

## EXPLORING THE REASONS BEHIND SCHOOL ABSENTEEISM AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS IN KASHMIR: A CASE STUDY APPROACH

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### Abstract

*Absenteeism is seen as a complicated behavioural outcome brought on by several conditions. The current study aimed to examine the causes of student absenteeism among senior secondary schools in Kashmir. In this study, the data was collected and analysed qualitatively using a "case study" design. Two prominent higher secondary schools in Srinagar districts were selected and thoroughly investigated. Teachers and students at these institutions served as the study's respondents. The information from the respondents was gathered using a semi-structured interview schedule. According to the results of study, there are a number of factors that contribute to student absenteeism, including low socioeconomic status, inadequate school facilities, parent un-involvement, teacher un-involvement, coaching centres, break due to covid-19, and drug addiction.*

**Key Words:** Absenteeism, Socio-economic status, coaching centres, drug addiction

### Introduction

The use of internet has become a part of life for majority of people and number of people using internet have been increased tremendously with over 80 crore Indians connected through internet use (CERT-In, 2022). People are increasingly using the

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The future of a nation can be gauged by the state of its youth, who represent the most dynamic and crucial segment of society but are also the most susceptible to challenges. When youth-related issues make headlines, it's often about problems. Over the past two decades, there has been a significant rise in concerns such as teenage suicide, gang involvement, substance abuse, and criminal activity among young people. Today, many Indian youths are being led astray for various reasons, one of which is absenteeism from school, either by choice or with parental consent (Barthwal & Pandey, 2018).

Over the years, researchers from various fields such as psychology, social and criminal justice, education, and medicine have examined school absenteeism. Despite interdisciplinary interest, there is some disagreement in how terms related to absenteeism are defined and used in the literature. Therefore, it is crucial to establish a common understanding of student absenteeism for the study. As per the Merriam Webster Dictionary, absenteeism refers to "a tendency to be away from work or school without a valid reason," specifically within the context of school, it denotes the practice or habit of being absent from school or tendency among students to skip school or class. Teasley (2004) defined student absenteeism as a time during which a student does not attend class. It describes absences from elementary or secondary (middle/high) schools, whether they were sanctioned or not (Kearney 2008). Unexcused absenteeism is an issue of major concern that plagues many educational systems across the globe, in contrast to excused absenteeism (such as absences due to medical sickness or accident), which may be considered as non-problematic.

Absenteeism is a complicated behavioural outcome brought on by several circumstances (Corville-Smith, et al., 1998). Studies on school absences have shown that missed classes have several significant repercussions or results (Lounsbury, et al. 2004). These include gang involvement, dropping out of school, poor academic performance, delinquency (Towberman, 1994), less desires for further education, and low school performance (Aiken, et al. 1993). Quantitative studies on the causes and consequences of absenteeism has connected it to a variety of factors, including economic under privilege, self-concept and personality needs, teacher control and support, teacher interpersonal skills, academic squeeze, teenage pregnancy, affiliation issues with peers, substance abuse, and involvement in school athletes, cognitive style, and self-reported alienation (Philips, 1997; Stevenson, et al. 1998; Hirate & Sako, 1998-1999; Byrne & Mazanov, 1999; Whitley, 1999; Rayner & Riding, 1996). Additionally, children who are chronically absent from school run a significant risk of permanent dropout (Kearney 2008), which may result in

economic hardship and a variety of adult mental, social, vocational, and marital issues (Tramontina et al. 2001; Kogan et al. 2005).

Student absenteeism is a major concern for teachers in schools. Absences create a lifeless, dull, unpleasant atmosphere in the classroom, making pupils uncomfortable and the teacher irritated (Marburger, 2001). This issue disrupts the dynamic teaching-learning environment, which has a detrimental effect on the general wellbeing of classrooms (Segal 2008). It is a quality loss since it squanders time, money, and human potential on education. For teachers, student absences may result in rework and wastage of time (Lalek 1995; Rumberger 1997). When teachers use class time to re-teach lessons, it reduces the instructional time available for students who regularly attend class. Additionally, the extra time spent reviewing absentee homework and assignments detracts from lecturers' planning periods and their ability to provide individual assistance (Weller, 1996). When students are not present in class, they miss out on valuable information gained through interactions with peers and instructors, as well as the clarity provided by specific examples used to explain challenging concepts. This essential aspect of the learning process cannot be replicated when coaches have to re-teach material to absent students (Weller, 1996; Williams, 2000).

