



## TRUANCY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN SECONDARY SCHOOL – SOME CHALLENGES

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### RESEARCH ARTICLE



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#### Abstract

Adolescence has been described as the period of storm and stress. Many behavior problems arise at this stage. Truancy is one such common feature especially in the early adolescent stage. The trouble of truancy is becoming one of the most baffling problems leading to further delinquent behavior of youngsters. Truancy is an intentional unauthorized absence from compulsory schooling. It is basically a behavior problem which is related to school life of a child. Truancy is a special kind of illegal absence. A pupil is truant from school when he/ she is absent without knowledge and permission of his parent or guardian. School participation is important for individuals and society. Therefore, when children are not in school, they are usually in violation of the school laws as well as social norms are defying a widely held expectation that they should be in school. Truancy is a problem because the absent children cannot benefit from the educational programs that the school offers. It is also an indicator that schools should also improve itself. In recent years, increased demand and massive expansion have brought into Indian schools' huge numbers of children who might not have attended in the past. Still, large numbers, and specific groups, of children remain excluded from schooling for various reasons, jeopardizing equitable access to secondary education. Further accentuating this inequity in provision, the quality of education remains deeply unsatisfactory, particularly for children from disadvantaged groups. The present study examines the influence of socio-economic status and other social problems that results on truancy among secondary school students in West Bengal, North 24 paraganas. 100 students were taken from 10 schools. The data for the study has been collected through two interview schedules which were constructed by researchers. The study is qualitative in nature. The paper also tries to suggest some remedial measures to tackle the problems of truancy in the area under study. It also examines the role of teachers to motivate the students and parents so that the truant students can be retained in the school for the entire school hour. Role of government was also found to have a significant impact in solving truancy

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#### Introduction

Child takes birth as a helpless creature, and he is not able to stand and talk at the time of birth; he has to learn these activities. Nature has made human life capable of gaining a lot of knowledge. From this point of view, it is natural right of a child to receive a proper education. Education is that light which expels darkness from life and focuses attention in all round development of the child, not only in the present age, but also in the past. It is not only important to admit the children to schools and provide facilities for them but it is also important to prevent wastage and stagnation of those who have been admitted to schools. Truancy is the main cause of wastage and stagnation. Indiscipline among students is a perennial problem. One common discipline problem found globally is truancy. Truancy can be defined as unexcused and unlawful absence from school; typically, without parental knowledge or consent (Lee and Miltenberger, 1996). Students that are truant typically spend the time they are out of school away from school and tend to conceal the absences from their parents. Truancy then, is a form of absenteeism that is unexcused and without guardian consent. Davies and Lee (2006) found out that school children in the United Kingdom (UK) are inclined not to attend certain classes during school hours. Truancy in Adolescence” attaches with it various kinds of activities while away from school. In this regard, Kline has linked truancy and running away, with man's roving instincts, linking it to the migratory instincts of animals and birds. In India, the education history shows a notorious character for its lack of social inclusiveness. Till the 19th century AD, education was largely considered a privilege restricted to persons at the higher end of the caste and class spectrum. In the ancient and medieval India education was a privilege available only to a chosen few. It was in 2008 in India that the Indian parliament had passed the historic 'right of children to free & compulsory education bill 2008' which envisages providing free and compulsory education to 6 to 14 yrs old children. From the time of compulsory education, truancy has also been a problem

as many youngsters are not willing to attend school regularly for one reason or another (Van Breda, 2006). In the list of education for all (EFA) development index, among 125 countries, India ranks 99th, even though there have been reduction in the number of out of school children since 2004.

### **Concept of Truancy**

The word truancy means “Run away from the classes” and the students who always tend to keep themselves away from studies and avoid attending classes are called truants. Truant Students develop a sort of Schools-Phobia. School phobia is a fear which may approach panic, of leaving home and going to schools. It should not be confused with the occasional mild reluctance for school seen in normal children and adolescents, or with realistic fears of going to school. Truancy is the main cause of wastage and stagnation. Truancy leads to poor result in the examinations, failures, non-promotion and drop outs which is technically called “Wastage and Stagnation” in education. According to Kothari commission (1964-66) “Wastage and Stagnation” are the symptoms ailment due to which there is absence of proper relationship between life and attraction for children to be in School”. According to Kee (2001) deliberate absence from school on the part of the learner without the knowledge and consent of the parent or absence of a learner from school for which no reasonable or acceptable excuse is given. Stoll (1990) defines truancy as ‘absence from school for no legitimate reason’.

