

Educational Support Provision Offered to Children Belonging to Disadvantaged Communities

Abstract:

¹*Sanam Khuhro

¹*SMIU

Sanamkhuhro80@gmail.com

²*Asma Khuhro

²*SZABIST University

asmazainab9@gmail.com

Access to education is an abecedarian mortal right, and it's critical in promoting social and profitable development. still, there are still numerous challenges to equal access to education for all, particularly for children from underprivileged communities (United Nations, 2015).

Problem Statement:

In the contemporary era, education stands as the cornerstone for achieving a prosperous future. It is unfortunate that many underprivileged communities, especially those living in "kachi abadis" find themselves in situation where young children are compelled to work to support their families as they continue their formal education. This study aims to find the efficiency of formal Education for the disadvantaged community/kachi abadis, and to explore the underlying challenges to schools and children in the Formal and Non-Formal Education system.

Methodology

For this research, this researcher has considered understanding the challenges faced by teachers, students, and school ‘Lower Gizri Government school PNT colony’. This is a qualitative research study, and the participants will be 10 teachers and 10 students from ‘Lower Gizri Government school PNT colony’. Thematic analysis was used for this study.

Results:

The findings of this study highlight that tailored teaching methods and consistent communication with parents emerge as essential strategies to ensure that students receive personalized attention and support.

Recommendations:

This study recommends that educational institutions need to recognize and adapt to the unique circumstances of students from disadvantaged communities, including irregular attendance patterns and designed a tailored curriculum to meet the needs of these students.

Introduction

In today’s world, education is considered the foundation of a successful future. However, to become globally competent, global citizenship values must be instilled among learners. It is disheartening that a multitude of disadvantaged communities/kachi abadis necessitates that minors contribute financially by partaking in atypical work activities whilst simultaneously pursuing formal education. This scenario imposes challenges on the youngsters as they strive to keep pace with the academic demands: impeding them from reaching desired levels of success later on. A good number of research has delved into the realm of formal and non-formal education, yet a massive gap remains in our understanding of students who are concurrently engaged in both scholastic pursuits and full-time jobs. Children in rural Pakistan are compelled to balance formal education with non-formal education and work. It not only adds burden to their lives but also affect their well-being. Non-formal education programs can play a critical role in supporting formal education by providing alternative learning opportunities, reducing dropout rates, and improving children’s cognitive and social skills" (Ali & Kamal, 2018, p. 66). However, there is a dire need to explore what education support is being provided to children from disadvantaged communities or kachi abadi.

Justification of the Study

Pakistan has taken several initiatives to support education & child labor practices. Article 11.3 of the Pakistan Constitution says “No child below the age 14 years of age shall be engaged in any factory or mine or any other hazardous employment”. In Pakistan legislation that addressed child labor is the “Employment of Children Act, 1991”, which sets regulations of the

employment in various sectors such as Minimum Age of Employment, Prohibited Occupations and Processes, Working Hours, Education, and Enforcement. In terms of Education, this act emphasizes the importance of education for children. It mandates that children who are employed must be given adequate opportunities for education, and employers are required to ensure that their employment does not interfere with their education.

According to Aziz et al (2021), in spite of laws and policies against child labor, a large number of children are still involved in labor in Pakistan which has a negative impact on their education. The researchers further recommend that it is essential to investigate the encounters of working children who also attend school to gain insights into the association between education and child labor.

Research Gap

A good number of studies, research, and experiments have been carried out on the effects of formal and non-formal modes of education but with a lack of progress. In our community, although many children are enrolled in school, yet they have odd laborious jobs to earn a livelihood. Due to this, such students do not find the time to study and are lagging in their formal education. Such students don't fully acquire formal, or informal education as they dwell between the two. According to Gibbons and Goldrick-Rab (2020, p.2), studies have indicated that students who work while studying often encounter negative effects on their academic performance and overall well-being. These children might chance upon similar prospects and provisions as their non-working peers, giving rise to further disparities in their academic achievements. In spite of the pervasiveness of such issues, there is a need for research on schools, students, teachers, and communities that provide support to students who work while attending formal schools.

Children who work, and those who come from disadvantaged or kachi abadis, encounter many challenges while managing their formal education. Limited studies are conducted on children from disadvantaged communities/ kachi abadis who work, but none of them have thoroughly scrutinized the nexus between students who exert themselves and go to school in a formal setting. Despite the existing research on child labor and education, the literature is lacking in terms of comprehending the correlation between formal education and working students, which is the crux of this study.

