

1 NATIONAL SCENARIO OF ACADEMIC BACKWARDNESS AMONG SCHOOL GOING RURAL CHILDREN

2

3 ABSTRACT

4 Most of the states in India are facing the problem of academic backwardness especially in rural villages. Academic
5 stresss in children can be present as physical, behavioural or emotional problems. The causes for a rural child being poor in academics
6 are varied and range from physical causes to psychological causes the later being more common. Present study was carried out in
7 order to find out the reasons of academic backwardness among rural school children between the age group of 11-17 years and to
8 provide results based remedial solutions and interventions. For this purpose, samples were selected from different villages of nine
9 states in India which includes Assam (Jorhat), Andhra Pradesh (Hyderabad), Haryana (Hissar), Himachal Pradesh (Palampur), Uttar
10 Pradesh (Pantnagar), Rajasthan (Udaipur), Maharashtra (Parbani), Punjab (Ludhiana), Uttarakhand (Dharwad). A checklist to assess
11 the academic backwardness among school children was prepared covering statements on three major aspects: Academic, Health and
12 Familial. Data analysis was done by using Frequency, percentage distribution and Chi-square test. Results revealed that majority of
13 rural school children from nine states were having problems related to studies due to academic reasons whereas in one state i.e
14 Parbhani, children were having problems related to studies due to health reasons.

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16 **KEYWORDS: Academic backwardness, Rural, School children**

17 **INTRODUCTION**

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19 It is a universal truth that all children are basically the same but are different up to a limit from each other physically, mentally,
20 educationally and socially. It is therefore, not unusual to find in the classroom, many students who do not benefit much from the usual
21 classroom teaching mostly designed for the normal or averages. It is a known fact that each student of the class brings a unique set of
22 characteristics to the classroom: different background knowledge, intelligence and a unique learning style, a variety of interests and
23 varied parental support and expectations. To anticipate that each student would learn in the same way, at the same speed and using the
24 same material is an unrealistic expectation. Every student possesses different intelligence, interests, learning styles and educational
25 problems which may influence his academic achievement. It is an important fact that these variables definitely affect the educational
26 backwardness.

27 Students generally face various educational problems. Because of these problems, the students may not concentrate upon their
28 studies and become educationally backward. Hence, many problems related to teachers and teaching, social atmosphere,
29 organizational or administration and cultural causes, may be responsible for low academic achievement. Under these circumstances,

30 the students are surrounded by many problems which may be related to poor self-concept, lack of family involvement and
31 encouragement, damaging peer pressure, cultural deprivation, emotional problems and physical illness.

32 The cause of academic backwardness may be anywhere; right from the home to the grading system or even the examiner.
33 Scholastic backwardness contributes to school dropout, especially after the primary school years (Kamat VV., 1934) and should be
34 recognized and remedial measures initiated, in the primary classes itself for best results. At present, children are identified much later
35 and as a result, optimum benefit of remedial education is not obtained. It is important to identify the risk factors for scholastic
36 backwardness so that these children can be identified early and corrective measures initiated.

37 Children are the future Human resource of our country. Academic performance is given prime importance in Indian society as
38 it is an important way to come up in one's life. Academic backwardness is one of the commonest educational problems encountered in
39 rural children. It is a big concern among parents and teachers in present day competitive society. It not only results in the child having
40 a low self-esteem, but also causes significant stress to the parents. It is usually a reflection of a larger underlying problem in children.
41 Also, majority of India still lives in villages and so, the issue of rural education in India is of utmost importance. There is a dire need
42 to analyze poor school performance systematically so that proper interventions can be given in this direction. If not worked upon, it
43 will eventually leads to dropout of children. It is reported that around 20% of school children have scholastic backwardness (Karande
44 S, Kulkarni M., 2005)

45 Despite of governmental efforts, huge investment and many innovative programmes, academic backwardness remains
 46 alarming high in many states of India. In this context, it is not only the provision of schooling facilities and quality of education, but
 47 also other household and social factors play a major role in influencing the academic backwardness in rural areas. It is very important
 48 to understand the family and parental characteristics and various other factors to examine the reasons for the same. Therefore, it is
 49 necessary that not only the teachers but also the parents of the backward students must root out the causes of the backwardness and
 50 create such type of environment where such students take interest in educational activities and make their academic achievement high.
 51 The aim of the present study was to identify the underlying risk factors for scholastic backwardness in school going rural children.

