

**“THE PHENOMENON OF PROBLEMATIC SCHOOL  
RELATED ABSENTEEISM AND IT’S RELATION TO  
SCHOLASTIC PERFORMANCE”**

*By*  
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Sri Devaraj Urs Academy of Higher Education and  
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**In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
M.D  
IN  
PAEDIATRICS**

*Under the guidance of*  
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***DR.HARISHA.G***

## **ABBREVIATIONS USED**

PSRA	- Problematic school-related absenteeism.
IQ	- Intelligent quotient
CPS	- Common public school.
IEP	- Individualized education plans.
RTE	-Right of children to free and compulsory education act.
SMCs	- School management committees.
SCPCR	- State commission for the protection of Child rights.
REPA	- Right to Education Protection Authority
.SDUMC	-Sri DevarajUrs Medical College.



## **ABSTRACT**

**INTRODUCTION:** Schools are increasingly being recognized as effective tools to reach the community. School absenteeism is an important issue, which affects not only educational achievement but also results in false estimation of the prevalence of disease in school based screening programs. Further, school based intervention programs may miss out several affected children. This study was therefore , carried out to estimate the magnitude of school absenteeism and identify its causes and its relation to school absenteeism.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1.To study the medical causes & social factors affecting school absenteeism.
2. To know the effect of school absenteeism on scholastic performance.

**METHOD:** It is a cross sectional study done in randomly selected school children in the age group of 5-15yrs. The study sample included 754 children studying in R.L.Jalappa school. Socio-demographic profile of the students was collected. Pre-designed questionnaires as well as school records were obtained to know the causes of school absenteeism. The marks cards of the test & exams performed in the entire year were taken to assess the scholastic performance. Significant absenteeism was taken when absenteeism was more than 15%.

**Results :** The incidence of school absenteeism was 3.1 % .Increased incidence is found in age group of 11 to 14 years. There is increased incidence of absenteeism in male gender, as birth order and family size increases and when mother's & father's education is low . Students from Hindu religion are more absent than non-Hindus. Majority of the school children had anemia followed by respiratory problems. Illness

was the the most important cause of school absenteeism. Poor academic performance is significantly associated with Incidence of absenteeism.

**Conclusion** : Male sex, early adolescent group , increasing birth order & family size, low parent's education, illness, school phobia, school truancy, school load and getting absent for family reasons were found to be independent significant factors responsible for school absenteeism. Of the above illness constituted the major reason for school absenteeism. School absenteeism had positive correlation with the academic performance of the students.

**KEY WORDS:** Absenteeism, academic performance, school children.

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## INTRODUCTION

Schools are increasingly being recognized as effective tools to reach the community. School based screening and intervention programs have helped in developing and implementing control measures for several disorders of public health importance. However, the effectiveness of these programs depends on the number of children attending schools.

School absenteeism is an important issue, which affects not only educational achievement but also results in false estimation of the prevalence of disease in school based screening programs. Further, school based intervention programs may miss out several affected children.<sup>1</sup> This study was, therefore, carried out to estimate the magnitude of school absenteeism and identify its causes.

Several implications both to students and the community have been identified as problematic when student absenteeism increases. Students who have absenteeism problems generally suffer academically and socially. It has long been recognized that school absenteeism and school truancy in middle and highschool are significant problems with highly visible negative consequences for youth, and ultimately, for their employability as adults.

School absenteeism has been studied in detail in relation to various social and physical causes.<sup>2,3</sup> School absenteeism has been linked to maternal education, residence, and specific illnesses like asthma, headache, abdominal pain, etc.<sup>3-7</sup> However, the role of social pressures like poverty, part-time jobs etc. has not been explored. There is paucity of literature comprehensively assessing the various factors leading to school absenteeism in India.

School absenteeism is a phenomenon with far-reaching consequences with highly visible negative consequences for youth, and ultimately, for their employability as adults.<sup>8</sup>

## **KEY TERMINOLOGY :**

This section provides working definitions for key terms employed throughout this thesis.

### ***At Risk***

Students are described as at risk when they are underachieving at secondary school and are unlikely to achieve their full potential.

### ***Authorized Absence***

Authorized absence is a sub-category encompassing a number of activities imposed by the school on students which are not a normal part of the school curriculum. These include: detention; disciplinary absence from classrooms; off-learning task penalties; and time out in school.

### ***Delinquency***

Delinquency refers to the committing of a minor crime or non-serious misconduct by a juvenile.

### ***Descriptors of Non-Attendance***

Descriptors of non-attendance include illness, suspension, exclusion, expulsion and transition.

### ***Early School Withdrawal***

Early school withdrawal refers to absence by children whose parents keep them away from school on a regular or long-term basis, for reasons related

to the needs of the family, or children who have chosen not to attend school for their own reasons.

***Fractional Truancy***

Fractional truancy refers to students who arrive late, leave early or skip individual classes.

***Frequent or Persistent Absenteeism***

Frequent or persistent absenteeism refers to student absences of 15% or higher, whether authorized or not.

***Junior School***

Junior school consists of students from class 3<sup>rd</sup> to class 5<sup>th</sup>.

***Middle School***

Middle school consists of students from class 6<sup>th</sup> to class 8<sup>th</sup>.

***Parental Condoned Absenteeism***

Parental condoned absenteeism refers to parental approved withdrawals such as family functions, holidays, and personal appointments.

***Problematic School-Related Absenteeism (PSRA)***

Problematic school-related absenteeism (PSRA) is a generic term taken to mean the persistent, habitual and unexplained absence from school of a child of compulsory school age, or explained absence that can occur with parental knowledge and consent.

***Regular Attendance***

Regular attendance means that students must maintain an 85% attendance rate at school.



### ***Risk Factors***

Risk factors are deemed to be those which are contributing to or causing students to display PSRA.

### ***School Non-Attendance***

School non-attendance refers to the broad category used to denote all absences from school. The term defines the condition whereby students who are required to attend school choose not to do so. Reasons offered to explain student absences may be classified as explained or unexplained.

### ***School Refusal***

School refusal refers to absence by children who refuse to attend school in the face of persuasion and punishment by parents, and of possible school discipline. This form of absenteeism is widely recognized as a disorder involving persistent nonattendance at school, excessive anxiety and physical complaints.

### ***Truancy***

Truancy means the persistent, habitual and unexplained absence from school of a child of compulsory school age that occurs without parental knowledge or consent.

### ***Unauthorized Absence***

Unauthorized absence may include truancy, occasional absenteeism, school refusal, school withdrawal, and dropping out by underage students. Suspensions and expulsions may also be accounted as unauthorized absence in some records, whilst in others they are not collated or not allocated.

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. To study the medical causes & social factors affecting school absenteeism.
2. To know the effect of school absenteeism on scholastic performance.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

An extensive review of literature on problematic school-related absenteeism identifies it as a worldwide phenomenon of immense and increasing proportion. The aims of this literature review are:

- to investigate terms, categories, and risk factors associated with PSRA;
- to outline management of PSRA & effect on scholastic performance; and
- to present a summary of the law and the concept of citizenship in relation to PSRA.

### **Categories of Problematic School-Related Absenteeism**

Different studies present differing definitions associated with the phenomenon of PSRA that have ultimately led to some confusion regarding its categorization.

In order to avoid some confusion regarding definitional issues the present study has categorized PSRA into five broad areas: truancy; school refusal; delinquency; early school withdrawal; and parental condoned absenteeism.

#### **Truancy**

Truancy is only one of several terms associated with PSRA, but is perceived to be the main category and attracts most of the attention in research into this phenomenon .<sup>9-11</sup>

Truancy is defined as unjustifiable or unexplained absence from school with attempts by the student to conceal the absenteeism. Usually the child avoids home when not at school and the parents are often unaware of the child's absence .<sup>12-13</sup> In the present study, truancy means the persistent, habitual and unexplained absence from school of a child of compulsory school age that occurs without parental knowledge or consent

There are two types of truancy: chronic and occasional. The former includes the frequent truants, while the latter includes instances where students are absent for only part of the day through missing classes and arriving late or leaving early

Chronic truants are students who are absent without approval for 20% or more of school time.<sup>14</sup> Some degree of occasional truancy is considered to be a normal part of growing up in today's youth culture.

Many students truant without it leading to serious attendance issues. Selective truancy is when pupils truant at certain times or stay off certain classes. This suggests that young people are actually making some positive choices about what they like and dislike, and find relevant or irrelevant about school.<sup>15</sup>

### **School Refusal**

School refusal is a complex disorder. Whereas the condition only occurs in 5% of the general school population, the problem accounts for about 8% of clinically referred children. Determining what constitutes a case of school refusal can be a difficult task.<sup>16</sup>

School refusal and school phobia refer to a syndrome that is recognized by an unwillingness to attend school, staying at home when not at school, parents who know and disapprove of their child's absences, and emotional upset at the possibility of having to attend school.<sup>17</sup>

The terms school refusal, school phobia, school avoidance, reluctance to attend school, and separation anxiety have been used interchangeably.

School refusal refers to absence by children who refuse to attend school in the face of persuasion and punishment by parents, and of possible school discipline. This

form of absenteeism is widely recognized as a disorder involving persistent non-attendance at school, excessive anxiety and physical complaints.

Two contributing factors include avoidance behavior in relation to school, and active seeking of situations that provide comfort and security.<sup>18</sup>

### **Delinquency:**

Truancy has been identified as one of the early warning signs that adolescents maybe headed towards delinquent activity that may result in negative educational, employment and undesirable social outcomes.

PSRA is linked to serious delinquent activity in youth: for instance, substance abuse often resulting in criminal activities such as burglary.<sup>19</sup>

PSRA characteristics of male juveniles were a high failure rate, frequent fighting, and anti-social behavior. PSRA and delinquency may be associated, in part, to common antecedents, such as home, school, peers, gender, culture and socio-economic environment.<sup>20</sup>

Adolescents experiencing persistent PSRA display disruptive behavioral patterns and may commit delinquent offence. There is a high correlation between school failure and anti-social behavior including truancy, classroom disruption and juvenile crime.<sup>21</sup>

Accordingly truancy and delinquency are connected statistically, but only in a minority of cases, as most truants are not considered criminals.

Delinquency refers to the committing of a minor crime or non-serious misconduct by a juvenile.

## **Early School Withdrawal**

Early school withdrawal refers to absence by children whose parents keep them away from school on a regular or long-term basis, for reasons related to the needs of the family, or children who have chosen not to attend school for their own reasons. This absence may occur with the permission of the school.

One of the significant factors contributing to early school withdrawal in India is poverty, female gender, early marriage among girls especially in rural areas & illiteracy among parents. Schools face the difficult task of deciding which strategies will make regular school attendance more meaningful. Strategies may include :<sup>16</sup>

- Educational engagement by offering challenging curriculum, fostering self-esteem, good implementing study habits, and organizational skill
- improving parenting styles
- improving teacher-student relationships and
- More consideration of age, ethnic and gender differences.

## **Parental Condoned Absenteeism**

Parental condoned absenteeism refers to parental approved withdrawals such as family functions, holidays, and personal appointments.

Directly or indirectly, parents play a major role in keeping their children absent from school. Parents held that schools were responsible for students' attendance at school whilst schools held that parents were responsible.<sup>16</sup>

In relation to parental condoned absenteeism, the question of lawful absence needs to be clarified and revised in light of school attendance being compulsory.

The unexplained absence should be deemed to be an offence whereby parents can receive a fine if found culpable .<sup>21</sup>

### **Risk Factors Associated with Problematic School-Related Absenteeism**

There are various risk factors associated with PRSA. Although certain conditions and circumstances are considered to be of particular importance, such as the individual, family, school environment, communal and societal, and local demographics, there appears to be no definitive cause-effect relationships.

There are five major risk factors associated with PSRA, namely: personal, familial, school, communal and societal, and demographic.

