parents experiencing socio-economic disparities may also hesitate to involve in school related activities due to lack of cultural capital,¹⁹ communication skills, paucity of time etc.

Therefore, parental involvement should not be seen as a simple component that may bring desirable results. There is much more to parental involvement and includes mechanisms

¹¹Aunola K, Stattin H and Nurmi J. 2000. Parenting styles and adolescents' achievement strategies. *Journal of Adolescence* 23(2): 205-222.

¹² Berg R, Noort L. Parental Involvement in Primary Education in Uganda. 2011. Thesis

¹³Fernández, Suárez-Álvarez, &Muñiz, 2014. Adolescents' homework performance in mathematics and science: personal factors and teaching practices. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 107(4): 1075–1085.

¹⁴ Dumont H, Trautwein U, Nagy G and Nagengast B. 2014. Quality of parental homework involvement: predictors and reciprocal relations with academic functioning in the reading domain. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 106(1):144.

¹⁵ Fernández-Alonso R. et al. 2017 _____

¹⁶Castro et al. 2015. Parental involvement on student academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Educational Research Review* 14 (2015) 33–46.

¹⁷ Fernández-Alonso R. et al. 2017. Parental involvement and academic performance: Less control and more communication. *Psicothema* 29(4):453-461.

¹⁸ Hornby G and Lafaele R. 2011. Barriers to parental involvement in education: An explanatory model. *Educational Review* 63(1): 37-52.

¹⁹ Reay D. 2004. Education and Cultural Capital: The Implications of Changing Trends in Education Policies. *Cultural Trends* 13(2):73-86.

like parental encouragement, parental modelling, parental reinforcement, and parental instruction.²⁰

Conclusion

It can be concluded that training the parents in communication and other skills is indispensable and the interventionists or the school administration would have to invest more in it. Also, involving the community or hiring and training them for educational purposes would be an added advantage as these are well acquainted with the local.

Therefore, in order to target the intricacies involved in the process of enhancing the learning outcomes children's perceptions are crucial and should be given due consideration. Children's involvement is also very crucial as educational outcomes are usually based on 'social desirability.'²¹ Therefore, children should be made part of educational processes that involve imagining, designing and bringing a change to the existing learning environments. This will indirectly result in children realizing their own potential and undergoing new experiences.

²⁰Hoover-Dempsey K, Walke JMT, Sandler HM, Whetsel D, Green CL, Wilkins AS and Closson K. 2005. Why Do Parents become involved? research findings and implications. *The Elementary School Journal* 106(2): 105-130

²¹Dumont H, Trautwein U, Nagy G and Nagengast B. 2014