

“Impact of Activity-Based Teaching and Co-Curricular Activities on Attendance and Enrolment in a Tribal Primary School: A Case Study”

Dr. Pervin Kumar Malik

Director,

Syadwad Institute of Higher Education & Research, Baghpat (UP)

Dr. Sonia Verma Trikha

(HOD of Education Department at SIHER)

Abstract

Student absenteeism and lack of engagement remain significant challenges in rural primary education, despite various governmental initiatives aimed at improving school access and enrollment. The present study investigates the causes of low attendance and learning disengagement in a rural primary school located in Patni village of Majhgawan block, Satna district, Madhya Pradesh, and examines the effectiveness of activity-based and playway learning strategies in addressing these issues. The selected school had an enrollment of 135 students; however, regular attendance was limited to only 35–45 students due to monotonous teaching methods, inadequate learning resources, lack of extracurricular activities, and poor physical infrastructure. Socio-economic challenges further compounded students' disinterest in schooling.

To address these concerns, a structured pedagogical intervention was implemented with the support of B.Ed. second-year trainee teachers of Syadwad Institute of Higher Education & Research, Baghpat (UP) during their internship, under the guidance of mentors. The intervention focused on activity-based, joyful, and experiential learning approaches, replacing traditional textbook-centered instruction. Teaching strategies included games, storytelling, role-play, group activities, art-based learning, and hands-on experiences aligned with the primary curriculum. In addition, trainee teachers conducted regular home visits and community interactions to motivate parents and encourage student participation.

The study adopted a descriptive and action research methodology, using observation, attendance records, and informal interactions for data collection. The intervention was carried out continuously over a period of two months. The findings revealed a significant improvement in student attendance and engagement, with average daily strength increasing from approximately 40 students to nearly 110 students. The study concludes that innovative pedagogical practices combined with teacher training and community involvement can substantially enhance student motivation and participation in rural primary schools, even in resource-constrained settings.

Keywords

Primary Education, Activity-Based Learning, Playway Method, Joyful Learning, Rural Schooling, Student Attendance, B.Ed. Internship, Teacher Training, Educational Intervention, Community Participation, Learning Motivation, Madhya Pradesh

Introduction

Education plays a crucial role in shaping the cognitive, social, and emotional development of children, especially at the primary level. Primary education forms the foundation of lifelong learning, attitudes, and skills. However, in many rural areas of India, despite the availability of schools and government initiatives, student attendance and engagement remain major challenges. Factors such as lack of resources, traditional teaching methods, socio-economic conditions, and absence of child-centered learning environments often result in student disinterest and irregular attendance. This research study focuses on addressing these challenges through activity-based and playway learning strategies implemented with the support of B.Ed. second-year trainee teachers.

The present study was conducted in a primary school located in Patni village, which falls under Majhgawan block of Satna district, Madhya Pradesh. Patni is a rural village where agriculture is the primary source of livelihood. The village reflects typical rural characteristics such as limited infrastructure, low socio-economic conditions, and restricted access to educational resources. Most families in the village depend on daily wage labor or farming, and education is often not prioritized due to economic pressures and lack of awareness. Seasonal migration, poverty, and limited parental involvement further affect children's regular attendance in school.

The primary school selected for this study had a total enrollment of 135 students, but regular attendance was alarmingly low. On most days, only 35–45 students attended school, while the majority showed little interest in coming regularly. During the initial survey and observation, it was found that students were bored with the conventional teaching methods regularly used in classrooms. The teaching-learning process was largely textbook-centered, teacher-dominated, and lacked interaction, creativity, and learner participation. As a result, students found learning monotonous and disengaging.

Another significant issue identified was the absence of extracurricular and co-curricular activities. There were no regular activities related to games, art, music, storytelling, or creative expression. Learning remained confined to rote memorization, which failed to stimulate curiosity or enjoyment among learners. Furthermore, the availability of educational and physical resources was very limited. The school lacked adequate teaching aids, learning materials, and play equipment. Existing playing equipment was either damaged or insufficient for the number of students.

The physical condition of the school environment also contributed to students' lack of interest. The school did not have a proper boundary wall, raising safety concerns and reducing a sense of belonging and security among students. Many students did not have proper school uniforms, and a large number of children were found attending school without shoes, even during peak winter. These conditions reflected the broader socio-economic challenges faced by the community and had a negative impact on students' confidence, comfort, and motivation to attend school regularly.

