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Research Article

Perception Of Parents Towards School Education System: A Special Focus on Mayiladuthurai District, Tamil Nadu

Dr. M. Mahalakshmi ¹, R. Prabakaran ^{2*}

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, A.V.C. College Autonomous, Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, Mayiladuthurai, Tamil Nadu, India

² PhD, Research Scholar, Department of Economics, A.V.C. College Autonomous, Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, Mayiladuthurai, Tamil Nadu, India

Corresponding Author: * R. Prabakaran

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Abstract

The school education system is a cornerstone for the socio-economic development of any region. In India, education significantly influences both individual growth and societal prosperity. Tamil Nadu School Initiatives (2024) emphasised enhancing parental engagement through programs like the Chief Minister's breakfast scheme and reconstitution of School Management Committees (SMCs). These committees, which include parent representatives, aim to address educational challenges and ensure inclusive decision-making at schools. The UKFIET Report (2022) explored the impact of the pandemic on education in rural Tamil Nadu. Parents in Mayiladuthurai increasingly valued education during school closures, advocating for enhanced teacher engagement and school readiness to meet post-pandemic learning challenges. Shelina et al. (2023) examined the effectiveness of alternative teaching methods, including home learning, in response to pandemic-induced disruptions. The study emphasised the need for curricula to integrate both psychosocial and academic goals. It found that parents' perceptions were shaped significantly by their children's ability to adapt to new learning environments. This study examines the perceptions of parents in Mayiladuthurai District, Tamil Nadu, toward the current school education system. Combining demographic stabilisation, resource-efficient agricultural practices, environmental regulation, and community-level awareness is essential. The population–environment relationship in Bihar must therefore be understood as mutually reinforcing rather than unidirectional.

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KEYWORDS: Population Growth, Environmental Degradation, Natural Resource Pressure, Agricultural Land Fragmentation Sustainable Development in Bihar.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is fundamental to societal progress, driving individual growth and contributing to the economic, cultural, and social development of communities. In India, particularly in Tamil Nadu, the school education system has undergone significant changes, from expanded access through government initiatives to the rise of private institutions and the integration of digital tools. However, the success of these reforms in meeting parental expectations and addressing their concerns remains uncertain. Koskela et al. (2022) discussed the increased responsibility parents took on during the shift to online learning, where many felt unprepared to support their children's learning due to a lack of digital resources and technical skills. This study emphasised the need for better training for parents to manage online education effectively. Fontenelle & Tereshchuk (2022) focused on the psychological impact on parents, noting how they felt stressed by the dual roles of providing emotional support and educational guidance. The study underscored the importance of mental health resources for parents and better communication between schools and families to alleviate these burdens. Jingyang Zhang et al. (2024) explored differences in perceptions between students and parents regarding parental involvement in education. They found that students' perceptions significantly impact academic outcomes and suggested empowering students' voices to improve school-family partnerships. This includes strategies like student-led parent-teacher conferences to foster mutual understanding. Mayiladuthurai, an agrarian district increasingly influenced by urbanisation, faces challenges such as economic disparity, limited access to quality education in rural areas, and the tension between traditional values and modern educational needs. This makes it crucial to explore how parents view the education system's ability to meet their expectations.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Borup et al. (2013) conducted a survey involving 79 parents to assess their involvement in online education, specifically how much time they spent discussing online classes with their children and instructors. The results revealed that parents spent an average of 86 minutes per week talking with their children about the course and 9 minutes per week communicating with the online instructor. According to **Fox and Patterson (2013)**, parents perceived improvements in students' learning through e-learning, noting benefits such as enhanced learning progress, career adaptability, and versatility. These advantages have significantly contributed to the widespread adoption of e-learning, replacing traditional teaching methods in recent years. **Kumaravel et.al. (2018)** focused on the perceptions of rural parents towards education, highlighting challenges such as limited access to quality infrastructure and the lack of adequate teachers in government schools. **Prince Gajendra Babu (2021)** explored the role of School Management Committees (SMCs) in Tamil Nadu under the Right to Education (RTE) Act, emphasising their potential to improve parental involvement in education. **Sasikumar and Balaji (2022)** examined the positive effects of Tamil Nadu's welfare schemes, such as free

textbooks, uniforms, and mid-day meals, on school enrollment and attendance. However, parents expressed concerns over the quality of government schools compared to private institutions, particularly regarding teacher training, infrastructure, and English-medium education. In a later study, **Sasikumar and Balaji (2023)** discussed how Tamil Nadu's welfare initiatives, such as free textbooks and mid-day meals, are appreciated by parents, but challenges in equitable access across urban and rural areas remain. **The Education World Authors (2024)** emphasised the government's efforts to revitalise and restructure SMCs to enhance parental engagement in school governance. They argued that increased parental involvement could address inefficiencies and improve accountability. **Prince Gajendra Babu (2024)** further discussed the role of SMCs in empowering parents, identifying issues such as political interference and advocating for greater autonomy and active parental participation.