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53 **METHODOLOGY**

54 **Sample Selection:** The total sample from all nine states for the study constituted 1350 school children/students (i.e. 150 children from
 55 each center) studying in 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th standard from nine respective zones. These children belong to the age group of 11-17
 56 years and the sample comprised with equal number of boys and girls from each center.

57 **Tool and its description:**

58 A checklist on academic backwardness was prepared by All India Coordinated research Project (AICRP) HDFS Scientists to assess
 59 the reasons for academic backwardness among school children. It comprised of 40 statements which were majorly divided into three
 60 categories: Academics, Health and Familial.

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62 RESULTS & DISCUSSION

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65 **Table 1: Academic problems among academically backward children of nine states**

S.no	Items	AAU, Jorhat	ANGRAUH Anandpur Sahib	CCSHAU, Chandigarh	CSKHPKV Haryana	Palampur Garhwal	GBPAUT, Bathinda	MPUAT Uttar Pradesh	MAU, Parbhani	PAU, Ludhiana	UAS, Dharwad	Chi Square	Significance
1.	I don't understand what teachers teach in the class.	20 (16.0)	88 (59.0)	59 (39.3)	80 (53.33))	86 (57.0)	35 (23.3)	106 (70.66))	25 (16.66))	51 (34.0)		191	p<0.01
2.	I don't like few subjects that's why I am lagging behind.	65 (52.0)	108 (72.0)	72 (48.0)	41 (27.33)	70 (47.0)	70 (46.6)	100 (66.66)	50 (33.33)	75 (50.0)		102	p<0.01

)))			
3.	I feel that some subjects are hard.	76 (60.8)	102 (68.0)	101 (67.3)	65 (43.33))	96 (64.0)	107 (71.3)	101 (67.33))	58 (38.66))	98 (65.3)	67.5	p<0.01
4.	Studies seem to be beyond to my capacities.	12 (9.6)	95 (63.0)	29 (19.3)	82 (54.67))	65 (43.0)	50 (33.3)	112 (74.66))	6 (4.0)	46 (30.7)	291	p<0.01
5.	I postpone studies for examination time.	29 (23.2)	21 (14.0)	74 (49.3)	63 (42.0)	40 (27.0)	110 (73.3)	30 (20.00))	10 (6.66)	57 (38.0)	228	p<0.01
6.	I feel that studies are burden.	28 (22.4)	92 (61.0)	19 (12.7)	35 (23.33))	27 (18.0)	65 (43.3)	102 (68.00))	9 (6.0)	38 (25.3)	260	p<0.01
7.	I am unable in continuing the tasks related to study.	24 (19.2)	99 (66.0)	65 (43.3)	69 (46.0)	62 (41.0)	95 (63.3)	115 (76.66))	30 (20.0)	44 (29.3)	195	p<0.01

8.	I am unable to give answers to all questions in the exams.	82 (65.6)	103 (69.0)	107 (71.3)	42 (28.0)	82 (55.0)	34 (22.6)	102 (68.00)	41 (27.33)	83 (55.3)	187	p<0.01
9.	I write slowly.	57 (45.6)	107 (71.0)	92 (61.3)	53 (35.33)	82 (55.0)	26 (17.3)	95 (63.33)	38 (25.33)	91 (60.7)	167	p<0.01
10.	I am afraid of studies.	10 (8.0)	89 (59.0)	12 (8.0)	38 (25.33)	33 (22.0)	21 (14.0)	102 (68.00)	8 (5.33)	36 (24.0)	314	p<0.01
11.	I find teaching methods in class room are boring.	10 (8.0)	57 (38.0)	33 (22.0)	18 (12.0)	34 (22.0)	24 (16.0)	126 (84.00)	12 (8.0)	31 (20.7)	347	p<0.01
12.	School hours seem long to me.	29 (23.2)	72 (48.0)	26 (17.3)	53 (35.33)	39 (26.0)	36 (24.0)	75 (50.00)	24 (16.0)	32 (21.3)	92. 1	p<0.01
13.	My written and oral language is not	40	106	71	41	81	46	115	26	60	194	p<0.01

