

Optimization of School Tardiness and Absenteeism through Motivation and Strategic School Policy

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Abstract: The study aimed at to find out different causes of students' absenteeism and the solution to optimize it through various school tardy policies. The School chosen for the study is located in the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The total Enrolment is more than 2500 in which the late comers of the school is analyzed and tried to find the solution for it. The result of this study showed those students are more absent or late comer during the first three months after the summer vacation. Later the late comers gradually decreases but again increases during the last two months of the academic year. After analyzing the data some policies had been adopted and again the data was collected and analyzed to find the change which reveals a good change in the late comers due to tardy policy. At last some suggestions have given to tackle the school tardiness.

Keywords: School Tardiness, Absenteeism, School Tardy policies.

1. INTRODUCTION

The word tardy refers to slow paced , sluggish or too long delayed which is very often seen in students of 7th grade and leads to frequent absents when the student reach to 11th or 12th grade. According to Eastwold (1989), the truant is likely to be seen in boys and to be in the eleventh or twelfth grade.[1] The student is truant more often as the year progresses, and skip some classes more often than others. He says he skips because he dislikes the classes or considers them to be too boring to attend. However, he does not necessarily intend to drop out of school. Rood (1989) views absenteeism as a constant interruption of the learning process. The more absence a student accumulates, the less he or she can be expected to adequately participate in and understand classroom activities. It is no secret that the skill levels of many high school students have declined while absenteeism continues to increase.[2] He writes that on an average Monday, many urban high schools have an absence rate of more than 30 percent. It is common for many secondary students to miss 20 to 90 days of school in an academic year. He identified the following characteristics of non – attendees. Age – absenteeism increases as a student progresses through high school. Gender – girls will have higher rates of absenteeism than boys will. Race – minority students are more likely to be have even more .There are many reasons for school tardiness which is a common feature of every school but the control over this problem is always latched with school tardy policy. Some of these factors can be taken as root cause of school tardiness and absenteeism.

2. SOCIO – ECONOMIC CAUSE

Academic economists and international development agencies claim that an educated population is essential for economic growth and, more generally, for a higher quality of life (Lucas, 1988; Barro, 1991; Mankiw, Romer and Weil, 1992; UNDP, 2003; World Bank, 2000).[3] One of the eight Millennium Development Goals is that by 2015 all children in developing countries should finish primary school. Yet developing country students who finish primary school often

perform poorly on academic tests (Glewwe and Kremer, 2005), and the value of a “low quality” education may be low. [4]Social structure of the students plays a vital part in the tardiness issues of a child. Low monthly income of parent may lead the students to mal nutrition or specially deficiency of vital minerals such zinc which would lead to poor concentration. During the earlier years of child research, the socioeconomic status (SES) of parents was largely overlooked. It was not until the work of sociologists in the late 1930s that behavioral scientists had firm evidence that well-defined behavioral trends were associated with various levels of SES. The determination of socioeconomic status SES is closely related with income or earnings and educational level that these two variables are usually used by researchers as valid indices of SES.[5] It is finely stated by educationist that child’s confidence level has a great impact due to his/her socio-economic status. Baharudin and Luster (1998) and Seyfried (1998) has also studied a positive correlation between SES and students academic achievements Mc Neal (2001) has also pointed out in his study that SES has overridden other educational influences such as family size, parental involvements and educational level of the parents. Jeynes (2002) shows that there is a positive correlation between SES of a family and the academic achievements of a student. Hochschild (2003) says that students who have a low SES earn lower test scores and are more likely to drop out of school. Eamon (2005) believed that low SES negatively affects academic achievements because low SES prevents access to vital resources and creates additional stress at home.[6]

3. SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL CAUSE

The environment inside the school also a cause for tardiness and absenteeism. The behavior of the teacher, the place where the student sit, the peer group and their social /maturity levels ..etc. The location of the class and the first period specifically the subject or the a particular teacher in the class has a great level of impact on the learning process as well as school tardiness. Many studies have attempted to estimate the impact of school and teacher characteristics on student performance, yet most have serious estimation problems that cast doubt on their results (see Glewwe, 2002, and Glewwe and Kremer, 2006). Almost all existing studies are “retrospective,” that is based on data collected from schools as they currently exist (in contrast to data collected from a randomized trial).[7] Yet even the best retrospective studies offer only limited guidance due to their estimation problems, the most serious being omitted variable bias (unobserved school, household and child characteristics that are correlated with observed school variables), and measurement error in school data. This has led to wide variation in the estimated impacts of key variables. For example, of 30 studies from developing countries reviewed by Hanushek (1995), 8 found significantly positive impacts of the teacher-pupil ratio on student learning, 8 found significantly negative impacts, and 14 found no significant impact.[8].

4. SAMPLE SCHOOL FOR THE STUDY

In this paper a flag ship school of Andaman Nicobar is chosen. Andaman and Nicobar Island are a group of more than 500 islands at the juncture of the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea which is a union territory of INDIA. It comprises two group of island, the Andaman Islands and the Nicobar Islands, separated by the 10°N parallel, with the Andamans to the north of this latitude, and the Nicobars to the south. The territory's capital is Port Blair. The total land area of this territory is approximately 8,053 km² having a population of approximately 325000 as per 2011 censuses. The name of the school chosen is GOVT. MODEL SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL located in the heart of Port Blair, the capital of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The school comprises 2500 students from class I to XII and a total of 135 staff both teaching and non-teaching. School tardiness and absenteeism of students founds to be a common problem in this school over the years. Data of late comers collected by some volunteers of the school for nine months revealed that a good number of students are coming to school very late or getting absent. (Table 1.1) The number clearly shows students are more tardy and make themselves absent during the months between April to July then the rate gradually decreases and its starts increasing during December to January.(Table 1.2 to 1.13) The basic reason for this may be the reopening factor of the school.

- *Students lack of adjustment to come to school after a gap of two months of summer vacation.*
- *Moreover after summer vacation some of the teacher joints the school late so students find the class as a waste of time leads them to such act.*
- *school environment could have been one more reason as after re-opening of the school the infrastructure such as furniture’s, classrooms, laboratory....etc are not in proper order and student find difficult to adjust to such situation.*

But the overall analysis of the bar representation reveals that throughout the year a good number of students are late to school leading to missing the class or not effectively attending the class. In order to find the lacuna a questionnaire was prepared, one for the parent and the other for the students (Table 2.1 & 2.2) but the response was not at all correlating with the problem. In order to find the participation of teacher in the school a questionnaire was prepared for the teacher (Table 2.3) but still the solution for the late coming students couldn't be resolved. Then the school decided to formulate few constructive policies in order to control the late coming of students leading to school tardiness and absenteeism. The major policy are as below:-

❖ *Reward System for Students with Highest Attendance*

Students with a highest attendance in a month along with more than 75% of marks in an average in all the subjects would be selected for receiving a reward in form of attractive gift in front of morning assembly. By this method students started becoming more serious in their attendance as well as their studies. The student getting this reward more than three times would be given a chance to teach the lower class under the supervision of subject teacher.

❖ *Meditation before the start of class*

A two minutes of meditation in the class before the start of lesson done a great job to increase the concentration of students. When teacher enter the class, students mental state would be very disturbed as he may be settling down in his/her place by keeping things or adjusting in the seat etc but this two minute of calm time might make the mind to perceive or ready to perceive whatever comes in the teaching. This time would act as a cooling time for the mind. Tardiness of a student has a great impact in the learning process because if the teaching-learning will appear ineffective then this may lead the student towards tardiness.

❖ *Micro level Counseling*

The frequent late comers are identified and club them into groups of six called a micro group. Each group is assigned a teacher who can talk to them personally about the real cause of their late coming. Their family background or Socio-economic status or their real problem which the teacher can put in front of the counseling committee of the school to get a solution of the problem. The teacher is allowed to call and talk to the parents of such students or make an anecdotal record of such student to rectify his/her problem of late coming.

❖ *Engaging late comers in the assembly programmes*

The frequent late comers are given some major role in the conduct of morning assembly due to which he/she has to reach the school in time. This policy of the also enhances the leadership quality of the students as well as increases the sense of responsibility. They can also give the role of monitoring the late comers and to maintain a record of it.