#### **Personal Risk Factors**

Personal risk factors include: psychosocial; physical; and behavioral.

#### ***Psychosocial Factors***

Psychosocial factors include self-esteem, motivation, cognitive constructs, and low intelligence.

Lack of self-esteem and poor self-image related to specific situations, or a general lack of feeling regarding self-worth all appear frequently on the list of characteristics attributed to students at risk due to school non-attendance. Students experiencing PSRA have significantly lower self-concepts .<sup>22,23</sup> While students with low self-esteem have an ability to feel part of the school culture, they may become frustrated and bored with school, and dislike the teachers, and any form of authority .<sup>24</sup>

Schools where students had little regard for, or placed little value on school attendance, tended to experience higher absence rates than schools

where students placed value on attending school.

Also attritional style is a significant cognitive factor in explaining why some students play truant from school but others do not, even though they are under the influence of similar school conditions .It was noted that persistent absentees displayed significantly lower intelligence and were underachievers and found that students with a high IQ score displayed a high rate of attendance.<sup>21</sup>

### ***Physical Factors***

Physical factors include physical health and psychological wellbeing.

The major cause of absence, namely, health reasons be disaggregated and addressed both to support the education of students whose absence is inevitable and to improve the school attendance of students whose health may not otherwise permit it.

Schools have a primary mandate to provide for the education of children. They should also have an interest in their students' health and emotional wellbeing in so far that these can have important implications for learning and development. Schools are also faced with dealing with a range of behavioral and emotional problems, many of which can have a significant bearing on student learning and the general environment of the school.<sup>25</sup>

### **Behavioral Factors:**

Behavioral factors include academic performance, truancy, and teacher conflict.



Schools and parents tend to pressurize and punish students for poor academic performance and sometimes reinforce the sense of failure among them rather than solving them.<sup>26</sup> Students experiencing PSRA are academically underachievers, though only a few were of low intelligence. Very importantly, even those who were intelligent or had achieved quite well at school regarded their own achievement as hopeless.<sup>27</sup>

Friends are significant in the lives of students choosing to absent themselves from school. Peer groups have the ability to coerce or persuade students into the act of truancy, the relationship between peers and teachers is significant. Also students are more likely to miss school.<sup>22</sup>

The main cause of truancy and disruptive behavior were the influence of friends and peers, while in the company of their peers. The relationship between educational underachievement and unemployment among middle school students who had suffered problematic peer relations during childhood was examined & was found that these students appeared to be placed at an increased risk of experiencing a range of adolescent interpersonal problems, namely, with teachers, PSRA, suspension and early school leaving.<sup>28</sup>

These results highlight the importance of successful childhood peer relationships for academic and occupational success.

### **Familial Risk Factors**

Familial risk factors include: family structure; family functioning; family socioeconomic status; and parental attitude to schooling.

***Family Structure:***

Variables associated with students' home background suggest there is no single category of parent whose children experience PSRA. In more recent times society has undergone considerable social change. Families may be classified as two-parent, single-parent, no-parent, blended, or extended. Extended families have generally been replaced by the nuclear and the single parent family. Adolescents experiencing PSRA exhibited a tendency to have defacto, single, separated, divorced, or remarried families.<sup>28</sup>

Family structure coupled with family functioning such as conflict, abuse, modeling, and mobility, may be significant factors in the overall issues of PSRA.

***Family Functioning:***

Adolescents' experiences at home which may include extremes in social and emotional support, discipline, abuse, family security, and parental involvement, compound their feelings of insecurity, lack of self-worth, and belonging. These experiences result in compensatory behaviors such as long-term absence from school.<sup>11,22</sup>

Families are becoming increasingly ill-equipped to provide a home environment that is conducive to academic achievement. This is due to a lack of understanding by the general public of the amount of effort and resources which schools put into their attendance processes to compound this problem.<sup>29</sup>

Parents should be educated to understand the value of their role in reinforcing practices which includes providing incentives for students who attend school regularly, while providing disincentives for non-attendance.<sup>30</sup> Problems created by adolescents

experiencing severe PSRA such as delinquency cannot be solved by school-based programs alone.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Family Socio-Economic Status:***

Socio-economic status is a universal variable consisting of a number of sub-categories: parental education, parental occupation, unemployment rates, family composition and family income. Socio-economic hardship, which may apply to lower class or working class families and manifest itself in poor housing conditions and periods of unemployment or erratic employment often, underpins PSRA.<sup>24,28</sup>

Although there is no definitive research to indicate that absenteeism has a direct correlation to a family's low socio-economic status such as inadequate housing and unemployment, students experiencing PSRA are more than likely to come from disadvantaged home backgrounds and unfavorable social circumstances.<sup>9,11,30</sup>

The correlation, or association, of absenteeism with any one group of the abovementioned factors is almost impossible to qualify. Nor can other socio-economic factors be isolated, such as: questionable child-rearing practices, questionable role modeling by the parent as a significant other, marital conflict or break-up, negative parental attitudes, expectations, and interest in the child's education.<sup>22,11,31</sup> While socio-economic status and PSRA are more than likely associated, there is insufficient information to determine which factor or factors contributing to or associated with socio-economic status may be the most influential.

### ***Parental Attitude to Schooling:***

The home background and the attitude of the parents is a contributing factor to the level of absenteeism, with parental attitude to school attendance one of the major concerns.<sup>11</sup>

With truancy contributing to a small proportion of the overall absences, the greater proportion of unauthorized absences has been attributed to parental knowledge, whereby parents have approved or consented to the child's absence, or in some extreme cases, the parents have been unable or unwilling to ensure the child returns to school.<sup>28</sup> In other words, children are more likely to be at home with the parents' knowledge and consent than truanting.

Parents' attitudes, expectations, beliefs about schooling and learning, guide their behavior with their children and have a causal influence on their children's achievements, attitudes and behaviors. Involved and concerned parents manage to communicate their concern about their children's school progress whether or not they are highly educated themselves.<sup>11</sup>

### **School Risk Factors :**

School risk factors include: school organization; curriculum; school climate: and school leadership.

### **School Organization:**

It has been seen that absenteeism tends to be lower, or reduced, in schools where the students feel safe and perceive discipline to be fair and effective. In these schools students have a strong academic focus and a high percentage is enrolled in academic programs.

There is a willingness to complete homework, achieve good grades, and an interest in academic accomplishment; individual differences and rates of learning are acknowledged; students are involved in the organization of the school; and there are close

parent-school relations.

Factors such as the size of school, buildings, resources, geographic isolation, classroom management and discipline, pastoral care policies, and school climate and culture. The internal organizational features of schools such as class size can have significant consequences for all students, especially students who are deemed to be at risk.

The number of students in a class has the potential to affect how much is learned in a variety of ways. For instance, it could affect how much time the teacher is able to focus on individual students.<sup>16</sup>

#### *Curriculum:*

A number of the contributory factors are under school control, such as policies, procedures, and curriculum. Schools differ from one another in many ways. These include curriculum, and the emphasis on academic subjects, as opposed to vocational subjects and the nature of staff, including their ability, qualifications and experience. These factors are critical to a student's school success.<sup>21</sup>

#### *School Climate:*

School and classroom climate have important effects on children's perceptions and behaviors. There are two types of support, that is, emotional and instrumental, provided at the level of the classroom and the school. An emotionally supportive classroom and school climate related to lower levels of violence, and was a predictive of lower rates of offences against property.<sup>16</sup>

## **School Leadership**

It is known that the role of the principal and leadership teams is paramount to ensure a smooth and cohesive operation of the school.

## **Communal and Societal Risk Factors**

Communal and societal risk factors include: poverty; communal norms; and communal disorganization.

### ***Poverty:***

The impact of poverty has a negative impact on children's education. Many children living in poverty fail to reach the basic benchmarks of achievement, whereas schools in poorer socio-economic areas face the greatest gap between their expectations for students and the reality in terms of resources, achievement and teacher quality.<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, it is apparent that PSRA has the greatest impact in these schools.

### ***Communal Norms:***

Communal norms greatly increase the risk of young people developing behavioral problems and being drawn into delinquent patterns of behavior. A sense of isolation, deprivation, conflict, and violence are conditions for adversity, and lead to poorer child development.<sup>16</sup>

### ***Communal Disorganization:***

Communal disorganization includes varied and complex combinations of circumstances in each case. The key risk factors include<sup>(32)</sup> :

- transience, mobility, and homelessness;
- geographical isolation;

- low parental value, or interest in education;
- low socio-economic status, or unemployment;
- illness and attention deficit disorders;
- differing cultural expectations, substance abuse; and
- Abuse of, or by, family members.

These factors are interrelated in many instances, and may be combined with school factors in increasing the likelihood of non-attendance. Parents placing a low value on education may be equally important. Parents may be more likely or willing to keep students out of school, less likely to participate in communication with the school and less likely to promote links between school and later success.<sup>13</sup>

Low incomes, unemployment and welfare dependency limit a family's ability to meet the costs associated with schooling, a difficulty which may also lead to embarrassment and, or, disciplinary consequences for students.

### **Demographic Risk Factors**

Demographic risk factors include: *School classification, year level and gender.*

#### *School Classification:*

Demographic factors are concerned with the incidence and distribution of PSRA. There was no evidence to suggest that attendance at private schools led to lower exposure to risk factors associated with PSRA than at government schools.<sup>33</sup>

#### *Year Level:*

There is significant youth risk factor behavior differences within the demographic factors and many differences varied within different adolescent age groups.<sup>34,32</sup>

***Gender:***

There is no conclusive evidence to indicate that boys or girls absent themselves from school more than each other.<sup>16</sup>

**Middle School Transition**

Middle schools years are difficult years for adolescents with emotional and social behavior at times seeming unstable in relation to the adolescent's physical, psychosocial, and psycho-cognitive development.<sup>34</sup> Particular attention needs of young adolescents in terms of curriculum, teaching and learning styles has to be paid.

Manning maintains that the middle school has grown beyond its infancy stage. It is now a school in and of itself, with its own identity.<sup>35</sup> Adolescents experience physical, psychosocial, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual stress during the middle years of schooling and this is often the time when PSRA becomes prevalent in adolescents.<sup>16</sup>

***Physical Development:***

There are tremendous physical differences that can be found in a group of young adolescents. Selected developmental characteristics include growth spurts and the onset of puberty. All adolescents will experience a growth spurt that results in rapid increases in body size, as well as readily apparent skeletal and structural changes.<sup>36</sup> With the onset of puberty, they also experience physiological changes associated with the development of the reproductive system.<sup>37</sup>

***Psychosocial Development:***

While less obvious than physical changes, significant psychosocial changes also are a part of young adolescents' experiences. Young adolescents shift their allegiance and affiliation from parents and teachers toward the peer group, which becomes their primary



source for standards and models of behavior.<sup>38</sup> Seeking freedom and independence from adult authority becomes almost common place with this age group.<sup>39</sup>

*Cognitive Development:*

Young adolescents begin to develop the ability to make reasoned moral and ethical choices.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, depending on their developmental rate, they begin to think hypothetically, abstractly, reflectively, and critically as a progression from the concrete operations stage to the formal operations stage. Since all young adolescents do not reach the formal operations stage at the same time, educators should avoid over-challenging late developers to think beyond their capacity.<sup>41</sup>

*Challenges:*

Adolescents do not progress through these multiple developmental tasks separately. At any given time, adolescents may be dealing with several tasks. Also, early adolescence is marked by rapid physical growth and maturation. The focus of adolescents' self-concepts is thus often on their physical development and self-evaluation of their physical acceptability.<sup>42</sup>

So teachers must recognize and understand young adolescents' physical, psychosocial and cognitive developmental characteristics, they can plan and implement educational experiences that are developmentally appropriate. Such understanding provides insight into young adolescents' concerns and questions about overall development, body changes, and the onset of puberty.<sup>35</sup>

### *Pastoral Care Programs:*

The focus on the physical, psychosocial, and cognitive development in relation to young adolescents draws attention to the need for more adequate pastoral care in the middle schooling years. Pastoral care is to be an important aspect recognition of psychological characteristics and needs in the adolescent.<sup>39</sup> These characteristics include emotional swings, sensitivity to criticism, attitudes, values and the search for identity.