The topic of rising absenteeism among secondary school learners is a prominent one that persists throughout many nations (Rood, 1989; DeKalb, 1999; Martin, 1991). Student absenteeism is a prevalent issue in both Government and Private Schools across all levels of education in India. Despite the provision of free and compulsory education by the Indian government, absenteeism remains a significant concern, leading to poor learning outcomes. Studies indicate high rates of absenteeism, with variations observed across different regions. For example, in rural Telangana, approximately a quarter (24.7%) of students were absent during an unannounced supervisory visit, while states like Bihar, West Bengal, and Madhya Pradesh reported absenteeism rates ranging from 40% to 50% (Annual Status of Educational Report- ASER, 2017). Similar findings were reported in Uttar Pradesh, Kolkata, and New Delhi, highlighting the widespread nature of the issue (ASER, 2017; Awasthi & Sharma, 2004; Biswas, 2018; Uppal et al., 2010). Furthermore, despite the requirement for students in classes XI and XII to maintain a minimum attendance of 75% as per the examination bylaws of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), there is no effective mechanism in place to monitor attendance at these levels (Barthwal & Pandey, 2018). This presents a significant challenge in addressing absenteeism among senior secondary students. Addressing the issues requires a better understanding of the underlying reasons for

absenteeism and the full extent of the problem. Jammu and Kashmir a union territory of India is not an exception then it comes to schooling culture. According to the Department of School Education and Literacy (DSEL) under the Ministry of Education (MoE), the dropout rate among secondary-level students in Jammu and Kashmir schools increased from 3.7% in the 2020-2021 academic year to 6.0% in the 2021-2022 academic session (Geelani, 2023). There is a rapid increase in absenteeism at secondary and senior secondary stage in Kashmir. It is becoming a trend in Kashmir that students prefer to stay at homes, Vander in the streets, spend time in gardens instead of attending the schools. It is, therefore, against this background that the present empirical study sought to examine the causes of student absenteeism in the Valley of Kashmir with the aim to explore the following research questions:

1. What are the students' opinions on the causes and factors that contribute to absenteeism?
2. What are the views of teachers about the causes of School Absenteeism among Senior Secondary School Students in Kashmir?

### **Significance of the Study**

Addressing persistent absenteeism is vital for ensuring equal opportunities for academic achievement, promoting societal welfare, and combating educational inequalities. Improving attendance is crucial for academic success as it allows students to benefit from instruction, participate in group activities, and engage in hands-on learning. Persistent school absenteeism in India poses a significant concern as research indicates that children frequently absent from school are prone to eventual dropout, constituting a concealed educational crisis (Kujur, et al., 2021). Over the past decades, India has successfully increased children's net enrolment rates but struggles to retain them in school, particularly in rural areas, where dropout rates remain notably high (Kujur, et al., 2021). Hence, there is a necessity to address the decline in attendance. Thus in the Indian context, alongside low attendance, the problem of school dropout persists. Future dropouts can be identified by monitoring their attendance patterns, as consistently declining attendance often precedes school exit.

The direct and indirect costs of absenteeism are substantial for individuals, schools, families, and communities. Increased frequency and duration of absenteeism among children are associated with lower academic performance (García & Weiss, 2018). It diminishes success as students miss valuable educational opportunities, leading to a loss of teaching time for all students as teachers must allocate

additional time to compensate (Rood, 1989; Williams, 2001; Eastman, et al., 2007). Absenteeism not only signals low academic achievement and dropout rates but also correlates with reduced social and life success (Williams, 2010). It hampers the development of discipline and responsibility, thereby posing challenges in future work and discipline habits (Pehlivan, 2006), potentially resulting in unemployment, low income, and the inability to hold regular jobs (Eastman et al., 2007; Gentle-Genitty, 2008).