5. RESULT & DISCUSSION

The above formulated policies were adopted for three months and the data of late comers was collected and analyzed (Table 3.1) The results were astonishing and encouraging one. The rate of late comers falls down by around 40%. It is known that Education is key to change and progress, therefore, Government has adopted this sector as one of the pillars for poverty reduction and benefit of masses. Government is fully committed to provide best Educational Facilities to its people within the minimum possible time. The Government has initiated major administrative reforms, such as Devolution of Power and Education Sector Reforms. Moreover, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFAs) are the International policy concerns announced in 2000, which need to be properly reflected in our Policy. [9] As such, the Ministry of Education has taken in hand an exercise to review the National Education Policy (1998-2010) for its updating to bring it in line the current needs of the country Here in this paper it is tried to convey that policy changes can achieve a great result and solutions of the problems faced in teaching-learning process. [10]

6. RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

School tardiness and absenteeism is a great problems faced by many schools across the country specially the rural area schools but dealing it strategically with good school policy would definitely give good results some of the suggestions like, Meditation before the start of class, Micro level Counseling, Engaging late comers in the assembly programmes,

Improvement in Methods of Teaching ,The School should Be a made a Place of Interest ,Removing the Distance Factors etc.

Table 1.1

CLASS	APRIL	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN
I	57	33	19	14	19	23	26	23	23
II	57	36	27	15	22	20	21	23	24
III	51	30	15	11	20	17	15	14	18
IV	49	25	14	10	16	17	15	14	17
V	49	28	14	9	15	12	12	12	13
VI	27	22	10	8	11	9	14	15	13
VII	44	25	12	10	11	7	13	12	12
VIII	29	17	9	9	9	6	9	11	10
IX	37	15	9	7	10	14	11	10	11
X	25	12	9	8	8	15	13	12	11
XI	0	0	9	8	9	11	13	15	11
XII	33	18	15	15	14	19	17	26	18

(Data Collected before the implementation of tardy policy)