These programs should support and encourage the development of positive attitudes and values and build self-esteem. Effective pastoral care endeavors to promote a holistic approach to the way education is experienced by the school community. A school's approach to such issues as the facilitation of learning, school yard supervision, interviews with parents, multicultural situations, and staff relations, all demonstrate the quality of pastoral care in that school.<sup>43</sup>

### *School absenteeism and academic performance:*

Attendance is found to be significantly associated with examination performance. Overall, students with good attendance records do more than 1.5 times better in the examination than those with poor attendance records. However, as we have seen earlier, poor attenders tend to have lower ability test scores to start off with and this might be expected to account for some of the performance difference.<sup>44</sup>

### **Measurement of Problematic School-Related Absenteeism**

Keeping track of attendance is a difficult task for many schools. Typically, schools require parents to provide a reasonable excuse such as a note of explanation or making contact with the school of a student's absence. Traditional record keeping, reporting and monitoring of attendance or absences are questionable. Although

schools have developed general procedures to cater for students who arrive late or leave early, it is impossible to account for all absences.<sup>45</sup>

Official daily absentee figures may underestimate the true magnitude of the absence rate and raise questions about the overall validity of the data. Also, accurate data on truancy are not kept by schools. This is partly due to the difficulty inherent in determining whether an absence is legitimate or not. General procedures for recording attendance vary with schools recording attendance during the first lesson, before recess, after lunch, at the end of day or at the beginning of every lesson.

An important source of data is the schools' attendance records, in particular, the process of collection and analysis. However, complications involving human error can take place in the process of checking attendance and communicating all data to the staff, parents, students, and other appropriate authorities.

Absenteeism rates cannot be accurately measured by counting the number of students not present at any one designated time during the school day. There is a common reliance on attendance rolls/registers to calculate the attendance rate. Attendance rolls or registers may systematically report the rate of non-attendance as they also systematically miss the students who wag class after the count is taken, be it at the beginning of the morning or afternoon.<sup>16</sup>

## **Management of Problematic School-Related Absenteeism**

### **I. ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT:**

#### **A. SCHOOL-BASED INITIATIVES:**

All schools whose overall attendance rate is below 95% shall develop an “Attendance Improvement Plan” (“Plan”) to be implemented during the next school year. The Plan shall be included in, and made a part of, the school’s School Improvement Plan for Advancing Academic Achievement for the next school year. The goals of the Plan shall be to.<sup>46</sup>

- reduce the number of student absences;
- increase student academic achievement;
- reduce the number of chronic truants/potential dropouts;
- increase parental and community involvement in these objectives; and
- Increase the use of alternatives to out-of-school suspensions, such as before- or afterschool detention; Saturday detention; before- or after-school service; and student perjuries.

The Plan may identify improved curriculum, expanded vocational educational programs, increased extracurricular activities, appropriate services to address the needs of homeless students, and other systemic changes to achieve the goals of the Plan.

#### **B. SYSTEM-WIDE INITIATIVES :**

The Board shall implement system-wide initiatives to support the schools' Student Attendance Improvement Plans. Such initiatives shall include the following.<sup>46</sup>

1. **COMPUTERIZED ATTENDANCE:** All schools have the capability to report daily attendance on the CPS mainframe computer. Attendance shall be reported daily and monitored centrally.
2. **ABSENTEE OUTCALLING SYSTEM:** The Absentee Outcalling System is an automated telephone system which may be programmed to call the home telephone numbers of absent students or other telephone numbers submitted by the student's parent(s) or guardian(s). (Schools should also place personal phone calls to absent students' homes if feasible.) A supplemental postcard mailing system may also be established to notify homes without telephones and homes that cannot be reached by the Absentee Outcalling System. Schools should also utilize the CPS mainframe system to generate five (5) and ten (10) day "unexcused absence" letters.
3. **TRUANCY HOTLINE:** A truancy line can be established to give individual citizens and businesses a convenient means of reporting school-aged students who are on the streets or at home during school hours, 24 hours a day. The hotline shall forward this information to central office for processing.
4. **HOMELESS EDUCATION LIAISONS:** Homeless Education Liaisons in each of the CPS clusters and each school shall assist in identifying and serving the needs of homeless students that may adversely affect their attendance.
5. **STUDENT ATTENDANCE AUDITS:** Schools shall be subject to annual audits to determine whether they are in compliance with their Attendance Improvement Plans and are accurately reporting student attendance.

6. **INTERVENTION:** Schools should employ the truancy intervention techniques, strategies, and procedures set forth in the Uniform Attendance Guidelines to maintain and improve their average daily attendance.

**II. INTERVENTION:**

In order to identify and address the causes of unexcused absenteeism, a principal shall, as necessary interview the student; meet with his or her parent(s) or guardian(s); meet with other Board officials or employees or other parties who may have information about the reasons for the student's attendance problem.

Schools may employ a variety of means to identify truant and chronically truant students and students at risk of becoming truant or chronically truant including, but not limited to, the local Police, Department School Absentee Reports, the Truancy Hotline, and other means as set forth in the School Attendance Guidelines.<sup>46</sup>

**III. SUPPORTIVE SERVICES:**

Schools may make available a variety of supportive services to students identified as at risk of becoming truants or chronic truants. Except for violations which subject the student to the possibility of expulsion, schools may also impose punishment and sanctions to students at risk of becoming truants or chronic truants.

These punishments & sanctions may include: in-school detention; before- or after-school detention; Sunday detention; before- or after-school service; student peer juries and truancy violation or prevention workshops.

Schools shall make the following supportive services available to truant or chronically truant students and/or their parents, as appropriate:<sup>46</sup>

- (i) parent conferences;
- (ii) student counseling;
- (iii) family counseling and other social services;
- (iv) information about existing community services which are available to truant and chronicallytruant students and relevant to their needs;
- (v) intensive academic remediation,
- (vi) informing students and their parents of the enrollment rights of homeless students and thetransportation services that may be available to assist homeless students in attendingschool

#### **IV. INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION:**

To assist the efforts of Schools to improve school attendance rates and reduce truancy and chronic truancy rates, the Board and its schools may, as appropriate, request the assistance and cooperation of other governmental agencies, including: the local Housing Authority (by including provisions in its leases requiring regular school attendance by school-age students); the legal department ,etc.The Board shall explore, andimplement to the greatest extent feasible, opportunities for such interagency collaboration.<sup>46</sup>

#### **V.CHRONIC TRUANCY ADJUDICATION:**

Setting up a truancy adjudication boardwhich shall be responsible for administratively adjudicating cases of chronic truancy and imposing appropriate sanctions. The Board shall appoint and employ hearing officers to perform the adjudicatory functions of the Department of Chronic Truant Adjudication. Principals and other appropriate personnel may refer students suspected of being chronic truants, as defined in this policy, to the Department of Chronic Truant Adjudication.<sup>46</sup>

## **VI. WITHDRAWAL/REMOVAL FROM ENROLLMENT:**

Students may be removed from enrollment under the following guidelines:

A. All students are to be removed from enrollment when they transfer to a different school(including home school) or graduate.

B. All students are to be removed from enrollment if their whereabouts cannot be determined after a school has completed all of the following:

1. calling all phone numbers on file for the student, including emergency contacts;
2. sending a letter addressed to the student's last known address asking the parents to call or come to the school to discuss the student's absenteeism; and
3. visiting the student's last known address without finding the student or the student's family.

C. No student under 17 years of age shall be permitted to withdraw from enrollment. Students 17 years of age require the express, written, and informed consent of their parent or guardian to withdraw from enrollment. Specific provisions for informed consent shall include, but not be limited to:<sup>46</sup>

- an accommodation for limited language speaking populations;
- a general description of the rights to educational services being waived as a result of dropping out;
- a description of the rights to educational services withdrawing students retain under the law, including the right of dropouts to return to school and to a due process appeal if the right to return to school is challenged by the local school;



- information regarding adult and alternative educational services available in the community; and
- information provided to the student as well as the parent or guardian summarizing the likely adverse consequences that result from dropping out of school.

D. School administrators must comply with the following provisions regarding removing students from enrollment:

- Students may not be removed from enrollment solely because of excessive unexcused absences, i.e., truancy, (for example, 20 consecutive unexcused absences).
- Students with excessive absences may be removed from enrollment only if, following the procedures set forth above, their whereabouts cannot be determined.
- Schools must complete a Lost Child Report for every student who cannot be located and is removed from enrollment after following the procedures set forth above.
- Unless a student can be properly removed from enrollment as transferred (including to home school), graduated, lost or dropped out, they should be treated as truant.
  - a. The school must make efforts to address and remedy the child's truancy.
  - b. If the efforts of school officials are unsuccessful, the child must be referred for adjudication as a chronic truant.

## **VII. TARDINESS:**

Schools must accept all enrolled students who have not been suspended or expelled who present themselves for daily attendance. All schools must develop and adopt a tardy policy prior to the beginning of each school year. Students are not to be sent home or refused admission to school due to tardiness.<sup>46</sup>

Students who arrive late for any class period must be allowed to proceed to their classes after obtaining proper documentation of their tardiness. Schools must ensure their admittance to class. Schools may impose disciplinary punishments for persistent tardiness to school or class. Suspensions for persistent tardiness are prohibited.

## **VIII. SCHOOL UNIFORM OR DRESS CODE VIOLATIONS:**

Schools cannot bar students from daily attendance or send them home for violations of a school policy or dress code. Schools may impose disciplinary punishments according to the school Discipline Code for uniform policy or dress code violations.<sup>46</sup> Suspensions for uniform or dress code violations are prohibited.

## **IX. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**

Schools may not refuse enrollment to students with disabilities or other special needs on the basis that the school does not have the resources to service such students. Schools must contact the Specialized Services for assistance in providing such services if they do not have pre-existing programs or resources to do so. Students with disabilities whose Individualized Education Plans (“IEPs”) require services to address truancy may not be referred for chronic truancy adjudication unless they have received all the services called for in their IEPs to

address their truant behavior.<sup>46</sup>

### ***Problematic School-Related Absenteeism and the Law***

Schools are legally obliged to record student attendance and absence. It is the parent's statutory responsibility to ensure that their children attend school on a regular basis. It is the school's responsibility to monitor and follow-up a student absence by obtaining an explanation from the parent. This legislation applies equally to non-government schools.

In India, the following acts were passed to make education more accessible and minimize school absenteeism:

- Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009
- National Policy on Education, 1968
- National Policy on Education, 1968
- National Policy on Education, 1986 (As modified in 1992)
- National Common Minimum Programme of the UPA Government, announced in May, 2004 Extracts relating to Education
- Education Commissions and Committees in Retrospect
- National Curriculum Framework, 2005
- Recent Policy Pronouncements
- The National Policy for Children 1974
- Principal Recommendations of the Education Commission
- Constitutional Provisions for Child Upliftment
- National Commission for Protection of Child Rights

Among the above the most significant was the **Right to Education Act 2009**.<sup>47</sup>

What is act about ?

- Every child between the ages of 6 to 14 years has the right to free and compulsory education. This is stated as per the 86th Constitution Amendment Act added Article 21A. The right to education act seeks to give effect to this amendment
- The government schools shall provide free education to all the children and the schools will be managed by school management committees (SMC). Private schools shall admit at least 25% of the children in their schools without any fee.
- The National Commission for Elementary Education shall be constituted to monitor all aspects of elementary education including quality.

