**7.3 DROP-OUT PROBLEM**

**(REASONS AND PREVENTION)**

Dropout is one who has left school or college before completion of studies, or it may be defined as a student who fails to complete a school or college course

* Drop-out problem is fairly a common occurrence in almost all schools throughout the world.
* UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) mentions that there are 47 millions youths in India that drop-out by 10th class.
* The repercussions of dropping out affect teen-agers for their entire life.
* Drop-out rate also influences the community as well as the society.
* This eventually affects the enrolment at graduation level and for higher education too.

**Drop-out Problem and its repercussions**

* Students who drop-out of school face a difficult future.
* They are most likely to be unemployed, confined and/or impoverished thereby losing their strength and vitality.
* With the students suffering from disabilities, the risk of dropping out intensifies.
* Their drop-out rate is about 40% more than normal students.
* Face unemployment;
* Live in poverty;
* Earn half as much income as a graduate;
* Get married early and have children at an early stage;
* Use illicit drugs, tobacco, or both;
* Likely to get overweight, not good for health.

**Risk factor for dropping out**

* Identifying students who are most likely to drop-out is not a precise process.
* Some students with no apparent risk factors leave school, and some with many risk factors complete school education.
* Although risk factors are not precise predictors, parents should be aware of them.
* Families can play an important role in making it sure that their kids attain graduation level. Therefore staying involved in teens’ life during middle and secondary school is critical.
* More importantly, they should become involved or seek assistance if they repeatedly see risky behaviors such as skipping school, failing classes, having significant discipline problems, or being involved in illegal activities.

**Why do young students drop-out?**

* When a young student drops-out of school, it is not always an intentional decision.
* Many say, they simply stopped going to school one day and no one objected.
* Some youth may drop-out because they have comprehension problem or problem with teachers, dislike school, or receive low grades.
* Other youths, however leave school because of problems not directly related to academics, such as financial needs, family caretaking responsibilities, employment etc.

**Prevention of drop-outs**

* Drop-out prevention starts during the early stages of a child’s education.
* In some cases though, parents and educators do not notice that the student is at the risk until he/she reaches high school.
* The challenges that contribute to dropping out are often systemic and may require a coalition and co-operation of teachers, school heads, community members and parents, to tackle the gravity of problem.
* There are many more small steps that we can take as remedial action.
* Exemplification of income statistics, dignity in future life and life expectancy, of an educated person through guest speakers such as former students who may share their experiences so that students see the real-life stories behind the success.

**Consequences**

* Most students who drop-out have not fully considered the consequences and typically are not prepared for what will happen to them afterwards.
* Being immature physically and emotionally, these adolescents often face the challenging transition to independent living and adulthood.
* As a result, they are more likely to face poor job prospects, experience lifelong dependence on social service system, use illicit drugs, become involved in juvenile justice system and become teen parents.

**Reasons of dropping out**

**1. Academic difficulty**

**Problem**

* They may have no personal connection with their teachers.
* One of the biggest reasons of dropping out of school is the academic failure that is because of the inability to cope with the academic pressure.
* A majority of students did not feel their teachers motivate them enough to work hard.
* Those students who fail to study competently at the earlier stage/or lower level of their education are more likely to quit the education at the later level.

**Prevention**

* More student-teacher interaction can act as an important remedy for the drop-out problem.
* Educators can use technology as a tool to bolster learning and keep their attention.
* “student-centered learning” allow teachers to take a more facilitative role in the learning process.
* When students enjoy their school’s environment, they’ll want to participate and stay in school.
* Technology allows teachers to invite students to personalized learning like never before.

**2. Boredom**

**Problem**

* Students often drop-out of school due to apathy or boredom.
* They often feel the academic contents uninteresting.
* According to a study, majority of students become disinterested at secondary school level while they are in 9th or 10th grade.
* They prefer to go late to the school, skip classes and take long lunch break.
* The lack of interest often leads to dropping out of school

**Prevention**

* Boredom is a problem that must be addressed by school faculty, students and most importantly by parents.
* A positive school culture, meaningful relationships with their peers and adults, and engaging interaction are all ways to motivate students and to keep them to be in school without feeling boredom.
* Introduction of Robotics is also a way to motivate students that can be used as a tool to minimize the drop-out cases.
* Learning how to build a website not only gives teens a career, but keeps them engaged in school studies.
* Parents can help by encouraging their kids to get involved in activities other than academics to develop talents and an interest for studies.
* Sumer camps that incorporate learning as well as fun can enhance students’ skills, keeping them fresh for the start of another school year.

**3. Bad company**

**Problem**

* Influence of bad company is an important factor of dropping out of the school

**Prevention**

* Parents should keep an eye at all the activities of their kinds.
* As soon as they notice any abnormal activity in their behavior, a thorough enquiry is required to be undertaken for their changed behavior to neutralize the bad effect, if any.
* Teachers are also required to pay attention at their students and guide them frequently.

**4. Bad influence**

**Problem**

* Un-limited exposure to internet and to TV can distract children from pursuing academics.
* This may start them off into anti-social activities.