In response to these challenges, a structured intervention strategy was planned and implemented with the involvement of B.Ed. second-year students during their internship, under the guidance of their mentors. The trainee teachers adopted activity-based learning, playway methods, and joyful learning strategies instead of traditional lecture-based teaching. The focus was on creating a child-friendly, inclusive, and engaging learning environment where students could actively participate in the learning process.

The trainee teachers designed and conducted lessons using games, group activities, storytelling, role-play, songs, drawing, and hands-on learning experiences aligned with the curriculum. These methods helped in making learning meaningful, enjoyable, and relevant to students' daily lives. The classroom atmosphere gradually transformed from passive listening to active engagement, where students felt motivated to express themselves freely.

In addition to classroom interventions, the trainee teachers took the initiative to personally approach the homes of students who were irregular or absent. Through continuous home visits, discussions with parents, and community interaction, they helped parents understand the importance of education and assured them that the school environment had changed positively. Parents were convinced that their children would now enjoy learning rather than feel burdened by it.

This intervention required continuous effort for nearly two months, during which the trainee teachers maintained regular communication with families and consistently applied activity-based teaching practices. As a result of these sustained efforts, there was a remarkable improvement in student attendance and participation. The average daily strength of students increased significantly from around 40 students to nearly 110 students, indicating renewed interest and trust in the schooling process.

This study highlights the transformative role of innovative pedagogical strategies, teacher motivation, and community involvement in improving student engagement in rural primary schools. It demonstrates that even in resource-constrained settings, effective teaching methods and empathetic outreach can bring positive change. The findings of this research contribute to the growing evidence that activity-based and joyful learning approaches, supported by teacher training programs such as B.Ed. internships, can play a crucial role in addressing issues of absenteeism and disinterest in rural education.

Research Objectives

The present study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To study the existing condition of student enrollment and attendance in the primary school of Patni village, Majhgawan block, Satna district, Madhya Pradesh.
2. To identify the major reasons behind students' irregular attendance and lack of interest in school education.
3. To examine the impact of traditional teaching methods on student engagement and motivation at the primary level.
4. To implement activity-based, playway, and joyful learning strategies through B.Ed. second-year trainee teachers during their internship program.
5. To analyze the effectiveness of activity-based learning in improving students' interest, participation, and regular attendance in school.
6. To assess the role of trainee teachers, mentors, and community involvement in strengthening the teaching-learning process in a rural primary school.
7. To suggest practical strategies for improving primary education in resource-constrained rural settings.

Review of Literature

A review of related literature provides a theoretical foundation and contextual understanding of the present study. Several researchers have emphasized that student engagement and attendance at the primary level are strongly influenced by teaching methods, school environment, and socio-economic factors, particularly in rural areas.

NCERT (2005) in the National Curriculum Framework highlighted the importance of child-centered and activity-based learning, stating that rote memorization discourages curiosity and creativity among learners. The framework strongly advocates joyful learning experiences to sustain students' interest in education.

Kumar and Gupta (2016) found that traditional lecture-based teaching methods often fail to address the diverse learning needs of primary school children, leading to boredom and absenteeism. Their study suggested that experiential and playway methods significantly improve classroom participation and motivation.

According to Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, learning is a social process, and children learn effectively through interaction, collaboration, and guided activities. Studies by Bruner (1966) also support learning through discovery and hands-on activities, especially at the foundational stage.

Singh (2018) conducted a study in rural schools of Madhya Pradesh and reported that lack of infrastructure, teaching aids, and extracurricular activities were major reasons for low student attendance. The study emphasized the need for teacher innovation rather than dependence on resources alone.

Research by Sharma and Mehta (2020) highlighted the role of teacher trainees and internship programs in improving classroom practices. Their findings indicated that trainee teachers often bring enthusiasm, creativity, and innovative strategies that positively influence student engagement.

Recent studies aligned with NEP 2020 stress the importance of play-based, experiential, and competency-based education at the foundational level. NEP 2020 strongly recommends activity-based pedagogy to ensure universal access, retention, and quality learning outcomes.

Thus, the reviewed literature clearly indicates that activity-based and joyful learning approaches, supported by trained and motivated teachers, can significantly improve student interest, attendance, and learning outcomes in rural primary schools. However, there is limited action research focusing on the direct involvement of B.Ed. trainee teachers in rural school transformation, which the present study attempts to address.

Research Methodology

The present research adopted a descriptive and action research approach, focusing on practical intervention and observation within a real classroom setting.

