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What's New for 'Adult Education' in National Education Policy 2020? Some Critical Reflections

• **M. V. Lakshmi Reddy**¹

Abstract

Adult education is an important aspect of education, mandated by the country's Constitutional provisions and education policies. However, when the Constitutional directive for free and compulsory education to the citizens receives inadequate attention by the State and when the national education policies and programmes including adult education are not implemented fully in letter and spirit, it is quite natural that the processes of amendments, reviews and revisions of the same do happen periodically, if not with definite periodicity. At the same time, the latest developments in the field of (adult) education at global and national levels also do speed up these processes. Nevertheless, the success or otherwise of the efforts in education in general and adult education in particular, depends ultimately upon the vision, commitment and contributions of all those involved at all levels of policy-making and implementation, and more so those at the helm of affairs. An attempt is made here to highlight certain critical points of the educational journey of India in a crisp manner with special reference to the unfulfilled constitutional mandate for education, and the education policies that have cascaded over decades leading towards a realization of the need for the development of national curriculum frameworks for education, including adult education and the structural integration involving the formal and non-formal educational institutions at different levels across the country. It also seeks to highlight the crucial issues and aspects of institutionalization of adult education that require greater attention of the concerned towards its integration on long-term and permanent basis across all levels of the educational system in the country in the light of National Education Policy 2020.

Keywords: *adult education, lifelong learning, policy making and implementation, curriculum frameworks, institutionalisation, structural integration, professionalisation, critical reflections.*

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Reflections on Major National Level Commitments, Successes and Failures in the Educational Front

While independent India's journey started on 15th August 1947, the Constitution of India was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 26th November 1949 which came into force on 26, January 1950. In 2022, after a long journey of 75 years since its Independence, India celebrated "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" to commemorate its freedom movement and freedom fighters. Meanwhile, the Constitution of India has got amended more than a hundred times (as of October 2021, there have been 105 amendments) since its inception. From an educational point of view, out of all these, the Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 is of great significance, whereby Article 21A (Right to Education) got inserted after Article 21 as a fundamental right. A new article (Provision of early childhood care and education to children below the age of six years) substituted Article 45, and Article 51A got an additional clause (k), added to it after clause (j), as a fundamental duty. Consequently, "The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009" is enacted, the spirit of which actually extends the right to free and compulsory education beyond the age group of six to fourteen. Thus, it encompasses the 'right of adults' to similar education, particularly for those adults who did not have or lost the opportunity for education and crossed the age for formal education, and now feel a need for pursuing it. Salutes to all the national endeavours with all the mixed results!

In the same long journey, the country witnessed a few national policies on education, viz. 1968, 1986 and the revised 1992, and is now witnessing National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020). All those people who remained outside or had dropped out or discontinued from conventional education system effectively formed the target groups for non-formal education or adult education of different levels and kinds. Starting with no national education policy, no common pattern of education with complex structure $[(10/11)+(1/2)+(2/3)]$ and no common curriculum frameworks during 1947-67, the system moved on to 10+2+3 pattern/structure of education with common Curriculum for Ten-Year School: A Framework, 1975 during 1968-85 under 1968 policy, and to re-confirmed 10+2+3 structure during 1986-2019 under 1986 / 1992 policies, with National Curriculum for Elementary and Secondary Education: A Framework, 1988, National Curriculum Framework for School Education, 2000 and a National Curriculum Framework, 2005. Though 'Early Childhood Care and Education' and 'Adult Education' were stressed in these policies, there were no separate Curriculum Frameworks mandated/developed for these two areas since independence till 2020. The significance of NEP 2020 is that it mandated development of separate National Curriculum Frameworks for both 'Early Childhood Care and

Education’ and ‘Adult Education’ (MHRD, 2020:3). NEP 2020 emphasizes: “The highest priority of the education system will be to achieve universal foundational literacy and numeracy in primary school by 2025. The gap between the current state of learning outcomes and what is required must be bridged through undertaking major reforms that bring the highest quality, equity, and integrity into the system, from early childhood care and education through higher education. The aim must be for India to have an education system by 2040 that is second to none, with equitable access to the highest-quality education for all learners regardless of social or economic background”. Grand salutes to such a welcome policy commitment to highest-quality education for all learners!

