

Teacher's Absenteeism and Strategy to insure their Presence

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Abstract

Teacher absenteeism is a common and most effecting and severe problem of educational system all over the world. Absenteeism among teachers and medical personnel is widely cited in development literature as a barrier to improving education and health levels in developing countries. This study mainly concerns with the gender ratio in teacher absenteeism at primary level schools of Uttar Pradesh governed by state Government. Many reasons for teacher absenteeism have been revealed. It is the need of the time to make an effective strategy to ensure teachers presence in the classrooms and schools.

India is a country struggling for achieving the goal of total literacy. India ranks 99th in the list of Education for All (EFA) development index among 125 countries, even though there have been reductions in the number of out-of-school children since 2004. According to the UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report 2007 on EFA there are not enough qualified and motivated teachers to reach the EFA goals. Teachers are in the key role of the target of achieving the total literacy so we cannot assume their role as a stagnate stakeholder because they effect not only the educational system but also give a deep impact on the construction and reformation of child's life. A World Bank survey Conducted in six countries -- Bangladesh, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Peru and Uganda -- to measure how widespread the problem is, the project surveyed 3,700 schools in 20 Indian states has found that 25 percent school teachers in India are missing from work, thus leaving a gap in the government's attempt to deliver primary education to all. 'Twenty-five percent of government primary school teachers in India are absent from work. Only 50 percent of teachers are actually engaged in the act of teaching while at work,' Different studies have arrived at distinct conclusions, but the most current research indicates that there is, indeed, a correlation between teacher attendance and student learning. In one urban school district, three Harvard researchers found that "teachers' absences have a effective impact on productivity and 10 additional days of teacher absence reduce student achievement in fourth grade mathematics by 3.3 percent of a standard deviation." Reagen T. Miller et al., *Do Teacher Absences Impact Student Achievement?* "Where teachers had the greatest number of absences, individual standardized test scores were lowered, student rank in class was lowered, and over all school scores were down as a result of frequent absences." Jacobs & Kritsonis (citing Woods & Montagno). The number of days that a teacher is absent increases, the level of student achievement decreases. All these study indicates that the educational system of most of the country is suffering with teacher absenteeism. It has become a severe problem at every level of educational system in India. Although Educational administration throughout the nation have used a wide variety of methods to reduce teacher absences but we are not getting the appropriate results, because several of these measures often are implemented simultaneously, it can be difficult to determine which particular method is more effective for getting the desired result. Our schools of India of

every level are also suffering with the problem of teacher absenteeism which is affecting poorly, most of the national goals of education. Indeed, the Indian government has spent a mass on primary education, mainly through the program Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, which was financed by a special education target. Improving infrastructure and teacher quality and teaching learning environment have been the main goals of this program. It should be pointed out that if teachers don't even show up to work, all these efforts are in vain. This study is a snapshot of the present situation of teacher absenteeism in Parishadiya Schools of Uttar Pradesh.

OBJECTIVES:- The objectives of the study were:-

1. To assess the percentage of teachers remaining absent from school.
2. To find out the average number of teachers present on a typical working day in relation to the number of teachers posted in remote area school
3. To find out the difference between absence rate of male and female teachers,
4. To find out the reasons of absence of teachers from the school in addition to above objectives.

RESEARCH DESIGN- Researcher found **Descriptive Survey Research Design** to be the most suitable for this investigation.

Design of the study

- (a) Collection of secondary data from records of the sample schools.
- (b) Collection of primary data from sample schools through, planned but unannounced schools visit, observations of school organizational work and interviews.

Sampling procedure

The study was confined to six districts of Uttar Pradesh. The sample districts identified for the study were Gorakhpur, Balrampur, Varanasi, Bhadohi, Fatehpur, and Meerat. The target populations were all teachers in government, primary and upper primary schools. Within each stratum, schools were further stratified into primary schools and upper primary schools. Selection of schools for each substratum was undertaken by using circular systematic sampling.