Table 1.2

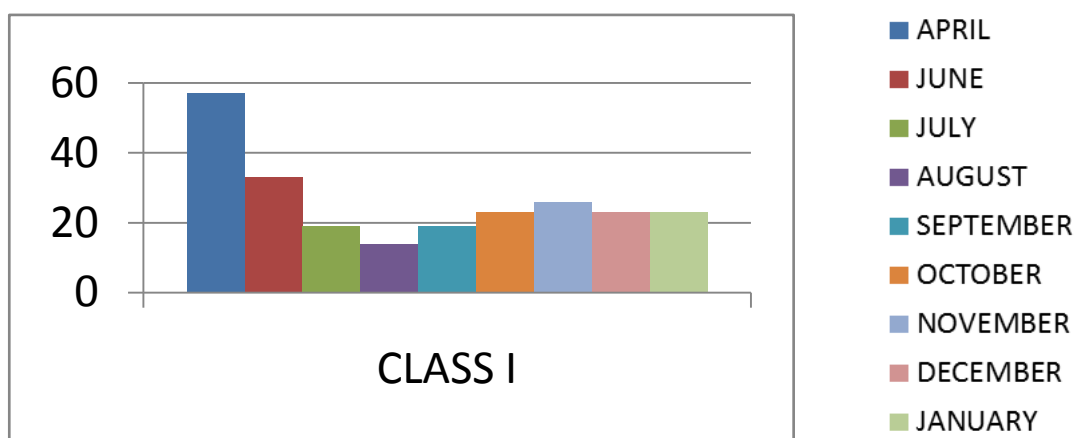


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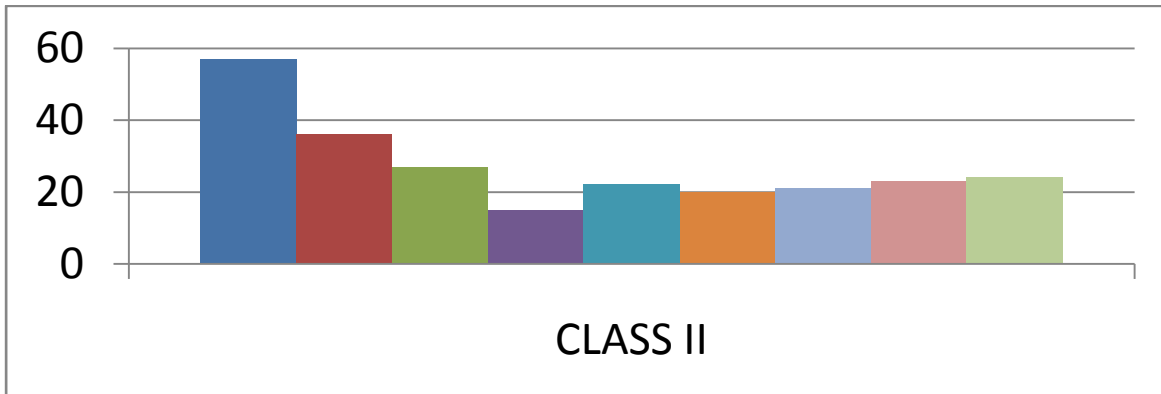


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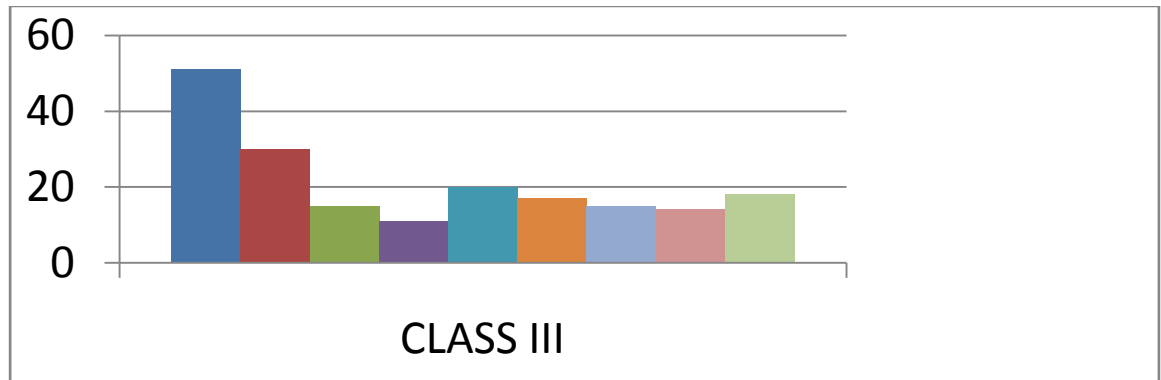


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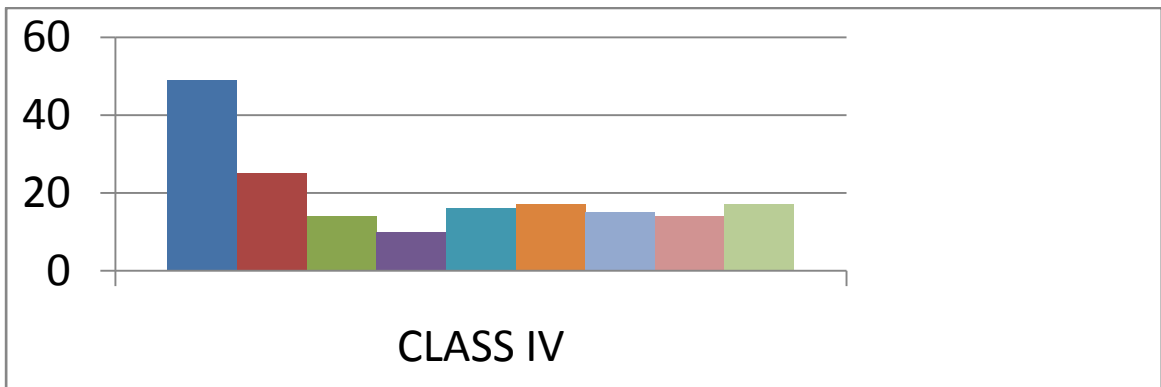


