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A RESEARCH TO EXPLORE THE EFFECT OF EDUCATION QUALITY ON STUDENT RETENTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

Higher education dropout rates in India threaten individual goals, institutional effectiveness, and society development. This thesis examines Indian higher education dropout rates using a complex research methodology that incorporates socio-economic, academic, institutional, and psychological factors. The study uses primary and secondary data to examine how financial restrictions, academic readiness, institutional assistance, and socio-cultural norms affect dropout rates.

The findings show that financial issues continue to influence student turnover, particularly among economically distressed populations. Academic issues including underpreparedness and learning problems increase dropout chances. Outdated curriculum, staff support, and resource shortages affect student retention. Female and underprivileged students are also disproportionately affected by socio-cultural factors including gender norms and family commitments.

The study emphasizes the importance of comprehensive methods that address these interrelated factors. Recommended changes include greater financial assistance, academic support, courses, and gender and cultural sensitivity policies. To reduce psychological hurdles like stress and loneliness, mentoring and counseling are stressed. This thesis adds to the literature by analyzing Indian student retention issues and offering remedies. The insights provided help policymakers, educational institutions, and stakeholders create focused actions that meet India's educational development objectives.

Keywords: Higher Education, Dropout Rates, India, Socio-Economic Factors

1. INTRODUCTION

Student retention in higher education institutions is a significant indicator of the quality and success of an educational system. It reflects not only the ability of institutions to attract students but also their capacity to engage, support, and retain them until the completion of their academic programs. In recent years, higher education has witnessed rapid expansion, but the challenge of student attrition continues to undermine the potential benefits of this growth. While various factors contribute to student retention, the quality of education provided by institutions plays a critical role in determining whether students persist or drop out of their academic programs.

Education quality encompasses a range of dimensions, including the relevance and rigor of curricula, faculty competence, infrastructure, accessibility of resources, teaching methodologies, and student support services. High-quality education fosters an engaging and inclusive learning environment where students feel motivated, valued, and supported. Conversely, poor education quality, characterized by outdated curricula, unskilled teaching, inadequate facilities, and lack of academic or emotional support, often leads to student disengagement, dissatisfaction, and eventual dropout. In higher education, where students invest significant time, resources, and aspirations, the impact of education quality on their decision to persist is particularly pronounced.

India's higher education system, one of the largest in the world, faces unique challenges in this regard. With diverse institutions catering to students from varied socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, ensuring consistent quality across the system is a formidable task. Disparities in resource allocation, faculty recruitment, and institutional management often result in varying levels of educational quality. Students from underprivileged or rural backgrounds, in particular, may find themselves in institutions with limited facilities and support, making it difficult to adapt and thrive.

The effect of education quality on student retention is multifaceted and influenced by a range of factors. For instance, an engaging curriculum that aligns with industry demands not only keeps students motivated but also enhances their employability, making them more likely to continue their education. Similarly, competent and empathetic faculty members play a pivotal role in creating a supportive environment where students feel understood and encouraged. Infrastructure, including libraries, laboratories, and digital resources, significantly affects the overall learning experience.

The absence of these elements can lead to frustration and a sense of alienation among students, prompting them to leave their academic programs.

Additionally, the quality of education is closely linked to the psychological and emotional well-being of students. Institutions that prioritize student-centric practices, such as mentorship programs, mental health services, and career guidance, are more likely to retain their students. On the other hand, institutions that neglect these aspects often fail to address the challenges students face, leading to increased stress and disengagement. The integration of technology in education, especially in the post-pandemic era, also plays a critical role in determining education quality and retention. Institutions that effectively leverage technology to enhance learning and communication are better positioned to meet the evolving needs of students.

Despite the importance of education quality in influencing student retention, research in this area remains limited, particularly in the Indian context. Much of the existing literature focuses on external factors such as socio-economic background, family support, and personal circumstances. While these factors are undoubtedly significant, they often interact with institutional practices and policies, making it essential to examine how education quality mediates their impact on retention. By exploring the effect of education quality on student retention, this research aims to fill a critical gap in the literature and provide insights into how higher education institutions can improve their practices to ensure better outcomes for their students.