The current policy further states: “The ability to read and write, and perform basic operations with numbers, is a necessary foundation and an indispensable prerequisite for all future schooling and lifelong learning. However, various governmental, as well as non-governmental surveys, indicate that we are currently in a learning crisis: a large proportion of students currently in elementary school — estimated to be over 5 crore in number -- have not attained foundational literacy and numeracy, i.e. the ability to read and comprehend basic text and the ability to carry out basic addition and subtraction with Indian numerals” (MHRD, 2020: 8). Given such state of affairs in the matter of learning outcomes of formal school students, it is needless to talk about the learning outcomes of target groups of adults of literacy and adult education programmes and missions of various kinds starting from Social Education Programme (SEP) through Farmers’ Functional Literacy Programme (FFLP), Workers’ Education, National Adult Education Programme (NAEP), National Literacy Mission (NLM), Saakshar Bharat (SB), and Padhna Likhna Abhiyan (PLA), among others, during the same journey. As per United Nations report (UNESCO, 2014, p.71): “India has by far the largest population of illiterate adults, 287 million, amounting to 37% of the global total.” Nevertheless, with just about 2 in 10 (18.33%) Indians being literate in 1950, now in 2022, the figures turned into opposite, i.e. 8 in 10 (77.70%) are literate (timesofindia.com), which is, no doubt, a great achievement. And, NEP 2020 aims to achieve 100% literacy in a few years ahead. It is truly a laudable goal aimed at raising the base-level to fully literate-India for moving towards irreversible, advanced adult education for all in the country.

Nature, Character and Potential of AE Institutional Structure in India during 1947-2019: An Overview

It is worthwhile here to have a brief overview of the potential structures of the past that played a crucial role in the promotion of adult education in India.

During 1947 to 1967: There was no uniform pattern of school education. So, it was too early to think of any common national curriculum framework for school education, let alone any such thing for adult education. However, the introduction of five-year plans began to pay significant attention to the promotion of adult education and there was a clear display of the Government's initiative to promote adult education in the form of social education to begin with. Janata Colleges, Community Centres, Farmers' Clubs and Mahila Samitis were launched. Social Education Officers' Training Centres took care of the training of the functionaries of social education programme at the grassroots level, while National Fundamental Education Centre (NFEC), established in 1956 discharged the functions of training, orientation and research, material production, clearing house activities, etc., in the field of adult education. NFEC was subsequently converted into Department of Non-Formal Education (DNFE) in the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). In the voluntary sector, Indian Adult Education Association (IAEA) which was established in 1938 as a voluntary organization continued to play its dynamic role in the field of adult education.

During 1968-1985: This period witnessed the first ever National Policy on Education 1968, which emphasized adoption of a broadly uniform educational structure (10+2+3 pattern) in all parts of the country, with the higher secondary stage of two years being located in schools, colleges or both according to local conditions. The Curriculum for Ten-Year School: A Framework, 1975 (NCERT, 1975) was developed covering 10 years of school education. The policy also laid emphasis on spread of Literacy and Adult Education. There were significant developments in the form of social education, farmers' education, workers' education, and education for youth, among others, for promotion of functional literacy linked with development. The Department of Non-Formal Education (DNFE) was taken over by Ministry of Education and Culture and renamed it as Directorate of Adult Education (DAE), which, in fact, was a turning point in the history of adult education in India because a separate resource support structure for adult education came into existence at the national level.