Statement of the Problem

In India, educational access and quality are significantly impacted by geographic location. Rural areas, in particular, face challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, teacher shortages, and limited educational resources. These issues often lead to lower parental satisfaction with government schools, especially in states with poorer educational outcomes. For example, parents in states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar report lower satisfaction levels with educational quality compared to those in states like Tamil Nadu or Kerala. Tamil Nadu has introduced several initiatives, including free mid-day meals, textbooks, and uniforms, aimed at improving access to education and bridging disparities. However, challenges remain, particularly in addressing the varied needs and expectations of parents from different socio-economic and regional backgrounds. Despite significant efforts to improve educational infrastructure and implement welfare schemes, disparities in parental satisfaction persist, particularly in rural areas such as the Mayiladuthurai district in Tamil Nadu.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main goal of this study is to understand parents' perceptions of the school education system in Mayiladuthurai, Tamil Nadu. Specifically, it aims to:

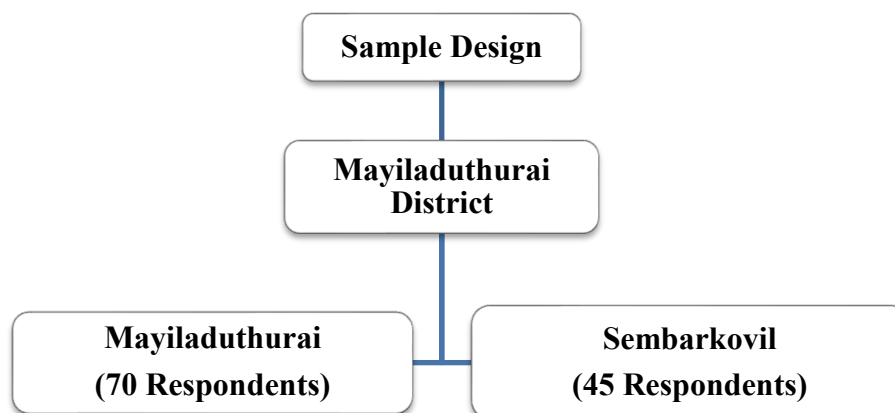
1. To study the Parents Perception on School Education System in the study area.
2. To study the Parental Satisfaction with Educational Quality.
3. To Analyze Parental Expectations from the School Education System in the study area.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study has used both Primary and Secondary data sources. The primary data has been collected based on purposive sampling methods from different parts of the sample area. Around 115 respondents were collected from various parts of the Mayiladuthurai district, based on the number of schools available. In this district, Mayiladuthurai and Sernbanar Kovil

are the highest school areas chosen for this study. The total sample size is 30 per cent of schools in the research area. Based on the school's information collected from the parents during the data collection, the study period has one year at different times.

The secondary data were collected from various published and unpublished governmental sources and journals of different periods.



5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Respondents' choice for the schools based on the parameters (in %)

Sl. No	Statement	Strongly agree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Prefer School in Neighbourhood	9.1	6.1	3.0	39.4	42.4
2	Board the School	6.1	24.2	18.2	39.4	12.1
3	The Head of the School is the face of the Institution	15.2	9.1	15.2	36.4	24.2
4	Offers mid-day Meal	9.1	12.1	21.2	36.4	21.2
5	Higher learning is also preferred	0	0	21.2	30.4	48.5
6	Teachers are the Soul of the School	0	33.3	21.2	27.3	18.2
7	The culture of the School	6.1	3.0	3.0	51.5	36.4
8	Travelling time	12.1	15.2	6.1	24.2	42.4
9	Fees structure	0	12.1	15.2	36.4	36.4
10	Communication skills	0	12.1	9.1	51.5	27.3
11	Extra-curricular activities	6.1	15.2	3.0	33.3	42.4
12	Board Results	6.1	9.1	30.3	24.2	30.3
13	Safe and Secure Transportation	9.1	15.2	3.0	30.3	42.4