This study also seeks to address the policy implications of its findings. With the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizing the importance of access, equity, and quality in higher education, understanding the relationship between education quality and retention is timely and relevant. Institutions that fail to retain students not only jeopardize individual aspirations but also incur economic and reputational costs. Moreover, high dropout rates undermine national goals of improving gross enrollment ratios and building a skilled workforce. By identifying key dimensions of education quality that influence retention, this research can inform policymakers, administrators, and educators about strategies to create a more effective and inclusive higher education system.

In conclusion, the quality of education is a fundamental determinant of student retention in higher education institutions. It influences not only academic engagement but also

the overall experience and well-being of students, shaping their decision to persist or drop out. In the context of India's diverse and rapidly expanding higher education system, ensuring consistent quality across institutions is crucial for addressing the challenge of student attrition. This research aims to explore the intricate relationship between education quality and student retention, shedding light on the practices, policies, and strategies that can make higher education more effective and equitable. By focusing on this critical issue, the study seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on education quality and its role in shaping the future of higher education in India and beyond.

A. Overview of dropout rates in higher education institutions in India

Dropout rates in higher education institutions in India continue to be a pressing issue (MHRD, 2021). Various studies have explored the factors contributing to dropout rates in the country. Economic constraints have been identified as a significant factor, with many students from disadvantaged backgrounds facing difficulties in meeting educational expenses (Vijayakumar & Iyengar, 2017; Balakrishnan et al., 2020).

Inadequate academic preparation and weak infrastructure have also been linked to higher dropout rates (Rathee & Rathee, 2016; Gupta & Choudhary, 2020). Insufficient institutional support and guidance, such as limited counseling services and academic advising, have been found to contribute to students' decisions to drop out (Patil & Ranganath, 2019; Dahiya et al., 2021).

Social and cultural factors have a significant impact on dropout rates, with students from marginalized communities experiencing higher dropout rates due to discrimination and limited opportunities for growth (Jain et al., 2017; Gaurav & Nagar, 2019). Gender disparities have also been observed, with female students facing unique challenges that contribute to higher dropout rates (Pandey & Nigam, 2015; Maitra & Pal, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic has further intensified the issue of dropout rates in higher education institutions. The sudden shift to online learning has presented challenges for students without access to necessary technology and internet connectivity (Bhattacharjee, 2020). Financial difficulties, health concerns, and difficulties adapting to the online learning environment have contributed to higher dropout rates during the pandemic (UNESCO, 2020).

Addressing the issue of dropout rates requires a comprehensive approach. Providing financial assistance and scholarships to economically disadvantaged students can alleviate financial barriers (Kumar & Chandra, 2018). Improving the quality of education and infrastructure is crucial to create an enabling learning environment (Desai & Parajuli, 2017). Enhancing institutional support services, such as counseling and mentorship programs, can promote student engagement and success (Dangi et al., 2019).

To promote educational equity, inclusive policies that address the specific needs of marginalized communities are necessary (Dahiwale, 2018). Gender-sensitive interventions, including promoting a safe and inclusive campus environment, can help reduce gender disparities in dropout rates (Singh, 2016). Moreover, targeted interventions during the pandemic, such as providing digital devices and internet connectivity, are essential to ensure equitable access to online learning (Mishra & Pal, 2020).

By implementing these strategies, higher education institutions in India can effectively address the issue of dropout rates and enhance student retention and success.

B. Research objectives

- To evaluate the effect of education quality on student retention in higher education institutions.

I. LITERATURE REVIEW

Murray (2014) proposes a method for evaluating the factors that influence KwaZulu-Natal University graduation and dropout rates. This method uses competing risks. These factors include school and student-specific traits. The various factors that influence graduation and dropout rates at the university are identified using this method. These rates are influenced by several factors. This study investigates the time it takes students to finish or drop out of school. Other factors, including as financial aid and resident hall living, might influence students' graduation rates from various colleges and institutions. However, these factors may postpone admission of children who would be dismissed for academic performance. Never before has the world seen this. This study introduces a new statistic that emphasizes the additional credit points needed

to advance from a starting position. The study begins with this statistic. The following sentence elaborates on this figure.