Subsequently, state and district level resource support structures such as State Resource Centres (SRCs) at state level, and District Resource Units (DRUs) as a part of District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) at district level emerged in the field of adult education. Of course, it is a widely known fact that a lot remained to be done to make the DRUs and DIETs fully functional in many districts across the country. The Departments of Adult, Continuing Education and Extension (DACEEs) have been established in certain Universities. Many Non-Governmental

Organisations (NGOs) came into existence and received adequate support from government to play their roles in different ways in promotion of literacy, adult education and continuing education. During this period, the first ever national level programme namely, National Adult Education Programme was launched in 1978 leading to very planned development of adult education resource support structures at different levels aimed at institutionalization of adult education and enhancing their potential contribution to adult education. It has also fostered the collaboration between formal educational institutions such as schools, colleges and universities and other implementing agencies of adult education. It was the period of collaboration of adult education institutions with various institutions in different sectors and thus brought in reforms in the field of adult education.

During 1986-2019: The National Policy on Education, 1986 (NPE, 1986) and the Programme of Action (POA) 1992 re-confirmed the common pattern of education (10+2+3) for the entire country, which came into operation extensively during this period. Three different national curriculum frameworks for school education followed in tune with the relevant policy requirements/directives. These are: National Curriculum for Elementary and Secondary Education: A Framework (NCERT, 1988) developed in response to NPE 1986; National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCERT, 2000) as per the mandate of POA 1992; and National Curriculum Framework 2005 (NCERT, 2005) in the light of the report, “Learning Without Burden” (1993). Though ‘Early Childhood Care and Education’ and ‘Adult Education’ were stressed in all these policies, no separate Curriculum Frameworks were mandated/developed for these two areas in the process of their implementation. Thus, as far as adult education was concerned, there were no curricular frameworks for adult education or for training of adult educators/functionaries at different levels.

Of course, there was no dearth of programme-specific orientation and training of the functionaries by the specific resource support structures at different levels – DAE, SRCs, DIETs/DRUs, and Jana Shikshan Nilayams (JSNs), among others. National Institute of Adult Education (NIAE) was established in 1991 at national level, subsequently Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSSs) at district level, Continuing Education Centres (CECs) at grassroots level were also established. More than hundred DACEEs came into existence at university level during this period. As a result, ample variety of literacy materials in the form of primers, including Improved Pace and Content of Learning (IPCL), post-literacy and continuing education materials as well as audio-video programmes were developed by DAE at national level, SRCs at state level, Zilla Saksharatha Samitis (ZSSs) and DIETs/DRUs at district level and Jan Shikshan Nilayams (JSSs), among others, at grassroots level in cooperation

with and support of other agencies including voluntary organisations involved in implementation of literacy missions or adult education programmes. It was the vibrant period of intensive and extensive campaigns and operations across the entire country for promotion of basic literacy, post-literacy and continuing education among adults.

Nevertheless, most undesirable development towards the end of second decade of 21st century is that the number of DACEEs got reduced drastically, and most of the existing ones have also been renamed as Departments of Lifelong Learning and Extension (DLLEs). Further, crucial resource support structures such as SRCs at state level received a death blow. Thus, as far as institutionalization of resource support structures is concerned, the absence of SRCs at state level is a big lacuna at present in the field of adult education. Establishment of DRUs as part of DIETs at district level remained an unfulfilled dream for decades.

Above all, the very nomenclature of adult education programmes too transitioned from National Literacy Mission to Saakshar Bharat and, finally, to Padhna Likhna Abhiyan. Such 'Abhiyan' is conceptually a retrogressive step as it reduced the very concept of literacy to reading and writing (Padhna Likhna in Hindi) that purged arithmetic from literacy (Saaksharatha). Of course, Equivalency programmes with some acceptable mechanism for recognition of prior learning have gradually become popular during this period. Equivalency Programmes for Basic Education popularly called the Open Basic Education (OBE) has been on offer for both children in the 6-14 age-group and out-of-school adults in the 15+ age-group. It is implemented at the national level through the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and at state level by the different State Open Schools (SOSs) across the country. This Equivalency programme (OBE) has three levels, A, B and C, which are equivalent to classes 3, 5 and 8 respectively of the formal education system.