Tools for Data Collection

Information from teachers and attendance of students was using the following schedule.

Ts1 – School Schedule

Ts2 – Teacher questionnaire

Ts3 – Schedule for recording teachers attendance

Data Collection

Collection of data from the schools was being done by the investigator and survey team. All the sampled primary/upper primary schools were visited three times within a period of about three months by a team of two investigators. Each visit was an unannounced visit. The gap between two visits is 3 to 4 weeks. Team collected data by enumerating students; teachers found to be absent and were scrutinized by the investigators for complete and consistent information. The sample size for the study in Uttar Pradesh is given below:-

Districts.	Primary Schools	Upper Primary Schools	Teachers	Students
06	360	102	503	3060

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS- Analysis, discussion and interpretation of the data collected from observation of Primary Schools, teachers, students of selected districts of Uttar Pradesh, leads to major findings.

Percentage of teachers remaining absent from school

Fig-1

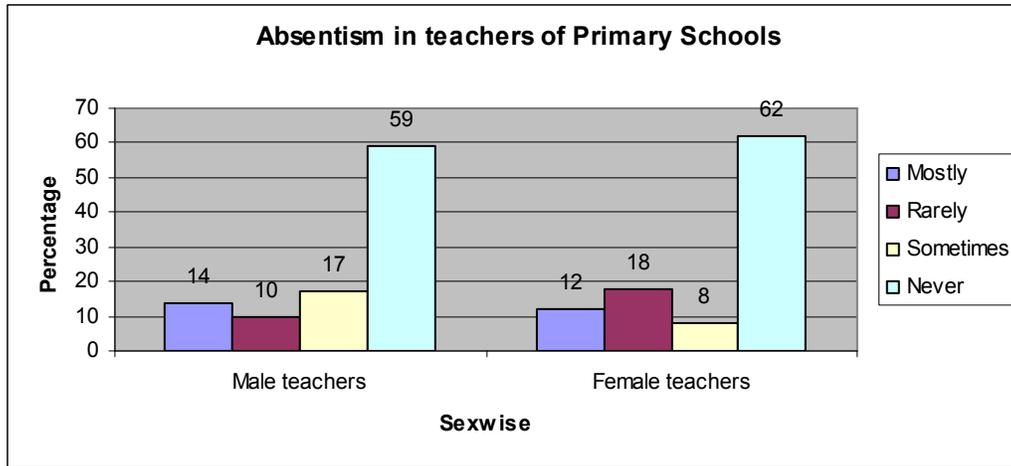


Fig-1 reflects that a significant number of teachers remain absent from schools and worse is that teacher absenteeism is on the rise. The report reveals that mostly 14% male and 12% female teachers of the primary school teachers were not present for duty. About 27% of the male and 26% of the female teachers rarely or sometimes they miss the school. Situation was worse in the upper-primary segment, where 20.2% teachers remained absent. 10.2% upper primary teachers always stayed away from work. Naturally, the percentage of schools with all teachers present has also gone down. Only 59% male and 62 % female teachers found to be in full duty and in full strength. Trends were disheartening.