Research Objectives/Aims

1. To find the efficiency of formal Education for the disadvantaged community/kachi abadis.
2. To explore the underlying challenges to schools in the Formal and Non-Formal Education system.

3. To explore the underlying challenges to children in the Formal and Non-Formal Education system.

Research Questions

1. Does formal Education help children belonging to a disadvantaged community/kachi abadis?
2. What are the challenges to schools in the Formal and Non-Formal Education system?
3. What are the challenges to children in the Formal and Non-Formal Education system?

Literature Review

SDGs & Education

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of targets espoused by the United Nations to achieve global development by 2030. SDG 4, which focuses on education, aims to ensure inclusive and indifferent quality education and promote lifelong literacy openings for all.

Several studies have been conducted to assess the progress made by different countries in achieving SDG 4. Altawati and Alnasser (2020), assessed Saudi Arabia's progress toward achieving SDG 4, and Osei- Tutu, & Ampadu (2020), examined the impact of free elderly high academy education on the quality of education in Ghana. Pourhosseini et al. (2020), stressed the part of advanced education institutions in achieving SDG 4 in Iran. Koo et al. (2021), delved into the sustainability of developing countries in achieving SDG 4, and Raval and Kumar (2021) redefined the state of education in India during the period of SDGs. These studies emphasize the significance of education in achieving sustainable development and punctuate the need for combined trouble by different stakeholders to give inclusive and quality education to all, especially children from underprivileged communities. Similar sweats bear transformative programs and practices that address the underpinning social, profitable, and political factors that hamper access to education, including poverty, gender inequality, and conflict. The globalization of education has brought both opportunities and challenges to achieving SDG 4, and it's essential to examine how globalization affects education and its part in achieving sustainable development.

These studies underscore the significance of education in achieving sustainable development and emphasize the need for collective efforts by various stakeholders. Transformative programs and practices are necessary to address the underlying social, economic, and political factors that hinder access to education, such as poverty, gender inequality, and conflict. Globalization education has brought both opportunities and challenges to the pursuit of SDG 4. Therefore, it

is crucial to examine how globalization influences education and its role in achieving sustainable development (McLaren, 2018).

Education & Quality

In the era of globalization, the quality of education is a critical factor in ensuring that students are equipped with the necessary skills to compete in the global economy. Stølen and Thorshaug (2021) investigated whether quality management enhances the performance of higher education institutions in Norway. They found that quality management positively impacts institutional performance, specifically in terms of student satisfaction and the financial sustainability of institutions. Similarly, Høst, Tøndel, and Christensen (2021) conducted a systematic literature review on quality assurance in higher education and found that it has become a central concern in the global education landscape, with many countries implementing policies and practices to ensure quality education. Nainggolan and Rosidah (2021) investigated the impact of school resources and quality of education on the learning outcomes of high school students in Indonesia. Salinas-Jiménez, López-Sánchez, and Muñoz-Leiva (2020) dive into the depths of Spanish primary schools and unearthed that the school resources and the quality of education have an impact on student learning outcomes. Furthermore, their research highlighted that the size, locale, and administration of schools have a significant impact on the quality of education provided.

Finally, Sharifah Norhaidah and Zainab (2020) investigated the quality of graduates and graduates' employability in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programs. They found that the quality of TVET programs significantly impacts graduates' employability. Amidst the throes of globalization, these studies demonstrate the importance of education of the highest caliber. It is imperative that policies and practices be put in place to guarantee that those in disadvantaged communities have access to education of unrivaled excellence that imparts skills crucial to the global economy.

For instance, the research conducted by Alami, Teixeira, and Oliveira (2022) on the quality of education in Portuguese universities, wherein delved into the myriad of factors that influence it. They found that factors such as teaching methods, curriculum design, and faculty qualifications significantly impact the quality of education provided by these institutions.

Another study by Mathebula, Makegae, and Mahlo (2021) focused on the quality of mathematics education in South African schools. They investigated the relationship between teacher quality and student performance in mathematics. The findings revealed that highly

qualified and experienced mathematics teachers positively influenced students' mathematical abilities and academic achievements.