#### **Why this act is significant and what it means to India?**

The passing of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009 marks a historic moment for the children of India.

This Act serves as a building block to ensure that every child has his or her right (as an entitlement) to get a quality elementary education, and that the State, with the help of families and communities, fulfils this obligation.

Few countries in the world have such a national provision to ensure both free and child-centred, child-friendly education.

#### **What is ‘Free and Compulsory Elementary Education’?**

All children between the ages of 6 and 14 shall have the right to free and compulsory elementary education at a neighborhood school.

There is no direct (school fees) or indirect cost (uniforms, textbooks, mid-day meals, transportation) to be borne by the child or the parents to obtain elementary

education. The government will provide schooling free-of-cost until a child's elementary education is completed.

**What is the role envisaged for the community and parents to ensure RTE?**

The landmark passing of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009 marks a historic moment for the children of India. For the first time in India's history, children will be guaranteed their right to quality elementary education by the state with the help of families and communities.

Few countries in the world have such a national provision to ensure child-centered, child-friendly education to help all children develop to their fullest potential. There were an estimated eight million 6- 14 year-olds out-of-school in India in 2009. The world cannot reach its goal to have every child complete primary school by 2015 without India.

Schools shall constitute School Management Committees (SMCs) comprising local authority officials, parents, guardians and teachers. The SMCs shall form School Development Plans and monitor the utilization of government grants and the whole school environment.

RTE also mandates the inclusion of 50 per cent women and parents of children from disadvantaged groups in SMCs. Such community participation will be crucial to ensuring a child friendly "whole school" environment through separate toilet facilities for girls and boys and adequate attention to health, water, sanitation and hygiene issues.

### **How does RTE promote Child-Friendly Schools?**

All schools must comply with infrastructure and teacher norms for an effective learning environment. Two trained teachers will be provided for every sixty students at the primary level.

Teachers are required to attend school regularly and punctually, complete curriculum instruction, assess learning abilities and hold regular parent-teacher meetings. The number of teachers shall be based on the number of students rather than by grade. The state shall ensure adequate support to teachers leading to improved learning outcomes of children. The community and civil society will have an important role to play in collaboration with the SMCs to ensure school quality with equity. The state will provide the policy framework and create an enabling environment to ensure RTE becomes a reality for every child.

### **How will RTE be financed and implemented in India?**

This Act serves as a building block to ensure that every child has his or her right (as an entitlement) to get a quality elementary education, and that the State, with the help of families and communities, fulfils this obligation.

Few countries in the world have such a national provision to ensure both free and child-centered, child-friendly education.

Central and state governments shall share financial responsibility for RTE. The central government shall prepare estimates of expenditures. State governments will be provided a percentage of these costs.

The central government may request the Finance Commission to consider providing additional resources to a state in order to carry out the provisions of RTE.

The state government shall be responsible for providing the remaining funds needed to implement. There will be a funding gap which needs to be supported by partners from civil society, development agencies, corporate organisations and citizens of the country.

### **What are the key issues for achieving RTE?**

RTE provides a ripe platform to reach the unreached, with specific provisions for disadvantaged groups, such as child labourers, migrant children, children with special needs, or those who have a “disadvantage owing to social, cultural economical, geographical, linguistic, gender or such other factor.” RTE focuses on the quality of teaching and learning, which requires accelerated efforts and substantial reforms:

- Creative and sustained initiatives are crucial to train more than one million new and untrained teachers within the next five years and to reinforce the skills of in-service teachers to ensure child-friendly education.
- Families and communities also have a large role to play to ensure child-friendly education for each and every one of the estimated 190 million girls and boys in India who should be in elementary school today.
- Disparities must be eliminated to assure quality with equity. Investing in preschool is a key strategy in meeting goals.
- Bringing eight million out-of-school children into classes at the age appropriate level with the support to stay in school and succeed poses a major challenge necessitating flexible, innovative approaches.

**What is the mechanism available if RTE is violated?**

The National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights shall review the safeguards for rights provided under this Act, investigate complaints and have the powers of a civil court in trying cases.

States should constitute a State Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) or the Right to Education Protection Authority (REPA) . Any person wishing to file a grievance must submit a written complaint to the local authority.

Appeals will be decided by the SCPCR/REPA. Prosecution of offences requires the sanction of an officer authorized by the appropriate government.

Substantial efforts are essential to eliminate disparities and ensure quality with equity. UNICEF will play an instrumental role in bringing together relevant stakeholders from government, civil society, teachers' organizations, media and the celebrity world.



## **METHODOLOGY**

PSRA conceptual models were structured to in order to measure the phenomenon associated with PSRA, namely, school-related absenteeism and parental condoned absenteeism.

### **School-Related Absenteeism Conceptual Model:**

The Student Questionnaire: School-Related Absenteeism incorporates a questionnaire in order to assess students' perceptions of specific situations relevant to PSRA. The rationale for employing this particular questionnaire highlights categories and risk factors associated with PSRA.

### **Parental Condoned Absenteeism Conceptual Model:**

The School Questionnaire: Parental Condoned incorporates questionnaire in order to assess schools' measurement of parental condoned absenteeism. The rationale for employing this particular questionnaire is to elicit specific information relevant to parental condoned absenteeism.

The present study is a prospective study conducted in R.L.Jalappa School, attached to SDUMC, Kolar, Tamaka for a period of one year June 2008 to May 2009 was taken. A total of 754 students who fulfilled the inclusion criteria were included in the study. Clearance was obtained from the ethical committee.

**Inclusion criteria:**

1. School children aged between 5 -15 years in R.L.Jalappa School who were absent for more than 15 % per year.

**Method of collection of data:**

The objectives of the study will be explained and informed consent will be obtained from the school head, parents and teachers to participate in the study. School children from R.L.Jalappa school, Tamaka, kolar will be selected.

Total of 754 children, of both sexes in the age group 5-15 years were taken in different standards. Each standard had 3 to 5 sections. One section per standard was randomly selected and all students in selected classes were eligible to be enrolled. Where there were more than 3 sections per standard, 2 were chosen randomly. Participants were included following an informed written consent.

At enrolment, information on socio-demographic profile of the students was collected. It included age, sex, class, education and occupation of the parents, their family structure and income. A pre-designed questionnaire as mentioned above was administered to ascertain the duration of absence and the causes for absenteeism, medical and non-medical. Participants were assured of confidentiality and were enquired about school truancy and various phobias of schools, teachers and subjects. The causes of absenteeism were also ascertained by school records, leave applications and one month's recall by the students. Students, teachers and parents were interviewed whenever needed.

Detailed data will be obtained from those students who were absented for the whole day for more than 15% of the total days. The marks cards of the test & exams performed in the entire year will be taken to assess the scholastic performance.

A total of 754 students were registered. The total number of working days was 240 days over the last 12 months. Significant absenteeism was taken when absenteeism was more than 15% .

**Statistical Methods:** Descriptive statistical analysis has been carried out in the present study. Results on continuous measurements are presented on Mean  $\pm$  SD (Min-Max) and results on categorical measurements are presented in Number (%). Significance is assessed at 5 % level of significance. Chi-square/ Fisher Exact test has been used to find the significance of study parameters on categorical scale between two or more groups.

### 1. Chi-Square Test

$$\chi^2 = \frac{\sum (O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}, \text{ Where } O_i \text{ is observed frequency and } E_i \text{ is Expected frequency}$$

### 2. Fisher Exact Test

	Class1	Class2	Total
Sample1	A	b	a+b
Sample2	C	d	c+d
Total	a+c	b+d	n

$$2 \times 2 \text{ .Fisher Exact Test statistic} = \sum p = \frac{(a+b)!(c+d)!(a+c)!(b+d)!}{n!} \frac{1}{\sum a!b!c!d!}$$

### 3. Significant figures

+ Suggestive significance (P value: 0.05 < P < 0.10)

\* Moderately significant (P value: 0.01 < P  $\leq$  0.05)

\*\* Strongly significant (P value : P  $\leq$  0.01)

**Statistical software:** The Statistical software namely SAS 9.2, SPSS 15.0, Stata 10.1, MedCalc 9.0.1, Systat 12.0 and R environment ver.2.11.1 were used for the analysis of the data and Microsoft word and Excel have been used to generate graphs, tables etc.



Photo 1.Examing school children



Photo 2: Questionnaire & Counseling



Photo 3: Children with school Principal

LEAVE RECORD			
Date	Remarks	Sign. of Parent	Sign. of Class Tr.
09/07/10	Rakshit was not well & so could not attend class on 09/07/10	Signature	Signature
21/08/10	Rakshit will not be able to attend classes on 23/08/10 (Monday) as he goes with his going to his native place (Mangalore)	Signature	Signature
21/10/10	As there was an important function to be attended to in our native place, we could not send Rakshit to school for 3 days, from 18/10/10 to 21/10/10. Please excuse his absence.	Signature	Signature
04/11/10	Rakshit could not attend class on 03/11/10 (1 day) as he had cold & cough	Signature	Signature

Photo 4: Official leave card.

## OBSERVATION AND RESULTS:

**Study design:** An Observational study with 754 school children is undertaken to study the medical causes and social factors affecting the school absenteeism and its effect of scholastic performance

Table 1: Age distribution of children studied

Age in years	Number of children	%
5+	75	9.9
6+	74	9.8
7+	75	9.9
8+	71	9.4
9+	73	9.7
10+	72	9.5
11+	77	10.2
12+	78	10.3
13+	80	10.6
14+	79	10.5
Total	754	100.0

Table 2: Gender distribution of children studied

Gender	Number of children	%
Male	357	47.3
Female	397	52.7
Total	754	100.0

Female students were more compared to male students in the study.

CHART 1:Age distribution of children studied

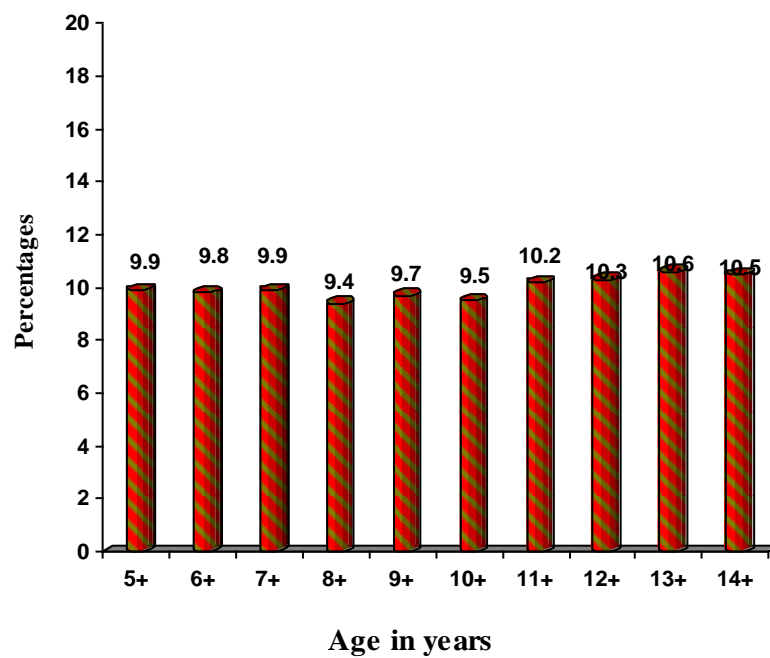


CHART 2 :Gender distribution of children studied

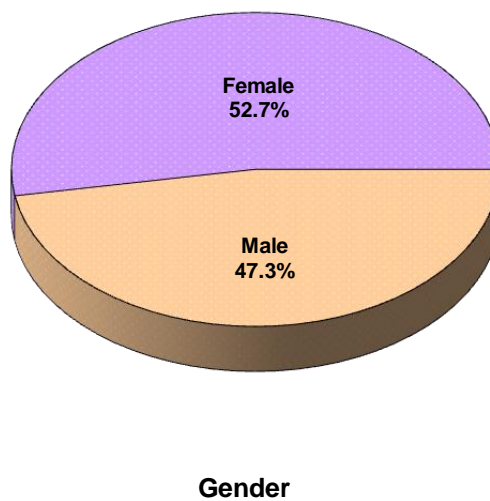


Table 3: Class distribution of children studied

Class	Number of children	%
1 <sup>st</sup>	75	9.9
2 <sup>nd</sup>	74	9.8
3 <sup>rd</sup>	75	9.9
4 <sup>th</sup>	71	9.4
5 <sup>th</sup>	73	9.7
6 <sup>th</sup>	72	9.5
7 <sup>th</sup>	77	10.2
8 <sup>th</sup>	78	10.3
9 <sup>th</sup>	80	10.6
10 <sup>th</sup>	79	10.5
Total	754	100.0

Students were randomly selected from Class 1 to class 10 in the study

Table 4. Incidence of absenteeism in different age groups

Baseline variables	Incidence of absenteeism				P value
	Yes (n=23)		No (n=731)		
	No	%	No	%	
Age in years					
• 5-7	4	17.4	220	30.1	0.283
• 8-10	6	26.1	210	28.7	
• 11-14	13	56.5	301	41.2	

Increased incidence is found in age group of 11 to 14 years (early adolescent group) due to unique problems faced by adolescent group.



