



# An Investigation into School Health Environment and School Health Services in Primary Schools of Hyderabad District

Kalpana Toran

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## Preface

The aims of this study are to prepare a comprehensive framework for school health policy as well as depict a meticulous, multi-stakeholder perspective of the school health environment and school health services in the primary schools of Hyderabad. The study followed a quantitative research approach using an explorative and descriptive design. Two quantitative research tools and three qualitative research tools are adopted in order to explore the school health environment and school health services of the primary schools as well as investigate the beliefs and opinions of the teachers as well as the students. The two quantitative research tools are an observation checklist and a close-ended opinionnaire. The three qualitative research tools comprise an open-ended opinionnaire, focus group discussions and case studies. The target population for this study constituted teachers and students in primary schools within the boundaries of Hyderabad city.

The study includes two categories of primary schools based on type of management i.e., government primary schools and private primary schools of Hyderabad city. The final form of the measuring instruments emerged with an observation checklist containing 32 items, a questionnaire containing 36 close-ended items and 13 open-ended questions after determining the validity and the reliability. The same study can be replicated easily in secondary and higher secondary schools at Hyderabad and even in primary schools based in other cities anywhere in India as it is essentially a situational analysis. Researchers can also carry on from this study by undertaking a thorough comparative analysis of government and private primary schools in Hyderabad. Based on this study, researchers can explore the role of school health environment as a driver or shaper of school health services and school health education, especially the links between variables of school health environment and school health education. Researchers can also look deeper into the corresponding influence of school health environment, school health services and school health education on education. Researchers can obtain insights from this study regarding perceptions of school teachers and students about school health and probe further the unique motivators and needs that account for differences in perceptions between school teachers and students. As an extension to this study, researchers can develop standardised indicators and sub indicators pertaining to school health environment, school health services and school health education so as to make these applicable to all urban, semi-urban and rural schools and then adopt a grading exercise to assess the school health status of every school in the state or nation. Such a uniform assessment and accreditation system, exclusively dealing with school health,

can be utilised to enhance state funds as well as local bodies' resources for those schools showing progress or potential.

A series of case studies on deprived, medium and model government and private primary schools in Hyderabad has offered a lucid view of the peculiar strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to school health. As the six schools chosen for the case study were carefully selected after checking the representativeness of several schools, each case study can be generalized to a considerable extent. Above all, this study is well focused and analytical. It principally dwells on the practical scenario with a judicious and balanced mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches. What is missing in the numbers is dug out in detail by a rigorous process of observations and opinion-based questioning of respondents. This study would make a good reading for both the lay-man and the researcher alike. The completely unbiased nature of this study also makes it a credible research exercise.

There are more number of children in schools than ever before. It becomes a paramount responsibility on the part of the primary schools, especially the private ones to focus on school health environment and school health services and to invest well on these bearers of the future, keeping in view the role of child development in the overall development of the nation. The goal of universalisation of primary education cannot be attained, if sufficient attention is not paid to the inextricable and invisible links between school health and education; in the absence of which the huge investments on primary education will be rendered futile. So, efforts from all quarters must be made to ensure that school health occupies a centre-stage in the hierarchy of school education system.

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