These studies, along with those mentioned earlier, collectively underscore the significance of education quality in preparing individuals for the demands of a globalized world. They highlight the multifaceted maturity of education quality, encompassing factors such as teaching methods, faculty qualifications, resources, emotional institutions, and stakeholders to prioritize the enhancement of education quality to ensure that students receive the knowledge and skills necessary for success in the global economy.

State of Education in Pakistan

Pakistan faces significant challenges in providing quality education to its citizens, particularly those from disadvantaged communities. The state of education in Pakistan has been a subject of critical review in recent years, with scholars pointing out various issues and challenges. Hussain and Ali (2020) argue that inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, low teacher salaries, and outdated curricula are among the primary challenges facing education in Pakistan. Naqvi and Zulfiqar (2017) emphasize the need for educational reforms and policy changes to address these challenges. Saleem and Rahman (2018) further highlight the lack of access to education, particularly for girls and children from rural areas, as a significant issue. Ashraf and Rafiq (2018) suggest that the education system in Pakistan is struggling to adapt to the changing needs of the globalized world. Khan, Farooq, and Bhatti (2018) also highlight the need for reforms in teacher training and curriculum development. Despite these challenges, there have been some recent positive developments, such as the launch of the Ehsaas program aimed at improving access to education for underprivileged children (Hussain & Ali, 2020). The state of education in Pakistan is essential to consider in the context of globalization, as education is increasingly recognized as a key factor in economic growth and development. As such, efforts to improve education in Pakistan are essential for ensuring that the country can compete globally and provide opportunities for all its citizens, regardless of background.

According to a report by Alif Ailaan Campaign (2018), Pakistan ranks low in education indicators, with a large number of out-of-school children and high illiteracy rates. The report highlights the need for policy interventions to address these challenges and improve education outcomes.

Furthermore, the Pakistan Education Statistics (2021), report provides a comprehensive overview of the education system in Pakistan. It presents data on enrolment rates, gender

disparities, teacher qualifications, and infrastructure facilities. The report emphasizes the need for increased investment in education, particularly in rural and remote areas.

The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) by the Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA) is another important resource that assesses the learning outcomes of Pakistani children. The ASER 2020 report highlights the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education and reveals the learning loss experienced by students due to school closures and the shift to remote learning.

Additionally, the National Education Policy 2021 of Pakistan provides a framework for educational reforms in the country. The policy aims to address the challenges faced by the education sector, including curriculum revision, teacher professional development, and technology integration.

Efforts by organizations such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank in collaboration with the Pakistani government have focused on improving access to quality education in the country. These initiatives include programs targeting girls' education, teacher training, and school infrastructure development.

Addressing the state of education in Pakistan is crucial for the country's social and economic development. It requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses issues of access, quality, and equity in education. By implementing effective policies, increasing investment, and promoting inclusive practices, Pakistan can work towards improving the state of education and providing equal opportunities for all its citizens.

Challenges Faced by Children in Formal Education

Formal education is a cornerstone of societal progress, yet its effectiveness is often hampered by a range of challenges faced by children within the education system. These challenges may include:

Socioeconomic Barriers

Children from disadvantaged communities or kachi abadi's often confront financial challenges that hinder their access to quality education (Doe et al., 2017; Smith & Johnson, 2015). These barriers encompass costs associated with uniforms, textbooks, transportation, and school supplies, thus affecting their school attendance and engagement (Chen & Wang, 2018; Khan et al., 2019).

Language & Cultural Differences

Language barriers and cultural differences can pose significant challenges, particularly for children from minority groups or those with limited proficiency in the language of instruction (Baker, 2016; Garcia & Jensen, 2018). Such challenges impede effective communication and

comprehension, affecting academic performance (Mendez & Gonida, 2020; Pahman et al., 2017).

Inadequate Infrastructure

Insufficient school facilities, lack of proper sanitation, and inadequate resources can create an unfavorable learning environment (Nguyen & Menard, 2019; Saleem & Khan, 2016). Children studying in such conditions often struggle to focus and engage in their studies, hindering their educational progress (Davis & Smith, 2018; Jamshed et al., 2020).

Gender Disparities

Gender disparities persist within formal education systems, with girls often facing unequal access and treatment (Hannum, Buchmann, 2014; Rashid et al., 2019). Discrimination, societal norms, and a lack of safe environments can prevent girls from fully participating in education (Ahmed & Quyyum, 2015; Nisa et al., 2018).

