

IDENTIFYING CAUSES FOR SCHOOL REFUSAL AMONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SPSR NELLORE DISTRICT

Dr. R. Balaji Rao* B. Srinivasulu**

*Lecturer, Govt. D.I.E.T., Pallipadu, Indukurpet Mandal, SPSR Nellore District, Andhra Pradesh, India

**School Assistant - English, Z.P.P.H.S., Iskapalli & Lecturer on Deputation, Govt. D.I.E.T., Pallipadu, SPSR Nellore District, Andhra Pradesh, India

Abstract— *the present study is an ardent effort to identify the causes for school refusal among the primary school children. The purpose of the study was to determine the influence of demographic variables such as gender, locality, and the caste of the student, type of the school management, father's education and mother's education on School Refusal. School Phobia Checklist developed by the investigator was administered to assess the causes for School Refusal of the subjects (N=200). To test the hypotheses, the data was analyzed using relevant statistical techniques like percentages, critical ratio's, t-test etc. Findings suggested that there is significant impact of demographic variables on School Refusal. The present study found out the causes for absenteeism and drop out in the school children because of school refusal with special reference to the elementary school level. It helps to find out the methods of overcoming these problems.*

Index Terms— *School Refusal, Elementary School Students, Caste, Locality, Father's/Mother's Education*

I. INTRODUCTION

“School Refusal” or ‘Didaskaleinophobia’ (School Phobia) is commonly encountered by parents. Some possible factors that could precipitate this behaviour are that the child is bullied in school, moving to a new area and having to start at a new school and making new friends is also a factor. Sometimes, it could be because the child is away from school for a long period either because of an illness or a holiday. Bereavement or the loss of pet, the arrival of a baby, illness in the family, separation, divorce, abuse or being witness to a tragic event, not being popular or academically successful could also trigger such behaviour. It occurs in one to two percent of teenagers and is associated with school refusal. Playing truant is common among children. Parents should realise the difference between children who develop Didaskaleinophobia and those who play truant. For the latter the problem normally resides in the school whereas for the child with a school refusal the problem lies at home. The child who plays truant generally dislikes school and may be victim to a teacher's ridicule, scolding or violence. The child may also be a member of a subculture and may be having difficulties in adjusting to the demands of the culture of the school. In contrast, the child who has a school refusal usually loves school and when he or she does manage to get thee will be a model student.

School refusal can create more significant problem to children, teachers, parents and school authorities. Children with school refusal show a severe emotional upset, excessive fearfulness, anxiety, anger etc. The child having school refusal always likes to stay at home. This will create tension, anxiety problem in the parents. School refusal is characterized by severe difficulty in attending school often amounts to prolonged absence. The teacher and the school authority face several problems, if a student is not presenting the school for a long period. Therefore, a study of school refusal helps the parents, teacher and the school authorities to find out the causative factors for school refusal and take appropriate remedial measures. If the child has other difficulties beyond school refusal, they will be addressed. These problems should be found and remedied in the elementary stage of the child since elementary stage plays an important and significant role in developing good character, creativity and knowledge in the childhood.

The National Policy of Education (1986) gave importance to the Universalization of Elementary Education. The Universalization of Elementary Education has to meet three demands; Universal provisions, Universal enrolment and Universal retention. Among these three factors, universal retention is the most important problems face by the government and education administrators. If a child leaves the school without the completion of his course, the ideal of universalization of elementary education stands defeated. School refusal is one of the most important reasons for school with drawl. So, a study of school refusal helps the school authority to retain their children in the school through satisfying their needs. The experience of joining with school personnel to successfully reintegrate a phobic child into the school will allow parents to learn what works and what does not for their boy or girl. Keeping in this view, the present study is focused to examine the impact of gender, locality, and the caste of the student, type of the school management, father's education and mother's education in the Elementary School Students on their School Refusal. The following objectives are formulated for the present study.

II. OBJECTIVES

- To identify the causative factors of school refusal in the elementary school children.
- To find the percentage of students with school refusal in elementary schools.
- To find whether there is any significant difference in the level of school refusal between boys and girls students.
- To find whether there is any significant difference in the level of school refusal among the different caste students.
- To find whether there is any influence of the education of the father / mother on the level of school refusal of school children.
- To find out the percentage of students with the school refusal in the elementary schools located in rural and urban areas.
- To find out whether there is any difference in the causative factors of school refusal between the students studying in government and private management schools.

