

## STRATEGIC INTERVENTION OF ODL IN DIPLOMA IN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT WORKS IN BANGLADESH

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### ABSTRACT

Diploma in Youth Development Work (DYDW) imparted through distance mode which was introduced at Bangladesh Open University (BOU) in 1999 aiming at accessible and flexible learning opportunities to the young men and women involved in youth development activities and prepare the participating youth towards performing active and constructive role in the regeneration of their fellow youth to become effective partners in socio-economic development.

The program feature and success and failure of the enrolled students have been discussed. Rural and urban, male and female, government and non-government, and gender issues were considered in the study for the enrolled students. Up to 2006, three cycles of the program have been completed and 25%, 27% and 16% of the students respectively of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle could successfully complete. The dropout rate of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle were 51%, 41% and 67% respectively. The drop out rate is very high and increasing day by day. The reasons of high dropout rate might be due to language difficulty, lack of proper recommendation in high competitive job opportunities, lack of service incentives, financial support, scholarship/fellowship and recognition as cadre service by the Government. Service incentives to the diploma graduates have been suggested to reduce the attrition rate.

**Keywords:** DYDW, distance education, dropout, CYP, BOU

### INTRODUCTION

It is believed that the actions of young people today determine the shape, size and prosperity of the world of tomorrow (Raka Rashid 2005). Today more than three billion people around the world are under 29 years. They represent the largest cohort of young people ever in human history and the biggest *youth quake* the world has ever witnessed. A large number of them are living in developing countries including the four Commonwealth regions. In fact, out of every five young persons, four live in the medium and least developed countries. Among them, the largest numbers lives in Asia and Africa. In South Asia alone the youth and adolescents together constitute a huge number of about 600 million (Bhagaban Prakash 2007). With a view to enhancing the cognizable competence level of youth workers and the young men and women for their socio-economic development, the human resource development pioneers particularly the Commonwealth Ministers responsible for the youth affairs initiated in Trinidad and Tobago in May 1995 to introduce the diploma program in youth development through open and distance mode.

Open and distance learning (ODL) has already been proved to be a potential alternative to conventional system of face to face education (Bazlur Rashid, 2006). Because, the open and distance methods using modern scientific technological facilities extend learning opportunities to those beyond the access to the conventional system due to economic, familial, spatial, temporal or geographical restrictions (Gujar and Sonone 2006). The perspective on youth development has undergone a paradigm shift and changed from emphasizing on the deficit aspects to that of asset aspects which is significant that the youth development should be viewed from the aspect of ascertaining potentials which is inherent within the youth and not to focus solely on solving the social ills that are experienced by the youth (Rahim, 2006). Diploma in Youth Development Work (DYDW) has therefore been launched as a diploma program imparted through the distance mode in the commonwealth countries. It is concomitantly offered in the same way in different institutions in different commonwealth countries like Bangladesh Open University (BOU), Bangladesh; Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), Annamalai University and SNTD Women's University, India; Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU), Pakistan; Open University of Sri Lanka; and The University of Putra, Malaysia. The program is sponsored by the Commonwealth Youth Program (CYP) with the objectives of seeking development of cadre of capable and qualified youth workers (Bazlur Rashid 2005). This paper describes the significance and progress of DYDW at BOU.

### **DYDW at BOU**

Bangladesh is a developing country with the trend of almost uncontrolled increasing population corresponding to the natural demand of socio-economic security. BOU complements the government's efforts towards education for all through open and distance mode by its expertise resource and excellent media facilities (Ershadul Bari 2005). Due to lack of proper scope and facilities a significant portion of the general mass particularly the unemployed youth, the critical and potential human resources of the country remain out of the scope of having proper education and training on the modern contemporary knowledge. Their earning sources and/ or the job security is so competitive than even and out of their reach. The plight of such socio-economic insecurity is significantly increasing day by day as to the context of increasing trend of the population. It may be mentioned that the earning source does not mean only to have a job in a Govt. or semi-govt. institution/organization. Working at various areas even in the private sectors with the minimum sustainable emolument providing maximum satisfaction may solve the unemployment burdens in the social health if the person concerned possesses the requisite knowledge of modern contemporary technical know-how and skill in addition to his/her academic degree or qualification. However, under the sponsorship of CYP, DYDW has been being offered in the School of Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD), Bangladesh Open University since 1999.