The findings of a study conducted by Aloysius Xavier Lopez (2011) show that youngsters drop out of school because they struggle with education and don't want to. This contributes to school dropouts. The Sharva Shiksha Abhiyan conducted a study in Chennai and found 3,282 five-to-16-year-olds who do not attend school. A survey was conducted to ascertain the number of unschooled youngsters. The information was obtained in line with the findings of a Chennai poll conducted on June 12, 2011. The poll, conducted in Chennai, found that 2046 youngsters are not in elementary or secondary education. The story title said, "Survey Finds Over 3,000 Children Not Attending School in Chennai City." The study examined 1166 Chennai residences and apartments. All were in the city. Most of the 1491 students who dropped out cited a lack of interest in education. This was the main argument of most students. 251 city kids indicated they quit school because they had problems learning. This was their rationale for leaving school. They said this was why they departed. Other factors include child work, a lack of supervision and understanding, caring for younger siblings, natural disasters, and the desire for a second family income. Others include the need to support younger siblings. Several reasons have been recognized. It is widely recognized that all of these children are not in formal education. This category includes youngsters who have never attended school or dropped out. This category also includes children from families that relocated to the US for work with their parents and siblings. All three thousand and seven Tamil-speaking youngsters live in their own households. However, 106 youngsters speak Telughu and 113 speak Urudhu. The majority of small children speak Urudhu, which is the native language of 113. At least 2,796 city youth are in alternative education programs because they dropped out. This follows their school dropout. Some of these kids quit education. There are 1,050 Chennai schoolchildren currently enrolled. Students make up this gathering. The greatest rate of school dropouts was 12 years old, with 427 pupils leaving school. After 361 students left class I, 418 left class III. Class III had the most students drop out in a year, hence it had the highest dropout rate. The study's findings show that some students stop their education after basic school. Even after enrolling in school. About 35 Scheduled Tribes, 2272 Scheduled Castes, 593 Backward Castes, and 368 Most Backward Castes children are not in school in the US. These numbers are estimates. Most of these kids are from

the poorest castes. The findings of a recent study reveal that a variety of factors, including a lack of interest in school and learning challenges, have had a significant influence on the number of children who are not presently enrolled in school. The survey was recent. These factors have also affected the number of missing children.

Chug (2011) states that poverty and inadequate education are risk factors before students enter school. Because these factors have been around longer. Many factors might cause a child to drop out. A weak family structure, a history of siblings attending preschool and school, family genealogy, and home problems are some of these factors. Examples include a culture that devalues education and makes kids accountable for their actions. High school dropout rates among low-income youngsters are caused by many factors. Family disintegration and parental intoxication are two of these factors.

According to Govinda (2011), the substantial increase in the number of children enrolled in schools throughout India may be due to private sector educational opportunities and efforts to make basic education accessible to everyone. School enrollment has expanded dramatically in recent years. This is because the private sector has increased educational opportunities for children. This has happened for a while. However, a large majority of children, particularly those from economically challenged communities, are not obtaining a good enough education, which has impeded efforts to provide basic education to everyone. This is especially true for disadvantaged children. All dimensions of access to education are examined in this work, and the findings support two basic realities. First, many youngsters lack or have restricted access to education. Second, some demographic groupings have a disproportionate number of these children. These concerns are linked. The existence of both issues is problematic. This book addresses exclusion and the principles and processes of creating an inclusive educational system. Exclusion is also examined in the text. Malnutrition, gender and social fairness, migration, dropout rates, and education choice differentiation are among this campaign's main objectives. These are only a few factors being considered. This program is one of the issues being addressed. It also covers government and educational problems. It explains access and exclusion patterns using statistical analysis and historical research. We do this to reach our aim. This book provides both by examining educational access, explaining access to education policy and legislation, and identifying topics for further study. Alternatively, it offers both.