Fig-2

Teacher absenteeism as per the situation of the school

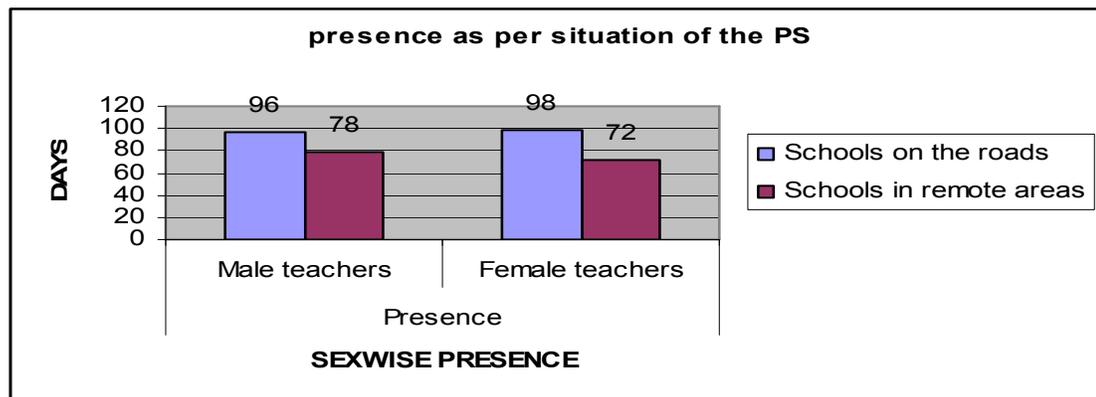
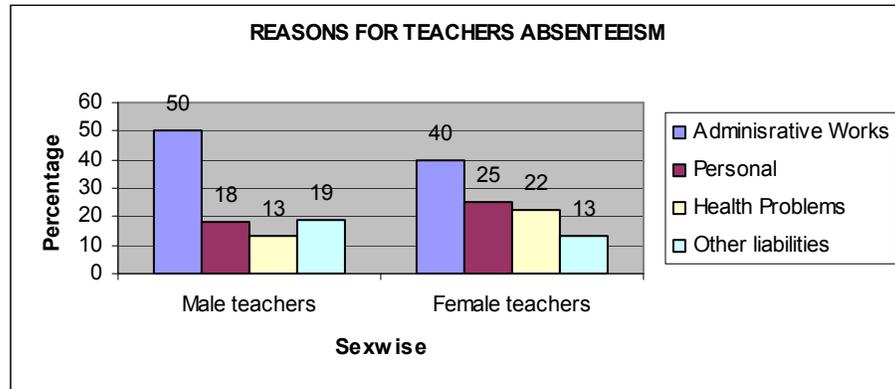


Fig-2 indicates that there is a little difference between the presence of male and female teachers as per situation of the schools but there is a major difference between the teacher's presence in the schools on the roads and the schools of remote areas. It is also strange that female teachers working in remote areas are showing more presence in the schools in comparison to male teachers.

Fig-2
Reasons of absence of teachers from the school



- ❖ Fig-2 reflects the reasons for teacher's absenteeism. It shows that more than 50% of the total missed school day's teachers visit Block Resource Centre for submission of report and other administrative like attending various meetings. In comparison to male teachers, female teachers take fewer initiatives in these works. Out of total 18% male and 25% female teachers miss their school duty for their personal work. Female teachers miss more school duty days due to health problems. .
- ❖ In comparison to female teachers, male teachers take many initiatives in other responsibilities given by the state government. Few teachers participated in political and social activities.
- ❖ During the third unannounced school visit that is last two hours of school, the attendance status of teachers were found to have increased as compared to the first and second visit.
- ❖ 4.2% of male teachers were absent from school and 5.8% of Female teachers have taken leave on the third visit.
- ❖ None of the teachers in the entire visit were found absent from school without intimation.
- ❖ In primary schools teachers spent only 15 days in attending training and meeting.
- ❖ Upper primary school teachers were found to have spent more hours on administrative work as compared to primary schools teachers.
- ❖ Family problems, health of teachers were common reasons for teachers being absent. Residence far away and posting not of teacher liking was a common problem in rural schools.

Twenty-five per cent of teachers at India's government primary schools absent themselves from work on any given day, and only 50% of teachers present in schools

are actually engaged in teaching, says a recent World Bank research project on teacher absenteeism.