**Prevention**

* Parents can guide their kids about the positive use of internet.
* Restricted use of internet, only for academic purpose should be allowed.
* Become involved in extra-curricular activities and games that keep kids more engaged.

**5. Economic needs**

**Problem**

* Students belonging to low income groups are more likely to drop-out of the school due to compulsions to support their family.
* Financial difficulty/lack of financial support by parents is a major reason that contributes in dropping out of students. Lack of sound financial back up some times instigates the drop-out act.

**Prevention**

* Communication with school administrators on the impact of financial difficulties can provide a range of options that will assist the family and keep the student in school.
* Establish an NGO for financial assistance for poor students. The NGO may start ***School Drop-out Prevention Program*** for students who are in need of financial/ other assistance.

**6. Familial problem**

**Problem**

* Some children may need to stay back at home to take care of their siblings while the parents go out to work.
* Family disputes, especially between their parents may lead to indifference towards education.
* Divorce or separation of parents also affects the education of children adversely.

**Prevention**

* Faculty is required to identify the student who may be having one or the other familial problem.
* In association with the school counselor try to minimize the detrimental e/effects the student may be suffering from.
* This may ultimately prevent the drop-out tendency.
* Class-teacher in all probability can skillfully handle such cases, in case there is no counselor in the school.

**7. Importance of education**

**Problem**

* They might have no knowledge of the importance of education that is required to spend a dignified life ahead.

**Prevention**

* Students should be made aware of the fact that those who drop-out of the school face difficulty in future and a higher unemployment rate.
* Motivate the students and prepare them to get ready for participation in competitive examinations in and out of the school.
* Students and most of the time parents have no perspective about the future education and its impact at their future.
* However, in public schools the situation is not so bad.
* Most of the time, principal and even the management of public schools fail to guide students (or their parents) about good prospects of their career.
* Majority of students are weak in two important subjects viz; Mathematics and English.
* A research shows that higher educated people have higher expectancy of life.

**8. Parents’ role and family involvement**

**Problem**

* Parents often fail to encourage their children to stay in school.
* When parents don’t prioritize their child’s high school education, the child may choose to drop-out of the school

**Prevention**

* Parents play an important role in education of their primary and high school kids.
* To help successful completion of secondary and senior secondary school education, parents are required to follow the tips which are based on drop-out prevention research.
* Family involvement is one of the most important contributions to the student for completion of his school education and success.
* The most accurate predictor of a student’s school achievement is the extent to which his/her family encourages learning.
* Success is more likely if, the family communicates high yet reasonable expectations from him/her. Take care for his/her future and sincerely involve in his/her education.
* Maintain contact with the child’s teacher throughout the school education.
* In case the child is skipping the school, it may be a warning sign that the kid is having some kind of trouble.

**9. Health of children**

**Problem**

* The health of a child greatly affects his learning ability and performance at school.
* Prolonged illness that occurs during childhood may curb a child’s ability to complete the school’s education.
* Students with depression are twice more likely to drop out of high school than the normal students. This is because their illness can affect their ability to learn and engage in studies.

**Prevention**

* School has an obligation to look after the health condition of students.
* Regular check-ups may identify a chronic disease that requires immediate medical attention. Successful treatment at a proper time may prevent drop-out of the concerned student/s.
* Much like any other disease, knowing the warning signs of depression/mental disease can be crucial to helping the teens before they drop-out.
* Finding services that can help to treat their conditions, along with counseling services can make all the difference.
* Our working memory helps us hold and use information. It is the intellectual process we use to hold some information in our minds.
* Working memory and dyslexia work hand-in-hand, and there is a lot we can do to help students with dyslexia to remember more.
* Students suffering from dyslexia need more attention than those students with normal working memory.
* If they are not paid more attention that is required to teach and train them, they may in all probability loose heart in studies and dropout of the school.

**10. Lack of performance and failure in a class**

**Problem**

* Failure/retention in a class has a negative impact on the self-esteem of a child.
* Repeated failures may develop a feeling of being older than their class-mates and tend to drop-out of the school.

**Prevention**

* Parents and educators are required to give young students more opportunities to learn course materials and get better grades.
* This may involve after school tutoring.
* Identifying learning disabilities that make academic success a difficult task.

**11. Reading habits**

**Problem**

* Children who are not reading proficiently by fourth grade are four times more likely to quit secondary school than their peers, since reading is required for everything in higher grades.
* The lower the reading level the harder time a student will have in school.

**Prevention**

* Early reading interventions are crucial in keeping kids engaged, successful, and remain in school.
* Parents and the teachers should be on the lookout for students who are struggling with the core subjects, especially in the lower classes.
* Point out different strategies that parents and teachers can use to try to improve reading levels, like shared reading, keeping books accessible, encouraging reading, one-on-one reading interventions.

**12. Chronic absenteeism**

**Problem**

* Chronic absenteeism leads to a seven fold increase in dropping out.
* It is also blamed for students falling behind and ultimately dropping out.

**Prevention**

* Schools must carefully monitor attendance and notify parents immediately if students are missing the school on regular basis.
* Aggressive persistence, teacher support and engaging parents could be the key to making sure students show up for school and stay there rather than drop-out.