### **Objectives**

- To provide flexible and accessible learning opportunities to the young men and women involved in youth development activities for equipping them with appropriation of oriented knowledge along with attitude, skills, values and competencies in working with young people in a variety of settings for managing and supporting other paid and volunteer workers and formulating policies in governmental and non-governmental agencies.

- To prepare the participating youth towards performing active and constructive role in the regeneration of their fellow youth to become effective partners in socio-economic development.
- To professionalize the youth development approach activities and services. It may be mentioned as an example that the diploma is recognized by the public service commission of Malaysia and factored into the evaluation and promotion process of youth Ministers of Sri-Lanka. Government of Brunei Darussalam is committed to the students for at least six increments in their job for having this diploma.

### **Program Features**

- DYDW is a self-directed, tutor supported and practice oriented training cum academic program imparted through distance mode using different printing and electronic media.
- Tutoring services are offered in weekend days at different youth development study centres.
- Flexible and accessible education for all types of rural and urban, male and female youth having graduation degree.
- Very low and affordable costs and learning materials such as valuable modules provided by the leading universities of the commonwealth.
- There are learning contract and learning journal in tutor marked assignment (TMA) instead of practical note book.
- As an international program the medium of instruction is English and the credits are easily transferable at any university in the commonwealth countries especially in UK.
- At the beginning of each semester the tutorial services are elucidated to the students through the tutorial orientation and briefed to them through attractive student's induction meeting.
- Development of community feelings, management skills and socio-economic leadership.
- The program is launched in collaboration with the department of youth development and the national youth training centre under the Ministry of Youth and Sports.
- Diploma is awarded to the successful students through certificate awarding ceremony by the honourable Vice-Chancellor in presence of CYP representative.

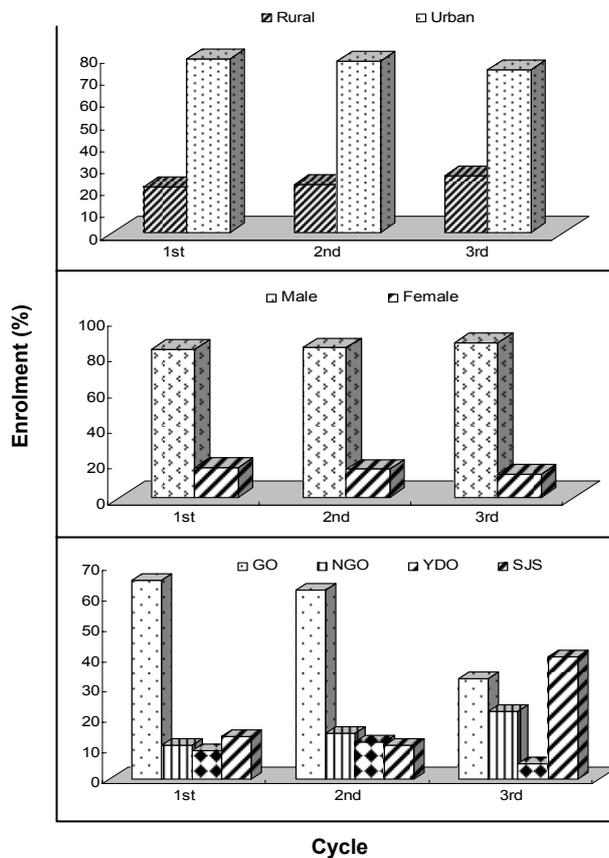
### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Upto now total 3 cycles were completed. The durations of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> cycles were 1999-2002, 2002-2004 and 2004-2006 respectively. In this study all data (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle) of students enrolment were collected from the Student Support Services Division of BOU. Data of success and failure of the students were collected from the examination division of BOU. Number of dropout candidates was calculated by using the following formula:

Dropout= Number of total enrolment – (Number of successful candidates+Number of unsuccessful candidates) and the dropout candidates were presented in this study as percentage.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The total enrolment of the students of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> cycles were 150, 143 and 142 respectively. The enrolment of the urban students was remarkably higher than those of rural students in all the cycles since 1999-2006 (Fig.1). The rural students of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> cycles were 21%, 22% and 26% respectively. Whereas the urban students were 79%, 78% and 74% respectively. In case of gender issue almost same distinctive trend of enrolment of male and female students have been found in all the cycles. The male students of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> cycles were 83%, 84% and 87% respectively while female students were 17%, 16% and 13% respectively.