III. HYPOTHESES

- In general a large percentage of students are suffering with school refusal.
- There will be no significant difference between the level of school refusal of boys and girls.
- There will be no significant difference between the school refusal of children and their caste.
- Father education of the school children will not show any significant influence on their level of school refusal.
- Mother education of the school children will not show any significant influence on their level of school refusal.
- There will be no significant difference between the level of school refusal of rural and urban school children.
- There will be no significant difference between the level of school refusal of government and private school children.

IV. TOOL, SAMPLE AND METHODOLOGY

In order to identify the causative factors of the school refusal among the elementary school children, normative and exploratory method was adopted by the investigator. A bio-data sheet was prepared seeking information about the student's gender, locality, type of school management; father's education and mother's education are taken into consideration. For collection of relevant data, a School Phobia Check-List (Student Version) prepared and standardized by the investigator was used. The investigator fixed criteria for scoring the tool. The statements are related to different factors of school refusal like School factor, Peer factor, Psychological factors, Academic factors, Family factors, Teacher factors etc. are included in the check list. The tool consists of 25 Yes/No statements. All the statements included in the check-list are positive statements. For 'Yes' response a score of '1' and for 'No' response a score of '0' is given. The total score is the sum of individual scores. Higher the score the chance is more for that child to come under the category of school refusal. The sample of the present investigation consisted of 200 Primary/Upper-Primary School Students studying classes 5, 6 and 7 and 20 schools were selected randomly under different managements in SPSR Nellore District of Andhra Pradesh and the sample included gender, management and locality in equal. Thus the check-lists scores obtained by each of student on all variables were computed. The data was analyzed using relevant statistical techniques like percentages, critical ratio's, t-test etc. The usual levels of significance viz., 0.05 and 0.01 were employed to test the significance of the obtained values.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table-1: Overall analysis of School Refusal among the different categories of Elementary School Students

S. No.	Variable	Category	Total No. of students	No. of students with school refusal	% of students with school refusal
1.	Total		200	128	64.00
2.	Gender	Boys	86	47	55.00
		Girls	114	89	78.00
3.	Caste	SC/ST	57	39	68.00
		BC	81	49	60.00
		OC	62	37	59.00
4.	Father Education	Illiterate	26	18	69.00
		Up to High school	95	40	42.00
		College and above	79	37	46.00
5.	Mother Education	Illiterate	65	39	60.00
		Up to High school	119	44	37.00
		College and above	16	4	25.00
6.	Locality	Rural	140	63	45.00
		Urban	60	19	32.00
7.	Type of School	Primary	80	28	47.00
		Upper Primary	120	79	66.00
8.	Management	Government	80	22	28.00
		Private	120	84	70.00

From the Table-1,

- It could be seen that a large percentage of students are suffering from school refusal. There are 64.00 % of school going children are suffering from refusal.
- In category 'gender' it can be understood that 47 students out of 86 students are suffering from school refusal of the boys (55.00) is less than that of girl students (78.00).
- The percentages of the students of SC/ST, backward and general community students are 68.00, 60.00 and 59.00 respectively. This shows that there is a great pressure on the SC/ST community students in all aspects compared to the other community students.
- It could also be seen that 45.00 per cent of rural area school students are suffering from school refusal. This per cent is more when compared to the urban area school students (32.00).
- The students who are studying in upper primary schools are suffering with school refusal more than the students studying in primary schools. The percentages obtained in school refusal by the upper primary school students and primary school children are 47.00 and 66.00 respectively.
- The students who are studying in government-managed schools are suffering less School Refusal compared to the students studying in private managed schools. The percentages of school refusal obtained by the students who are studying in government schools and private schools are 22.00 and 84.00 respectively.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study helped to find the causes for School Refusal in Elementary School Students such as – lack of confidence in study matters, defective school atmosphere, poor study habits and poor teaching etc. and over attention by the teachers and family members, lack of interest in the school activities, lack of peer group interaction etc. Knowledge about the causative factors of school refusal helps the teacher, the school authorities and the parents to tackle the phobic problem of the child. The study helps the parents, teachers and the school authority to provide guidance to the students having school refusal.

