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A Study of Present Status of Foundational Learning of Students in Primary Schools of Aurangabad District

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Abstract

Considering the contemporary educational situation in Maharashtra, which has a background of educational and social transformation since the pre-independence period, even if it is satisfactory, it is necessary to increase the fundamental learning ability of primary-level students. Because earlier reports in Maharashtra regarding fundamental learning are negative. Many experimental schools and experimental teachers are working in Maharashtra today, so there is a need to universalize the different study teaching processes developed by the experimental schools and experimental teachers in Maharashtra to improve the fundamental learning ability of the students. Considering the primary goal of language and mathematical education, listening, reading, speaking, writing, number recognition, reading comprehension, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division are the foundations of basic education. It is necessary to develop. To study the current status of foundational learning study considering the basic literacy of primary school students in Aurangabad district, students have been assessed through different means. Through that evaluation, as the picture in terms of basic literacy in Aurangabad district is hopeful, even though the current status of the primary schools in Aurangabad district and the quality of the students studying in them is positive, there is a need for many improvements.

Keywords: Foundational, Learning, Marathwada, Primary School.

Introduction

In March 2020, all schools, colleges, and universities were closed due to the nationwide lockdown. Therefore, the question of how to educate their children was facing the parents. Due to the closure of schools and colleges, the education of students suffered a lot during that time. As a solution, the government tried to provide online education to schools and students. That is why all schools and colleges in Maharashtra started teaching students through digital platforms. But students in villages far from cities face many hurdles in their education due to lack of internet connectivity or smartphones. Even though the task of removing all those obstacles is mainly done by the government, public representatives and teachers

After the coronavirus crisis in the country, considering the basic education of primary school students, in many surveys conducted by the education departments of many states of the country, as well as NGOs, many different conclusions have come out regarding the consideration of basic

education. Considering the primary objective of language and mathematical education, listening, reading, speaking, writing, recognition of numbers, reading comprehension, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division are the foundations of basic education. Capacity development is essential. Keeping in mind that it is necessary to provide quality education while considering basic literacy, the Maharashtra government has decided to select 488 schools as ideal models in the state for increasing the quality of education in 2021. In that, 17 schools were selected in Aurangabad district. Under this Adarsh School initiative, quality buildings, well-arranged classrooms, sports materials, playgrounds, ICT labs, library science laboratories, libraries, supplementary reading books, and reference books will be provided for these schools. From that point of view, to study the current status of foundational learning study considering the basic literacy of primary school students in Aurangabad district, students have been assessed through different means. Through that assessment, as the picture in terms of basic literacy in Aurangabad district is promising, even though the current status of the primary schools in Aurangabad district and the quality of the students studying in them is positive, there is a need for many improvements.

Aurangabad - At a glance:

Aurangabad district is the most important district of the Marathwada region in the Maharashtra state. This district is situated at the center of the Maharashtra state and is known as the gateway of Marathwada. Aurangabad is the capital of Marathwada and is known as a major center of educational and revolutionary movements. Aurangabad District is located mainly in the Godavari Basin and it's some part towards North West of the Tapi River Basin. This District's general down level is towards the South and East and North West part comes in the Purna-Godavari River basin. The Aurangabad district's North Longitude (Degree) is 19 and 20 and East Longitude (Degree) is 74 to 76. The Aurangabad District's total area is 10,100 Square Kilo Meter out of which 141.1 Square Kilo Meter is an urban area and 9,958.9 Square Kilo Meter is Rural Area. In Aurangabad district, as per the Census 2011 total population is 3,701,282 and peoples mainly speaks Marathi, Hindi, English, and Urdu language.

- Total Geographical Area: 10,100 Km
- Total Population (According to Census 2011): 37,01,282
- Rural Population: 20,81,112
- Total No. of Talukas: 09

- Total No. of Villages: 1341
- Total No. of Gram Panchayats: 861
- Total Average Rainfall: 725.8 mm
- Aurangabad district is divided into Aurangabad, Khultabad, Soygaon, Sillod, Gangapur, Kannad, Phulambri, Vaijapur, Paithan 9 talukas. These 9 talukas consist of a total of 1344 villages.

Foundational Learning

Education is seen as the foundation of national development. From that point of view, the government spends a lot on education. Today, when India is seen as the country of youngest in the world, providing quality education to those youth is the need of the hour and our country must provide them with good quality education opportunities because the future of the nation of tomorrow lies in the hands of the youth through education. The Education Strategy 2020 has started with the view that to achieve the goals of the Global Education and Development Action Program for Development, it is necessary to promote well-planned inclusive, and equal quality education for all. Because of the principles of this policy, it mainly emphasizes the following.

Recognizing, identifying, and fostering the unique capabilities of each student, by sensitizing teachers as well as parents to promote each student's holistic development in both academic and non-academic spheres & flexibility, so that learners can choose their learning trajectories and programmers and thereby choose their own paths in life according to their talents and interests.

Also, concerning school education, the following aims are mainly set in this educational policy. The overall aim of ECCE will be to attain optimal outcomes in the domains of physical and motor development, cognitive development, socio-emotional-ethical development, cultural/artistic development, and the development of communication and early language, literacy, and numeracy.