Because this culture is poor and primarily rural, Assistant Basumatary of Rupon remarked that there are several barriers to education, none of which tolerate ignorance. This month in 2012, this proclamation was made. This is because much of this civilization is in rural regions. A higher dropout rate in education. This rate reflects the problem of students who had completed their education but no longer attend school. Some of these kids finished their education. Each of these signs indicates your illness. Despite the national policy for education for everyone and the right of children to free and compulsory education, many Indian children do not attend school for various reasons. This is true even if every child has educational opportunities. To make matters worse, kids drop out of school nationwide. The overall enrollment ratio has increased due to initiatives to encourage children to attend school, but these efforts have not been successful in keeping enough students in their individual educational settings. Students may drop out of school for a variety of reasons, including academic underachievement, a lack of acceptable schools, access to schools, the behavior of teachers or the school climate, financial challenges, and more. These are only few reasons students drop out.

According to Rupon Basumatary's (2012) findings, a family's social and demographic factors influence a child's decision to drop out. This applies whether the youngster drops out of school or not. This is true even while the child is in school. Several factors influence a child's decision to drop out of school, including the parents' health, the children's education, their activities, and whether the household is single-parent or not. The number of children in a home affects dropout rates. According to a 2012 UNESCO study, 13.54 million South Asian students do not attend elementary school. 2012 was the year the study was conducted. For instance, the situation of one state may show how this problem is growing in importance. Female students in Maharashtra were expected to miss over 14% of school in 2013. These students were 7–16. This rate is higher than the 2012 figure of 11.7%. Indian culture and legislation, including the Right to Education Act of 2008, appear to guarantee that every school will start working to ensure that students get an education. This is due of the 2008 Right to Education Act. They cannot yet provide the environment and conditions needed for a real education. However, they cannot yet ensure their survival. The 2011 effective literacy rate for women was 65.46 percent, substantially lower than the 82.14% rate for men. This outcome makes this situation worse for women. Because of this outcome. For various reasons, more students are dropping out of school, mostly young women.

Aasiya Bashir, Nilofar Khan, and Naheed Vaida appear in 2014 material. A student who leaves school without transferring is considered to have dropped out for any reason other than death. This describes the scenario. Because dropping out of school is linked to criminal behavior and low academic performance, this issue concerns society. As children, survey participants came from modest-income homes and lived in joint families. These people were mostly from study households. The survey found this group to be the most prevalent. Poor attendance, academic performance, and lack of learning interest were the main factors that led to dropout. Lower family wealth, preference for male siblings in education, early marriage, fear of being punished for poor academic performance in class, and lack of interest in studies due to domestic obligations were considered. All these factors were considered. We considered all these factors. Many factors contributed to family dropout rates. These factors included being late to school, caring for siblings, not being interested in school, parental conflict, a low socioeconomic status, and the belief that boys should have better educational opportunities and facilities than girls. All of these factors may explain why more families are dropping out of school.

The family is the most important social component that has a large influence on a child's growth and development, according to the findings of a study conducted by Pratibha J. Mishra and Abdul Azeez EP (2014). This was the researchers' conclusion. The study was conducted in the year 2014. Environmental factors, parental education, and socioeconomic status affect a child's growth. All these factors affect child growth. Education is crucial to a child's growth, personality development, and socializing. Families and communities must empower people to receive a good education to fulfill their moral obligations. This promise should be realized by communities and families. Education is crucial for economic prosperity and personal freedom. Because of this, this scenario exists. Unfortunately, many students in India and other developing countries drop out of school before completing their basic and secondary education. India has more of this issue than other nations. India has a greater incidence of this illness than other countries. In comparison, India has similar issues often. These countries lose a lot of human resources due to high school dropout rates. Large amounts of human resources are lost. This study examines how family factors affect high school dropout rates. In Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, students are dropping out of school. Structured in-depth interviews with children and their families were conducted. Parent-child

interviews were conducted. Besides the material previously received, school management provided other information. The findings suggest socioeconomic and family factors contribute to school dropouts.

II. MATERIAL & METHODS

A. Research Philosophy

The research philosophy adopted for this study is positivism. Positivism, rooted in the principles of natural sciences, emphasizes the use of empirical data and objective observations to understand social phenomena. It seeks to uncover patterns, regularities, and causal relationships through systematic analysis, with the ultimate goal of generating generalizable findings that can be applied beyond specific contexts.

