**7.1 LATE COMING PROBLEM**

**What is late coming?**

* Late coming to school is an act of arriving at school after the official hour of commencement of the day’s learning activities.
* Late-coming means partial absence for a few hours or period or a part of it, in a day.
* Before actual commencement of teaching activity there are other activities which students are expected to be present in school in order to take part in them.
* A situation where students do not attend these pre-lesson activities and are not present at the commencement are considered as late coming to school.

**Late coming problem**

* There is hardly any school that is spared from the problem of late coming.
* The impact of this problem cannot be overlooked, as it has contributed immensely in a negative way to the academic achievements of learners and the functioning of the school.

**Theoretically lateness is classified into three categories;**

**Chronic:**

* It is a response to a bad environment and student’s dislike with fellow students.
* Chronic lateness among students in high school could be the low level of commitment to school and lack of satisfaction.

**Avoidable:**

* It occurs when students think that they have more important activities to do than arrive on time for a particular lesson or class in the school.
* In most cases this happens in math classes.

**Unavoidable:**

* It is due to factors beyond the students’ control, such as transport problem, bad weather, illness and accident.

**Repercussions of lateness**

* Effective teaching and learning cannot take place without coming together of the teachers and the learners.
* A learner, who is not punctual in school, faces learning problems resulting from late coming to the school.
* Punctuality is important because learners who arrive late at school often disrupt lessons and the general management of the school.
* Late coming violates the principle of punctuality and if not checked at the onset, it may become a habit with the individual involved and may have negative consequences.
* Lateness can be seen as a “less severe form” of withdrawal that eventually escalates into the “more severe form” of absenteeism.
* In most cases, when condoned, it breeds a bad habit and an attitude detrimental to success in numerous enterprises in life.
* Lateness could result into poor academic achievement, disruption in class, difficulty in keeping accurate records, reduced ability to meet instructional target.
* In fact, chronic lateness can impact a student’s academic success throughout elementary school.
* Increase in number of late comers often damage school’s reputation.
* Furthermore, studies have shown that chronic lateness (tardiness) can reduce acceptance of personal responsibility.

**Reasons of late coming to the school**

* Issues that frequently cause lateness in early or late childhood group are; medical, transportation, and family based issues.
* Medical issues include circumstances in which the parent or the child has a chronic illness that makes early morning difficult.
* If a family is without a way to transport a child to school each day, this could cause chronic lateness.
* A single family with many children in different schools could have a trouble ensuring all get to school at the right time, thus creating a chronic lateness problem for one or more.

**The impact of lateness**

* Late-coming to the school is a big problem.
* Habitual late-comers feel disconnected with the school, leading to behavioral problem and eventually drop-out of the school.
* Students with habitual late-coming use to impact negatively at their teachers and other students.
* Schools stress the need to be punctual in coming to the school in time, as the habit leads to the irregularity of attendance.
* School attendance is a major factor when it comes to school success and student behavior.
* The most crucial learning hours of a school day are the morning hours because students are most attentive at these hours of time.
* Latecomers not only miss the beginning of their morning class but also cause distraction when they arrive late to the class.
* Late comers usually fail to score higher grades.
* Chronic lateness in elementary and middle classes is also linked to the failure in secondary classes.
* Late-coming causes students to feel disconnected with school, leading to behavioral problem and drop-out.
* Students who have been habitual late-comers in school are more apt who may be fired from a job for showing up late at their duty.

**Addressing the late coming problem**

Strategies adopted to tackle the late-coming problem of students may vary from school to school. Practical solutions ranging from administrative improvement to students’ behavioral change are recommended.

* Set the clear rules at the beginning of the session which is required to be communicated to all the students of the school and their parents.
* Make them understand the school’s late-coming policy from the very first day.
* Frame somewhat strict rules to deal with such an issue.
* Students should simply know that being late is their loss.
* Some students’ late-coming can be due to legitimate reasons. We need to understand situation before taking actions and suitably find the innovative ways to handle the problem.
* Beyond those legitimate reasons, the complex issue of late-coming requires a careful handling.
* One strategy “fit for all” may not work.
* Strict may be the strategies to deal with such elements.
* Lack of respect for “class-start time” should be dealt firmly in order to make them understand that lateness shall not be tolerated and it is not an option.
* Late-comers need to understand that their lateness affects the whole class, and they should know the importance of punctuality.
* Leave one or two desks/chairs at the back of classroom for late-comers.
* They should, if allowed will enter in the classroom through the back door only just to avoid any disturbance in the ongoing teaching activity or they may be asked to spend the remainder of the period standing outside the class.
* These late-comers may see the teacher after the class is over in order to explain the cause of their late arrival in the class.
* In order to address the problem of late-coming, school may embark on dynamic and creative campaign, driven by learners outside the school premises, to assist school by encouraging late-comers to be present at the school time.
* They may display placards, posters about punctuality and hand out information about the damage done by late-coming.
* Collecting fines at school gate from those who use to report late/habitual late-comers is not a reasonable policy. It looks as if it is an extortion activity without desired result.
* Rather than collecting the fine, it is better to Keep record of habitual late-comers and call the parents and discuss the matter and find out a proper solution.