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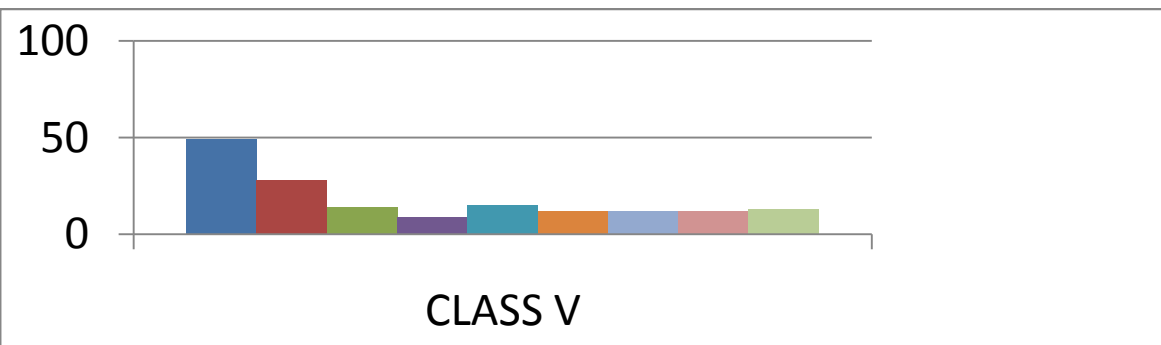


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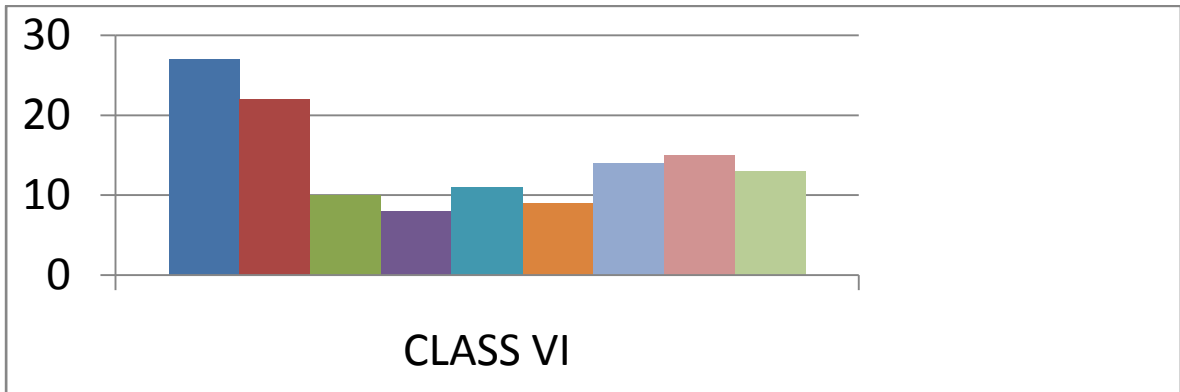


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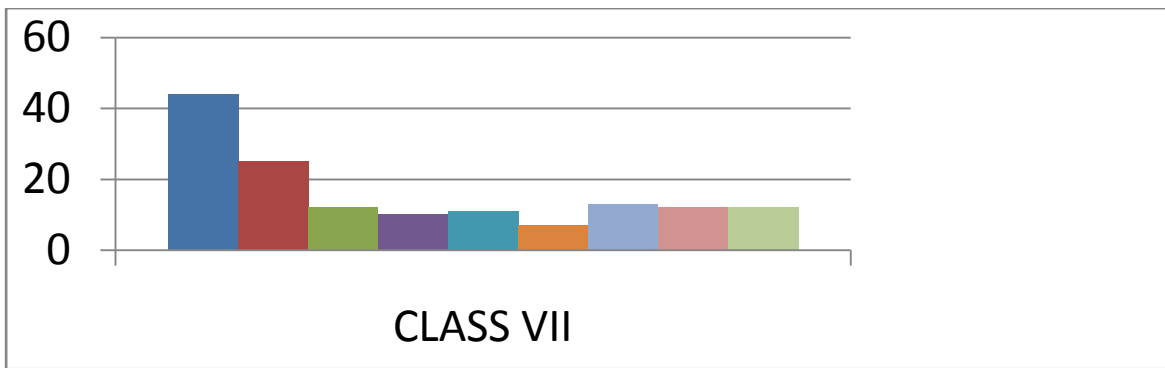