REFERENCES

- [1] Achenbach, N.P. (1973): At risk teachers, Honolulu, HI: Pacific Resources for Education and Learning.
- [2] Aluedse, O. (2006) Bullying in Schools: A Form of Child Abuse in Schools. *Educational Research Quarterly*, 30, 1,37-49.
- [3] Barlow, D.H and Waddell, M.T. (1985). Agoraphobia (In) D.H. Barlow, *Clinical Handbook of Psychological disorder*, New York: Guilford.
- [4] Beck, A.T. (1985). *Anxiety disorders and Phobias: A cognitive Perspective*, New York: Basic Books.
- [5] Bernard, G.J (2008). Phobic disorder among the school children and influencing factors, *Journal of Applied Psychology and Education*, Vol. 21. July, p.15
- [6] Best, J.W. (1990). *Research in Education, USA: Prentice and Hall, Inc.*
- [7] Blagg, N. and Yule, W. (1984). The behavioural treatment of school refusal: A Comparative Study: *Behavioural Research and Therapy*, 22, 119 – 127.
- [8] Brendel, K. E., & Maynard, B. R. (2014). Child–parent interventions for childhood anxiety disorders: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 24(3), 287-295.
- [9] Brenstein , G.A, Massie, E.D, Thuras, P.D, and Crosby, R.D (1997). Somatic symptoms in anxious-depressed school refusers, *Journal of American Academic Child Adolescent Psychiatry*, 36, 66-668.
- [10] Brenstein , G.A., Hektner, J.M. and McMillian, M.H. (2001). Treatment of school refusal: One year follow up. *Journal of American academic Adolescent Psychiatry*, 40, 206-213.
- [11] Bruke, A.E., Silverman, W.K. (1987): The perspective treatment of school refusal. *Clinical Psychological Review*.7, 353 – 362.
- [12] Carroll, H. C. M. (2010). The effect of pupil absenteeism on literacy and numeracy in the primary school. *School Psychology International*, 31, 115–131.
- [13] Colter, S. (1986). *Epidemiology and outcome: Behavioural disorders in infants, children and adolescents*, New York: Random House.
- [14] Csoti, M. (2003). *School phobia, panic attacks, and anxiety in children*. New York: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- [15] Eaton, W.W and Keyl, P.M. (1990). Risk factor for the onset of diagnostic interview, Schedule DSM-III, agoraphobia in perspective, population – based study, *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 47, 819-825.
- [16] Eaton, W.W., Kessler, I. And Magee, Y. (1994): Teachers attitude towards the students and their problems, 33-47.
- [17] Fox, C. L. and Boulton, M. J. (2005). The social skills problems of victims of school phobia: Self, peer and teacher perceptions. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 75, 313-328.
- [18] Ghouse Basha, Sk. (2009). A study to identify the causative factors of school phobia among elementary school children, M.Phil, Dissertation, M.S.University, Turunelvali. T.N.
- [19] Gini, G. (2006) Phobia as a Social Process: The role of group membership in student's perception of inter-group aggression at school. *Journal of School Psychology*, 44, 1, 51-65.
- [20] Gopalan, S. (2010). Impact of certain psychological factors on the school phobia disorder in school children, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. VIII, Feb, 2010
- [21] Good. C.V. et. al., (1948): *Methodology of Educational research*, New York, Appleton Century Crafts, Inc, 164-184.
- [22] Gruber, James E. and Fineran, Susan (2007). The impact of school phobia and sexual harassment on middle and high school girls. *Violence Against Women*, June, Vol. 13, Issue 6, pp. 627-643.
- [23] Hersov, L.A (1960). Refusal to go to School, *Child psychiatry*, 1, 137-145.
- [24] Heyne, D., King, N.J and Cooper, H. (2001). School Refusal: Epidemiology and management, *Pediatric Drugs*, 3,719 – 732.
- [25] Johnson, A.M. (1999). School of Phobia, Workshop Discussion: *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 27, 307 – 309.
- [26] Johnson, A.M., Falstein. E., Szurek, S.A and Svendsersen, M. (1941). School Phobia, *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 11, 702 – 711.
- [27] Kearney, C.A. (1985). School Refusal behaviour, *clinical Handbook of Northvale, NJ*. 61 – 66.
- [28] Kearney, C. A. (2007). *Getting your child to say “yes” to school*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- [29] Kearney, C. A. (2008). *Helping school refusing children & their parents: A guide for school-based professionals*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- [30] Kennedy, W.A. (1965). School Phobia: Rapid treatment of fifty cases, *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 70, 285 – 289.
- [31] King, N.J., Hamilton, D.I. and Otlendick, T.H. (1994). Children’s Phobias: A behaviour Perspective.
- [32] Last, C.G., and Strauss, C.C (1990). School refusal in anxiety – disordered children and adolescents, *American Journal of Academic Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 29, 31 – 35.
- [33] Lindersay, F.W. (1991): Effects of student – teacher relationships, *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 70, 33-52.
- [34] Lyon, A. R., & Cotler, S. (2009). Multi-systemic intervention for school refusal behavior: Integrating approaches across disciplines. *Advances in School Mental Health Promotion*, 2(1), 20-34.
- [35] Mahoney, H. (1992): Stress and defence: Student behaviour, *Journal of Health and Social behaviour*, 25, 303-320.
- [36] Martin, M and Waltham – Greenwood, C. (1995). *Solve your child’s school related problems*, New York: Perennial (School Phobia, 208-213).
- [37] Mashe, E.J and Wolfe, D.A (1999). *Abnormal Child Psychology*, Belmont, C.A.Wadsworth.
- [38] McGuckin, C. and Lewis, C. A. (2006) Experiences of school phobia in Northern Ireland: Data from the life and times survey. *Adolescence*, vol. 41, 162, pp. 313-320.

