

“An analysis of dropouts at secondary level”

Introduction:

Education is the basic need for the socio-economic transformation and the advancement of a country. It is the prime ingredient of human resource development. The Constitution of Bangladesh obligates the Government to adopt effective measures for establishing a uniform, mass-oriented and universal system of education and extending free and compulsory education to all children to such a stage as may be determined by law. It also obligates the Government to relate education to the needs of the society and producing properly trained and motivated citizens to serve the needs. It also obligates the Government for removing illiteracy within such times as may be determined by law.

Secondary education is also crucial importance to every citizen as like as primary education. First, it lies between the primary education level and the tertiary education level-an important bridge ensuring continuity of further education. Thus a well functioning and quality secondary education creates the basis for better tertiary education by supplying good quality secondary graduates. Therefore, it is thinking to make secondary education compulsory as like primary education.

As a part of continuous effort of the government to access in secondary education there are several development initiatives and measures have been taken by the government as well as several development partners through projects for enhancing secondary education in the country. As an output of these projects, access to secondary education in respect of quantity has been increased but there is little change in quality of the secondary education. The several hindrances of the quality education have been identified and the government has taken certain measures to overcome these hindrances. But it was not possible to achieve the hopeful goals.

Although there are several hindrances are exists for achieving the goals of different education subsectors but dropout rate, an indicator of systematic loss/wastage over the primary and secondary education is one of the major causes for achieving the goals of education. The following table will show the quantity and apparent rate of dropout in secondary education cycle in different grades on the basis of grade 6 students enrolled in 2001 and irrespective of repeated and promoted students:

Year	Grade	Enrolment	Dropout students		Rate of dropout	
			Between grade	Cumulative from grade 6	Between grade	Cumulative from grade 6
2001	Grade 6	2008565	-			-
2002	Grade 7	1831573	176992	176992	8.81%	8.81%
2003	Grade 8	1616291	215282	392274	11.75%	19.53%
2004	Grade 9	1364296	251995	644269	15.59%	32.08%
2005	Grade 10	961547	402749	1047018	29.52%	52.13%
2006	SSC Output	466732	494815	1541833	51.46%	76.77%

It is cleared from the above table that those students were enrolled in grade 6 in the year 2001, about one third of students were dropped out after reaching in grade 9 and more than half (52%) students were dropped after reaching the last grade of the cycle in grade 10. The table also shown that only 23% students

completed secondary cycle and 77% were dropped out. Among the dropout students some are being repeated. But from the above statistics, we may observe that a huge number of students can not completed the secondary education and subsequently they are falling into illiterate. Those population are going out from our education system, they became certainly hindrance the changing the education system into quality education. It is very essential to keep these populations into our education system. Therefore, it is very essential to take appropriate measures and steps to keep the students in the formal system through find out the causes of dropout in the secondary level.

Justification of the Study:

Secondary education enrolment in Bangladesh has more than tripled and the number of institutions has more than doubled since 1980. The growth of girls' enrolment, spurred by social mobilization and incentives, such as stipends and tuition waivers for girls' students, has been spectacular. Girls now outnumber boys in secondary schools. Expansion of the system has aggravated quality problems. High rates of dropout and failure in public examinations indicate serious deficiencies in quality of education. Dropout rates averaged over 70 percent between grades 6 to 10 in recent years, and on an average, one fifth of students completed secondary cycles those who were enrolled in grade 6. Poor achievement of students and low quality of education are attributed to a number of major causes – deficiencies in teachers' skills and capability, inadequate facilities and learning materials, poor enforcement of rules and criteria for approval of government subvention, inadequate resources reflected in low per student expenditure, lack of willingness of parents, lack of security in case of girls student, early marriage of girls and poor governance and management of schools. Attention to poverty reduction, emphasized in the national Poverty Reduction Strategy, has brought out in sharp relief the high degree of inequity in respect of quality in education. Maintaining acceptable quality in education is a simultaneous concern, since access to education without the guarantee of a minimum level of quality is meaningless

Development initiatives and an education sector reforms programme supported with international assistance have been aimed at addressing the problems of quality and equitable opportunities in secondary education. The success of these initiatives will depend on understanding the dimensions and depths of the problems and designing actions that are realistic, implementable and responsive to specific needs and circumstances.

