FROM ABSENTEEISM TO ENGAGEMENT: ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES TEACHERS FACE IN ENSURING STUDENT PRESENCE AND PARTICIPATION

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ABSTRACT

"Teaching is one of the noble professions." The statement which is losing its significance. There are multiple challenges in front of a teacher and they are so intense that they threaten the existence of the teachers. For example, various digital platforms, AI, Students' changing mindsets, increasing irrelevance of the non-commodifying subjects like arts and humanities, philosophy, and culture studies, and the biggest among all is to make the student attend the class. It is not a small phenomenon as it seems that doors are closed for teachers to their students' hearts. They do not feel the need of a teacher except to mark their attendance. Undoubtedly teachers are facilitator but to be a teacher is more than just to be the facilitator. It is observed that the whole group of academicians is trying to focus more on the commodification of students' skills and knowledge rather than focusing on their overall wellbeing. Being teachers, we supposed to impart more than just to clear the already existed concepts and theories, such as the habit to create theories and concepts, the habit to think. Academicians are unable to bring the student community from the 'web' world. The paper would delve more into problem, the reasons and try to find out some possible solutions.

Keywords: Teacher, facilitator, NEP 2020, attendance, wellbeing, knowledge, skills Track

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's ever-evolving educational landscape, absenteeism has emerged as a persistent challenge, impeding the holistic development of students and the overall effectiveness of academic institutions. The growing trend of student absenteeism is not merely a statistic but a reflection of underlying issues that require immediate attention and comprehensive strategies. Teachers, as the frontline warriors in the battle for student engagement, encounter myriad challenges that extend beyond the classroom walls. These challenges encompass socio-economic factors, mental health concerns, lack of parental involvement, and the allure of digital distractions. The interplay of these factors often manifests in decreased student presence, leading to a significant impact on learning outcomes and academic performance. Addressing absenteeism necessitates a multifaceted approach that goes beyond punitive measures, focusing instead on fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment. By understanding the root causes and implementing targeted interventions,

educators can transform absenteeism into active engagement, ensuring that every student can participate fully in their educational journey. This exploration delves into the various obstacles teachers face and proposes actionable solutions to create a thriving and participatory educational ecosystem.

However, this seems a distant dream for the many academicians as the problem lies somewhere else. Behind the absenteeism one must find the reasons for it. Disinterest can be the one, unwillingness to be better, find the whole system or process baseless or useless, find the need of only certificate to the career making and not the actual skills, living life on their own without having any restrictions and discipline, indifferent attitude towards life itself thanks to videogames and other time killing means, unnecessary support from the parents, lack of individual identity, lack of awareness of the uncertain future challenges, overconfidence on the technology and on the self, rage against the compelling attitude of the institutes regarding the attendance and so on. Every single reason needs an extra attention to understand in general and to fight with in particular.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Behind every instance of absenteeism lies a complex web of underlying reasons that must be carefully unraveled to comprehend and address the issue effectively. (Bridgeland, Dilulio Jr., & Morison, 2006). Disinterest in academic pursuits, for instance, can stem from a curriculum that fails to engage students or cater to their diverse interests and learning styles. When students perceive the educational system as irrelevant or baseless, they are less likely to participate actively. The feeling that formal education is merely a pathway to obtaining certificates, rather than a means of acquiring valuable skills, can further exacerbate disinterest.

Another critical factor is the desire for autonomy. Many students yearn to live life on their own terms, free from restrictions and discipline, leading to a clash with the structured environment of educational institutions. The advent of digital distractions, such as video games and social media, has only magnified this issue, providing students with alternative avenues to spend their time. These distractions can foster an indifferent attitude towards life and diminish the perceived value of education. (Balfanz, Herzog, & Douglas J. , 2007). Parental involvement, or rather the lack thereof, plays a significant role as well. Excessive parental support, without setting appropriate boundaries, can inadvertently encourage absenteeism. Parents who are overly lenient or fail to emphasize the importance of regular attendance may inadvertently signal to their children that skipping school is acceptable.

Furthermore, the struggle for individual identity during adolescence can contribute to absenteeism. Students who are grappling with their self-identity may feel alienated or disconnected from their peers and educators, leading them to withdraw from the school environment. Coupled with this is a lack of awareness of future challenges. Students who are not cognizant of the uncertainties and demands of the future may underestimate the importance of education in preparing them for these challenges.

Overconfidence in technology and self-sufficiency also contribute to absenteeism. The belief that one can acquire all necessary knowledge and skills through the internet or independent efforts can lead students to devalue formal education. Additionally, resentment towards the rigid attendance policies enforced by institutions can manifest as absenteeism. Students may perceive these policies as an infringement on their personal freedom, prompting them to rebel by skipping classes.