	good.	(32.0)	(71.0)	(47.3)	(27.33)	(55.0)	(30.6)	(76.66)	(17.33)	(40.0)		
)))			
14.	I feel difficulty to understand my teacher's language.	14 (11.2)	48 (32.0)	12 (8.0)	58 (38.67)	42 (28.0)	15 (10.0)	74 (49.33)	9 (6.0)	49 (32.7)	157	p<0.01
))				
15.	My teacher's behavior seems to be bias.	44 (35.2)	23 (15.0)	33 (22.0)	19 (12.67)	31 (21.0)	18 (12.0)	48 (32.00)	20 (13.33)	31 (20.7)	49	p<0.01
)))			
16.	Behavior of my classmates is not good with me.	14 (11.2)	27 (18.0)	18 (12.0)	75 (50.0)	66 (44.0)	10 (6.6)	81 (54.00)	26 (17.33)	31 (20.7)	202	p<0.01
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66 **Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage**

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68a. **Academic reasons:** With regard to academic reasons, table 1 revealed significant difference among all centers with respect to various

69 aspects of academic reasons. More than half of the children in Hyderabad (59%), Palampur (53.33%), Pantnagar (57%) and Parbhani

70 (70.66%) showed difficulty in understanding the subjects. Respondents from Jorhat (60.8%), Hyderabad (68%), Hissar (67.3%),

71 Pantnagar (64%), Udaipur (71.3%), Parbhani (67.33%) and Dharwad (65.3%) felt some subjects are hard to understand. More number
72 of children reported inability to answer the questions in the exams from six centers viz Jorhat, Hyderabad, Hissar, Pantnagar, parbhani
73 and Dharwad. Slow in writing: More than fifty percent of the respondents from Hyderabad, Hissar, Pantnagar, Parbhani and Dharwad
74 reported slow in writing as a reason for academic backwardness. Majority (73.3%) of respondent from Udaipur, 84 per cent from
75 Parbhani, 71 per cent from Hyderabad reported studies as burden, boring teaching methods in class room and poor written and spoken
76 language respectively. The child is called backward not only because he is a slow learner but also he is not using an effective learning
77 style. Owing to it, he may forget his lessons at examinations that show his low academic achievement and turned him into backward
78 student. According to Dunn and Dunn (1986), multi-style learners tend to achieve more and score better than learners with one or two
79 learning styles. As such, it is inferred that learning styles do make an impact on the students' overall academic achievement. Nair et
80 al.(2003) in a similar study found that daily study patterns, family environment, education status of parents, personal distractions and
81 attitude towards studies were observed as factors affecting scholastic performance.

82 **Table 2: Familial problems among academically backward children of nine states**

S.no	Items	AAU, Jorhat (N=125)	ANGRAU, Hyderabad	CCSHAU, Hisar	CSKHPKV, Palampur	GBPAUT, Pantnagar	MPUAT, Udaipur	MAU, Parbhani	PAU, Ludhiana	UAS, Chitradurga	Significance
1.	My home environment is not conducive for studies.	36 (28.8)	83 (55.0)	41 (27.3)	39 (26.0)	65 (43.0)	9 (6.0)	12 (8.00)	31 (20.66)	28 (18.7)	15 4 p<0.0 1
2.	My siblings disturb me in my studies.	31 (24.8)	57 (38.0)	53 (35.3)	32 (21.33)	22 (15.0)	34 (22.6)	104 (69.33)	23 (15.33)	19 (12.7)	18 6 p<0.0 1
3.	My family members engage me more in activities other than studies.	7 (5.6)	52 (35.0)	49 (32.7)	30 (20.0)	36 (24.0)	45 (30.0)	129 (86.00)	30 (20.00)	30 (20.0)	28 1 p<0.0 1
4.	I have to do other work due to financial constraints.	13 (10.4)	33 (22.0)	1 (0.7)	29 (19.33)	53 (35.0)	08 (5.3)	94 (62.66)	27 (18.00)	29 (19.3)	23 9 p<0.0 1
5.	Actually my parents don't want that I should continue my studies.	4 (3.2)	33 (22.0)	2 (1.3)	30 (20.0)	42 (28.0)	00	75 (50.00)	6 (4.0)	23 (15.3)	23 2 p<0.0 1
6.	My family occupation interrupts me in my studies.	19 (15.2)	32 (21.0)	1 (0.7)	37 (24.67)	27 (18.0)	22 (14.6)	90 (60.00)	20 (13.33)	25 (16.7)	17 7 p<0.0 1