Furthermore, as absenteeism escalates, students are more likely to experience psychological issues such as depression or behavioral disorders. They may engage in violence, teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, or other harmful behaviors both within and outside the school setting (Gottfried, 2009; Lannegrand-Willems et al., 2012; Sinha, 2007; Robinson, 2009; Jeter, 2011; Casserly, et al, 2001). Thus, absenteeism among youth serves as a precursor to academic failure and increases the risk of various other negative outcomes. Therefore, it's crucial to comprehend the underlying reasons for this phenomenon.

### **Review of Literature**

At the secondary school level, various factors directly and indirectly influence student achievement, prompting research into teaching methods, learning styles, curriculum design, and teacher training to enhance educational quality and student academic performance. Among these factors, student absenteeism stands out as a significant variable impacting successful secondary education. Absenteeism is defined differently in the literature, with Lannegrand-Willems et al. (2012) characterizing it as a student's absence from school, with or without an excuse, while Robinson (2009) defines it as not attending school, with or without an excuse, missing classes, or arriving late. The persistent rise in absenteeism represents one of the most pressing issues in secondary education today (Martin, 1991; DeKalb, 1999; Rood, 1989). Administrative records from secondary education highlight a rapid increase in absenteeism at this stage (Demir & Karabeyoglu, 2015).

Several studies provide insights into student absenteeism in India. In the North West Frontier Province, an absenteeism rate of 18% was reported among school students (Ali & Reed, 1994). A World Bank study conducted in India during the mid-1990s revealed that approximately 50% of students were frequently absent (Bank, 2001). Another study found the absenteeism rate in India to be 25%, with lower rates observed in schools that underwent regular inspections, had better infrastructure, and were located closer to roads (Kremer, et al, 2005). Moreover,

43% of students aged 7-18 were identified as chronic absentees (Ghosh et al., 2017). Gender disparities were also evident, with higher absenteeism rates observed among female students compared to male students in India (Deepa, 2015). Specifically, approximately 25% of enrolled girls and 17% of enrolled boys in government schools were reported as absent. Additionally, students appointed within their local communities exhibited lower absenteeism rates than those commuting from outside the city or village (Ghuman & Lloyd, 2010).

Existing literature have highlighted various factors contributing to student absenteeism, including lack of student motivation, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate infrastructure, teacher vacancies, non-academic burdens, insufficient training to address diverse classes, declining social status of teachers, and widening social class disparities between students and the clientele of government schools (Mooij & Narayan, 2010). Additionally, Deepa (2015) suggested that school climate also plays a role in influencing absenteeism among high school students in India.

Various studies have identified family socioeconomic status (SES) as a significant risk factor for school absenteeism (Sing, 2015; Gottfried & Gee, 2017; Gubbels et al., 2019; Klein et al., 2020). Students from lower SES backgrounds are disproportionately represented among absentees (Morrissey et al., 2014; Gottfried & Gee, 2017; Gennetian et al., 2018; Gubbels et al., 2019). In India, socioeconomic factors such as family status, maternal education (Farah & Upadhyay, 2017), child's caste, tribe, religion (Choudhury, 2006; Joshi, 2010), and gender (Guha, 2002) independently influence child attendance. Moreover, household-level and neighbourhood factors also influence absenteeism (Dreibelbis et al., 2013; Galloway et al., 1985). In literature there are many other factors that contribute to absenteeism, such as a dearth of a motivating and demanding syllabus, a wish for pleasure-seeking actions with peers, low self-esteem, absence of curiosity in the subject, a lack of personal interest in learning, a student's mental capacity not matching the course they have chosen, and a lecturer's poor teaching abilities that also keep students away from school (Weller 1996; Mayer and Mitchell 1996; Williams 2000; Marburger 2001).