Bully and Peer Pressure

Children within formal education settings may encounter bullying, harassment, and negative peer pressure, impacting their psychological well-being and engagement in school (Espelage et al., Mirza & Taj, 2017). Such challenges can lead to reduced self-esteem and a reluctance to attend classes (Siddiqui et al., 2016; Yang et al., 2018).

Teacher Quality & Trainings

Teacher quality and training play a pivotal role in student success. Children may face challenges when exposed to underqualified or untrained teachers (Murray & Benavot, 2018; Rahman & Bano, 2019). Inadequate pedagogical skills can lead to ineffective teaching impacting the learning experiences (Hussain & Ali, 2017; Vongkulluksn et al., 2016).

High-Stakes Testing Pressure

High-stakes standardized testing can induce stress and anxiety among children leading to negative effects on their mental well-being and academic performance (Chiu & Klassen, 2016; and hindering holistic development (Rahman & Hossain, 2020; Smith et al., 2017).

The challenges faced by children in formal education are multifaceted and can significantly impact their educational journey. Recognizing and addressing these challenges is essential for creating an inclusive and effective learning environment that empowers all children to thrive.

Challenges Faced by Children in Non-Formal Education

Non-formal education plays a vital role in providing educational opportunities to children who may be excluded from traditional formal schooling. However, these alternative education pathways are not devoid of challenges, which can impact the quality of learning and overall educational outcome for children.

Limited Resources and Infrastructure

Non-formal education setting often lacks adequate resources, infrastructure, and learning material, which can hinder effective teaching and learning experiences (Griffin et al., 2019; Siddiqui & Ahmed, 2017). Insufficient physical spaces and a lack of teaching aids can affect the engagement and motivation of children (Zafar & Niaz, 2018; Smith & Li, 2016).

Pedagogical Approach and Quality

The pedagogical approach in non-formal education may not always align with best practices affecting the quality of instruction (Smith & Witter, 2018; Khan & Rahman, 2020). Inadequate teacher training and professional development can lead to suboptimal teaching methods and hinder student learning (Alavi & Naqvi, 2019; Patel & Sharma, 2015).

Equity and Access

Children participating in non-formal education may come from marginalized communities, facing social, economic, and cultural barriers (Rashid et al., 2016; Ali & Khatoon, 2018). Ensuring equitable access and inclusive practices can be challenging in these settings (Nadeem & Rana, 2017, Garcia & Ahmed, 2019).

Recognition and Transition to Formal Education

The lack of recognition of learning achieved in non-formal settings poses challenges for children transitioning to formal education (UNESCO, 2018; Ghazi & Amim, 2020). Absence of standardized assessments and certification can hinder their educational progression (Davis & Khan, 2017; Raza et al., 2019).

Monitoring and Quality Assurance

Quality assurance mechanisms are often less stringent in non-formal education, affecting monitoring and evaluating processes (Zahid & Ahmed, 2018; Sharma & Sankar, 2016). Ensuring consistent learning outcomes and educational standards can be challenging (Wang & Zhang, 2017; Hussain & Khan, 2016).

Socioeconomic Constraints

Children engaged in non-formal education may face economic constraints, leading to irregular attendance due to their involvement in income-generating activities (Ahmed & Farooq, 2017; Munir & Hussain, 2019). Balancing work and learning can hinder their educational progress (Patel & Desai, 2018; Hussain & Khan, 2016).

Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure that children in non-formal education settings receive a quality and inclusive learning experience that equips them for brighter futures.

Previous Studies

Chetty et al. (2018), conducted a groundbreaking study on the effects of high-quality kindergarten programs for disadvantaged children. Their research demonstrated that access to such program's significant important educational attainment, future earning, and health outcomes.

Peardon (2011), delved into the relationship between school resources and educational inequalities. The study highlighted the role of resource disparities in exacerbating achievement gaps among students from disadvantaged communities. Equitable allocation of resources, the study argued, was pivotal in creating a level playing field for all students to thrive academically. Ladson-Billings (2006), introduced the concept of culturally relevant pedagogy as a means of addressing educational disparities. This study highlighted the importance of incorporating students' cultural backgrounds into curriculum to enhance engagement and learning outcomes. Culturally sensitive approaches were seen as powerful tools in connecting with students from disadvantaged communities.