Strategy to ensure Presence of teachers in the schools

Quality of learning in the classroom has to be ensured with the total involvement of teachers administrative structures and intervention can only be supportive and facilitative. In order to provide education of satisfactory quality an important requirement is that teachers teach whatever they are supposed to teach and students remain in the class when teaching is going on. If teachers are not present on all the working days and no teaching takes place because of the absence of teachers, either the prescribed course of any given class will not be completed or will be completed in unsatisfactory manner. Thus teacher absence affects the quality of education.

- ❖ The study by researchers at the World Bank and Harvard University found better pay also doesn't lower absenteeism. Older teachers, more educated teachers and head teachers have better salaries but are also absent frequently. So some other possible solutions to be highlighted:-
- ❖ Most researchers agree that attendance improves when districts require teachers to report their absence directly to their supervisors detailed for this.
- ❖ The most effective policy for reducing absenteeism was found to be requiring teachers to speak to the principal when they call in sick.” (Best of ERIC on Educational Absenteeism 2010)
- ❖ Educational administration must devote extra time tending to behavior problems and/or pedagogical concerns in substitute teachers' classrooms, and they also must evaluate the performance of substitutes.
- ❖ Several experts recommend close tracking of absence data. An attendance information data system should be established and that will include data on teacher absences, excuses given, and so forth.
- ❖ Educational Administration should proactively communicate to teachers their attendance expectations and results of their absence-reduction programs.
- ❖ Some researchers also advocate dissemination of actual attendance data (presumably in the aggregate, as opposed to data on each individual teacher.
- ❖ For an attendance-improvement program to be effective, the school board should make it clear to principals that they will be held accountable for implementation. Principals should be asked “to closely monitor the attendance patterns in their schools and to immediately discuss inconsistent attendance with teachers.
- ❖ Healthy teachers are less likely to fall ill, and a wellness program can encourage good health. The Dallas Independent School District reduced teacher absenteeism after it offered its staff “medical screening, fitness assessment, goal setting, exercise and nutrition prescriptions, health education, exercise classes, motivation, and feedback.” (Thomas R. Collingwood, This Good-Health Regimen Keeps Employees [sic]—And School Budgets Trim.)
- ❖ Multiple researchers suggest the inclusion of attendance information on teacher evaluations.
- ❖ Numerous studies have documented higher rates of absence for female employees than male employees but it is not true in present context female teachers found more devoted in their work in comparison to male teachers.

- ❖ There should be facilities for games and sports, drinking water, electricity connection and a school library with significant member of text books, story books and other reference reading – learning materials. Relevant teaching materials and teaching aids to both primary and upper primary schools should be equipped.
- ❖ Teacher’s trainings should motivate teachers’ professional motivation, and therefore might be hoped to improve attendance.
- ❖ Continuous and comprehensive evaluation should be followed both at the primary and primary level to motivate the teachers to be more regular in their classes.
- ❖ Maintaining data base of all teachers helps to avoid deputing the same teachers to same type of training and also serves as an objective monitoring to all the records of the teachers.
- ❖ These should be more stringent ways of regulating and enforcing service rules relating to absenteeism of teachers.
- ❖ .There should be frequent Inspection for schools with more problems of teacher’s absenteeism.
- ❖ Randomized evaluations should be put in place such evaluations should monitor a range of educational outcomes to ensure that these reforms not only increase the educational input of teacher attendance, but also the fundamental objective of student learning.
- ❖ Teachers working in remote areas should be provided extra incentives.
- ❖ Teachers working near to their villages and home town should be posted to another district to ensure their full devotion in teaching.
- ❖ The level of pre-service education of teachers, which is carried out at elementary level should be raised to higher education level.
- ❖ Working conditions of teachers – such as class size, working hours/days and supporting facilities – should be considered.
- ❖ Teacher’s presence percentage should be made criteria of giving promotions and increments
- ❖ Teachers with cent percent attendance should be awarded at district and state level might motivate other teachers to ensure their presence.
- ❖ Teachers’ salaries should be high enough to attract promising young people to the teaching profession and a reasonable balance achieved between their salaries and those of other services.

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