### **Truancy and Exclusion**

Government statistics on the number of pupils who are not enrolled in school have historically been used to assess exclusion in secondary education. However, specialists in this field believe that a more thorough understanding of exclusion is necessary. "When we talk about exclusion, we think of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and minorities," says R Govinda, author of the recently published book *Who Goes to School: Exploring Exclusion in Indian Education in the Capital*. Despite this, it's crucial to consider exclusion in the classroom as well. Even if a youngster is seated in the classroom, they may still be excluded. The real causes of truancy, which is a form of silent exclusion, can include discriminating attitudes, missing lessons, etc. It has been observed that youngsters do not choose to skip school. They either do this because they find the school to be torturous or because they are mistreated there. A tiny portion of them are taken away by their parents due to factors like poverty. Many of the kids who worked at roadside dhabas had attended school but had chosen to drop out, according to a poll done 10 years ago. They chose the dhaba over education despite the lengthy work hours. He emphasizes the necessity to examine what takes place in these schools.

Health is another significant factor that contributes to exclusion. "A child who receives proper care during their early years will grow up to be a healthy adult. However, children would have developed deficiencies in their cognitive capacities—the ability to learn—due to hunger, stunted growth, etc., and let's not forget that India has the highest population of undernourished children worldwide, Govinda argues. One approach to finding a solution is to clearly focus on schools and, more crucially, on instructors. Govinda concludes by saying, "The nation needs to invest in teacher-teacher coaching, handholding, and capacity-building in addition to inspection. In order to achieve a realistic synergy, we must first examine a child's early life in terms of healthcare realities and a smooth transition into the curriculum before looking at schools. India would have won more than half the fight if we did that."

A key component of the government's social inclusion agenda is lowering the rates of truancy and exclusions. Regular students are less likely to engage in criminal or antisocial behavior and are more likely to make the most of their school time, which increases their chances of reaching their full potential. There is evidence that low literacy may be a contributing factor in some situations. According to an early Children's Society survey, males between the ages of 13 and 15 make up the bulk of those who are permanently excluded, and the majority of them began secondary school with reading levels below those of their classmates.

Teenage girls are a “underestimated minority” whose issues need to be identified and addressed immediately. These girls may be excluded from school or have ceased attending due to discontent, bullying, or family issues. As we previously mentioned, girls in India face greater disadvantages than boys, and girls from impoverished, SC, ST, and Muslim communities face double disadvantages in all areas of life, including education. Velaskar (2005) looked at how caste, class, and patriarchy interact to affect Dalit (SC) girls' access to education in Maharashtra. This is because poor SC and ST children, especially girls, frequently have very few options outside of receiving a subpar education in a single-room, single-teacher school. As children from SC and ST households, they experience various forms of prejudice and consistently perform worse than children from other households, even if they are mainstreamed in a school with greater academic and physical facilities (Duraishamy 2004, p. 504). According to Venkatanarayana's (2004) study conducted in Andhra Pradesh, girls from SC and ST groups who live in rural regions face the greatest educational disadvantages. Additionally, the study details a more intricate relationship between caste, gender, and location that significantly affects school attendance. Economic position appears to be a decisive factor in girls' education, aside from social background. Many choices, such as whether a girl will attend school at all, what kind of school she will attend, and how much money to invest in her education, are determined based on the attitudes of her parents as well as their financial situation. Ray (2000) also discovered that the likelihood of a kid, especially a girl, attending school or entering the workforce depended on the awareness and educational attainment of adults in the household, as well as the size and makeup of the household and the distribution of resources within the household. However, in metropolitan regions, a family's general financial well-being can at least partially close the gender enrolment gap.

### Objective Of the Study

1. To find out the socio-economic status of male and female truant.
2. To find out the other social problems of male and female truant.
3. To find out the academic achievement of male and female truant.

