

# Research Practices Among the School Teachers to Foster the Psychosocial Wellbeing of The school Students of Tamilnadu

Vijimon I<sup>1</sup>, Dr. R. Dakshinamurthy<sup>2</sup>, Dr. N Rajavel<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Center for Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli.

<sup>2</sup>Professor & Director (Retd.) Center for Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli.

<sup>3</sup>Assistant professor, Department of Social Work, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli.

## Abstract

Researches carried out to profusely unearth the subtle challenges that would throw light into redesigning the ways and means to achieve the précised expected outcomes from every filed of expertise. The modern technologically driven educational environment poses opportunities as well as equal or a greater number of challenges for the stakeholders of the field upfront. The study here proposes tounderstand the research practices undertaken by the school teachers/administrators to foster the psychosocial wellbeing of the school going students of Tamilnadu. Data collected with the help of a questionnaire that contains the details of number of case works, group works, cases reported for counselling and guidance, remedial plans, diagnosis of learning difficulties and management, number of poor school performers among the students and the nature of problems reported. 12 schools from 12 different districts of Tamilnadu were consulted and interviewed the administrators and senior teachers, conducted a focus group discussion on the activities undertaken by the teachers to foster the psychosocial wellbeing of the students studying in these schools. The findings suggest better reflective and scientific research practices are yet not been a custom in the schools of Tamilnau and invite the concentrated attention of the authorities to orient and train the teaching community.

**Key words:** Research, school teachers, students, psychosocial wellbeing, learning difficulties, learning disabilities, behavioural issues.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education at the global level experiences drastic changes in both scholastic and co-scholastic arenas with the technological innovations such as artificial intelligence and makes the tough going hard among the stakeholders qualitatively and quantitatively. Educators at the wider world seek continuous and comprehensive improvement of the system consistently (Govinda, I. L. 2012) in the midst of the abovesaid technological acceleration. Addressing the challenges at the micro level needs systematic research programmes simultaneously with the teaching and learning process. The intention here is to throw light into the research practices of school administrators

as well as the teachers to address the psychosocial wellbeing of the primary school going students.

Among, the school going population primary school children between six to twelve years whoare naturally curious and industrious and the same could be retained if all other relevant fields around them remain absorbable. Adolescents is a period when we observe that the children struggle between the process ofdefining one's identity and the depressing role confusion or repudiation and refusal as the end products if not cared appropriately. Understanding the psychosocial problems of the adolescents demand timely interventions from the teaching community and the organization that provides education.Action research is one of such

activities that would potentially direct us to delve into the areas pertained to differential age groups as mentioned above. The teacher researcher shall initiate an action that can generate constructive knowledge and practical solution to the challenges in a cyclical manner as stated by Altrichter, et al., (2007). Generating research activities that would promulgate the unique means of understanding the students itself would add to the quality expected out of the teaching learning process. One such strategy is to conduct regular action research in our schools to locate the challenges precisely. Action research is conducted worldwide to improve any system. This is an up ended activity that would assist any organization to excel in their activities. Schools too are not exception in conducting action research and try their best in achieving the maximum outputs as expected. (Kember, 2000; Mills, 2003). In action research the teachers themselves find the viable alternatives to better their outcomes through continuous evaluation of the practices undertaken by them. (Best and Kahn, 1986)

### **Objective of the Study**

To understand the research practices undertaken by the school teachers to foster the psychosocial wellbeing of the school students of Tamilnadu.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A quantitative research methodology is adopted to collect the existing recorded information from the schools supported with qualitative inputs by interviewing the teachers and administrators through focus group discussion.

### **Research Design**

A structured questionnaire was employed by the researcher and collected the data with the help of interviewing and recording the transactions between the researcher and the participants and used descriptive research design.

### **Data Collection**

Structured questionnaire focusing on the research activities undertaken by the teachers and administrators at the school was used to collect the data.

### **Sample Design**

The study employed purposive sampling and conducted focus group discussion to collect qualitative data.

### **Sample Size**

The researcher collected data from 300 teachers and 20 administrators of 12 schools.

### **Significance of the Study**

Schools with research practices find ways and means to positively diagnose the glitches that would hinder providing quality education through reflective analysis of the activities undertaken and therefore, become professionally efficient and exceptional. Teachers at such organizations practice teaching and researching on the same for the better outcomes hand in hand as well as enrich them to teach innovatively through the research outcomes (Watts, 1985, Mills, 2011). The practices across the globe in the educational policies are research oriented and are being consistently sought for ensuring the quality (Bergmark and Hansson 2020). The research in this field seeks to construct the fields of knowledge that augment the growing demands associated with the communities that bank on education. Knowing the subtleties through action researches would effectively limit the challenges and at the same time would accelerate the process of problem solving across the systems (Norton, 1997). Further, scholars of eminency, many in number believe that reflective learning to make appropriate changes is the key to progress (Hargreaves, 1994). The research practices in the schools intrinsically interwoven with the cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains of the students as far as education is concerned. Other aspects such as impacts of culture,

social and economic factors etc., too are possible areas of investigation that again would link well with the purpose of education. The nature of the action research extensively supports the betterment of pedagogical practices consistently.