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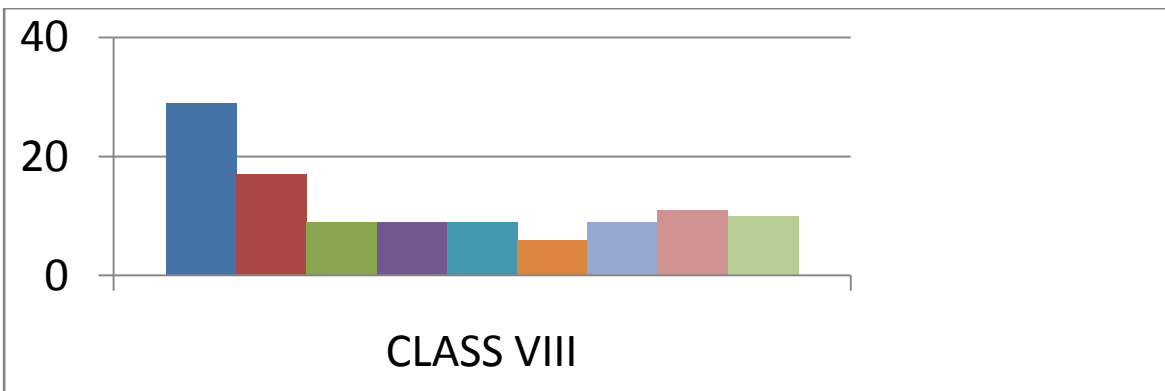


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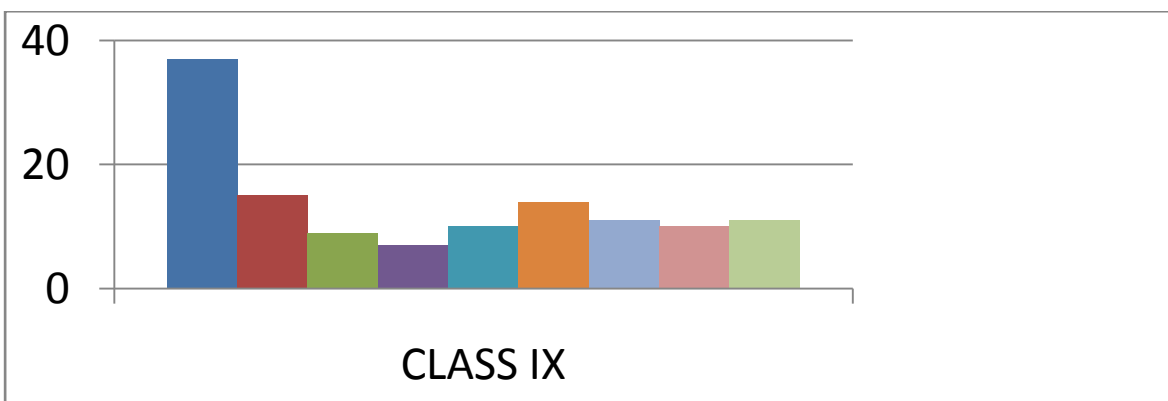