Overall, the National Education Policy 2020 has considered the principles and key objectives for the development of school-going students from the point of view of competence and basic education. Therefore, the development of basic literacy and numeracy skills among primary-level students has been given top priority. For that

Ministry of Education launched the National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN) Bharat in July 2021. NIPUN was announced as a national mission to enable all children at the end of Grade 3 to attain foundational skills by the

year 2026-2027. As a crucial step towards strengthening efforts for Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN), a large-scale Foundational Learning Study (FLS) was undertaken by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in March 2022.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the present status of Foundational Learning of primary school students in Aurangabad district.

Study of Methodology

This research focuses on foundational learning areas such as reading, listening, writing, communication, basic numeracy, number identification and comparison, number operations, multiplication, and division. The study employs survey, descriptive, and analytical methods.

For data collection, the researcher designed an evaluation questionnaire, ensuring its validity before use. An assessment test was conducted, and the students selected as the sample were evaluated based on their performance. The collected data were categorized into quantitative and qualitative forms, with the quantitative data being analyzed using percentage-based methods.

Sample Selection Methodology

Aurangabad district has a total of 318fx1 schools of all management in 9 talukas as of 2021- 22. Its statistical information can be stated as follows.

Table 1

Statistical Information of Primary Schools in Aurangabad District 2021-22

S.no	Taluka	Total number of schools	Boyes	Girls
1	Heels	370	24097	21737
2	Soyegaon	112	6957	6381
3	Silload	399	24808	22689
4	phulambri	230	8916	8350
5	Aurangabad	906	109652	98890
6	Khultabad	132	7777	7011
7	Vaijapur	357	17601	16546
8	Gangapur	350	34131	29554
9	Paithan	325	22345	19667
	Total	3181	256284	230825

Source: District Social and Economic Review, 2021-22 Aurangabad.

The sample has been randomly selected from all management primary schools in Aurangabad district. There are a total of nine talukas in Aurangabad district out of which two talukas were randomly selected and two talukas namely Paithan and Gangapur were selected as samples.

There are a total of 675 schools in Paithan and Gangapur talukas out of which 34 schools have been selected through lottery. The school sample is five percent. A total of 1020 boys and girls were selected randomly out of 34 schools selected as a sample, 10 students each from classes three to five. The students selected as the sample were tested in reading, listening, speaking, writing, number recognition, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, etc. They have been directly evaluated by giving an assessment test of 100 marks each to know the fundamental learning in the case.

Analysis and Discussion of the Findings

Table 2

Percentage Analysis of Each component for students

S.No	Component	Less than 40 marks	41 to 50 Marks	51 to 60 Marks	61 to 70 Marks	71 to 80 Marks	Above to 81	Total Response
1	Textbook oral reading ability	102	80	280	530	21	7	1020
		10%	7.84%	27.45%	51.96%	2.05%	0.68%	100%
2	The ability to understand the meaning of language	120	90	355	399	47	6	1020
		11.76%	8.82%	34.80%	39.12%	4.60%	0.58%	100%
3	The ability to communicate	156	110	398	332	17	7	1020
		15.29%	10.78%	39.01%	32.54%	1.66%	0.68%	100%
4	ability to Writing	120	141	403	338	12	6	1020
		11.76%	13.82%	39.50%	33.17%	1.17%	0.58%	100%
5	Ability to recognize numbers	125	163	383	337	6	6	1020
		12.25%	15.98%	37.54%	33.03%	0.58%	0.58%	100%
6	Ability to add up	138	150	390	322	12	8	1020

		13.52%	14.70%	38.23%	31.56%	1.17%	0.78%	100%
7	Ability to subtract	145	114	399	330	20	12	1020
		14.21%	11.17%	39.12%	32.35%	1.96%	1.17%	100%
8	Ability to multiply	152	121	392	331	15	9	1020
		14.90%	11.86%	38.43%	32.45%	1.47%	0.88%	100%
9	Ability to divide	125	115	357	388	24	11	1020
		12.25%	11.27%	35.00%	38.03%	2.35%	1.07%	100%
	Overall total & Percentage	1063	1084	3357	3317	174	72	
		11.57%	11.80%	36.56%	36.13%	1.89%	0.78%	

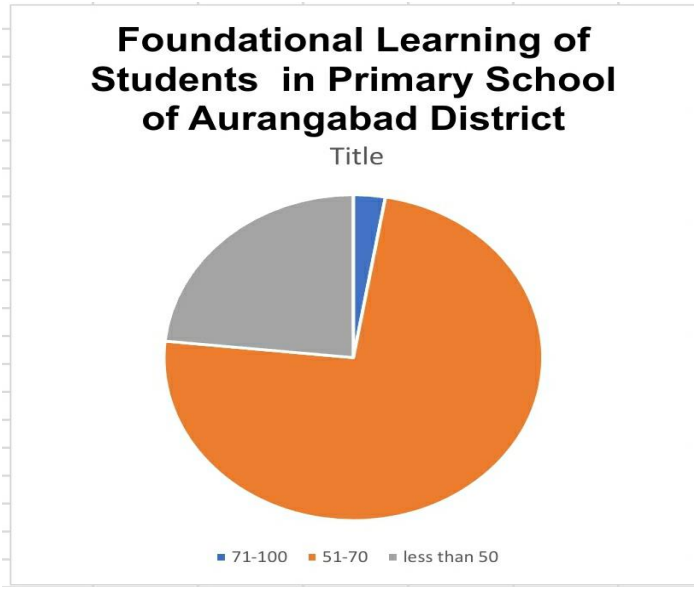

Fig.1

Below is a concise discussion of the percentage analysis for each component as revealed in Table-2

i. **Textbook Oral Reading Ability:**

   a. The majority (51.96%) score between 61 and 70 marks, suggesting a strong performance in this area.

