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Preventing Dropout from Higher Education

YOUTH in Bangladesh are now more interested in studying at universities due to increasing job opportunities at home and abroad. Annual Education Survey-2015 of Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) reveals that the total number of students at universities was 872,891 in 2015. And by 2026, the enrolment in tertiary education is expected to reach 4.6 million, according to an estimate made by the University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh.

However, the dropout increases with the increase of enrollment. The university dropout is now an important topic in many countries, as well as in Bangladesh since it is not only the waste of taxpayers' money but now it is also one of the criteria for evaluating university. Research tells that the reasons for students dropping out of their studies can be grouped



into three categories: social, economic and educational. Obviously low college knowledge and lack of interest in the subject studied are two main academic reasons for dropping out from universities in Bangladesh. But when it comes to solve this problematic phenomenon, there is no simple solution as dropping out is a complex social problem.

A student can drop out due to financial difficulties or family related or personal problems. The university authorities have no control over the decision of the student to dropout due to any of these external circumstances. On the other hand, a student can drop out of his/her university study due to failure to meet the academic standards and demands within university. In this case dropout is undesirable to the extent that dropout means the loss of valuable academic input from the students who dropped out. University should try to understand this problem and come out with solution. Orientation and educational support actions can be offered. Adopting interactive teaching and learning methods and inspiring faculty members and staff to interact with students will obviously result in reducing the dropout rate. Academics and support

services should work together to plan ahead for issues that may affect students at the beginning of their courses. Many universities in Bangladesh arrange programmes for new students' such as reception on first day of their university life. The orientation which is primarily of teacher-centred orientation emphasises on conveying the status of the institution and overloading students with rules and regulations and disciplinary related information. Students need some kind of introduction to university life and teaching learning methods. Ideally, an orientation programme will introduce newly enrolled students to their peers and members of the faculty and staff. It also should familiarise them with extracurricular opportunities available on campus and the institution's academic policies, as well as library, academic support, and career services. Universities in many countries first-year seminars often serve

interactive learning as the basis for developing understanding of core disciplinary concepts, and these underpin academic success with strong implications for student retention. In teacher-centered method, theoretical knowledge is disseminated through the technique of talk and chalk. The teacher-centered approach is described as a way of teaching in which students are considered to be more or less the passive recipients of information transmitted from the teachers to the students. Universities in Bangladesh follow traditional teaching and learning approach called teacher-centred approach. Teacher-centered instruction doesn't allow students to express themselves, ask questions and direct their own learning. As the teacher retains full control of the classroom and its activities, students become bored and lose their interest in learning.

In real life students learn by doing and interacting; and this is reinforced by the use of student-centered instruction. The student-centered approach is described as a way of teaching which sees teaching as facilitating the students' learning processes. Instead of listening to the teacher exclusively, students and teachers interact equally. There are different types of student-centered approach. Problem-based learning (PBL) is a student-centered instructional approach that is implemented at many universities worldwide. PBL fosters deep learning. Project-Based Learning and Task-Based Learning are also popular instructional approaches. Nowadays student-centered approach is the most preferred method of teaching, and our universities should adopt this approach. Our teachers in general are not exposed to modern pedagogies. Both public and private universities in Bangladesh should establish Center for Teaching and Learning to provide professional development to faculty members. Learning environment plays a prominent role in the decision to drop out. We can create a conducive learning environment by (i) developing students' involvement in and sense of belonging to their institution, faculty or department, (ii) promoting interaction between teachers, students and fellow students, (iii) offering academic/career-related lectures, (iv) giving frequent feedback on their academic progress, (v) forming study groups outside class, (vi) encouraging academic or social interact with advisors or faculty members outside of the classroom, (vii) participating students in extracurricular activities, (viii) developing skills of administrative people in dealing with students, (ix) Developing environment friendly campus and (x) arranging comprehensive orientation and induction into students' studies. Like other universities in the world our university authorities must relook existing teaching and learning methods and introduce student-centred orientation and even consider Pre-Orientation and Parent Orientations in order to cut down student dropout number.

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as an extension of the orientation programme and aim to assist students in the development of both academic skills and university survival tactics, such as time and stress management. University management thinks carefully about new students to make sure they get a good start. These universities also arrange Freshman Pre-Orientation and Parent Orientations. Parent Orientation is a great way to get a glimpse of the many different experiences that their sons/daughters will have an opportunity to explore at the university. It is the research finding that once students are involved they are more likely to stay even if they are having problems in other areas such as family or financial problems. When students no longer feel connected to their faculty members and student peers, they are likelier to withdraw themselves from the academic community.

For student retention, the more micro level issues involve outlining the teaching and learning factors that promote student continuation with their studies. Student engagement can be facilitated through interactive teaching and learning. The classroom needs to include active and

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