POVERTY AS THE PRIMARY REASON OF ABSENTEEISM

by:
Benydel C. Rodrigo
Teacher I, Bayan-Bayanan Elementary School

Absenteeism is one of the many educational problems every facilitator of learning experiences. Many of the teachers complain on the frequent absences committed by their students, which in turn result to poor performances in school or in worst cases affect the dropout rate. Teaching and learning is a complex process that requires full participation of both the teachers and the learners. Without the active engagement of both parties, meaningful learning will not take place. Nevertheless, the big question is what are the root causes of the frequent absences of the students?

Some studies revealed that one of the major reasons for committing absences is poverty or financial struggle. For many students, the reasons for their absenteeism may be attributed to being poor. Many families who live in poverty or fall under poverty line have limited access to vital resources, such as food, permanent shelter, medical care, mental health services, and stable employment. Children who are suffering in destitute situation often have a rigid time safeguarding dependable transportation as means of service from home and to school. The children may be accountable to upkeep for younger siblings in the mornings, which hampers their own capability to attend schooling; or they may be destitute and hesitant of where they will be staying from one day to the next. All of these problems can affect a child’s ability to attend school and can result in absenteeism.

In 2015, about 22 million Filipinos, which are more than one-fifth of the population, still live below the national poverty line. Being poor is associated with having low levels of education, being unemployed and having no any means of livelihood. All of these factors are the leading reasons why many students tend to commit absences in the school.
According to the article written by Zhang (2008), he elaborated that school absenteeism is strongly related with child poverty, with pupils at primary school being much more likely to be affected by an area's finances and having no work than their counterparts at secondary schools. School absentees generally start the routine of non-attendance when they are at primary school, with child poverty as a main associated factor. Addressing family well-being problems early is seen as the way to lessen absenteeism in schools.

It is true that poverty is a big factor why students often leave school or commit many absences. As teachers, we have the prime responsibilities of taking care of our students and keeping them active in schools. It is a failure in our part to see our enrolment is dropping because of absenteeism so we must look for possible intervention to counterpart this long-term educational problem. The future of our students depends on how we effectively do our job as their second parents. Let us all work together in achieving quality education through active participation of our learners.

References:

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