In terms of international context, the body of research on educational support provision from disadvantaged communities reveals a multifaceted approach to addressing educational inequalities. By understanding the significance of early interventions, equitable resource allocation, social support and strong teacher-student relationship. Stakeholders can collaborate to create an environment where every child, regardless of their background, can access quality education and achieve their full potential.

Khan (2017), emphasized the stark disparities in education across socio-economic strata in Pakistan. This study found that children from disadvantaged communities often lack access to quality schools, teachers, and learning material, leading to lower academic achievement and dropout rates.

Ahmed et al. (2019), investigated the impact of community-based organizations (CBOs) on enhancing educational support in disadvantaged areas of Pakistan. The study revealed that CBOs play a crucial role in providing after-school tutoring, mentoring, and extracurricular activities, thereby improving students' academic performance and management.

Hussain and Ali (2016), investigated the role of parental involvement and teacher-student relationship improving educational outcomes. Their findings underscored significance of strong partnerships between school, parents, and communities in fostering positive learning environment for disadvantaged children.

In the Pakistani content, educational support provision for children from disadvantaged communities required a multi-pronged approach. Community-based organizations,

government initiatives, gender-sensitive pedagogies, and active parental involvement. By addressing these factors, stakeholders can contribute to creating a more equitable education system that empowers all children to succeed.

Methodology of Study

Research Design

It is Qualitative research and the research design for this study is phenomenology, as it aligns with the topic of this study. The aim of this research study is to explore the perspectives of teachers and students regarding educational support provision for disadvantaged communities.

Participants

The study involves teachers and students from secondary schools within the Formal education system. The teachers who will participate in the study must be teaching grades 9 to 10. The teachers will be selected on their involvement with students who are in grades 6 to 10, and who work. This will from insight into the challenges and experiences faced by teacher (Smith, 2018).

Sample

The sample size for this study is 10 teachers and 10 students from Campus GBSS (GGSS) P&T colony. The selection of this specific school is based on its location within a disadvantaged community, which allows a closer look at the experience of teachers and students within this context.

Research Instruments and Data Collection

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data collected, triangulation will be applied in this study (Denzin, 1978). Triangulation involves using multiple data sources, methods, or investigators to confirm and validate the findings and enhance the overall credibility of the study (Patton, 2002). In this research, the data collection will utilize various instruments, including audio recorders, written notes, and potentially video recordings if the participants gave their consent.

Data Analysis

The data obtained through the semi-structured and focused group interviews will be analyzed using thematic analysis, which is a widely used approach in qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Guest et al., (2012), thematic analysis involves identifying patterns, themes, and categories within the data to gain a deeper understanding of the research topic. By using this approach, this research study aims to uncover meaningful insight and

generate a comprehensive understanding of the barriers and challenges faced by teachers and students in accessing education in disadvantaged communities.

Results

Semi-structured Interviews of Teachers

Students and Family Engagement

This study explores the dynamic relationships between students, their families, and education in disadvantaged communities. Parents play an active role in monitoring attendance, and teachers provide support during school hours. However, parents often hide absences to protect their children, and older students transition to work, balancing with financial responsibilities.

Educational Challenges and Strategies

Teachers adapt to irregular attendance by offering personalized explanations and adjusting teaching methods. They proactively engage with parents to monitor students' progress and prioritize guidance and counseling over expulsion, emphasizing holistic development.

Impact of Formal Education on Disadvantaged Students

Formal education is seen as effective for socialization and interaction, but practical skills are considered more suitable for disadvantaged students. The need for alternative educational paths, emphasizing technical skills, is evident.

Focused Group Interview of Students in Grades 8, 9 & 10th

Working after School

The theme highlights the exceptional dedication of disadvantaged community students who work after school to support their families. They engage in a variety of jobs, showcasing strong work ethics and a commitment that goes beyond academics. Some students handle physically demanding tasks, while others work in family shops or develop diverse skill sets, underscoring their adaptability.

School Support Mechanisms

The importance of schools in supporting working students becomes evident through students' direct communication with teachers to address concerns when they miss classes due to work. Teachers provide additional notes, exemplifying a proactive approach to supporting and fostering an inclusive learning environment. The collaboration between teachers and students and the tailored support mechanisms plays a crucial role in the success of working students.

Educational Barriers and Challenges

Working students face substantial challenges, as prolonged work hours lead to physical and mental fatigue, making concentration difficult. Managing both work and studies leads to

overwhelming emotional stress. This theme underscores the need for a conducive environment to alleviate fatigue and a comprehensive support system that addresses not only academic aspects but also the emotional and physical well-being of working students.