Source: Compiled data from field sources

The above table 1 summarises respondents' preferences for schools based on various parameters, measured as percentages across five categories: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Not Sure, Agree, and Strongly Agree. Key highlights include a strong preference for neighbourhood schools (42.4% strongly agree) and emphasis on higher learning opportunities (48.5% strongly agree). The culture of the school is highly valued, with 51.5%

agreeing and 36.4% strongly agreeing. Communication skills (51.5% agree) and extracurricular activities (42.4% strongly agree) are also important. Conversely, factors like teachers being the "soul of the school" received a high disagreement rate (33.3%), showing varied opinions. Parameters such as board results and mid-day meal offerings show moderate preferences, reflecting mixed priorities among respondents.

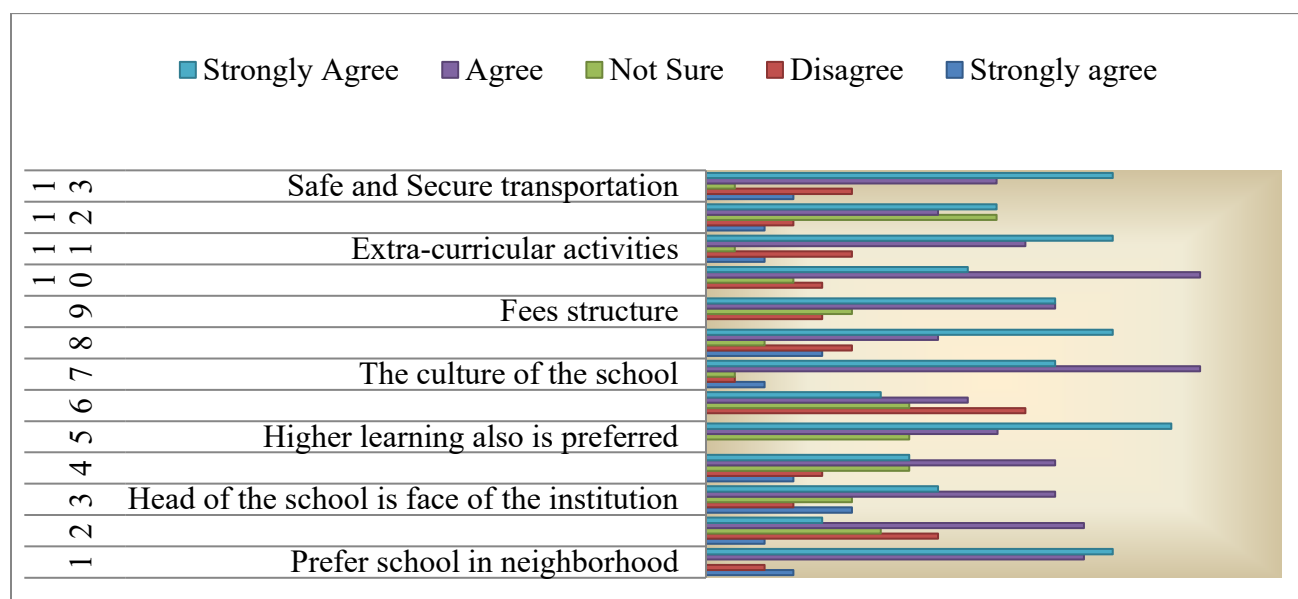


Figure 1: Respondents choose the schools based on the parameters

Table 2: Factors Influencing Preferences for Secondary Schools (in %)

Sl. No	Statement	Strongly agree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Regular Parent-Teacher Meeting	6.1	9.1	15.2	21.2	48.5
2	Extra-curricular activities contribute to the overall development	0	12.1	6.1	30.3	51.5
3	Academic performance of the child	12.1	12.1	21.2	24.2	30.3
4	Participation in School programs	12.1	6.1	15.2	36.4	30.3
5	The school offers nutritious food	6.1	6.1	21.2	48.4	18.2
6	A good school is preferred even if it is far from the residence	12.1	12.1	12.1	33.3	30.3
7	Good infrastructure	0	9.1	12.1	39.4	39.4
8	Response to parents queries	9.1	12.1	15.2	27.3	36.4
9	Cleanliness is an important	5.1	3.0	12.1	21.2	57.6
10	A School is preferred if teachers function as mentors also	6.1	15.2	15.2	45.5	18.2

Source: Compiled data from field sources

Table 2 highlights respondents' priorities regarding secondary schools. Cleanliness stands out as the most critical factor, with 57.6% strongly agreeing on its importance. Regular parent-teacher meetings and extracurricular activities are highly valued, with 48.5% and 51.5% strongly agreeing, respectively. Academic performance and participation in school programs show moderate agreement, indicating their relevance to overall

satisfaction. Nutritious food offerings and good infrastructure are also prioritised, with agreement rates of 48.4% and 39.4%, respectively. While a good school being far from residence is acceptable for many, only 30.3% strongly agree, showing some resistance. Lastly, teacher mentorship and responsiveness to parents are important, but not as unanimously preferred.