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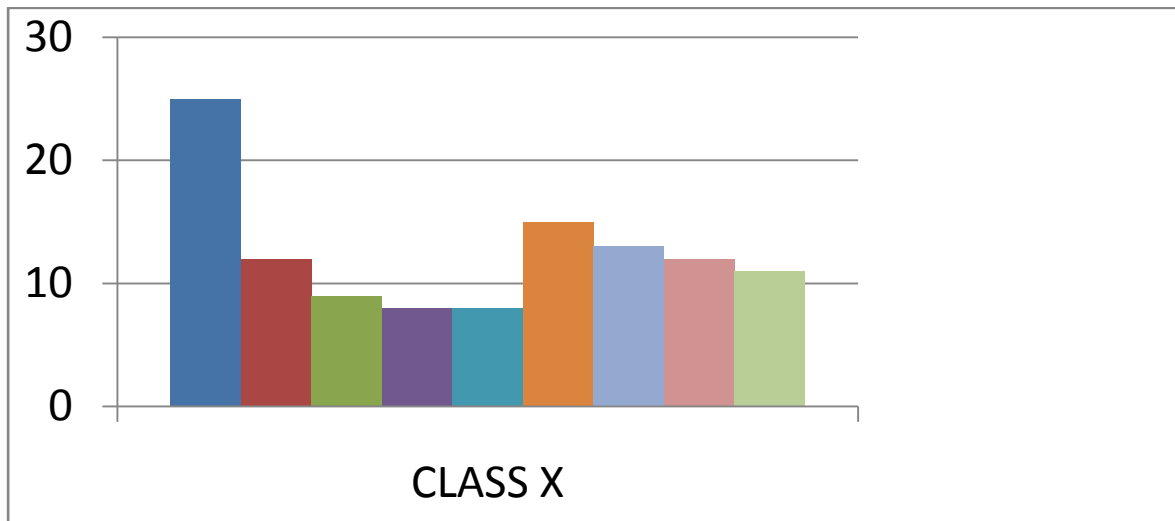


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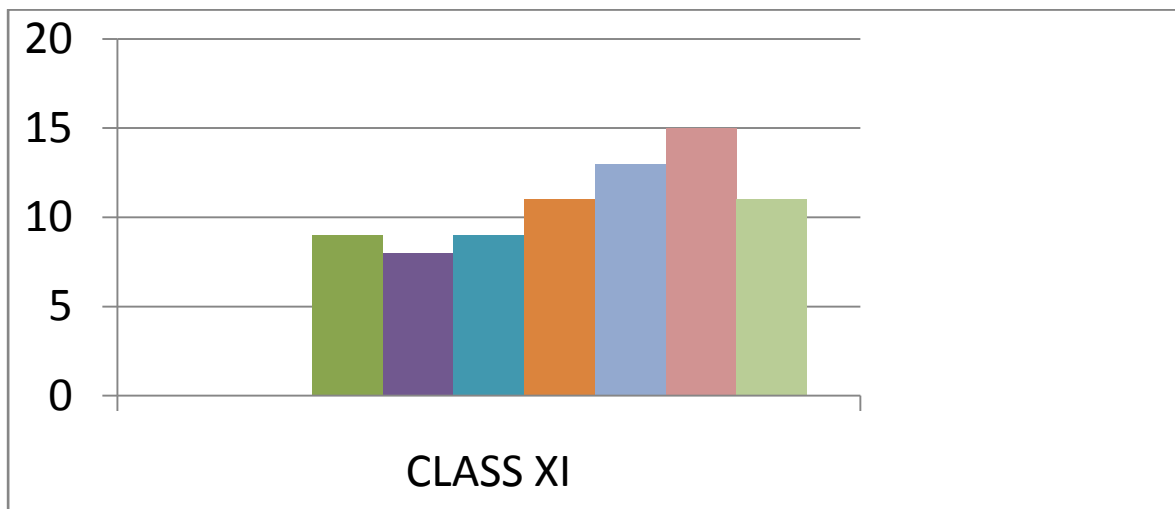