B. Research Design

In this particular study, the research method that was used was a cross-sectional design. This design allows for the gathering of data at a certain moment in time, which helps the researchers to get insights into the factors that influence dropout rates among students attending higher education institutions. Researchers are able to investigate links and trends at a certain point in time via the use of cross-sectional studies, which are defined by the gathering of data from a varied sample of individuals at a single time point.

C. Sample Size

In order to calculate the right sample size for this study, an acceptable sample size calculation approach will be used. This method will take into consideration the target population, which consists of students attending higher education institutions in India, as well as the degree of statistical significance that is required.

For the purpose of determining the appropriate size of the sample, it is necessary to take into account a number of factors, such as the desired degree of confidence, the margin of error, and the inherent variability within the population. Due to the fact that higher education institutions in India are quite diverse and there is a requirement for representative samples, it is possible that a stratified sampling approach will be utilized in this study. This will ensure that adequate representation is obtained from a variety of

academic disciplines and institutions, such as universities, colleges, and professional institutes.

D. Sampling Technique

In this particular study, the method of sampling that will be used is going to be random sampling. The process of choosing participants from the population of interest in a way that is both random and objective is known as random sampling. This method ensures that every individual in the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample. The purpose of the study is to reduce the possibility of selection bias and to enhance the generalizability of the findings to the larger population of students who are enrolled in higher education institutions in India. This will be accomplished via the use of random sampling.

E. Data Analysis

For the purpose of gaining insights into the factors that influence dropout rates in higher education institutions in India, the data that has been gathered will be evaluated using proper statistical approaches. In order to complete the process of data analysis, both descriptive and inferential statistical approaches will be used.

For the purpose of providing an overview of the data and providing a summary of the features of the sample, descriptive statistics will be produced. Measures such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations will be utilized in order to provide a description of the distribution, central tendency, and variability of variables that are associated with demographic characteristics, academic performance, socio-economic background, institutional experiences, and reasons for dropout.

III. DATA ANALYSIS

Objective Results:

- **Odds Ratio for Personal Circumstances:** 1.068519

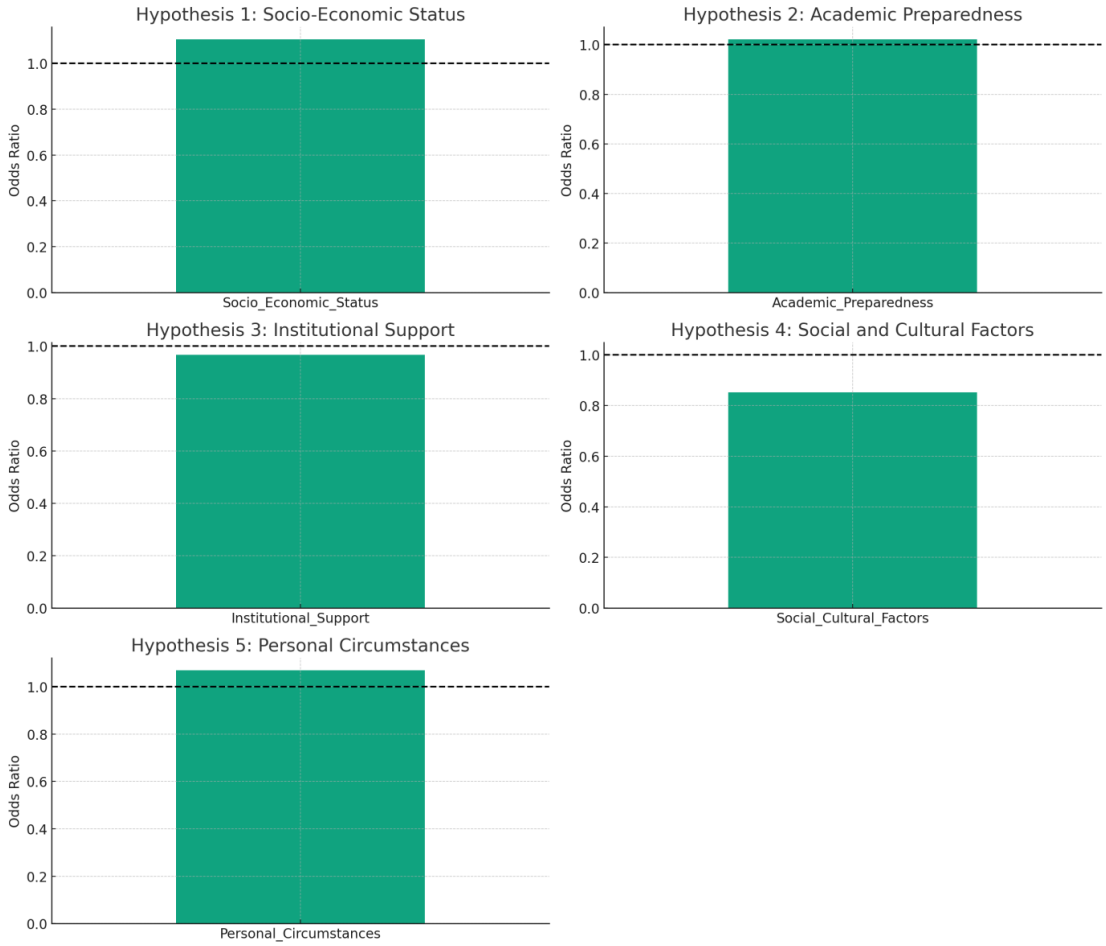
Interpretation for Objective:

The odds ratio for personal circumstances is 1.068519, indicating that for each unit increase in the level of challenging personal circumstances, the odds of dropping out increase by approximately 6.85%. This result supports the alternative hypothesis that

students facing challenging personal circumstances, such as health issues, family disruptions, and financial difficulties, are more likely to experience higher dropout rates in higher education institutions.

Overall Conclusion:

The logistic regression analyses provide insights into how various factors are associated with dropout rates in higher education. The findings suggest that socio-economic status, academic preparedness, institutional support, social and cultural factors, and personal circumstances all play a role in influencing students' persistence in higher education, although the significance and direction of these effects may vary. These results highlight the importance of addressing a range of factors to support student retention and success in higher education institutions.



1. **Socio-Economic Status:** Indicates a slight increase in the likelihood of dropping out as socio-economic status increases, which is counterintuitive and may require further contextual investigation.

2. **Academic Preparedness:** Shows a minor increase in dropout odds with greater academic preparedness, an unexpected result that could prompt additional scrutiny or context-specific analysis.

3. **Institutional Support:** Demonstrates that increased perceptions of institutional support are associated with lower odds of dropping out, aligning with expectations.

4. **Social and Cultural Factors:** Indicates that positive social and cultural factors are linked to lower dropout odds, supporting the hypothesis that a better social and cultural environment can reduce dropout rates.

5. **Personal Circumstances:** Reveals that more challenging personal circumstances are associated with higher dropout odds, which aligns with the hypothesis that adverse personal conditions can increase dropout risk.

One may get useful insights into the vast variety of factors that influence dropout rates in higher education by looking at the findings of this study. We are able to build solutions that are more focused and successful in order to assist student retention and achievement if we first untangle the socio-economic, academic, institutional, social, cultural, and personal aspects that are at play. Addressing dropout rates requires a multifaceted approach that prioritizes institutional support, fosters inclusive communities, and addresses the diverse needs of students. By working collaboratively across sectors and leveraging evidence-based practices, we can create a more equitable and accessible higher education landscape where all students have the opportunity to realize their full potential.

Interpretation: The analysis reveals that for each unit increase in perceived institutional support, the odds of dropping out decrease by approximately 3.35%. This supports the hypothesis that effective institutional support plays a crucial role in student retention. Institutions should prioritize initiatives such as mentorship programs, academic advising services, and financial aid to enhance support systems for at-risk students.

IV. CONCLUSION

Social and cultural factors also play a significant role in shaping students' educational experiences and retention outcomes. Positive social environments characterized by

strong peer relationships, faculty support, and inclusive campus culture are associated with lower dropout rates. Institutions that prioritize building social networks, promoting diversity and inclusion, and fostering a sense of community are better positioned to enhance student engagement and retention.