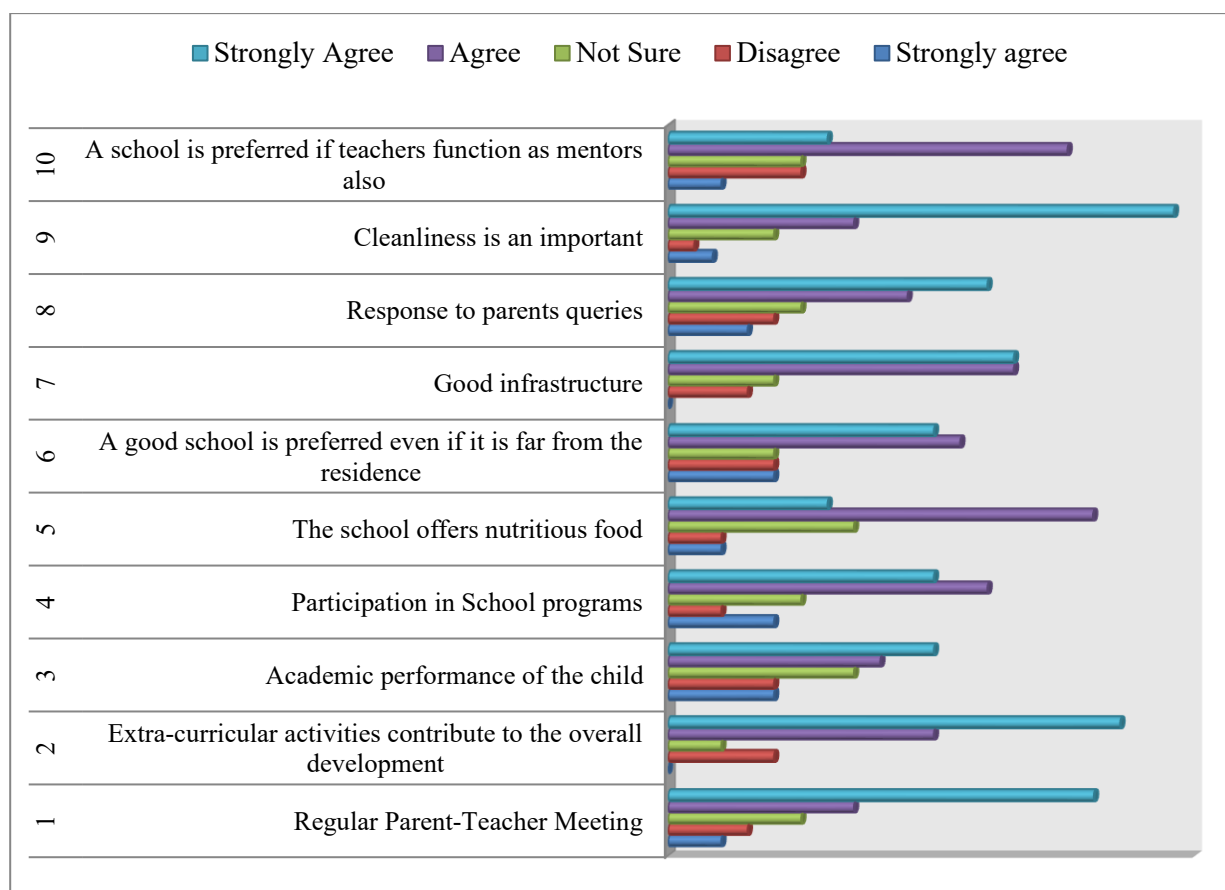


Figure: 2- Secondary School

Table 3 - Influence of Teacher-Student Relationship and School Attributes on Preferences (in %)

Sl. No	Statement	Strongly agree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Personal attention of teachers towards students contributes	0	12.1	18.2	33.3	36.4
2	Friendly approach of teachers	3.0	6.1	15.2	27.3	48.5
3	The discipline of the school is an important parameter	3.0	15.2	12.1	42.4	27.3
4	School is adopting the latest methodologies for teaching	0	3.0	39.4	36.4	21.2
5	A school is preferred if it is affiliated up to higher secondary classes	12.1	18.2	0	33.3	36.3

Source: Compiled data from field sources.