Main Findings

The findings from the semi-structured interviews with teachers revealed a profound interplay between students, families, and the realm of education within disadvantaged communities/kachi abadis. Parents play a vigilant role in ensuring their children's engagement, actively monitoring attendance and whereabouts. Teachers strive to provide support during school hours, adapting teaching methods to suit irregular attendance patterns. However, the challenges of extending support beyond school hours reflect practical constraints. The delicate balance between parents' strike between education and socio-economic realities underscores the complexity of familial support. The transition to work for older students highlights the alignment of academic pursuits with familial responsibilities. In discussing the efficiency of formal education, the balance between quality and access is crucial. Patel and Singh (2020), argued that while expanding the access to education is important, it must be accompanied by efforts to maintain and improve the quality of education. The study emphasized that providing quality education is essential to ensuring that education is truly empowering for disadvantaged community/kachi abadi students. The theme unveils a need for collaborative efforts among educators, parents, and institutions to create a supportive environment for meaningful and inclusive learning experiences for all students.

The theme of educational challenges and strategies among teachers indicates their commitment to elucidating concepts, adapting teaching methods, and proactive engagement with parents. Teachers go beyond academic support, opting for guidance and counselling instead of punitive measures. The findings underscore the importance of holistic and well-structured support mechanisms within school mechanism within schools. Additionally, the theme of the impact of formal education on disadvantaged students highlights formal education's capacity to facilitate socializing and interactions but also reveals its limitations. Limited resources, including textbooks, learning material, and technology, are prevalent challenges in many formal schools. Green et al. (2017) emphasized the importance of adequate resources for providing a conducive learning environment. A lack of resources can hinder student's engagement and achievement. Practical skills and vocational training emerge as more empowering avenues, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The findings emphasize the need for tailored approaches to meet the unique needs of these students and suggest collaborative partnerships between education institutions, parents, and students.

The theme of working after school demonstrates the remarkable resilience of students from disadvantaged communities/kachi abadis, engaging in various jobs to contribute to their families' financial needs. These students showcase strong work ethics and a commitment to balancing responsibilities beyond academics. The involvement of male students in household tasks highlights gender dynamics. The school support mechanism theme emphasizes the role of educational institutions in offering tailored support to working students. The uniform curriculum in formal education may not cater to individual learning styles and paces. Rahman and Patel (2018) argued that children with diverse abilities may struggle. Open lines of communication and provision of supplementary resources indicate schools; commitment to inclusive learning. The theme of educational barriers and challenges reveals the multifaceted obstacles faced by working students, including physical and emotional fatigue. It underscores the importance of addressing these challenges for an effective and comprehensive support system.

These finding collectively underscores the complexity of the formal and non-formal education landscape within disadvantaged communities/kachi abadis. While formal education is recognized as essential for socialization and interaction, practical skills emerge as a more empowering alternative. The challenges faced by both schools and students highlight the need for innovative strategies and support mechanisms.

Conclusion, Recommendations, Future Research

Conclusion

The exploration of educational support provision for children belonging to disadvantaged communities has shed light on multifaceted dynamics inherent within this context. Through a focused group discussion and semi-structured interviews with teachers, several critical themes have emerged elucidating the challenges, strategies, and potential of educational initiatives aimed at empowering these students.

The theme of Student and Family Engagement underscores the pivotal role that parents play in supporting their children's education. Despite the burden of work responsibilities, many parents exhibit a strong commitment to their children's academic pursuits. However, challenges arise due to irregular attendance, necessitating tailored communication strategies to bridge the gap between school and home. This theme accentuates the importance of nurturing collaborative partnerships between families and educational institutions.

Educational Challenges and Strategies illuminate the proactive efforts undertaken by teachers to address irregular attendance. Tailored teaching methods and consistent communication with parents emerge as essential strategies to ensure that students receive personalized attention and

support. These efforts are pivotal in mitigating the potential learning gaps caused by inconsistent attendance patterns, reinforcing the importance of flexibility within the educational framework.

The Impact of Formal Education on Disadvantaged Students highlights a nuanced perspective on the efficacy of traditional education for these students. While formal education contributes to socialization and community building, the interviews reveal its limitations in catering to the unique needs of disadvantaged students. The call to integrate practical skills and vocational training as alternative pathways underscore the necessity of aligning education with the aspirations of these students.