7.	Due to some family reasons I can't spare time for studies.	23 (18.4)	32 (21.0)	13 (8.7)	52 (34.67)	73 (47.0)	41 (27.3)	115 (76.66)	36 (24.0)	40 (26.7)	22 1	p<0.0 1
8.	There is no contribution of my family members in my studies.	18 (14.4)	72 (48.0)	46 (30.7)	79 (52.67)	65 (43.0)	58 (38.6)	135 (90.00)	21 (14.0)	36 (24.0)	26 9	p<0.0 1
9.	Due to lack of education, the expected cooperation from family members is lacking.	38 (30.4)	77 (51.0)	93 (62.0)	57 (38.0)	79 (53.0)	52 (34.6)	125 (83.33)	27 (18.0)	50 (33.3)	18 5	p<0.0 1
10.	My studies are affected due to family disputes.	23 (18.4)	21 (14.0)	10 (6.7)	30 (20.0)	49 (33.0)	05 (3.3)	85 (56.66)	22 (14.66)	34 (22.7)	18 3	p<0.0 1
11.	I can't study because of ill health of family members.	31 (24.8)	11 (7.0)	-	42 (28.0)	55 (37.0)	20 (13.3)	50 (33.33)	20 (13.33)	23 (15.3)	11 7	p<0.0 1
12.	Proper facilities for studies are not available in my home.	32 (25.6)	28 (19.0)	80 (53.3)	48 (32.0)	76 (51.0)	26 (17.3)	110 (73.33)	25 (16.66)	29 (19.3)	21 9	p<0.0 1
13.	There is no inspiration and guidance in my home for studies.	23 (18.4)	82 (55.0)	75 (50.0)	73 (48.67)	54 (37.0)	49 (32.6)	135 (90.00)	25 (16.66)	30 (20.0)	26 5	p<0.0 1

83 Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

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85 ➤ **Familial reasons:** Table 2 throws light on the familial reasons of academically backward children. All centers differ significantly
86 in various aspects of familial reasons. About 83.33 percent, 62 percent, 53 percent and 51 per cent of respondent from Parbhani,
87 Hissar, Pantnagar and Hyderabad respectively reported lack of education and lack of cooperation from family member as the cause
88 of academic backwardness. A proper facility for studies are not available in home was reported by Hisar (53.3%), Pantnagar (51%)
89 and Parbhani (73.33%) center. Hyderabad, Hisar and Parbani (55,50 and 90% respectively) children reported no inspiration and
90 guidance in home for studies was another reason of academic backwardness. Very little percentage of children reported as not
91 getting conducive environment at home, distractions by siblings, involvement in household tasks, financial crisis and financial
92 disputes, poor family support and ill health of family members as a cause for academic backwardness.

93 **Table 3: Health problems among academically backward children of nine states**

S.no	Items	AAU, Jorhat	ANGRAU, Hyderabad	CCSHAU, Hisar	CSKHPKV, Palampur	GBPAUT, Pantnagar	MPUAT, Muzaffarpur	MAU, Parbhani	PAU, Ludhiana	UAS, Dharwad	Chi Square	Significance
1	My frequent illness hinders my studies.	44 (35.2)	17 (11.0)	26 (17.3)	69 (46.0)	73 (47.0)	4 (2.6)	25 (16.66)	21 (14.0)	33 (22.0)	169	p<0.01
2.	Sufficient food is not available for me.	21 (16.8)	21 (14.0)	-	58 (38.66)	47 (31.0)	-	30 (20.00)	7 (4.66)	15 (10.0)	169	p<0.01
3.	Due to depression I am unable to study properly.	36 (28.8)	33 (22.0)	-	81 (54.00)	67 (44.0)	1 (0.6)	100 (66.66)	13 (8.66)	39 (26.0)	327	p<0.01
4.	As my school is far from my home so I get tired.	56 (44.8)	24 (16.0)	32 (21.3)	61 (40.67)	65 (43.0)	60 (40.0)	105 (70.00)	33 (22.0)	48 (32.0)	138	p<0.01
5.	Often I feel tired so I am unable to concentrate on my studies.	38 (30.4)	33 (22.0)	30 (20.0)	51 (34.0)	56 (37.0)	40 (26.6)	125 (83.33)	37 (24.66)	48 (32.0)	195	p<0.01
6.	My frequent absentia in school because of illness affects my	34 (27.2)	19 (13.0)	24 (16.0)	39 (26.0)	49 (33.0)	1 (0.6)	75 (50.00)	15 (10.0)	38 (25.3)	145	p<0.01