The above Table 3 outlines respondents' views on the teacher-student relationship and related school attributes. A friendly approach by teachers is highly valued, with 48.5% strongly agreeing. Personal attention to students also garners strong support, with a combined 69.7% agreeing or strongly agreeing.

Discipline is an important factor, receiving 42.4% agreement. While newer teaching methodologies are moderately appreciated, a significant 39.4% remain unsure. Affiliation up to higher secondary classes is another preference, with 36.3% strongly agreeing and 33.3% agreeing.

Table: 4 - Parental Preferences for Holistic and Academic Schooling Attributes (in %)

Sl. No	Statement	Strongly agree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Parents prefer a school that focuses on building confidence and motivation	4.5	15.9	27.3	34.1	18.2
2	Parents prefer a school that provides a balance of strong academics and cultural values	11.4	13.6	18.2	45.5	11.4
3	Parents prefer well-equipped classrooms with high-quality learning materials	9.1	13.6	25.0	27.3	25.0
4	The school is refereed which prepares for competitive exams.	6.8	20.5	29.5	22.7	20.5
5	Parents prefer the qualified & experienced Montessori teachers to facilitate children	4.5	25.0	11.4	34.1	25.0
6	Parents prefer the school that imbues excellence in academics	9.1	13.6	22.7	29.5	25.0
7	Parents prefer the school which focus on Academic reputation	6.8	27.3	15.9	94.1	15.9
8	Parents' school is preferred, which prepares global citizens	6.8	11.4	31.8	31.8	18.2
9	Parents prefer the school that focuses on Life skill Education and conflict management	4.5	13.6	15.9	38.6	27.3
10	Parents like school, which has counsellors and special educators to assist slow learners in small groups	9.1	18.2	38.6	25.0	9.1

Source: Compiled data from field sources.

The above Table 4 reflects parents' preferences for schools based on various educational and developmental priorities. A balance of strong academics and cultural values is highly prioritised, with 45.5% agreeing. Schools focusing on building confidence and motivation, as well as those emphasising life skills and conflict management, are also favoured, receiving 34.1% and

38.6% agreement, respectively. Well-equipped classrooms and Schools with experienced Montessori teachers are valued, with 25% strongly agreeing in each category. However, preferences for schools with counsellors and global citizenship preparation see mixed responses, as many remain unsure. Academic reputation and excellence remain key factors for most parents.

Table 5 - Parental Priorities for Selecting Higher Secondary Schools (in %)

Sl. No	Statement	Strongly agree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Parents prefer the school where childhood is celebrated	23.7	0	44.7	10.5	21.1
2	Parents prefer well -equipped classrooms with high-quality learning materials	34.2	34.2	10.5	10.5	10.5
3	The school is preferred that prepares for competitive exams	0	34.2	10.5	34.2	21.1
4	Parents prefer the school that imbues excellence in academics	21.1	10.5	0	31.6	0
5	The school is preferred that prepares global citizens	21.1	10.5	0	47.4	21.1
6	Parents prefer the school which focus on Life skill Education & conflict management	31.6	0	44.7	0	23.7
7	Parents like school, which has a counsellor and special educators to assist slow learners in small groups	0	34.2	21.1	23.7	21.1
8	Parents prefer the school that offers quality at affordable fees	26.3	21.1	21.1	10.5	21.1
9	A school is preferred in which teachers motivate learning from different sources	23.7	34.2	21.1	21.1	0
10	Parents like the school that develops the natural & full potential in children	0	10.5	36.8	10.5	42.1

Source: Compiled data from field sources.

Table 5 highlights factors influencing parents' preferences for higher secondary schools. Celebrating childhood is a key factor, with 23.7% strongly agreeing, though 44.7% are unsure.

Schools with well-equipped classrooms and competitive exams Preparation is moderately preferred, but opinions are divided, with some parents disagreeing (34.2%).