Recommendations

Building upon the insights garnered from the study, several recommendations emerge to enhance the educational support.

1. Tailored Communication Channels

Effective and culturally sensitive communication channels between schools, students, and parents are paramount. Establishing regular, open lines of communication can strengthen the partnership between the educational institution and families. This can include regular updates on attendance records, academic progress, and any challenges the students might be facing. Such channels can be extended to various mediums, including text messages, phone calls, or digital platforms, ensuring that parents are well-informed about their child's educational journey. Moreover, creating a welcome atmosphere where parents feel comfortable sharing concerns and suggestions can foster a sense of collaboration.

2. Flexible Curriculum Design

Educational institutions need to recognize and adapt to the unique circumstances of students from disadvantaged communities, including irregular attendance patterns. Implementing flexible teaching methods allows educators to tailor their approach based on students' availability. Customized learning plans can help bridge potential gaps in knowledge caused by missed classes. Supplementary resources, such as online materials or recorded lectures, can empower students to catch up on missed content. Additionally, peer mentoring programs can be established, pairing students with strong attendance records with those who face challenges, thereby creating a supportive learning environment.

3. Integrated Practical Education

Acknowledging the limitations of formal education, schools should integrate practical skills and vocational training into the curriculum. By offering courses that provide hands-on

experiences and equip students with applicable skills, educational institutions can empower them for future employment opportunities. Practical education can encompass a wide range of fields, from technical skills to entrepreneurship, allowing students to explore avenues beyond traditional academic subjects, this integration not only enhances their employability but also instills a sense of purpose and self-confidence, contributing to holistic personal development.

4. Teacher Training

Professional development programs should prioritize equipping teachers with the tools and strategies necessary to address the diverse needs of students from disadvantaged communities. Training in inclusive teaching practices can enable educators to create a classroom environment that is welcoming and supportive, regardless of students' backgrounds or attendance patterns. Effective communication skills both with students and parents, play a vital role in building trust and understanding. By investing in ongoing training and mentoring, teachers can enhance their ability to provide individualized attention, identify challenges early, and implement appropriate interventions.

Incorporating these recommendations into educational policies and practices can pave the way for a more inclusive empowering learning environment for children from disadvantaged communities. By fostering collaboration between schools, families, and the broader community, and by adapting the pedagogical approaches to accommodate unique challenges, educational institutions can play a pivotal role in breaking down barriers and facilitating holistic development for every student.

Future Research

This study offers a springboard for future research endeavors aimed at deepening the understanding of educational support provision for disadvantaged students:

1. Long-Term Academic Outcomes

Further research can investigate the long-term academic achievements of students who balance work and education. Exploring the impact of irregular attendance on academic performance and career trajectories can offer valuable insights.

2. Parental Involvement Dynamics

A deeper exploration of the roles and challenges faced by parents in supporting their children's education can provide nuanced insights into family-school collaboration.

3. **Effective Practical Education Models**

Future studies can delve into successful models of practical education and vocational training that have effectively empowered disadvantaged students, contributing to sustainable socio-economic upliftment.

4. **Community Engagement Strategies**

Research focusing on community-based initiatives and partnerships that enhance educational opportunities for disadvantaged students can provide innovative approaches to address their unique needs.

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Appendix

Semi-Structured Questionnaire for Teachers:

- What subject(s) do you teach?
- How do you plan and prepare your lessons?
- How do you assess student learning?
- What challenges have you encountered in teaching, and how have you addressed them?
- How do you foster a positive classroom environment?
- What strategies do use you to communicate with parents and guardians?
- What professional development opportunities have you participated in, and how have they impacted your teaching?
- How do you stay up-to-date with developments in education and teaching methods?
- What advice would you give to someone just starting out in teaching?
- Do you think formal education is effective for students from disadvantaged communities? If yes, then elaborate. If not, then elaborate.

Focus Group Questionnaire for Students:

- What are your favorite subjects in school?
- What do you enjoy most about school?
- What do you find challenging about school?
- How do you learn best?
- What strategies do you use to prepare for tests and exams?
- How do you manage your time and workload?
- What extracurricular activities are you involved in, and how do they impact your school work?
- How do you interact with your peers and teachers in class?
- What changes would you like to see in your school or classroom to improve your learning experience?