To address the problems and hindering of quality education in the secondary school and to take further optimistic initiatives, there is a need for analyzing present dropout levels in the secondary schools and its major causes. The present study will contribute to the Ministry of Education for further initiatives of reforms in education at the secondary school.

Objectives of the Study:

The objective of the research study was to analyze the trend of dropout rates for the consecutive years and identify the reasons for dropout in the secondary education cycle. The specific objectives of the study were:

- To measure wastage in secondary education by analyzing trend of dropout in secondary level for the present and past few years through analyzing data in apparent method and reconstructive cohort method;
- To identify the causes of dropout student in different socio-economic hindrances of the country.

Methodology:

The research has been limited to two types of questionnaires- one for the institution and other for opinion of guardians of dropout students. Because of known variations in the educational attainment, the analysis of dropout in secondary level has done in the following considerations:

- Secondary schools and madrasahs
- Rural and Urban Area
- Government and Non-Government
- Division/ District/Upazila
- Grade and Sex
- Apparent and Reconstructive Cohort Method based on Grade 10 test result

Sample of the study:

The study covered 54 secondary schools and 36 madrasahs of selected 18 upazilas under 6 divisions. Head of the institutions and Guardians of drop out students were interviewed. Data were collected from 3 secondary schools and 2 madrasahs and 50 guardians from each upazila. The following table shows the name of districts and upazilas in each 6 division brought under the study:

Division	District	Upazila
Dhaka	Munshiganj	Sirajdikhan
	Tangail	Shakhipur
	Jamalpur	Sadar
	Netrakona	Kalmakanda
	Manikganj	Singair
	Madaripur	Shibchar
Barisal	Bhola	Daulatkhan
	Patuakhali	Mirzapur
	Barisal	Sadar
Division	District	Upazila
Chittagong	Lakshmipur	Ramganj
	Comilla	Adarsha Sadar
	Chittagong	Fatikchari
Khulna	Jessore	Jhikargacha
	Jhenaidah	Harinakunda
Rajshahi	Joypurhat	Kalai
	Rangpur	Badarganj
	Natore	Singra
Sylhet	Moulvibazar	Rajnagar

Sample method:

All districts and upazilas were selected through Random Sampling method

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to bring the issue of poor performance of the institutions at the secondary level and reasons of dropout of students from the secondary cycle to the notice of the policy makers and planners some recommendation have been made, which may be helpful in addressing the constraints prevailing in the way for improving the overall quality of secondary education. Although in this study, the size of the sample is very small and may not preview the actual situations of the country but it can give some idea about shortcomings regarding efficiency of the system and major causes of dropout of students from the cycle. The specific recommendations may be taken into consideration in order to address the dropout situation as well as promote secondary education as follows:

- 1) To make continuation of education, teaching materials should be make available and other commodities like school dress, bag, books, pen, writing pad etc. to the pro-poor students should be supplied so that they can study smoothly and regularly;
- 2) Admission of incompetent students in grade 6 should be discouraged and provision of admission test may be introduced;
- 3) Launching and continuing social awareness campaign against demerits of early marriage of girls;
- 4) Steps to be taken to keep the students both boys and girls free from household works and income generating activities;
- 5) The head teachers and class teachers should always keep the guardians aware about the performance of their wards;
- 6) Enhancement of awareness programme to the guardians by the teachers of respective institutions for ensuring supportive atmosphere at home;
- 7) Teacher-Guardian relationship should be strengthen through monthly parents meeting with class teacher and guardians should be involved with all academic programmes of the institutions;
- 8) The head teacher should ensure monitoring and supervision of classroom and also ensure total academic atmosphere of the institutions;
- 9) Arrangement should be made for taking additional classes on English, Mathematics and Science and system of tutorial examination should be introduced;
- 10) Create social awareness in favour of the importance of education and produce audio visual public awareness programmes for educating the secondary education age population and should broadcast through electronic media;
- 11) Steps should be taken to control social disturbances through creating social awareness and if necessary legal actions may be taken to protect girls from being teased on the way to school by the anti social elements.