## **Methodology**

The case study method was used in this study. Two prestigious higher secondary schools in Srinagar were chosen and thoroughly studied. The study's respondents were the teachers and students at these institutions. The respondents' answers were elicited using an interviewing technique. A semi-structured interview

schedule was used to collect the opinions and impressions of both students and teachers.

The study used a qualitative approach to gathering and analysing data. Interpretive qualitative methodology was utilised to examine the data in this study. According to studies, written accounts that can be analysed to find themes and draw meaningful conclusions can help us understand a problem from the viewpoint of the people experiencing it (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003).

### **Data Analysis**

Most of the data for the current study came from interview transcripts and notes that were transcribed, then analysed into themes and sub-themes. The data were analysed using a constant comparative data analysis method. Constant comparative data analysis primarily consists of comparing the most recent data obtained with older data collected in order to spot differences and similarities and discover common themes. This resulted in the development of an extensive coding system. This means that while categories were repeatedly identified, new data was compared to existing categories. As different themes emerged, the connections were noticed. As the categories developed, we searched for internal coherence while remembering that each category needed to be distinct from the rest. We eliminated peripheral categories after we had reached the point of saturation.

### **Results and Discussion**

The succeeding themes were recognized by grouping categories.

#### **Socio-economic Status**

When studying the causes of absenteeism, the current study found that socio-economic issues are important. The cases that were studied involve two government schools, and the teachers at the respective schools felt that the pupils admitted to the government schools came from economically weaker sections. Absenteeism and subsequent dropout rates are significantly influenced by families' poor financial status. Some of the students said that because they do part-time jobs, they are unable to attend class on a regular basis.

*One of the students remarked, "I come from a poor household. I have three siblings, and since I'm the oldest, I have the responsibility in the family. I come to school three days a week and the other four days, I help my father, who works as a butcher."*

The study's findings are consistent with several other studies. Family socioeconomic status (SES) has been found as a significant risk factor for school absence in numerous research (e.g., Gottfried & Gee, 2017; Gubbels et al., 2019; Klein et al., 2020; Sosu, et al., 2020). There are more students that miss school who come from lower socioeconomic families (e.g., Gubbels et al., 2019; Gennetian et al., 2018; Gottfried & Gee, 2017; Morrissey et al., 2014). In general, absence rates rise as family income decreases. Being at-risk for or having chronic absenteeism was significantly more likely if you were raised in a low-income or impoverished family (Romero & Lee, 2007). It can be claimed that a significant contributing reason to school dropout, particularly for boys, is the duty to work and support the family's economy from an early age (Sahin, et al. 2016).

*One of the respondents said, "I am having three friends, all of us are from middle class families.... financially we are not sound. So, we made a group and we work together in different hotels and communities during marriages and other occasions so we sometimes miss our school days".*

The economic circumstances of students' families are identified as a potential factor contributing to absenteeism (Emile-Monono, 2023). Many students belong to households where parents or guardians are either seasonal or permanently unemployed, leading students to seek employment to support their families and education (Şahin et al., 2016). Additionally, students who work part-time often experience negative impacts on their attendance patterns due to their work schedules (Demir & Karabeyoglu, 2016).

Segal (2008) argues that while education was historically viewed as a tool for enlightenment and equality, it is often seen as perpetuating inequality and oppression, lending support to this finding of the study. This raises questions about the actual efficacy of equal opportunity and access in education when some students must forego schooling to earn money for their studies and support their families. Giddens (1990) suggests that despite education's promise to mitigate income and power disparities by providing skills for societal integration, it tends to reinforce existing inequalities rather than eradicating them. Poverty poses challenges for education due to social distribution structures and how certain curricula and teaching methods benefit specific groups over others (Rizvi, 1993). Although the relationship between poverty and education is acknowledged, which suggests that children from low-income families lack essential elements for academic success. Consequently, school absenteeism may hinder efforts to reduce socioeconomic disparities.

### **Lack of Adequate Facilities in School**

Students are less willing to attend school as a result of factors such as a lack of sociocultural activities, inadequate physical school structures, and a heavy course load that prevent schools from becoming interesting cities for students. In schools, where they spend a significant portion of their daily time, providing children and teenagers tranquil, joyful, and secure learning settings is a crucial element that can boost their commitment to school and education in general.