Each of these reasons requires targeted attention and tailored interventions. Educators and administrators must adopt a holistic approach, recognizing that absenteeism is not a one-size-fits-all issue. To effectively combat absenteeism, it is essential to engage students by making learning more relevant and interactive, provide support systems that address their individual needs, and create an inclusive environment that fosters a sense of belonging. Building strong partnerships with parents and raising awareness about the long-term implications of absenteeism are also crucial steps in addressing this multifaceted challenge. (Henry, 2007).

Absenteeism in educational institutions is a multifaceted issue that significantly impacts student learning outcomes and overall school performance. As educators grapple with the increasing prevalence of absenteeism, it becomes crucial to understand and address the underlying factors that contribute to this phenomenon. The journey from absenteeism to engagement involves not only identifying the root causes but also implementing effective strategies to foster a conducive learning environment that promotes regular attendance and active participation.

Understanding Absenteeism can be attributed to a range of factors, including socio-economic challenges, mental health issues, lack of parental involvement, and the allure of digital distractions. For instance, students from low-income families may struggle with attending school regularly due to financial constraints, responsibilities at home, or a lack of access to basic resources such as transportation and school supplies.

Mental health concerns, such as anxiety and depression, also play a significant role in students' ability to attend and participate in school.

Socio-Economic Factors: Research indicates that socio-economic status is a critical determinant of student attendance. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds often face barriers that hinder their regular attendance. These barriers include inadequate healthcare, food insecurity, and unstable housing conditions(Gottfried, 2014).

Mental Health Issues: Mental health problems among students are on the rise, with anxiety and depression being common issues. These problems can lead to chronic absenteeism as students struggle to cope with academic pressures and social dynamics within the school environment (Kearney, 2008).

Lack of Parental Involvement: The role of parents in encouraging regular attendance cannot be overstated. A lack of parental involvement and support can result in students feeling unmotivated and disengaged from their academic responsibilities (Epstein & Sheldon, 2010).

Digital Distractions: The rise of digital technology has introduced new challenges in maintaining student engagement. The allure of social media, video games, and other digital platforms can lead to a decline in students' interest in school activities and a subsequent increase in absenteeism (Hofferth, 2010).

Strategies for Enhancing Student Engagement To effectively address absenteeism, educators must adopt a holistic approach that encompasses a variety of strategies aimed at enhancing student engagement. These strategies should be tailored to meet the diverse needs of students and create an inclusive, supportive learning environment.

Creating a Positive School Climate: A positive and inclusive school climate is essential for fostering student engagement. Schools should implement programs that promote a sense of belonging, respect, and support among students and staff. Activities such as peer mentoring, student-led initiatives, and inclusive events can help build a strong school community (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, Higgins, & D'Alessandro, 2013). Implementing Early Intervention Programs: Early intervention is key to preventing chronic absenteeism. Schools should develop systems to monitor attendance patterns and identify at-risk students. Intervention

programs, such as counselling, mentoring, and family outreach, can provide the necessary support to address the underlying causes of absenteeism (Balfanz & Byrnes, Chronic Absenteeism: Summarizing What We Know From Nationally Available Data, 2012).

Engaging Parents and Guardians: Parental involvement is a critical component of student engagement. Schools should actively involve parents in their children's education by organizing regular meetings, workshops, and communication channels. Empowering parents with the knowledge and tools to support their children's learning can significantly improve attendance and participation (Sheldon, 2007).

Integrating Technology in Learning: While digital distractions pose a challenge, technology can also be leveraged to enhance learning experiences. Integrating interactive and engaging digital tools in the classroom can capture students' interest and make learning more enjoyable. Teachers can use educational apps, online resources, and virtual collaboration platforms to create dynamic and interactive lessons (Schleicher, 2015).

3. CONCLUSION

To face these numerable problems regarding the presence of students in the class, the academicians need to look back and have references from the ancient tradition of knowledge. It is not only about to make them sit in the class but to make them take interest and participate willingly in the learning process. Just to be active in the class and create activities is not enough for the teachers to achieve the goal. Teachers should take the lead and should have the command over the class rather than be led by the students. Students need to be disciplined, teachers can do that and only teachers can make them think, only teachers can make them deprived of unnecessary use of digital instruments. Only teachers can guide them and transform them into good human beings. Teachers must take the lead. Students oriented teaching is good but will not work as the age factor would play the crucial role in that. It is ok to listen them, it is okay to give them what they need in the way they need but it is not okay to follow them, it is not okay to entertain them, it is not okay to be led by them. The youth is full of energy and creativity; teachers need to mound them into the right direction.

Addressing absenteeism requires a concerted effort from educators, parents, and the community to create an environment that encourages regular attendance and active participation. By understanding the root causes of absenteeism and implementing targeted strategies, schools can transform the challenge of absenteeism into an opportunity for fostering student engagement. A holistic approach that promotes a positive school

climate, early intervention, parental involvement, and the thoughtful integration of technology can pave the way for a more engaged and participatory student body, ultimately enhancing the educational experience for all.

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