**Methodology:** The sample was collected from 100 both male and female secondary school students from 10 schools.

**Table: 1.1**

Gender	No. of Students
Male	50
Female	50
Total	100

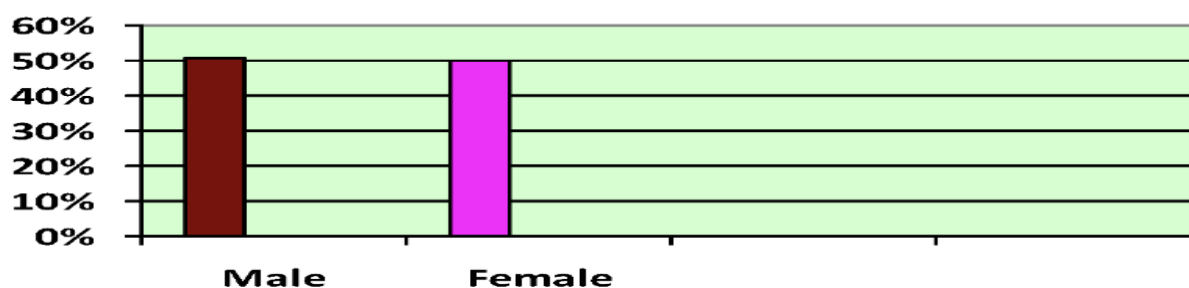
**Tools for the Study:** Two interview schedules were prepared by the researcher to collect the data.

**Type of Research:** Survey method was followed to collect the data.

### Finding of the study

#### Objective 1:

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEM OF MALE AND FEMALE TRUANTS

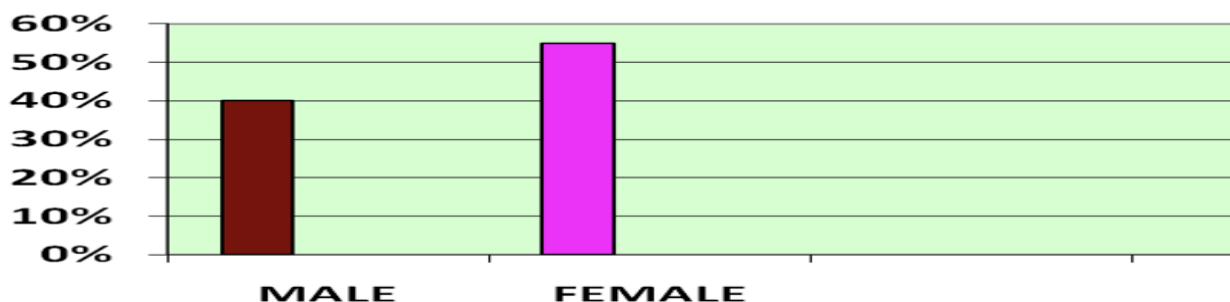


Graph -1 show that 51% male and 50% female students are truant due to socio economic problem of their family. Socio Economic status is determined by an individual's achievement in education, employment, and occupational status and income and wealth. The finding revealed that socio economic status of parent contributes to truant behavior. It is clear that family's socio-economic status plays a major role in the academic propagation of their children. Family can either make or break the education of their children. Here some factors which make students truant:

- Lack of adequate material.
- Clothing
- Transportation
- Inability to pay for their children's school fees etc.

#### Objective 2

### SOCIAL PROBLEM OF MALE AND FEMALE TRUANTS



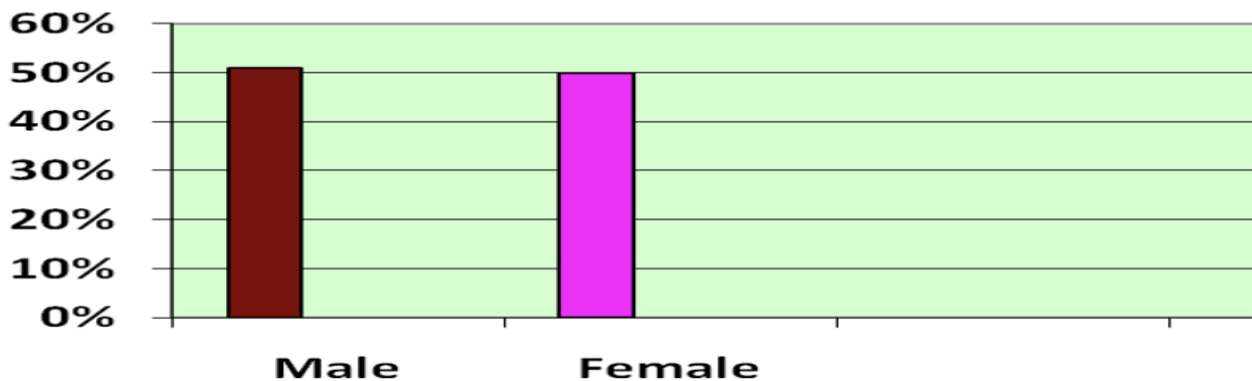
More than 55% female students became truant due to some social problems. Here some barriers which make the girls truant:

