



848/F

"I won a gold medal for running. But I got only 5 marks for the Scholarship exam"

K A N Sulochana Alexander

Department of Research and Development, National Institute of Education, Maharagama.

Low achievement at the Grade 5 Scholarship Examination is a neglected phenomenon as a research issue. The present study was one of the 19 case studies conducted in 2010 to identify causal factors for gaining less than 5 marks at the Scholarship Exam conducted in 2009. The child, the subject of the study, attended a 1C school, which was selected from the list of schools having students who obtained low marks. This information was obtained from the education office of the Western Province. Data collection techniques were directed to understand the underlying factors for the student's low achievement. The history of the child in Grade 5 was studied retrospectively and the present patterns of learning were studied at Grade 6 using survey techniques. A question paper was prepared to assess mathematics and language competency levels of the child at Grade 6. The interviews were conducted with teachers who taught the child from Grade 1 to Grade 6, parents, family members, Grama Niladari, and neighbours. Classroom observations were conducted to identify how the child was participating in teaching learning situations and also to understand behavioural patterns of the child. In addition, students' progress records and writing books were observed. Data analysis revealed that the common denominator of the child's very low achievement can be attributed to the low socio economic status of the family, and broken family status. In addition, extra marital affairs of the father of the child and conflicts between mother and father, father getting married to step mother, father's illegal drug business, and his imprisonment from time to time have badly affected the child's natural growth as a school child and as a result the educational attainment of the child. His mental state was not balanced during the lessons. Teachers were aware about his family background but did not apply specific remedial measures due to their routine teaching career. Although the child is academically backward, his inherent and inborn physical talents were displayed in sports events of the school. Although the school has ample resources, the child had not benefitted from the said resources.

Acknowledgement: GIZ for financial assistance

Tel: 011-7601601