**Figure: 1**  
**Enrolment of various types of students in different cycles of DYDW program**  
**Go: Government Organization, NGO: Non Government Organization, YDO: Youth Development Organization, SJS: Students and Job Seeker's**

In both of the cases the distinctions might be due to lack of proper publicity of the program in the rural areas of the country and the people are not so aware of such educational opportunity.

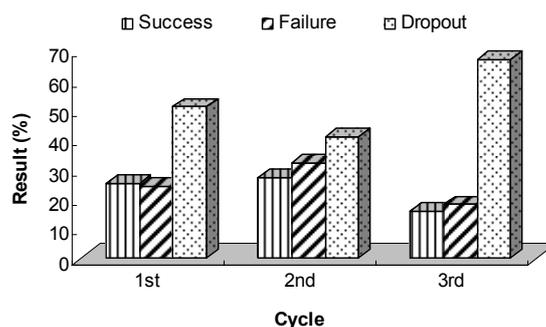
Besides, the rural people irrespective of gender issue are yet to be modernized and conscious with the use of contemporary issues especially Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and other electronic distance education facilities. The less enrolment of the female students also indicates that they are still far behind in the social health irrespective of rural or urban situation. Although the females in the country constitute about half of the human resources, their participation is still insignificant in the nation building strategy due to educational opportunity (Sufia Begum 2003).

It may be conceded that the rural people, the females in particular are still vulnerable to the circumstantial constraints to be overcome. Situation of the tutorial centres at the urban areas might also be one of the reasons for such distractive results. There were also categorization of students such as students from Government Organization (GO), Non-Government Organization (NGO), Youth Development Organization (YDO) and solely Students and Job Seekers (SJS).

Organization-based students' category reveals that the number of students from the government organization gradually became reduced from 1<sup>st</sup> cycle to 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle. Students from non-government organization and youth development organization are almost similar in each cycle except 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle (Figure: 1).

On the other hand student from different educational institution and job seeker were found to be sustained in the subsequent 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle. The students of GO, NGO, YDO and SJS of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle were 65%, 11%, 9% and 14%; 62%, 15%, 12% and 11% and 33%, 22%, 5% and 40% respectively. The dropout rate of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle were 51%, 41% and 67% respectively. The attrition/dropout rate indicates that students from GO, NGO, YDO are not interested to continue such type of diploma program might be due to lack of incentives of the diploma holders either in the form of increments, fellowship/assistantship or any other facility as regards to the income source.

As a result the attrition/dropout rate was always higher followed by failure rate (Figure: 2).



**Figure: 2**  
Success, Failure and Dropout of DYDW students in different cycles

This might be due to the fact that most of the students of DYDW program were service holders. So it is difficult for them to manage adequate free time for this program.

Besides, the 'English' became difficult as a foreign language and hard to many of the students. Lack of adequate financial support might also stand behind such high dropout rate.

Student attrition and completion rate in many distance teaching-learning program has been studied and reported that family and work commitment, lengthy and difficult course contents, lack of academic support etc. had been identified as the most important factors for student attrition in some courses (Biswas and Mythili 2006).

In some other cases it has also been found that without the regular face-to-face support of both tutors and peers, many distance-learning programmes suffer from very high dropout rates (Anonymous, 2004).

## **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION**

Diploma in Youth Development Work (DYDW) imparted through distance mode which was introduced at Bangladesh Open University (BOU) in 1999 aiming at accessible and flexible learning opportunities to the young men and women involved in youth development activities and prepare the participating youth towards performing active and constructive role in the regeneration of their fellow youth to become effective partners in socio-economic development.

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The reasons of high dropout rate might be due to language difficulty, lack of proper recommendation in high competitive job opportunities, lack of service incentives, financial support, scholarship/fellowship and recognition as cadre service by the Government. Service incentives to the diploma graduates have been suggested to reduce the attrition rate.

## **CONCLUSION**

Youth are the leaders and executives for tomorrow's world. It is important that the potential of them as a critical human resource has been realized through the DYDW program. Their cognitive and competence level should be recognized, enhanced, integrated and sustained into social, economic and nation building activities. The dropout rate is very high and increasing day by day. The dropout rate may be reduced through providing incentives in their services and income generating or creating job opportunities especially for the unemployed diploma awardees in the government and non-government organizations.

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