The study here, is significant as the teaching practices in Tamilnadu and in the country need a reflective analysis at the grass root level as the application of the learning by the teachers in the classroom, as seen elsewhere in the globe, is still the minimal than what is expected (Groundwater-Smith & Dadds, 2004). Extensive research at the micro level advances the teaching learning process and the collaboration and partnership with the researchers too would update or upgrade the role of teachers in the process qualitatively (Leeman, van Koeven, and Schaafsma 2018). Therefore, it is pivotal to make the move forward in the arena of education and its allied fields to consider and practice researches and the attempt here is to assess the status of the same among the teachers in the state of Tamilnadu. Koshy, V (2005) states that reflective practices in education illuminate knowledge that would resolute the contingencies that one may confront on a regular basis., the continuous inquiry that would refine the experience of the researcher, here the teacher, as the process creates the possibilities and opportunities for identifying, analyzing, synthesizing and appreciating the outcomes for better experience.

### **Review of Research**

Ulrika Bergmark (2020) analyzed the impact of action research in the motivation level of teachers as well as the precision the teachers would have while engaging themselves in the process of teaching and learning. Teachers who simultaneously pursue the teaching and research through reflective practices will have access to better outcomes qualitatively. S. Gebeyehu. (2017) studies on the topic of action research practices among the secondary school teachers of Ethiopia and the findings

show that the teachers though had the experience of conducting action researches could not consistently follow through the practice. The reasons cited here include lack of progressive updating, analyzing the innovative practices and the workload or the struggles that teachers make to meet the demands of the schools. This study reiterates the benefits of action research such as developing the competency of the teachers and improved performance of the students.

O' Brien (2001) states that the action researches in the school sector accelerates the instructional practices and let the teachers as well as the students to locate the underlying reasons for the problems or challenges that are contingent, common or uncommon. The interest and the competency of the teachers too are important and play the vital role in designing and conducting action researches. MacNiff and Whitehead (2006) proposes that the practice of action research is a simple practice that can have enduring influence in the lives of the teacher and taught and also it is a task that everybody can undertake without much effort and special degrees, equipment or expertism but requires an attitude of experimenting and learning new things creatively.

Enala S.L, et al., (2021) described the steps in action research and provided a meaningful summarization of the importance of conducting action research in the field of education and fine tuning the teaching and learning process. This study elaborates the peculiarities of action research as compared to other traditional methods of researches. The paper has also made an attempt at describing the steps in action research. In the concluding section we have discussed the importance of action research to the teacher and all involved in education.

### **Analysis and Interpretations**

The analysis at the broader level focused on the research problems or the areas of

challenges that the schools used for action researches. Major areas of attention were learning difficulties or disabilities and behavioural issues. The problems related to the primary students are not elaborate but constrained to the specific areas mentioned to have desired outcomes. Schools with a dedicated counsellor as not found in the list. A teacher with social work or psychology as one of the subjects was used to maintain the record. However, the practical knowledge or wisdom to analytically review the cases reported by the teachers was still at a long distance as far as these schools are concerned. Advocacy is done to a minimal percentage and considered all the

potential problems as normal in most of the cases.

Schools pay their sincere attention to 'poor school performers'. They consider this as the major area of work to remain unchallenged by their competitors and to welcome the best feedbacks of the parents. Remedial teaching or special coaching is provided extensively by the schools as a practice of managing the problem of low-level performance. The real issues that are more on psychological, social or economic are buried under the carpet or time-tested activities are employed to make over the minimum expected results to show the status of centum achievement.

**General Record of Obtained from the Schools and Teachers**

School	No of Students	Learning Difficulties	Learning Disabilities	Behavioural Issues
A	830	65	3	12
B	755	80	1	10
C	820	98	2	16
D	735	88	0	19
E	640	55	1	13
F	90	16	0	7
G	560	68	0	12
H	760	73	2	18
I	840	90	4	23
J	760	86	0	20
K	540	80	0	14
L	340	45	1	9
12	7,670	844 (11%)	14(0.18%)	173 (2%)

Table 1.