   b. A small percentage (0.68%) score above 81 marks, indicating a high level of proficiency.

ii. **Understanding the Meaning of Language:**

a. A significant portion (39.12%) score between 61 and 70 marks, showing a good grasp of language comprehension.
b. Only 0.58% score above 81 marks, which might suggest room for improvement in higher levels of understanding.

iii. **Ability to Communicate:**

a. Most respondents (39.01%) score between 51 and 60 marks, reflecting decent communication skills.
b. A very small percentage (0.68%) score above 81 marks, indicating few individuals reach the highest proficiency.

iv. **Ability to Write:**

a. 39.50% score between 51 and 60 marks, demonstrating solid writing abilities.
b. A negligible percentage (0.58%) score above 81 marks, showing that fewer excel in writing.

v. **Ability to Recognize Numbers:**

a. 37.54% score between 51 and 60 marks, showing general competence in number recognition.
b. Only 0.58% score above 81 marks, suggesting a need for more focus on higher proficiency.

vi. **Ability to Add Up:**

a. 38.23% score between 51 and 60 marks, indicating strong basic arithmetic skills.
b. A very small percentage (0.78%) score above 81 marks, highlighting limited advanced proficiency.

vii. **Ability to Subtract:**

a. 39.12% score between 51 and 60 marks, reflecting good subtraction skills.
b. Only 1.17% score above 81 marks, suggesting fewer achieve advanced subtraction skills.

viii. **Ability to Multiply:**

a. 38.43% score between 51 and 60 marks, showing solid multiplication skills.
b. Only 0.88% score above 81 marks, indicating limited high-level multiplication proficiency.

ix. **Ability to Divide:**

a. 38.03% score between 61 and 70 marks, showing competence in division.
b. A small percentage (1.07%) score above 81 marks, highlighting that advanced division skills are less common.

Thus, it can be concluded that the distribution across components shows most respondents score between 51 and 60 marks (36.56%) and 61 and 70 marks (36.13%), as illustrated in Fig. 1. Additionally, the percentage of individuals scoring above 81 marks is quite low (0.78%), indicating that achieving the highest level of proficiency is rare across all components.

Conclusion and Future Directions

Reading, listening, speaking, writing, number recognition, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, etc. In terms of foundational learning, the number of students getting marks in 51-70 is the highest. Also, the number of students scoring less than 50 marks is around 23% so this number is significant. The number of students who get 71 to 100 marks is very low. Students scoring less than 50 marks should be brought in the range of 50 to 70 marks. Students who are in the range of 50 to 70 should be moved to the range of 71 to 100. For primary school students in Aurangabad district Foundational learning abilities are satisfactory.

Considering the contemporary educational situation in Maharashtra, which has a background of educational and social transformation since the pre-independence period, even if it is satisfactory, it is necessary to increase the fundamental learning ability of primary-level students. Because earlier reports in Maharashtra regarding fundamental learning are negative. Many experimental schools and experimental teachers are working in Maharashtra today, so there is a need to universalize the different study teaching processes developed by the experimental schools and experimental teachers in Maharashtra to improve the fundamental learning ability of the students. Teachers, who are the most important component of the educational process in Maharashtra, have to do a lot of extra-curricular activities, so they do not get enough time to teach. Therefore, it is necessary to reduce the large number of extracurricular activities of teachers. Even though the government is conducting a large number of different types of training for teachers today, the training given in that training and the impact of that training on those teachers is very low. Therefore, the responsibility of training should be given to experimental schools and experimental teachers. At the same time, it is necessary to motivate the teachers through experimental teachers. Since the fundamental learning ability is not fully developed in

the students, a lot of depression is created in the students, due to the lack of ability, the students do not feel interested in the education, which increases the dropout rate of the students in the school. Therefore, it is necessary to get the cooperation of students who have good fundamental learning ability to bring these students along with those students whose fundamental learning ability is good. Today we see many out-of-school children turning to criminal behavior due to a lack of development of fundamental learning abilities.

Overall, while paying attention to the basic education of the students, it is necessary to change the training given to the teachers to enable the students in the basic education and while making that change, the trend of mental development of the students should be taken into account. Also, keeping in mind the mental abilities of the students, there is a need to make major changes in the curriculum according to the local and regional areas. Also, considering the mental abilities of the students, it is necessary to teach them according to their preferences, only when the basic abilities of the students are enabled.

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