- Poor relationship between children and parent.
- Poor physical condition. Use of corporal punishment at home
- Lack of parental interest in child's welfare
- In many parts of the nearest school to a particular community might be a 4/5 km away from their residential place.
- Due to poverty most of the female students are engaged in some part time job which makes them truant.

Early marriage is also a cause of truancy.

### Objective 3

## ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF MALE AND FEMALE TRUANTS



The study reveals that constant absence from school has serious negative consequences both male and female students. It has been seen that students have faced some problems like bad social atmosphere, bad company, social discriminations, unhealthy surroundings, unhealthy teaching procedure, heavy curriculum, teacher student relationship, lack of cooperation, loose administration, cooperation between headmaster and assistant teacher etc which reflects student's academic achievement.

### Recommendations For Reducing Truancy

- 1. Improve communication with parents**
  - Inform parents quickly when a student is absent.
  - Hold regular parent-teacher meetings.
  - Encourage families to monitor attendance daily.
- 2. Create a positive school environment**
  - Make classrooms engaging and supportive.
  - Prevent bullying and harassment.
  - Encourage participation in sports, arts, and clubs so students feel connected to school.
- 3. Provide counselling and guidance**
  - Identify emotional, social, or academic problems early.
  - Offer counselling for stress, anxiety, peer pressure, or family difficulties.
  - Mentor students who are frequently absent.
- 4. Use attendance monitoring systems**
  - Keep accurate attendance records.
  - Identify patterns of absenteeism quickly.
  - Contact students and families before absenteeism becomes severe.
- 5. Offer academic support**
  - Provide tutoring or remedial classes for struggling students.
  - Help students who fear failure or feel left behind academically.
- 6. Reward regular attendance**
  - Give certificates, recognition, or small incentives for good attendance.
  - Celebrate improvement, not only perfect attendance.
- 7. Address health and transportation issues**
  - Ensure students have access to healthcare when possible.
  - Arrange safe and reliable transportation to school.
- 8. Strengthen school discipline fairly**
  - Set clear attendance rules and consequences.
  - Use supportive interventions instead of harsh punishment alone.
- 9. Increase student engagement**

- Use interactive teaching methods.
- Connect lessons to real-life goals and careers.
- Allow students to participate in decision-making activities.

#### 10. Community involvement

- Work with social workers, local organizations, and community leaders.
- Organize awareness campaigns about the importance of education.

A long-term reduction in truancy usually comes from combining support, motivation, and accountability together

#### Conclusion

Truancy is a segment of social behavior is becoming increasingly important and complex everywhere in the modern world, today. It is an alarming phenomenon and a distress signal for home, society and school. It has thus become one of the foremost concerns with school authorities and a common pattern of behavior among students. Truancy is an escape from reality, causing an inability or unreadiness to cope with the exaction of school. Truancy is thus a danger signal warranting inquiry action. Family must be careful in aspiring to their children's future. Parents should be given guidance through adult education. A sound knowledge of the correct methods of observation and diagnosis is necessary for a teacher in order to discover the truants. Besides this knowledge the teacher needs to have a keen eye for significant peculiarities of behavior and the necessary experience upon which can draw interpretation of what he observes.

In the preceding section we analysed some of the complexities involved in describing the children who are being excluded from elementary schools. Our analysis points emphatically to a nexus of multiple negative forces. Gender discrimination invariably combines with social and economic backwardness to place girls in multiply disadvantaged situations with respect to attending school. The first-generation learners undoubtedly need special care and sensitive handling, which is critical to break the vicious inter-generational cycle of illiteracy and poverty. From our analysis of data and the findings of other studies, four clusters of factors emerge that significantly influence the patterns of exclusion. The first cluster relates to gender. In spite of various policy and programme initiatives, girls remain more likely to be excluded than their male counterparts, whatever their social origin or economic status. The trajectory of progress in the schooling of girls from the traditionally disadvantaged social groups, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, brings this problem into sharp focus.

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