*"The provision for co- curricular activities in our school is negligible. There.....(pointing towards Yard) the lawn you are seeing is for playing.... its space is very small..... you may see students are playing volley ball there .... our school is having only one ball, how many students can play with it we do not have any means of refreshing ourselves, students become tired of academic studies and find excuses not to come to school"* was said by one of the respondents.

Attendance of students is significantly impacted by inadequate school facilities and inadequate infrastructure (Mboweni, 2014). One of the elements determining student absenteeism is the scheduling of break periods, as well as sports and cultural activities (Altnkurt, 2008). Examining the study's findings reveals that some students complain about the condensed break times and the scarcity of furniture, toilets, sports and cultural activities at their schools that makes the school environment unattractive.

While interacting with the students in a group, one of the students said, *"we do not come to school regularly because our education system- the system we are having in Kashmir is unattractive. If you want us to come school regularly make the system attractive."*

School dropouts and absenteeism have been linked to a lack of sociocultural activities, inadequate school buildings, and heavy course loads in other research studies also. According to Gömleksiz & ozdaş (2013), students' propensity to drop out of school reduces as their degree of satisfaction with the educational system and the school rises. According to Aküzüm et al. (2014), inadequate school physical amenities are a significant contributor to absenteeism.

### **Coaching Centres**

Parents pressure their children to perform well in every area as competition increases daily. These children choose outside sources as a result of inadequate guidance at school. In order to do this, they enlist in private coaching, which leads to more effort and absences.

*"The timing of my coaching center is in the evening. I return very late from the coaching. I become tired and it is difficult to get out of bed early as our school timing is quite early"* said one of the students.

Due to teaching that falls short of student expectations, academic institutions have been given the go-ahead to conduct coaching, which can be explained by the students' declining interest in the regularly scheduled classes at these institutions. *"Unlike schoolteachers, private tutors teach with conscience and their lectures are quite interesting."*

The majority of students' perception that they require coaching for class curriculum-based examinations points to a problem with learning inside the formal education system of educational institutions. It has become clear that students who attend the coaching sessions are losing interest for educational institutions' planned classes. From the perspective of the student, this makes sense given the efficient use of time, which they feel is not being used effectively when they attend classes in educational institutions. Secondary level students, particularly those in classes 11th and 12th, are known to enrol in specific schools only for the purpose of completing the Board examination application while concurrently enrolling in coaching.

One of the students said, *"We complete our course syllabus in the coaching centres. We can catch up with the private tutors who teach us with zeal and we do not find the need to attend the school. We just come to school for attendance purpose."*

For theory topics that are important for competitive examinations, coaching centres takes care of all the educational needs of students, while the admitting institution makes some short-duration arrangements for labs. Issues regarding the efficacy of the overall educational system are raised by the educational institution's implicit acceptance of student absences from class and facilitation of their attendance during examinations.

### **Teacher Involvement**

Classes are unquestionably specific types of environments. Every classroom has unique characteristics that have an effect on the students, regardless of how it is set up or what the teacher believes about education (Doyle, 1986). The degree to which students remain motivated to attend class on a regular basis is influenced by the teacher's management of the classroom environment. Teachers interact with pupils literally hundreds of times in a single day. The students listed a variety of teachers' negative traits that predispose them to absenteeism or non-attendance,

including bad teacher teaching methods, dull lectures, lectures that are too long, and lecturers that show favouritism to particular students. Students are subtly encouraged to skip class by boring, unapproachable, harsh, and unsympathetic teachers.

One student remarked *"The way our school teachers teach us is very boring. Only one or two school teachers teach us with dedication and hard work."*

Research that was conducted at Lincoln University by Fleming (1995) support the findings. According to his research, students' primary excuses for skipping lectures were bad lecturing (23%), the lecture's time (23%), and the lecture's topic (9%). Teasley (2004) makes the additional point that students who have strained or contentious relationships with their teachers will stay home in order to avoid them, which adds to the problem. Wadesango and Machingambi (2011) also point out that uninteresting teachers and bad teaching methods cause students to skip class. When teachers do not use a variety of teaching techniques and students are aware of their assignments in advance, they simply choose to miss school. While teachers' good classroom attitudes have a favourable impact on students' school attendance, teachers' authoritarian attitudes in the classroom can make students miss class. It is claimed that another factor contributing to student absenteeism is the ineffective communication between teachers and students.