	studies.											
7.	I frequently suffer from headache.	29 (23.2)	17 (11.0)	38 (25.3)	97 (64.67)	46 (31.0)	2 (1.3)	79 (52.66)	19 (12.66)	45 (30.0)	239	p<0.0 1
8.	I frequently suffer from stomach ache.	18 (14.4)	23 (15.0)	32 (21.3)	34 (22.67)	46 (31.0)	4 (2.6)	65 (43.33)	17 (11.33)	24 (16.0)	104	p<0.0 1
9.	I am unable to study properly because of vision problems.	19 (15.2)	13 (9.0)	17 (11.3)	21 (14.0)	41 (28.0)	0	35 (23.33)	11 (7.33)	21 (14.0)	63	p<0.0 1
10.	I feel physically weak which affects my studies.	20 (16.0)	15 (18.0)	26 (17.3)	24 (16.0)	52 (35.0)	0	90 (60.00)	15 (10.0)	19 (12.7)	238	p<0.0 1
11.	My studies are affected due to lack of concentration.	53 (42.4)	67 (45.0)	66 (44.0)	42 (28.0)	59 (39.0)	34 (22.6)	115 (76.66)	17 (11.33)	63 (42.0)	167	p<0.0 1
12.	My studies are affected because of my worries and restlessness.	19 (15.2)	72 (48.0)	-	74 (49.33)	60 (40.0)	12 (8.0)	95 (63.33)	23 (15.33)	34 (22.7)	271	p<0.0 1
13.	I am unable to hear properly in the class room.	10 (8.0)	17 (11.0)	13 (8.7)	23 (15.33)	37 (25.0)	0	25 (16.66)	14 (9.33)	45 (30.0)	83	p<0.0 1

94 Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

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96 ➤ **Health reasons:** With regard to health reasons, table 3 showed all centers differ significantly in different aspects of health reasons.
97 Percentage distribution showed tiredness due to long distance of school reported by more than one third of respondent from Jorhat
98 (44.8%), Palampur (40.67%), Pantnagar (43%), Udaipur (40%), Parbhani (70%) and Dharwad (32%). More than half (64.67 &
99 52.66 %) of the respondent from Palampur and Parbhani respectively reported frequent head ache. 60 per cent of children from
100 Parbhani center told that physical weakness as a cause which interferes in their studies. Many centers e.g Jorhat, Hyderabad,
101 Hissar, Parbhani and Dharwad, more than one third of the children reported about lack of concentration. Saraswati et al. (2009) also
102 recognized in their study the social influence, study habits and health factors are the reasons affecting scholastic performance of
103 adolescents. Factors responsible for the backwardness are from their family environment, school environment as well as their own
104 health. So it is evident that social and family factors have a significant influence on the academic functioning of children (Haneesh
105 K.Krishna kumar.p. Sukumaran.S, Riyaz. A., 2013).

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Table 4 depicts overall reason of academic backwardness of rural school children. Major causes of academic backwardness was academic (39.21 %) followed by health (30.56 %) and familial (24.36 %) reasons. Similar trend was observed across all centers except Parbhani. In Parbhani health (64.56 %) is the major cause followed by academic (61.83 %) and familial (45.9 %) reason. Academic underachievement of children is a big concern among parents and teachers in present day competitive society. Factors associated with scholastic backwardness include physical illnesses, below average intelligence, learning disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, psychiatric disorders, family and school factors (Mogasale VV., 2012).

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Table 4: Overall Reason of Academic Backwardness of School Children