CHART 3:Class distribution of children studied

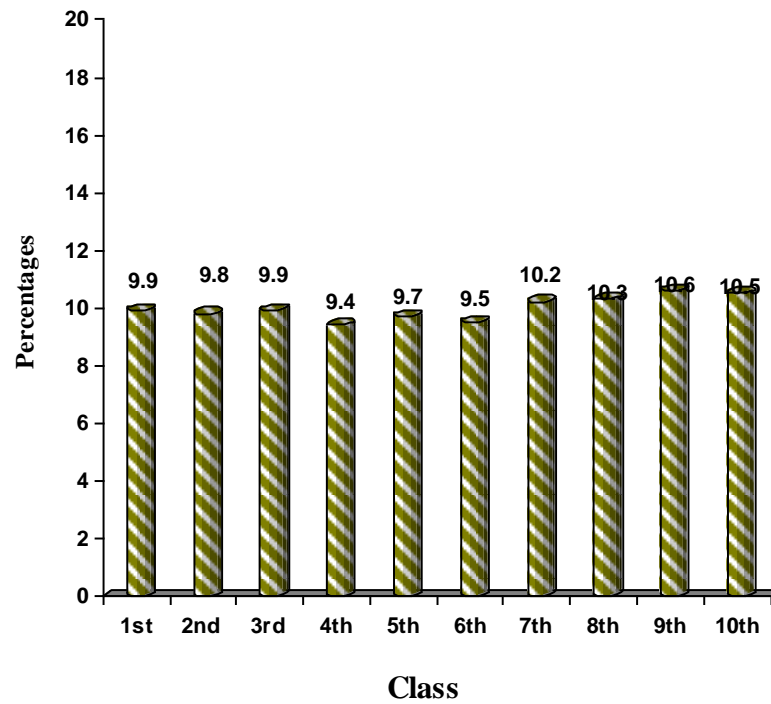


CHART 4:Incidence of absenteeism in different age groups

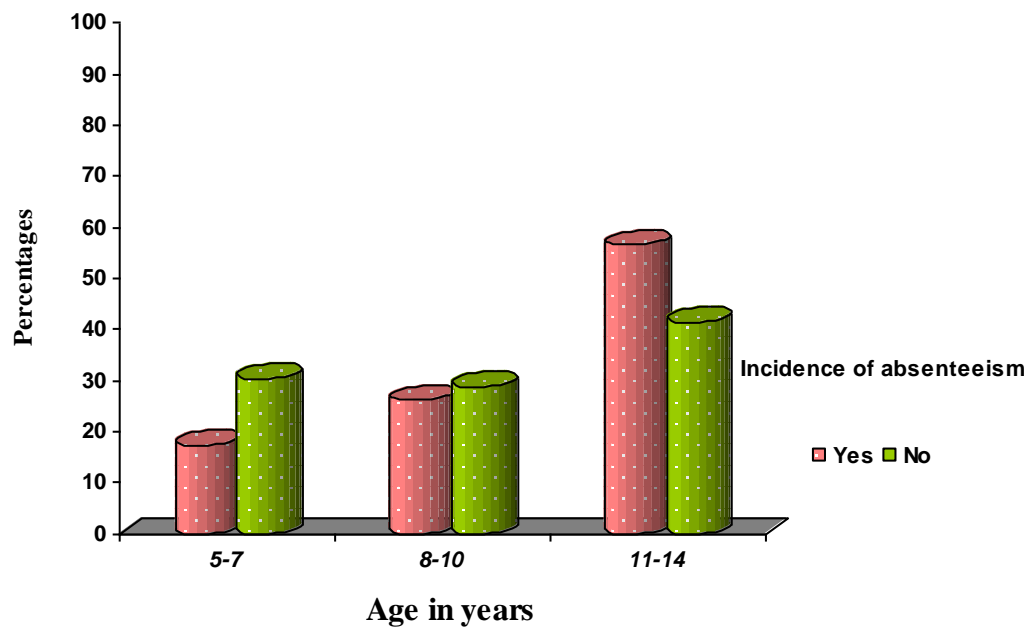


Table 5.Incidence of absenteeism in different sexes

Baseline variables	Incidence of absenteeism				P value
	Yes  (n=23)		No  (n=731)		
	No	%	No	%	
Gender					
• Male	14	60.9	343	46.9	0.187
• Female	9	39.1	388	53.1	

There is increased incidence of absenteeism in male gender compared to females.

Table 6.Incidence of absenteeism in different birth orders

Baseline variables	Incidence of absenteeism				P value
	Yes (n=23)		No (n=731)		
	No	%	No	%	
Birth order					
• 1 <sup>st</sup>	8	34.8	244	33.4	0.873
• 2-3 order	13	56.5	397	54.3	
• 4-5 order	2	8.7	90	12.3	

There is increased absenteeism in 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> order of birth as parents are finding it difficult to take care of all the children at the same time effectively.

CHART 5:Incidence of absenteeism in different sexes

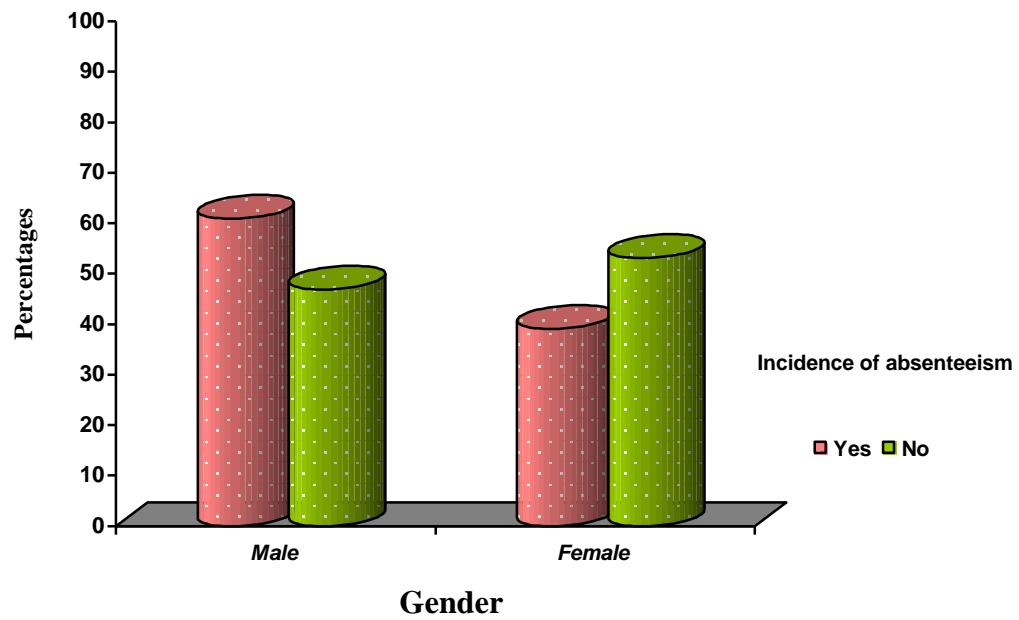


CHART 6:Incidence of absenteeism in different birth orders

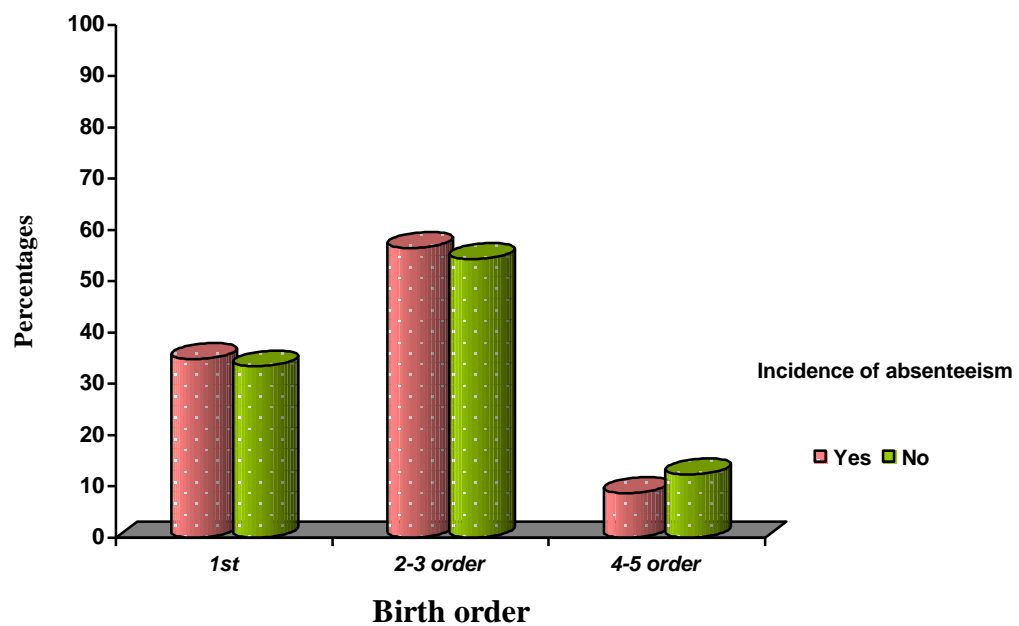


Table 7: Religion of school children studied

Religion	Number of children	%
Hindu	674	89.4
Non-Hindu	80	10.6
Total	754	100.0

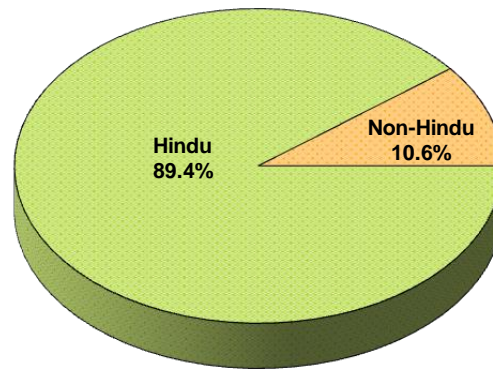
Students from Hindu religion are more absent than Non-Hindus as they have many festivals and functions

Table 8. Father's education in relation to absenteeism

Baseline variables	Incidence of absenteeism				P value
	Yes (n=23)		No (n=731)		
	No	%	No	%	
Father education					
• <8 <sup>th</sup> standard	9	39.1	163	22.3	0.058+
• >8 <sup>th</sup> standard	14	60.9	568	77.7	