Research Design

The study followed a survey-based and intervention-based design. Initially, a baseline survey was conducted to understand the existing educational scenario of the selected primary school. This was followed by the implementation of activity-based teaching strategies and continuous observation of changes in student behavior and attendance.

Area of the Study

The study was conducted in a primary school of Patni village, located in Majhgawan block of Satna district, Madhya Pradesh.

Sample

The sample of the study consisted-

- Students enrolled in the primary school (total enrollment: 135 students)
- Regularly attending students (35–45 at the initial stage)
- B.Ed. second-year trainee teachers involved in the internship program
- Mentors guiding the trainee teachers

Limitations of the Study

1. The study was confined to only one primary school, which limits the generalization of the findings to other regions or contexts.
2. The duration of the intervention was limited to two months, which may not reflect long-term sustainability of improved attendance and learning outcomes.
3. The study relied primarily on qualitative observation and simple quantitative measures, without standardized achievement tests.
4. Socio-economic factors such as poverty, seasonal migration, and family responsibilities were beyond the control of the researchers.
5. The involvement of trainee teachers may have created a temporary motivational effect that requires further longitudinal study.

Tools and Techniques

The following tools and techniques were used for data collection:

- Observation method
- Formal interviews with students, teachers, and parents
- Attendance records analysis
- Survey and field notes
- Continuous monitoring of classroom activities
- Intervention Strategy

The intervention included:

- Activity-based learning
- Playway method
- Joyful and experiential learning
- Group work, games, storytelling, role-play, art-based activities
- Home visits and parent counseling by trainee teachers

The intervention was carried out over a period of two months with consistent efforts by trainee teachers and mentors.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative analysis and simple quantitative comparison, mainly focusing on changes in attendance, student participation, and interest in learning before and after the intervention.

Findings of the Study

Based on observation, attendance records, and continuous monitoring before and after the intervention, the following key findings emerged from the study:

1. Low Attendance Due to Traditional Teaching

The initial findings revealed that traditional, textbook-centered teaching methods were a major cause of students' boredom and irregular attendance. Students showed minimal interest in passive learning environments.

2. Lack of Resources and Activities Affected Motivation

The absence of extracurricular activities, limited teaching-learning materials, poor play equipment, and inadequate school infrastructure negatively impacted students' enthusiasm and willingness to attend school.

3. Positive Impact of Activity-Based Learning

The introduction of activity-based, playway, and joyful learning strategies significantly improved students' interest and classroom participation. Learners became more attentive, interactive, and confident.

4. Improvement in Student Attendance

A notable improvement was observed in attendance. The average daily strength increased from 35–45 students to nearly 110 students after two months of continuous intervention.

5. Enhanced Student–Teacher Interaction

The involvement of B.Ed. trainee teachers created a friendly and supportive classroom environment. Students felt more comfortable expressing themselves and participating in group activities.

6. Role of Community and Parental Involvement

Home visits and parent counseling played a crucial role in motivating parents to send their children to school regularly. Community interaction strengthened trust in the school system.

7. Effectiveness of Internship-Based Intervention

The study found that B.Ed. internship programs, when properly guided, can contribute meaningfully to improving teaching-learning processes in rural schools.

Educational Implications

The study highlights that effective pedagogy does not always require advanced resources. Even in limited-resource environments, teacher innovation, empathy, and student-centered strategies can significantly enhance learning outcomes. The findings underscore the importance of experiential learning and the role of teacher education programs in strengthening the grassroots educational system.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to examine the causes of low student attendance and engagement in a rural primary school of Patni village, Majhgawan block, Satna district, Madhya Pradesh, and to assess the effectiveness of activity-based and joyful learning strategies in addressing these challenges. The initial findings revealed that traditional teaching methods, lack of resources, absence of extracurricular activities, and poor infrastructure contributed significantly to students' disinterest in schooling.

The implementation of activity-based, play way, and experiential learning approaches by B.Ed. second-year trainee teachers during their internship led to a remarkable improvement in student engagement and attendance. The continuous efforts, combined with home visits and parental counseling, resulted in a substantial increase in average daily attendance from approximately 35–45 students to nearly 110 students within two months.

The study concludes that innovative pedagogy, teacher motivation, and community involvement play a critical role in revitalizing rural primary education. The findings reinforce the idea that joyful and child-centered learning environments can transform students' attitudes toward education, even in socio-economically disadvantaged settings. The research also demonstrates the potential of B.Ed. internship programs as effective instruments for educational intervention and reform at the grassroots level.

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