Students are also more likely to skip class and quit school when teachers behave negatively toward them and have excessively oppressive attitudes. Additionally, it has been seen that students who are terrified of their teachers' strict and critical reactions when they arrive late to school choose not to attend that day.

*Our school timing is 9 O'clock in the morning. If we are late by five minutes our physical Education teacher punish us very harshly, said one of the students.*

The conclusion that teacher' traits and qualities can make the issue of absenteeism worse exposes two significant ironies that exist in education. First, teachers are expected to lead the charge in boosting student productivity, retention, and attendance rates. This is true not just because it is a requirement of their professional duty, but also because employment as a teacher is contingent upon the presence of students. Second, it is somewhat surprising that participant students admitted that they skip scheduled lessons because they don't like particular teachers or particular courses, as this is the last thing that should be expected in a positive teaching/learning environment.

### Parent Un-Involvement

Under this theme, absenteeism was attributed to a learner's parents not being involved in their education. It was claimed that some parents are too busy to check on their kids' homework, while others do not place a high priority on education, which leads to absence because children are allowed to choose their own schedules for school.

When asked about the reasons of absenteeism, one of the teachers said, *"Majority of students in this school are from middle class families. Their parents are busy in their own work. They do not bother to visit the school to see progress of their children".*

Literature also claims that parents of children who attend impoverished schools show little concern in their children's academic performance. If parents don't care about their kids' academic achievement, it influences how often they go to school (Maynard, 2014). One more teacher remarked:

*"Well... what should we (the teachers) do if the students' parents do not think of their children, we organize parent-teacher meets but majority of the parents do not come to attend such meetings. The children leave for school from their homes but the parents do not bother to see whether they are coming to the schools or going elsewhere.*

Children from families with poor communication with the school miss more school and are more likely to drop out than other pupils. Thornton and his colleagues (2013) assert that parent-teacher conferences, extracurricular activity, and monitoring a child's attendance and homework all help to improve a child's academic achievement and attendance. Children from families who are unable to have open contact with their children, who are excessively oppressive, or who lack authority over their children and have accepted their failure have been found to have much higher absenteeism and school dropout rates.

*"A lot of parents here can't raise children, so it doesn't surprise me that a lot of students are often absent"* was said by another teacher.

Chronic absenteeism can be avoided in large part due to parent involvement (Allison & Attisha, 2019; Hornby & Blackwell, 2018; Wallace, 2017). Children's daily attendance at school is directly impacted by the attitudes, perspectives, and actions of their parents. According to earlier surveys, parents face difficulties that make it tough for them to send their children to school daily (Wallace, 2017; Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). Attendance is enhanced through

increasing parental participation and informing parents of the precise number of days their child was absent.

### **Break due to Covid-19**

Although the issue of student absenteeism is not new, it requires ongoing attention to guarantee that students receive the education they need and deserve. According to Dearing et al. (2018), one in ten students misses more than 10 percent of the school year due to chronic absences. A possible contributing factor to the surge in chronic absenteeism at some schools is the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

*One of the teacher respondents remarked, "As we know that there was a gap of more than one year due to covid. During covid-19, students were studying online within the comfort zones of their homes. They became habituated to that very zone and know they are not ready to leave that comfort zone and they do not come to school."*

In addition to their comfort zones, Covid-19 introduced students to a variety of online learning environments where they may fulfil their academic goals and needs while becoming less reliant on their teachers. One of the students Said:

*"I can be sitting comfortably at home and get better teaching according to my own schedule from You tube etc ...feeling relaxed.... why should I come to school while most teachers do not even teach?"*

In Long Beach, chronic absenteeism increased from 12 percent before to COVID-19 to 25 percent this year, according to an article by Blad (2022). Even though it just represents one American city, which is roughly twice as much. As additional data is gathered to analyse the consequences of the epidemic, it is quite possible that this surge will become a trend we observe across the nation and world.