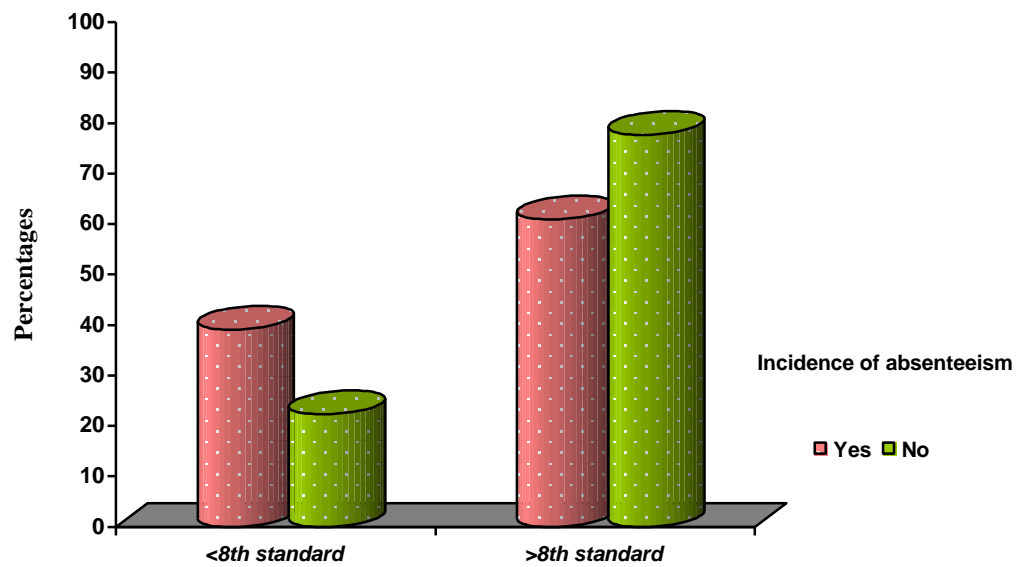
There is increased incidence of absenteeism when father's education is low.

CHART 7: Religion of school children studied



Religion

CHART 8: Father's education in relation to absenteeism



Father education

Table9.Mother's education in relation to absenteeism

Baseline variables	Incidence of absenteeism				P value
	Yes  (n=23)		No  (n=731)		
	No	%	No	%	
Mother education					
• <5 <sup>th</sup> standard	13	56.5	192	26.3	0.001**
• >5 <sup>th</sup> standard	10	43.4	539	73.7	

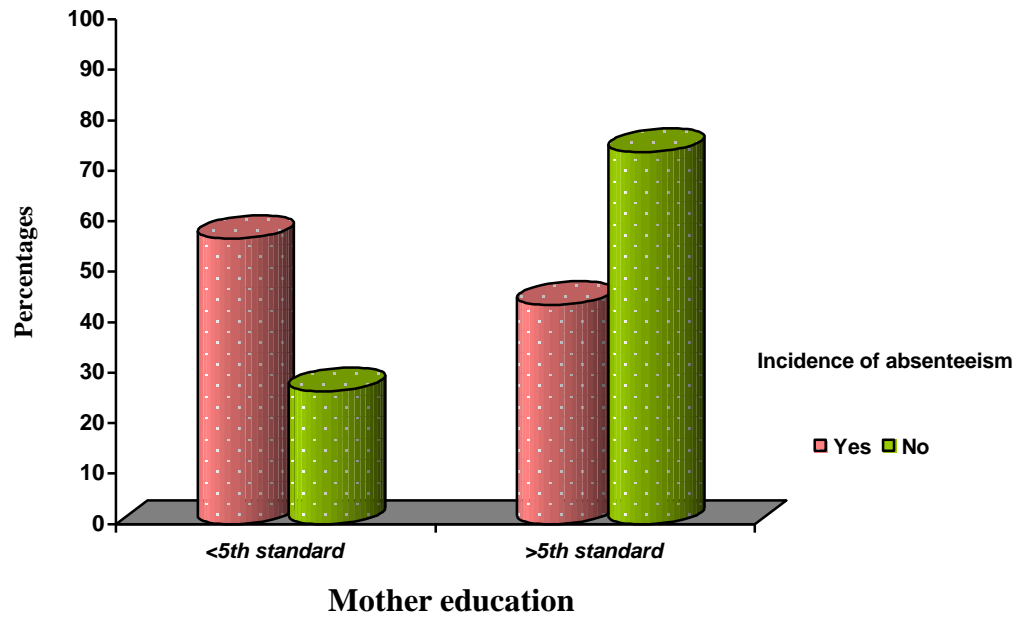
There is increased incidence of absenteeism when Mother's education is low as mother is best teacher in home. Mother and Father are significant predictors of incidence of absenteeism

**Table 10. Residence of school children studied:**

Baseline variables	Incidence of absenteeism				P value
	Yes (n=23)		No (n=731)		
	No	%	No	%	
Residence					
• Kolar	7	30.4	238	32.6	0.830
• Surrounding area	16	69.6	493	67.4	

Students coming from surrounding areas of Kolar had increased incidence of absenteeism because of transportation problems.

**CHART 9:**Mother's education in relation to absenteeism



**CHART 10:**Residence of school children studied

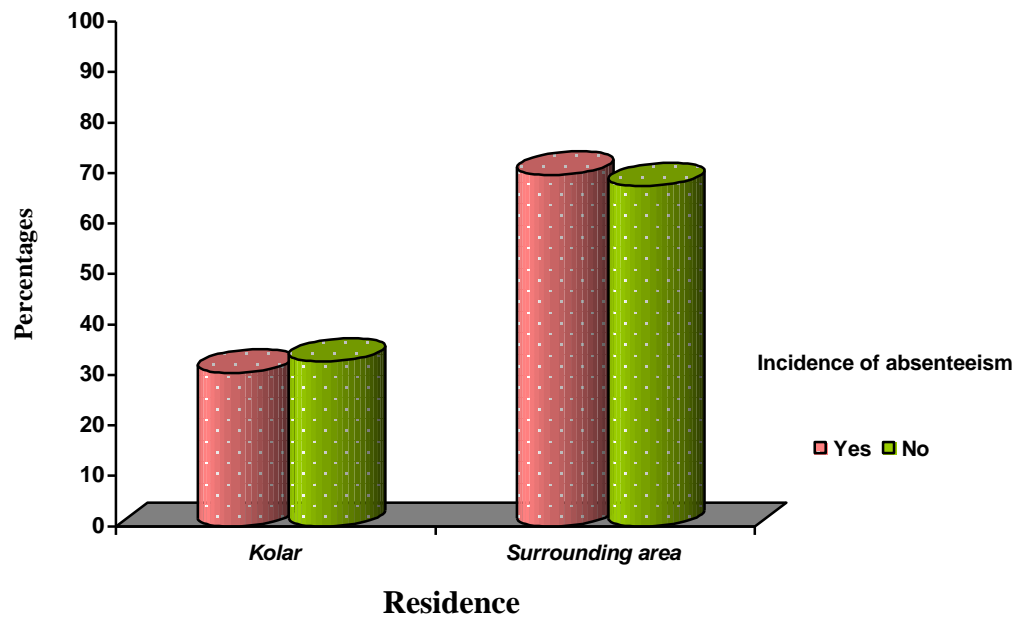


Table 11. Family size in relation to school absenteeism

Baseline variables	Incidence of absenteeism				P value
	Yes (n=23)		No (n=731)		
	No	%	No	%	
Family Size					
• <4	5	21.7	188	25.7	0.667
• >4	18	78.3	543	74.3	

There was increased school absenteeism when family size increased above four as children as individual attention could not be given to all the children.

Table 12: Occupation of parents of school children

Occupation	Number of children	%
Clerk /shop	327	43.4
Skilled	193	25.6
Semi skilled	70	9.3
Semi professional	130	17.2
Unskilled	34	4.5
Total	754	100.0

Students whose parents are working in shop or as a clerk found to be more absent than others.



CHART 11: Family size in relation to school absenteeism

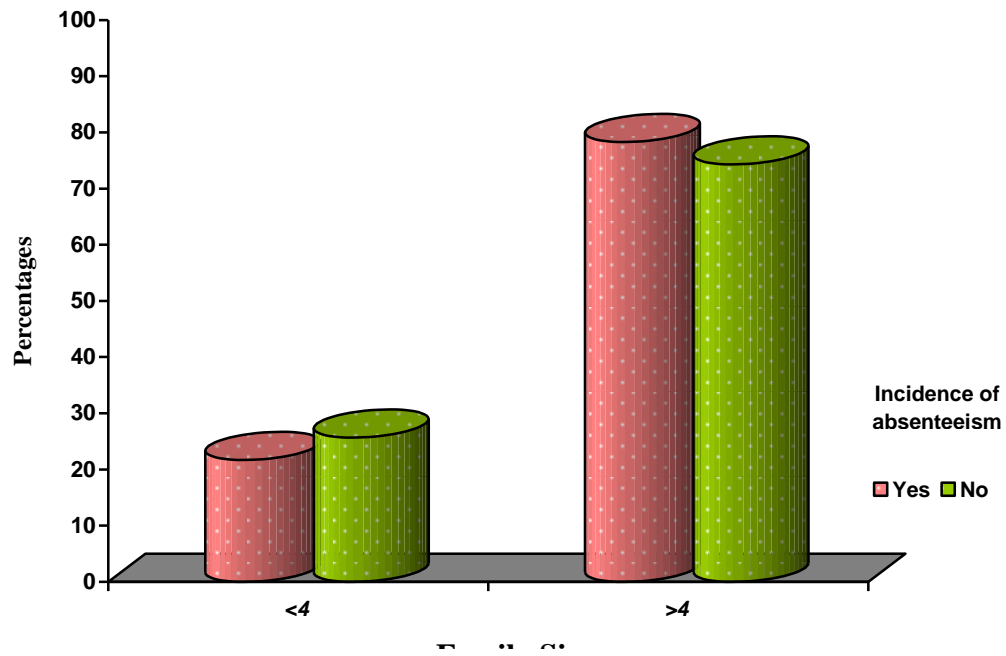


CHART 12:: Occupation of parents of school children

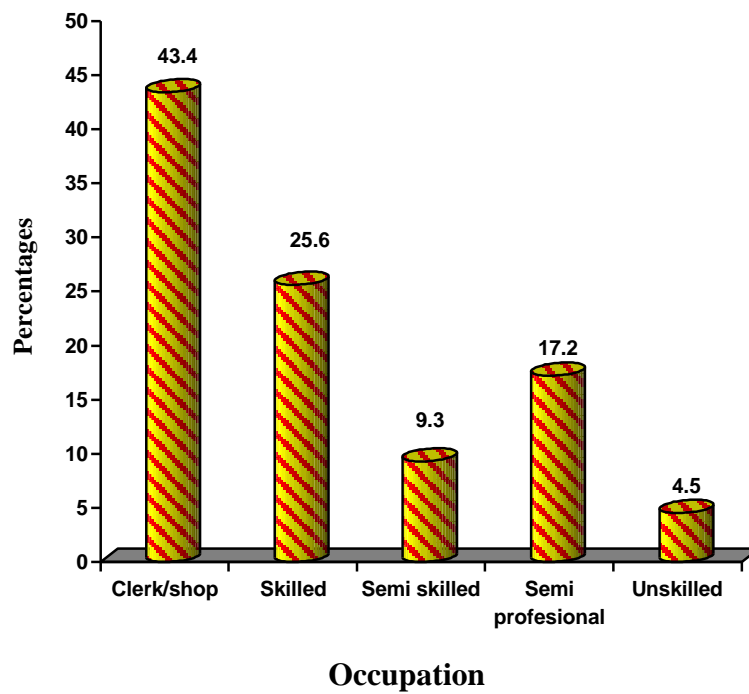


Table 13: Family Income of school children studied

<b>Family Income in Rs</b>	<b>Number of children</b>	<b>%</b>
< Rs.6100	16	2.1
Rs.6101-10160	16	2.1
Rs.10161-15280	31	4.1
>Rs.15281	691	91.6
Total	754	100.0

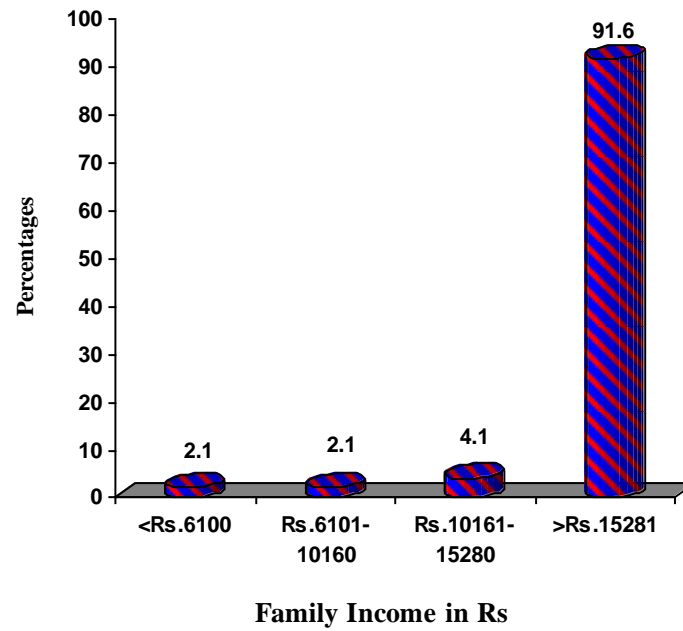
Since the school is a private school, most of the students belong to families belonging to higher income group.