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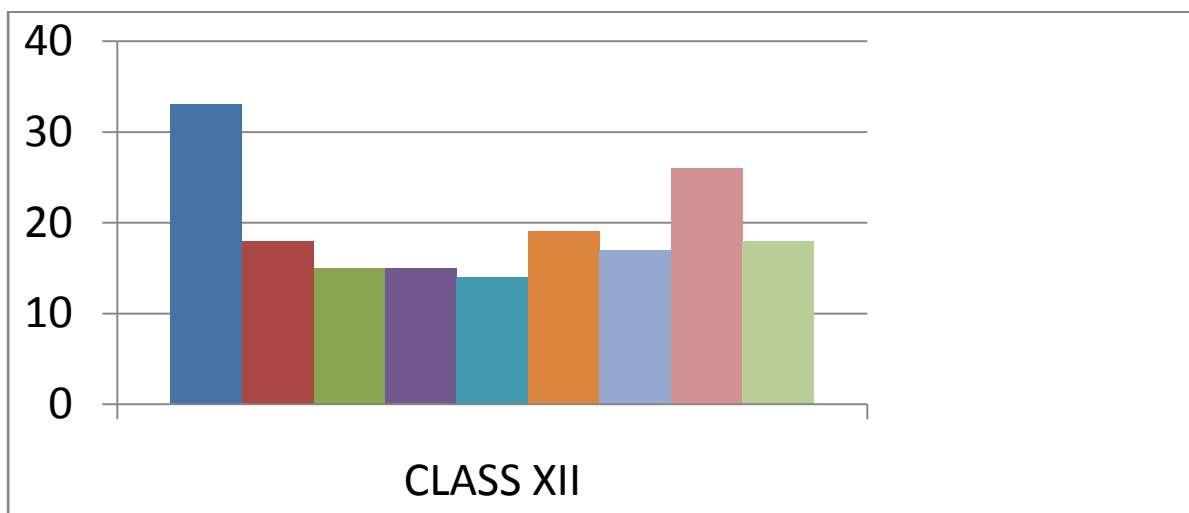


Table 2.1

S. No	QUESTION	YES	NO
1	Are you satisfied with the location of the school	143	14
2	Are you satisfied with the infrastructural facilities provided in the school	125	32
3	Are you satisfied with the class room teaching of your ward in this school?	146	11
4	Do you feel your ward is given stress free environment for studies?	116	41
5	Are you satisfied with the discipline of the school?	116	41
6	Are you satisfied with the quality of mid day meal provided to your ward?	119	38
7	Are you satisfied with the frequency of parent Teachers contact time to time in a year?	121	36
8	Are you satisfied with the safety measures taken in the school?	139	18

(Questionnaire for Parents)

Table 2.2

S. No	QUESTION	GOOD	SATISFACTORY	POOR
1	How do you rate the teaching learning process in the school	150	52	0
2	what is your satisfaction level regarding the infrastructural facilities provided in your school	89	97	16
3	Have the school provide you a platform to display your talents?	123	70	9
4	What is your satisfaction level regarding the quality of mid day meal provided in your school?	97	74	31
5	How do you rate the Computer Lab facility provided to you?	43	53	106
6	How do you rate the remedial classes provided to you to help you in your studies?	87	83	32
7	How do you rate the drinking water facilities provided to you in the school?	91	54	57

8	How do you rate the co-curricular activities provided to you in the school?	127	53	22
9	What is your satisfaction level regarding washroom facilities provided to you in the school?	50	68	84
10	How do you rate the toilet facility provided to you in the school?	27	63	112
11	How do you rate the library facility provided to you in the school?	114	65	23

(Questionnaire for Students)

Table 2.3

S. No	QUESTIONS	GOOD	SATISFACTORY	POOR
1	What is your satisfaction level regarding the number of subjects enrichment programmes provided to the teachers?	17	47	21
2	What is your satisfaction level regarding the infrastructural facilities provided	21	56	8
3	How do you rate the School Library	13	52	20
4	How do you rate the availability of separate toilet facility for female and male staffs?	25	35	25
5	Involvement of teachers in decision making process of the School	30	48	7
6	Equal opportunities are given to all teachers	33	46	6
7	recognition/appreciation/incentive for the individual work given in the school	32	50	3
8	Schools plans and arrange excursion and field trips for staffs	5	36	44
9	Abundant opportunities are provided for teachers to learn and grow and demonstrate leadership skills.	26	54	5
10	Capabilities and potentials of the teachers are recognized by the School for reaching optimum levels.	31	50	4

(Questionnaire for Teachers)

Table 3.1

CLASS	Februray	March	April
I	12	08	02
II	06	05	05
III	05	06	04
IV	05	07	02
V	06	05	01
VI	10	02	06
VII	05	05	05
VIII	06	03	01
IX	03	04	02
X	05	08	04
XI	04	04	00
XII	05	04	05

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