### **Lack of Proper Assessment System**

Lack of a suitable assessment system was identified as a contributing factor to absenteeism under this theme. In institutions that use summative exams, missing school does not have a higher negative impact on a student's grade.

*One of the teachers said, "The type of evaluation our education system is having is a summative type of examination. The end term exam consists of two sections- External- written test comprising of 80 marks and Internal- comprising of 20 marks having a negligible scope for attendance"*

The lack of attention given to absenteeism is evident in the careless management of student absences, the failure to inform parents when a student is absent,

cheating on exams, and the failure to look into the reasons behind absences, all of which contribute to an increase in absences and, ultimately, the occurrence of school dropouts.

When asked about the influence of attendance on the grades one of the students replied, *"our grades are not affected by remaining absent from the school as we cheat our examiners and imitate the questions from others and from mobile phones. We have learned where to keep our mobile phones and notebooks prior to the examinations."*

### **Drug Addiction**

Adolescent substance abuse has been linked to long-term detrimental effects on education, including lower high school graduation rates (Chatterji, 2006; Renna, 2007; Horwood et al., 2010; Kelly et al., 2015), lower post-secondary educational credentials (Staff et al., 2008), and higher dropout rates (Van Ours and Williams, 2009; Leach and Butterworth, 2012; Brière et al., 2014). The current study highlighted drug abuse as a factor in adolescent pupils' absences from school.

One of the teachers said, *the students studying in this school are from the vicinity and this area-area around downtown is considered as the hub of drug addiction and drug peddling. Many students have become drug addicts. Such students prefer to remain absent because they can't spend whole day without drugs in school as students are allowed to enter school after a thorough checking of their bags and pockets.....".*

The results support earlier studies showing that marijuana and alcohol use are significant risk factors for adolescent absence from school (Hill & Mrug, 2015; Hemphill, et al.2014; Brown et al., 2001; Dembo et al., 2012; Henry, 2010; Bryant & Zimmerman, 2002; Henry & Huizinga, 2007). According to the authors of a Compared to just 3.8% of adolescents who never smoked tobacco, nearly 25% of young tobacco users missed at least 3 days of school (Feemster, et al., 2016). "Students who are taking drugs and disengaging from school had the highest likelihood of recent absenteeism" (Henry, 2007).

### **Conclusion**

Absenteeism is the term used to describe a common tendency among students to skip school or class. If action is not done, a series of events that could include academic failure and dropping out of school, financial troubles, and other mental, social, and occupational issues in adulthood, could occur due to absenteeism. The issue is brought on by the interaction of numerous elements, both internal and

external to the student and/or the school. Poor socio- economic status, inadequate school facilities, parent un-involvement, teacher un-involvement, coaching centres, break due to covid-19, and drug addiction are major contributors to absenteeism. Rather than solely relying on punitive measures, addressing the root causes of truancy and fostering parent engagement are essential strategies for prevention and intervention.

To effectively address absenteeism, it is imperative to adopt a holistic approach that considers diverse factors contributing to absenteeism. This includes recognizing teachers as key agents of change and providing support to families facing complex issues. Punitive measures, such as benefit revocation, may exacerbate challenges for vulnerable families. Therefore, comprehensive strategies should prioritize interventions that promote parent involvement, teacher effectiveness, and address underlying causes of absenteeism. Further research is needed to explore innovative approaches for reducing absenteeism rates, particularly in underserved communities. By understanding the barriers students face, interventions can be tailored to improve attendance and promote better educational outcomes for all students.

In conclusion, addressing absenteeism requires multifaceted solutions that involve collaboration among schools, families, and communities. By prioritizing parent involvement, supporting effective teaching practices, revising curriculum and co-curriculum and adopting holistic approaches, we can work towards improving student attendance and enhancing educational success.

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