Table 14: Medical problems:

<b>Medical problems</b>	<b>Number of children (n=754)</b>	<b>%</b>
CVS	2	0.3
RS	4	0.5
P/A	2	0.3
CNS	2	0.3
Anemia	18	2.4
Others	5	0.7

Majority of the school children had anemia followed by respiratory problems

CHART 13:Family Income of school children studied



.CHART 14:Medical problems studied among children

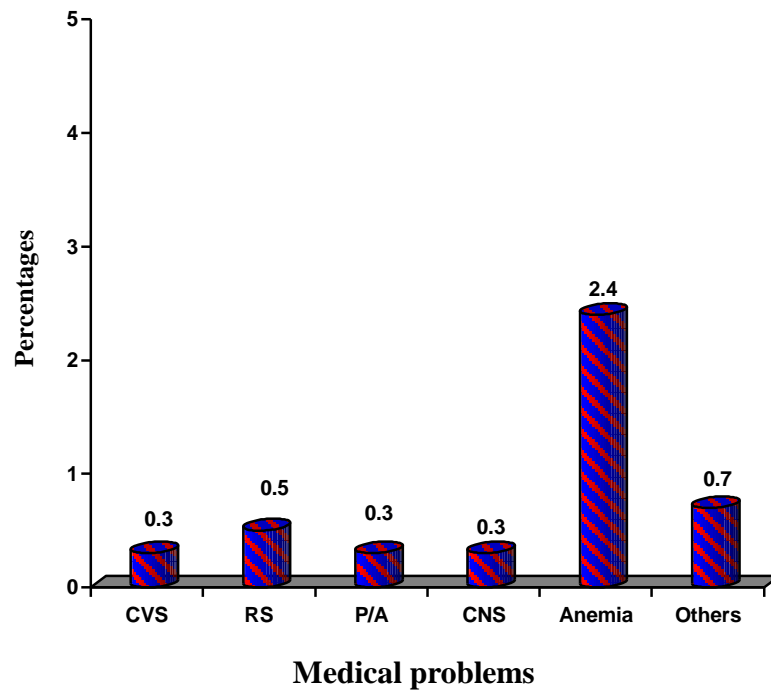


Table 15: Complaints of children recorded

<b>Complaints of children recorded</b>	<b>Number of children (n=754)</b>	<b>%</b>
Absent	709	94.1
Present	45	5.9
• Pale/pallor	16	2.1
• Cough / Fever	6	0.8
• Afraid of home work/teacher	6	0.8
• Blurring of vision	5	0.7
• Weak and tired	3	0.4
• Bullying in school	2	0.3
• Convulsion	2	0.3
• Family problems	2	0.3
• Playing	1	0.13
• Palpitations	1	0.13
• Wheezing	1	0.13
• Burning micturation	1	0.13

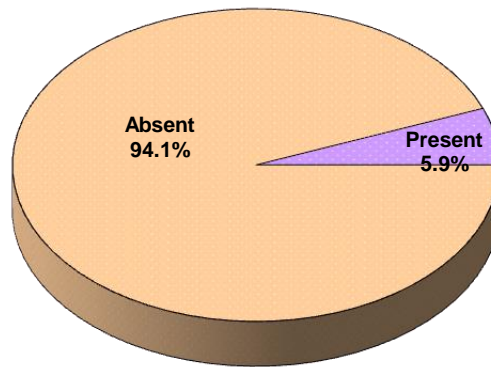
Complaints were present in 5.9% of the children of which majority had pallor (anemia) followedby cough.

Table 16: Incidence school absenteeism of school children studied

<b>School absenteeism</b>	<b>Number of children</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	23	3.1
No	731	96.9
Total	754	100.0

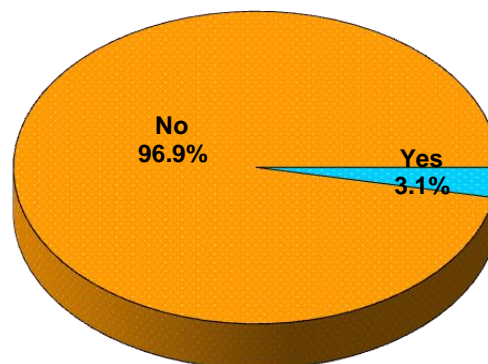
The incidence of school absenteeism was 3.1 % in our study

CHART 15:Complaints of children recorded



Complaints of children recorded

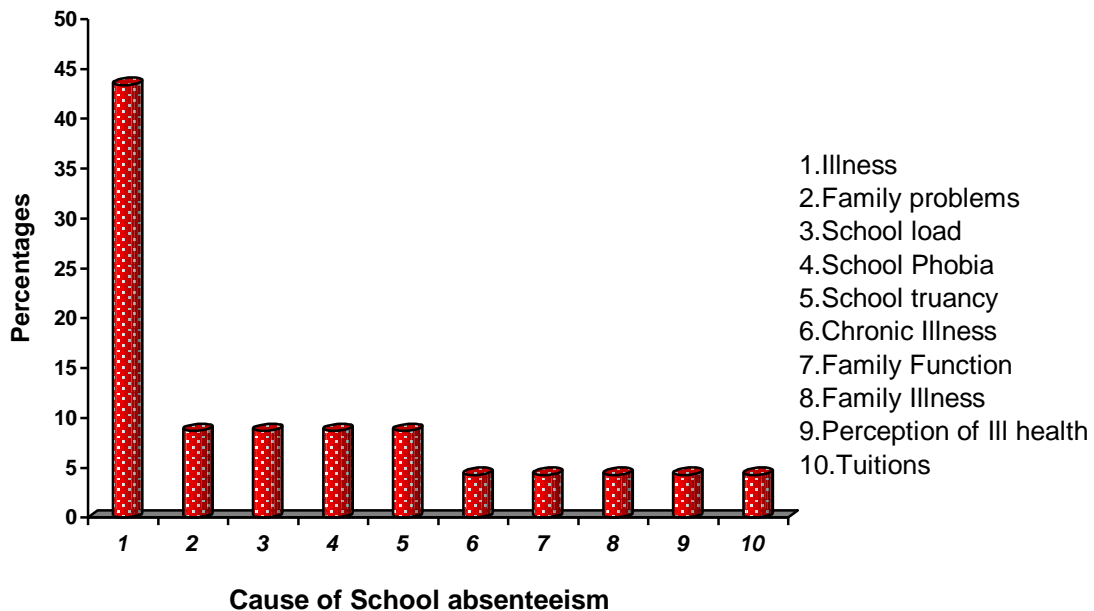
CHART 16:: Incidence school absenteeism of school children studied



School absenteeism

Table 17: Cause of school absenteeism

Cause of School absenteeism	Number of children (n=23)	%
1.Illness	10	43.4
2.Family problems	2	8.7
3.School load	2	8.7
4.School Phobia	2	8.7
5.School truancy	2	8.7
6.Chronic Illness	1	4.3
7.Family Function	1	4.3
8.Family Illness	1	4.3
9.Perception of Ill health	1	4.3
10.Tuitions	1	4.3



Illness was the the most important cause of school absenteeism.

Table 18: Correlation of Medical problems with Incidence of absenteeism

Medical problems	Incidence of absenteeism			
	Yes (n=23)		No (n=731)	
	No	%	No	%
Present	11	47.8	20	2.7
Absent	12	52.2	711	97.3
Inference	Presence of medical problems is significantly associated with <b>Incidence of absenteeism</b> with $\chi^2=114.99$ ; $P<0.001^{**}$			

Presence of medical problems is significantly associated with incidence of absenteeism

Table 19: Correlation of academic performance with Incidence of absenteeism:

Academic Performance	Incidence of absenteeism			
	Yes (n=23)		No (n=731)	
	No	%	No	%
Fail	4	17.4	7	0.9
Pass	19	82.6	724	99.1
Inference	Poor academic performance is significantly associated with <b>Incidence of absenteeism</b> with $\chi^2=41.890$ ; $P<0.001^{**}$			

Poor academic performance is significantly associated with Incidence of absenteeism

CHART 18:Correlation of Medical problems with Incidence of absenteeism

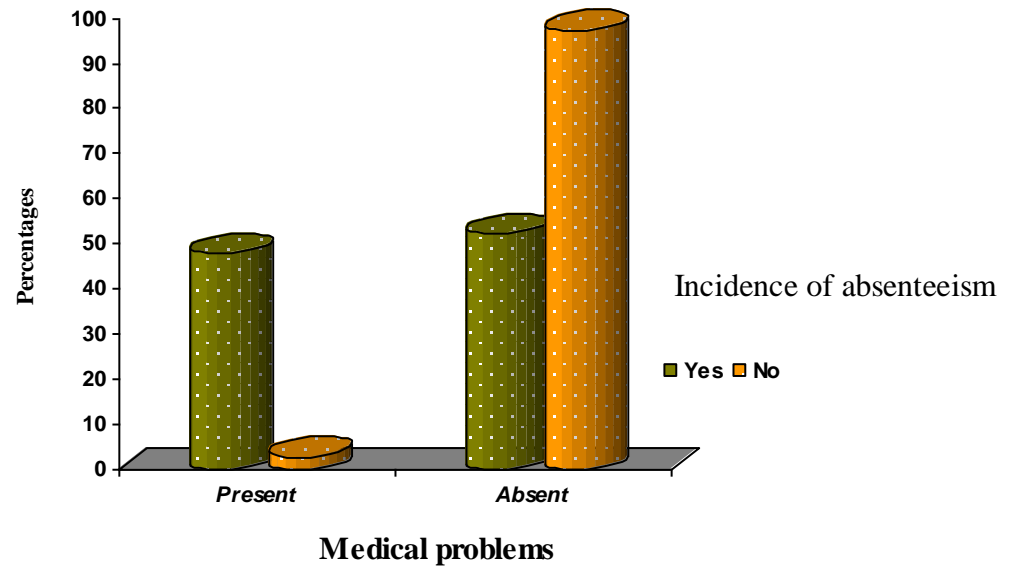
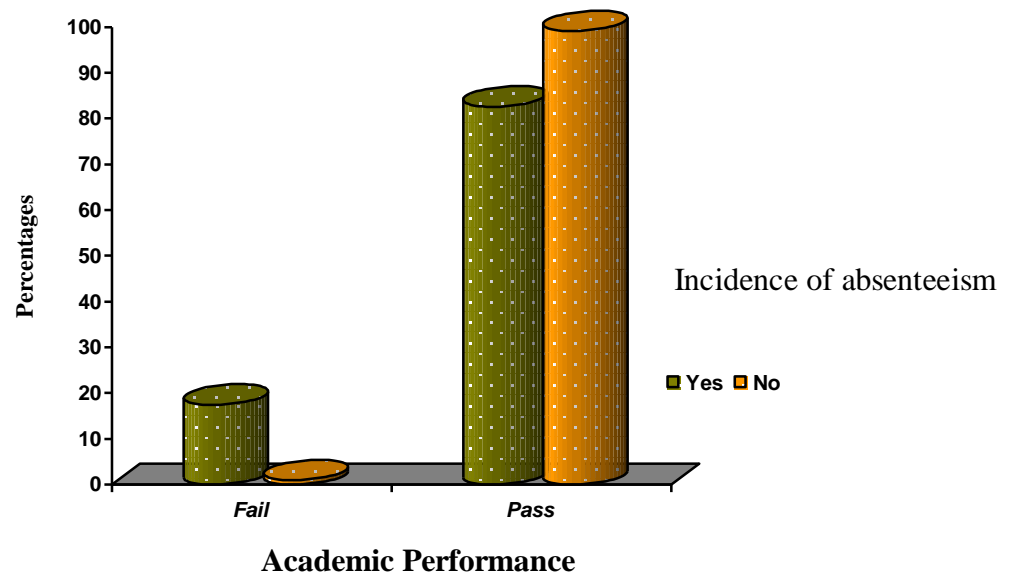