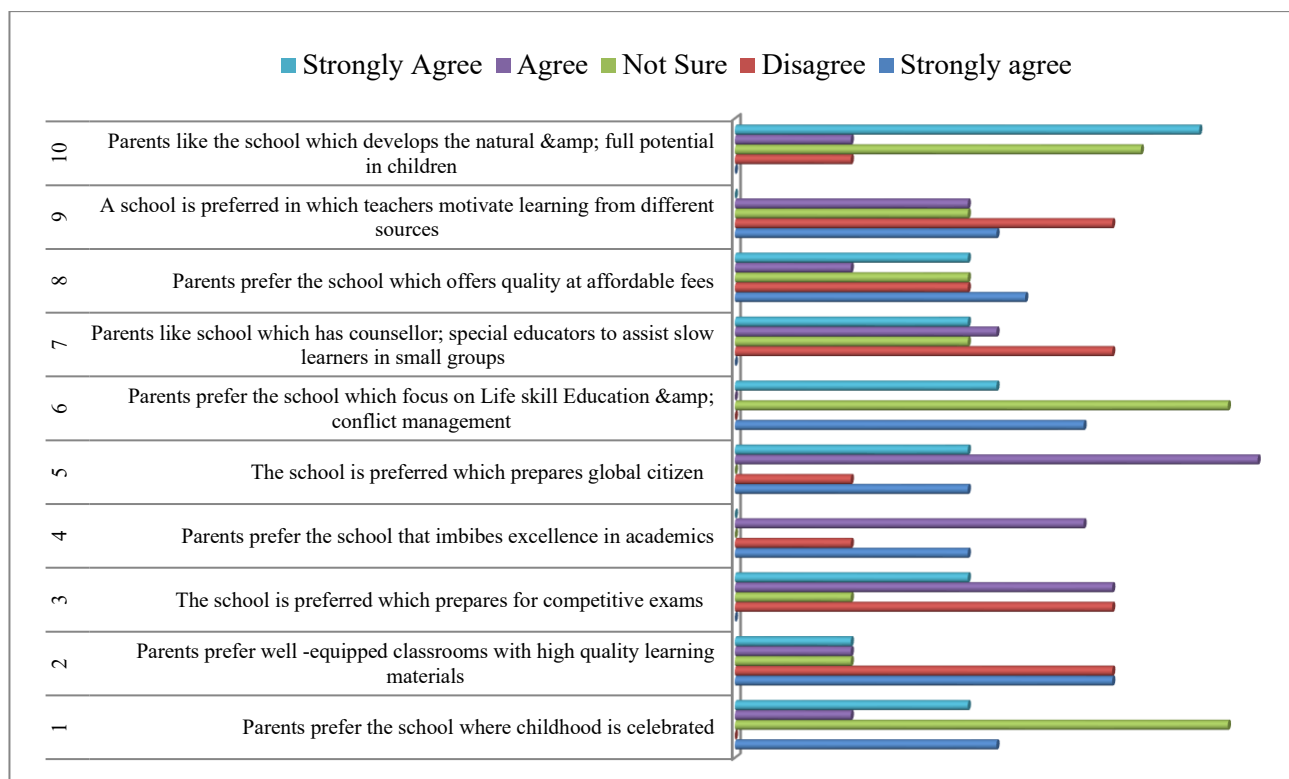


Figure 3: Parental Priorities for Selecting Higher Secondary Schools

Life skills education, conflict management, and global citizenship are valued, receiving strong agreement rates of 31.6% and 47.4%, respectively. Affordability and quality also play a role, with 26.3% strongly agreeing on its importance. Notably, developing children's full potential receives the highest strong agreement at 42.1%, showcasing its significance among parents.

6. CONCLUSION

Parents generally express satisfaction with government initiatives such as free textbooks and mid-day meals, but concerns persist about the quality gap between government and private schools. Rural parents, in particular, report lower satisfaction due to inadequate infrastructure and teacher shortages. Parental involvement, which remains limited, is a key factor influencing educational quality. Although Tamil Nadu has made significant strides in education, parents in rural areas like Mayiladuthurai District continue to face challenges. Many feel disconnected from the education system, citing limited opportunities for involvement and a lack of access to modern educational resources. Despite these issues, there is a growing demand for increased parental engagement and better access to digital education. Addressing these concerns could help improve the education system in Mayiladuthurai, aligning it with both parental expectations and the evolving needs of 21st-century education.

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About the corresponding author



R. Prabakaran is a Ph.D. Research Scholar in the Department of Economics at A.V.C. College (Autonomous), affiliated with Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, India. His research interests focus on economic development, education systems, and regional socio-economic issues. He is actively engaged in academic research and scholarly publications.