Table 1 provides the details of the quantitative data collected from the schools. The total number of adolescents studying in these schools is 7670. Among these 844 i.e., 11 percentage of them found to have certain learning difficulties and therefore they have become poor school performers. The behavioural issues are recorded only with 2 percentage of the total students. Teachers shared they did not assess the learning difficulties specifically other than the challenges the students had to recall the concepts taught according to their expectations. There were 14 learning disability cases identified and referred to

the counsellors. 10 of them took the transfer certificates and the status is unknown. 4 of them are continuing with the current system as the parents are not ready to accept the reality and the students struggle to read or write. The support of the parents to make the necessary follow up regarding the area of learning disabilities is still a serious concern for the schools.

The following table discusses the case works and the cases advocated for counselling by individual schools. The details include the quantity, nature of the problem, management strategies and the status of outcomes achieved.

## Case Works

School	Quantity	Nature of problem	Management Strategies	Outcomes
A	23/65	Learning Difficulties (LD)	Remedial Teaching	90 percent shown improvement
A	1/10	Behaviour Issues (BI)	Counselling	Corrected the behaviour
B	15/80	LD	Remedial Teaching Counselling for 5	5 students had shown poor results
B	3/10	BI	Counselling	Initial improvements shown but left in due course
C	13/98	LD	Remedial Teaching/ Mentoring	Shown improvement
C	4/16	BI	Counselling	2 of them - Parents did not cooperate, became passive
D	12/88	LD	Remedial Teaching	Shown better results
D	6/19	BI	Counselling	Worked well
E	8/55	LD	Remedial Teaching	Shown improvement
E	2/13	BI	Counselling	Issues solved
F	3/16	LD	Remedial Teaching	Shown better results
F	1/7	BI	Counselling	Cleared the issues
G	6/68	LD	Remedial Teaching	1 could not recover
G	3/12	BI	Counselling	Left the counselling sessions. Issues persisting
H	11/73	LD	Remedial Teaching	4 of them shown very little improvement
H	6/18	BI	Counselling	Issues persisting
I	4/90	LD	Remedial Teaching	Shown improvement
I	8/23	BI	Counselling	3 of them have BI
J	13/86	LD	Remedial Teaching	Shown improvement
J	6/20	BI	Counselling	Worked well
K	10/80	LD	Remedial Teaching	3 of them struggle
K	4/14	BI	Counselling	Issues solved

L	7/45	LD	Remedial Teaching	Shown better results
L	2/9	BI	Counselling	Issues solved

Table 2. Status of Case work undertaken by the teachers

Table 2 is a continuation of the inputs given in table 1. The elaboration or the extended data are pictured in the table to specify the outcomes. The case work practices as part of action researches in these schools focused only on two major areas such as learning difficulties or disabilities and behavioural issues.

Learning disabilities are either neglected or unaddressed appropriately. Reasons stated for this includes negligence of parents, denial of such problems by the parents, unavailing of experts' help, unavailability of a special educator or counsellor in the school, inability of the teachers to diagnose or manage the disabilities etc. 125 cases out of 844 total cases of learning difficulties, which is below 7 percentage, reported were seriously taken into account by the schools. Formal cases studies could not be found even in these cases.

The behavioural issues that are considered for the study ranged from severe, moderate and mild in effect and there found to have around 173 i.e., 2 percentage of the total students, cases reported that are severe in nature. Only 46 of them were taken into account for studying the details. This falls below 4 percentage of the total cases. Out of these studied cases 4 of them were completely solved and the remedial actions found to be satisfactory.

Overall, the cases seriously studied shares 13.18 percentage of the total cases reported. The cases taken to study under the head amounted learning difficulties 11 %, learning disabilities 0.18% and behavioural issues 2%. This is an alarming rate that shows the focus of the schools in dealing with scholastic as well as non-scholastic aspects of children at the school level as the areas we would neglect or untouched in effect would have foreseeable impact in the psychosocial wellbeing of the students as

well as the progress of the school optimistically with the potential expected.

### Group works

All the schools conducted special programmes in the form of assemblies, training, career guidance, personality development classes, seminars and other scholastic and co-scholastic group activities. These activities were general in nature and the objectives were common for every student. Subjective elements and challenges which are unique in character were unaddressed during these sessions. Group work that aims at specific psychosocial interventions were not carried out by any of the schools or teachers structurally.

### 3. CONCLUSION

The primary schools with the children who would be at their productive and script formation stage need specific interventions from the part of the teachers, parents and the concerned authorities. The study conducted here through quantitative and qualitative analysis shows that the action research practices at the school level in Tamilnadu is yet to reach the expected level of quality. Schools in general seem to have engaged solely in producing quantitative outputs in the form of subject oriented results. Qualitative analysis to understand the problems and challenges in depth to find out the psychosocial vulnerabilities among the primary school children is imperative to ensure the desired educational objectives and outcomes. The concerns found here match with the study by Hopkins (2002) as the teachers need training and firsthand experience in conducting action research and thereby acquire confidence in different areas that

would contribute to the growth and development of the school.

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