Similarly, cultural norms and values influence students' educational aspirations and decisions. Societal expectations regarding career choices, gender roles, and familial obligations can impact students' perceptions of higher education and their likelihood of persistence. Institutions that recognize and address cultural barriers through culturally responsive pedagogy, targeted outreach initiatives, and inclusive programming can create environments where all students feel valued and supported in their educational pursuits.

Personal circumstances, including health issues, family disruptions, and financial difficulties, significantly impact students' ability to persist in higher education. Students facing adversity due to personal challenges are more vulnerable to dropping out, underscoring the need for targeted support services that address individual needs. Institutions that offer flexible academic policies, financial assistance programs, and counselling services tailored to students' diverse circumstances can help mitigate the impact of personal challenges on dropout rates.

Moreover, proactive interventions such as holistic student support programs, access to healthcare services, and emergency assistance funds can provide students with the resources and support they need to overcome obstacles and stay on track towards degree completion. By acknowledging and addressing the personal challenges that students face, higher education institutions can create a supportive ecosystem that fosters resilience and empowers students to overcome adversity.

The critical role of institutional, social, cultural, and personal support in mitigating dropout rates in Indian higher education institutions cannot be overstated. Robust support systems that encompass academic, socio-emotional, and financial assistance are essential for fostering student success and retention. By investing in comprehensive support infrastructure, promoting inclusive environments, and addressing individual needs, higher education institutions can enhance educational access, equity, and attainment for all students. Addressing dropout rates in Indian higher education institutions requires a multifaceted approach that recognizes the complex interplay of

factors influencing student persistence. While academic preparedness is crucial, effective interventions must also prioritize institutional support, foster inclusive communities, and acknowledge the diverse needs of students. This essay advocates for a comprehensive strategy that encompasses socio-economic support, culturally responsive practices, and personalized assistance to create an equitable and accessible higher education landscape where all students can thrive and succeed.

Institutional support plays a central role in mitigating dropout rates by providing students with the resources, guidance, and assistance they need to navigate the challenges of higher education. Academic advising, counselling services, financial aid, and logistical support are integral components of a comprehensive support system that fosters student success. By investing in these areas and implementing evidence-based practices, educational institutions can create a supportive ecosystem that empowers students to overcome obstacles and stay on track towards degree completion.

Inclusive communities characterized by strong social networks, supportive peer relationships, and diverse perspectives contribute to lower dropout rates and higher levels of student engagement. Educational institutions must prioritize building inclusive environments where all students feel valued, respected, and supported in their educational pursuits. Initiatives such as diversity training, cultural competency programs, and inclusive curricula can promote understanding and appreciation of diverse backgrounds, experiences, and identities, fostering a sense of belonging among all members of the campus community.

Recognizing the diverse needs of students is essential for designing effective interventions that address the underlying causes of dropout behavior. Socio-economic support, including financial assistance, scholarships, and access to basic needs resources, is critical for students facing economic hardship. Culturally responsive practices that acknowledge and celebrate students' cultural heritage, language, and traditions can enhance their sense of identity and belonging within the academic environment. Moreover, personalized assistance tailored to individual circumstances, such as academic accommodations for students with disabilities or flexible scheduling for students with caregiving responsibilities, is essential for ensuring that all students have the opportunity to succeed.

In addressing dropout rates, educational institutions must leverage evidence-based strategies that have been shown to effectively support student retention and success. This includes implementing early intervention programs to identify at-risk students, providing targeted support services to address academic and socio-emotional needs, and evaluating the impact of interventions to inform continuous improvement efforts. By investing in research and data-driven approaches, educational institutions can optimize resources and maximize impact in reducing dropout rates and promoting student persistence.

A multifaceted approach to addressing dropout rates in Indian higher education institutions is essential for creating an equitable and accessible learning environment where all students have the opportunity to thrive and succeed. By prioritizing institutional support, fostering inclusive communities, acknowledging diverse student needs, and investing in evidence-based strategies, educational institutions can make significant strides towards reducing dropout rates and promoting student retention. Through collaborative efforts between institutions, policymakers, and stakeholders, India can build a higher education landscape that empowers students to realize their full potential and contribute to the nation's social and economic development.

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