CHART 19:Correlation of academic performance with Incidence of absenteeism





## DISCUSSION

The present study , done in R.L.Jalappa Hospital attached to SDUMC,Kolar,Karnataka,consists of 754 children.

Incidence of school absenteeism was 3.1% of which males constituted 60.9% & females constituted 39.1%.

A wide range of incidence of school absenteeism has been recorded in different studies ranging from 4.7% to 17.8%

### **Incidence of school absenteeism in different studies:**

Sl.No	Study	Year	Age group (yrs)	Incidence (%)
1	Awasthi S, Sharma A.	2004	5-16	4.7
2	Sreenivas et all	2008	10-15	10.2
3	Besculides et all	2005	10-16	7.3-17.8
4	Present study	2010	5-14	3.1

This diversity of incidence of absenteeism is mainly due to varying groups taken for the study and basic differences between rural subgroups related to geographic ,educational status ,cultural factors and religion.

In our study the incidence of school absenteeism is correlating with study done by Awasthi S and Sharma A.<sup>48</sup>

### Incidence of absenteeism in different studies according to sex:

Sl.No	Study	Male (%)	Female (%)
<b>1</b>	Awasthi S, Sharma A.	<b>68</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>2</b>	Sreenivas et all	<b>61.9</b>	<b>38.1</b>
<b>3</b>	Ananthakrishnan, <i>et al</i>	<b>45</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>4</b>	Present study	<b>60.9</b>	<b>39.1</b>

Present study shows that incidence of absenteeism is higher in males (60.9%) compared to females (39.1%) which is similar to studies done by Aswathiet all<sup>48</sup> and Sreenivas et all.<sup>49</sup>

However Ananthakrishnanet all<sup>1</sup> found no significant gender difference.

The differences may be attributable to different settings of the study.

### Father and mother education among absentees:

	Sreenivas et all <sup>49</sup>		Present study	
	Absent (%)	Nonabsent (%)	Absent (%)	Nonabsent (%)
Father's education				
<8 <sup>th</sup> std	39.1	22.3	36.9	22.3
>8 <sup>th</sup> std	60.9	77.7	63.1	77.7
Mother's education				
<5 <sup>th</sup> std	56.5	26.3	53.6	26.4
>5 <sup>th</sup> std	43.5	73.7	46.4	73.6

Present study shows that parent education especially mother's education are significant predictors of incidence of absenteeism, which is similar to study done by Sreenivas et al.<sup>49</sup>

**Family size affecting incidence of absenteeism :**

Family size	Present study (%)	Sreenivas et al.(%)
<4	21.7	18.8
>4	78.7	81.2

Present study shows that incidence of absenteeism is less in smaller families less than four ( 21.7%) compared to family size greater than four (78.7%) similar to the study done by Sreenivas et al.<sup>49</sup>

**Causes of school absenteeism:**

Sl.No	Cause	Srinivas et al.(%)	Present study(%)
1	Illness	52.4	43.4
2	Family problems	42	8.7
3	School load	49.7	8.7
4	School phobia	47.32	8.7
5	School trauma	17.6	8.7
6	Chronic illness	15.2	4.3
7	Family function	48.2	4.3
8	Family illness	30.6	4.3
9	Perception of ill health	44	4.3
10	Tuitions	8	4.3

The present study shows that illness is the major cause of school absenteeism (43.4%) which is similar to study done by Sreenivaset all.<sup>49</sup>

**School absenteeism affecting school performance:**

	Romero et all		Present study	
Academic performance	Absent (%)	Non absent(%)	Absent(%)	Nonabsent (%)
<b>PASS</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>82.6</b>	<b>99.1</b>
<b>FALL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>0.9</b>

Present study shows that more students fail among absents (17.4%) when compared to non absentees (0.9%) which is similar to study done by Romero et all.<sup>50</sup>

## **CONCLUSIONS**

- Male sex, increasing birth order and family size, lower parental education and income were identified to be associated with significant school absenteeism.
- Gender, age group, birth order, parents' education and income, illness, school phobia, school truancy, school load and getting absent for family reasons were found to be independent significant factors responsible for school absenteeism.
- Of the above illness constituted the major reason for school absenteeism
- School absenteeism had positive correlation with the academic performance of the students.

## SUMMARY

- A cross sectional study was done from School children in R.L.Jalappa school attached to SDUMC, Tamaka, Kolar.
- Total of 754 children, of both sexes in the age group 5-15 years were taken
- The study included 357 males and 397 females.
- The incidence of school absenteeism was 3.1%
- Increased incidence is found in the adolescent age group due to unique problems faced by these children
- There is increased incidence among male students compared to females
- There is increased incidence with increasing birth order,
- Students from Hindu religion were absent more than non-Hindu religion
- Father and mother education play a significant role in decreasing school absenteeism.
- Students coming from far of places tend to be more absent
- Increased incidence of absenteeism was noted as family size increased.
- Majority of the children were suffering from anaemia followed by respiratory problems
- Illness was the most important cause of school absenteeism.
- Presence of medical problems is significantly associated with incidence of absenteeism
- Poor academic performance is significantly associated with incidence of absenteeism

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### **Profoma for school absenteeism**

1. Serial No : Date:
2. Age :    yrs
3. Class:
4. Sex: M/F
5. Birth order : 1 /2 /3 /4 /5
6. Religion : Hindu /Non Hindu
7. Mother's education :        standard
8. Father's education    :        standard
9. Residence :Kolar /Surrounding Kolar.
- 10.Occupation: unskilled /skilled / semi-skilled / clerk/ shop/  
professional/ others
- 11.Family size :
- 12.Family income :
- 13.Any complaints:
- 14.**On examination :**
  - A.General physical examination :
  - B.Systemicexamination :
    - a. Cardiovascular system:
    - b. Respiratory system:
    - c. Per abdomen:
    - d. Central nervous system :
- 15.Number of days taken in last year:
- 16.Passed in last year exams :Yes/No
- 17.Performance in class : 1<sup>st</sup> class / 2<sup>nd</sup> class

## *Student Questionnaire: School related absenteeism*

Please tick one of the five choices mentioned below:

**A = Strongly disagree B=Disagree C=Unsure D= Agree E= Strongly agree**

- |   |                         |                         |                         |                         |                         |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. I am not a good student :                      | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C | <input type="radio"/> D | <input type="radio"/> E |
| 2. Most subjects are boring:                      | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C | <input type="radio"/> D | <input type="radio"/> E |
| 3. School rules are unfair:                       | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C | <input type="radio"/> D | <input type="radio"/> E |
| 4. I can't do anything right in school:           | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C | <input type="radio"/> D | <input type="radio"/> E |
| 5. Sometimes I feel scared going to school:       | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C | <input type="radio"/> D | <input type="radio"/> E |
| 6. I can't do homework sometimes:                 | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C | <input type="radio"/> D | <input type="radio"/> E |
| 7. Other students pick on me:                     | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C | <input type="radio"/> D | <input type="radio"/> E |
| 8. Teachers scold me sometimes:                   | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C | <input type="radio"/> D | <input type="radio"/> E |
| 9. I have no friends to talk when I have problem: | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C | <input type="radio"/> D | <input type="radio"/> E |
| 10. I feel angry when no one listens:             | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C | <input type="radio"/> D | <input type="radio"/> E |
| 11. I miss school because I always feel sick:     | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C | <input type="radio"/> D | <input type="radio"/> E |
| 12. I like to simply be at home:                  | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C | <input type="radio"/> D | <input type="radio"/> E |
| 13. School is just a waste of time:               | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C | <input type="radio"/> D | <input type="radio"/> E |
| 14. I like to play all the time:                  | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C | <input type="radio"/> D | <input type="radio"/> E |
| 15. I like to be with my mother always:           | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C | <input type="radio"/> D | <input type="radio"/> E |
| 16. It is easy to make friends:                   | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C | <input type="radio"/> D | <input type="radio"/> E |
| 17. School life is boring:                        | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C | <input type="radio"/> D | <input type="radio"/> E |
| 18. I like to be on festivals in home :           | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C | <input type="radio"/> D | <input type="radio"/> E |
| 19. Some subjects are boring:                     | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C | <input type="radio"/> D | <input type="radio"/> E |
| 20. I have family problem :                       | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C | <input type="radio"/> D | <input type="radio"/> E |
| 21. Holidays are too short:                       | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C | <input type="radio"/> D | <input type="radio"/> E |

### **School questionnaire: Parental Condoned absenteeism**

1. In which class level (5-10years) did you experience highest level of absenteeism?

Ans.

2. What is the greatest type of school absenteeism experienced in your school?

Ans. Illness/ Explained leave/unexplained leave/parental condoned

3. Do you consider parental condoned absenteeism is a major issue in your school?

Yes /No

4. Is there a specific group particular to parental condoned absenteeism associated with your school? For example:

- |  |   |         |
|--|---|---------|
| <input type="radio"/> Socio-economic         | - | Yes/ No |
| <input type="radio"/> Gender                 | - | Yes/ No |
| <input type="radio"/> Multi-cultural         | - | Yes/ No |
| <input type="radio"/> Family dynamics        | - | Yes/ No |
| <input type="radio"/> Personal/psychological | - | Yes/ No |
| <input type="radio"/> Indigenous             | - | Yes/ No |
| <input type="radio"/> Others                 | - | Yes/ No |

5. What strategies do you think are appropriate for controlling parental condoned absenteeism?

- ☐ Parental education
- ☐ Community programs
- ☐ Government legislation
- ☐ Attendance officer
- ☐ Others

### Key to Master chart:

H= Hindu

NH= Non Hindu

K= Kolar

SA=Surrounding areas

US= Unskilled

SM= Semiskilled

SK= Skilled

CL= Clerk/shop

SP= Semiprofessional

I1 = <6100 RS

I2 = 6101-10,160 RS

I3 = 10,161-15,280 RS

I4 = >15,281 RS

IL= Illness

SPH= School phobia

ST= School truancy

SL= School load

FP= Family problems

CI= Chronic illness

PI= Perception of ill health

FF= Family function

FI= Family illness

TU= Tuitions