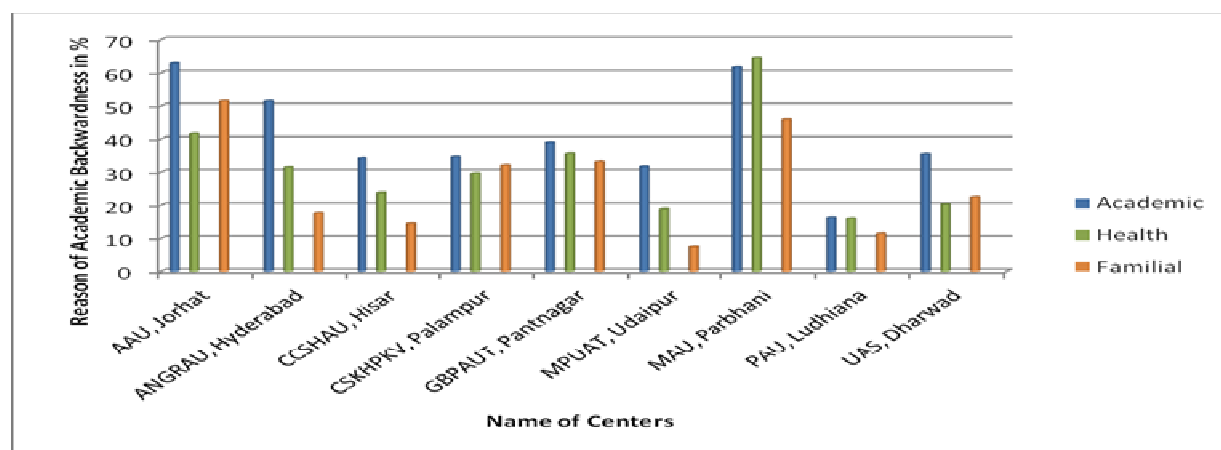
S.no	Category	AAU, Jorhat	ANGRAU, Hyderabad	CCSHAU, Hisar	CSKHPKV, Palampur	GBPAUT, Pantnagar	MPUAT, Udaipur	MAU, Parbhani	PAU, Ludhiana	UAS, Dharwad	Total
1.	Academic	554 (62.95)	1237 (51.54)	823 (34.29)	832 (34.67)	936 (39.00)	762 (31.75)	1484 (61.83)	392 (16.33)	853 (35.54)	7873 (39.21)

2.	Health	298 (41.68)	613 (31.44)	464 (23.79)	578 (29.64)	696 (35.69)	369 (18.92)	1259 (64.56)	313 (16.05)	396 (20.31)	4986 (30.56)
3.	Familial	397 (51.56)	371 (17.67)	304 (14.48)	674 (32.10)	698 (33.24)	158 (7.52)	964 (45.90)	242 (11.52)	472 (22.48)	4280 (24.36)

117 Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

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121 **Fig 1: Overall Reason of Academic Backwardness of School Children**

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It can be concluded from the results that the leading cause for academic backwardness was related to academics. The reason

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may be age of the respondents where very few of them considered study as major concern on priority basis in comparison with

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physical appearance, entertainments etc. Specially, the rural children are more confident with their vocation of agriculture.

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Very few of them are exposed with the various job avenues available to them. When we peep into the familial reasons, it can

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be stated that illiteracy, unawareness, ignorance and scarcity of resources in the family are the key issues for the

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backwardness. Looking into health cause for academic backwardness, inadequate food, nutritional insecurity and poor access

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to health facilities are the answer to the question. Despite several governmental efforts wide gap continues to persist in rural

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education. Every child is a social asset; positive channelization of their competencies is responsibility of all of us.

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Unrecognized and unresolved scholastic backwardness has a lifelong impact on the child and adolescent, affecting school

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completion, higher education, interpersonal relationships, prospects for employment, marriage etc.

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Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2016, showed that even though the number of rural students attending schools is

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rising, but more than half of the students in fifth grade are unable to read a second grade text book and are not able to solve

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simple mathematical problems.

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138 **CONCLUSION:**

139 From the above study, it has been concluded that on a national level, not much is done to accommodate the educationally backward
 140 children. No special services are provided nationwide, nor are the services provided at a state or district level. It is up to the teachers
 141 and parents to provide the help needed for educationally backwards to progress. There is an urgent need of special education for the
 142 backward students. It will help in saving huge wastage and stagnation and check the growth of backward students. It is the duty of the
 143 government, society and educational institutions of this democratic nation, to ensure that such children should be identified and then
 144 proper education and guidance should be provided to them according to their needs. Hence, any child with difficulty in reading or
 145 arithmetic skills or deterioration in academic performance should be evaluated and managed scientifically at the earliest. Improvement
 146 in academic performance will help the child to excel in future life. This study will the help to know problems of academic backward
 147 students and its relation with academic achievement so that program formulations and implementation of remedial program can be
 148 organized and we may help them for building a strong personality and future orientation.

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