- [39] Naylor, P. and Cowie, H, *et. al.* (2006) Teacher's and Pupil's Definitions of School phobia. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol. 76, 3, pp. 553-576.
- [40] OST, L.G. (1987). Age of onset in different Phobias, *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 96, 223 – 229.
- [41] Paige, L.Z. (1993). The identification of treatment of school phobia, Silver Spring, M.D: National Association of School Psychologists.
- [42] Philbrick, A and Tansey, K (2000). School Refusal: Children who are anxious and reluctant to attend school, Tamworth, NASEN.
- [43] Popper, C.W. (1993). Psychopharmacologic treatment of anxiety disorders in adolescents and children.
- [44] Rigby, K. and Slee, P. T. (1999) School phobia among Australian school children: Reported behaviour and attitudes toward victims. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 131 (5), pp. 615-627.
- [45] Ruprik, P. (1990). The teacher and School Phobia. Doncaster: Apronstirngs Education.
- [46] Schmitt. W.S (1996): Professional isolation and student behaviour, *Psychological Reports*, 84, 943-946.
- [47] Sidana and Sinha, D. (1973). Child rearing, Practices and development of fear in children, *Indian Journal of Psychology*, 48, 34 – 48.
- [48] Singh. S.S. (1983): The mechanisms of school phobia among school children, *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 69, 517-531.
- [49] Silverman, W.K. and Kurtines, W.M. (1996). (1996). *Anxiety and phobic disorders: A Pragmatic Approach*, New York: Plenum Press.
- [50] Smith, P. K., Madsen, K. and Moody, J. (1999). What causes the age decline in reports of being phobia at school? Towards a developmental analysis of risks of being anxiety. *Educational Research*, 41, 267-285.
- [51] Sudharaj, N. (2009). Causes and consequences of school phobic disorder of elementary school children, *Experiments in Education*, Vol. XXXV, No.2, pp. 18-20.
- [52] Yoneyama, S. and Rigby, K. (2006) Phobic Students and Classroom Climate. *Youth Studies Australia*, Vol. 25, 3, pp. 34-41.
- [53] Youngers, C. (1996): The relationship between school phobia and teacher adjustment, *Dissertation abstracts international*, 60, 1944.
- [54] Waldfoegel S. et.al. (1987). A programme for early intervention in school phobia, *Abnormal Psychology*, 21, 147 – 149.
- [55] Wanda.P.Foremont. (1992). School refusal in children and adolescence, State University of New York. 84-87.
- [56] Whitney, I. and Smith, P. K. (1993) A survey of the nature and extent of school phobia in junior/middle and secondary schools. *Educational Research*, 35, 3-25.
- [57] Wig, N and Akthar, S. (1974). Twenty five years of Psychiatric research in India, *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 16, 16-48.
- [58] Wimmer, M. B. (2003). School refusal: Assessment and intervention within school settings. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