'Adult Education and Lifelong Learning' under NEP 2020: Some glimpses of the potential offerings

Here, it is appropriate to look at some of the general provisions of NEP 2020 that have implications for adult education, and Chapter 21 of NEP 2020 which specially focuses on 'adult education and lifelong learning'.

Current global trend in education is to promote lifelong learning. India too posited its new educational policy in the context of lifelong learning. For instance, the global education development agenda reflected in the Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015 seeks to "ensure inclusive

and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030. Such a lofty goal will require the entire education system to be reconfigured to support and foster learning, so that all the critical targets and goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be achieved (MHRD, 2020: 3).

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) actually forms the true basis not only for childhood education but also for adult education and lifelong learning as it will have a strong effect on the education of adults in their later life. “The architecture of the brain forms from the prenatal period to age 5, and so this is an important stage for developing cognitive and socio-behavioural skills” (World Bank, 2018). Under NEP 2020, in the new 5+3+3+4 structure, a strong base of ECCE is also included, which is aimed at promoting better overall learning, development, and well-being (MHRD, 2020: 7). Further, the Policy states: The above four stages are purely curricular and pedagogical, designed to optimize learning for students based on the cognitive development of children; they will inform the development of National and State curricula and teaching-learning strategies at each stage, but parallel changes to physical infrastructure will not be required (MHRD, 2020: 12). But the emerging reality in implementation is already treading all together a different path in the field. For example, in the state of Andhra Pradesh which has taken a lead in implementing NEP 2020, there exist three types of institutions in the new education system – Pre-Primary Schools (PP1 and PP2), Foundational Schools (PP1, PP2, Preparatory Class I, Classes 1 and 2) and Secondary Schools (Classes 3 to 10/12). What sort of names of schools would appear in other states is interesting to watch!

Nevertheless, what is important to note under the new education policy is that the structure of new education system has great relevance to adult education infrastructure at grassroots level as the Government of India intends to use school systems also to reach out to the maximum number of non-literates under New India Literacy Programme (NILP). In addition, with growth in life expectancy and old-age population including the active superannuating people and to be in tune with the emerging global trend, it is also time to establish University of the Third Age (U3A) to enlist their effective engagement for their own welfare and of the society, as no prior qualifications and no subsequent certificates feature in this approach to ‘learning for its own sake’. This type of learning from ECCE through U3A, which can ‘prolong active life in old age’ also has the true potential to make lifelong learning a perfect reality engaging the people of all the ages in learning throughout the length and breadth of their lives.

Aligned with the recommendations of National Education Policy 2020 (Para 5.23) a new centrally sponsored scheme on ‘Education for All’ (Adult Education) –

New India Literacy Programme (NILP) has been designed. The scheme will cover five components of 'Education for All' as recommended by NEP, i.e. (i) Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, (ii) Critical Life Skills, (iii) Basic Education (Equivalency), (iv) Vocational Skill Development, and (v) Continuing Education. The scheme will use IT-Based platforms and school systems to reach out to the maximum number of non-literates. It is expected to cover 5 crore non-literate adults, in the age group of 15 years and above in both online and offline modes in the country within five years from 2021-22 to 2025-26 (Government of India, 2021: 102).

So, the trend expected to emerge in the field of adult education under the NEP 2020 is to integrate adult education infrastructure with formal school system and higher education institutions. For such integration of adult education with school system, it is essential to ensure that there comes into existence the prescribed structure of education (5+3+3+4) with uniform nomenclature of schools with appropriate combination of different levels/stages — Foundational School (3 years Anganwadi/Pre-school/Balvatika + classes 1-2), Preparatory School (classes 3-5), Middle School (classes 6-8), Secondary School (classes 9-12) across the country. The well-established pattern of 10+2+3 education system along with present nomenclature of schools as exists today – Primary (classes 1-5), Elementary (classes 1-8), Upper Primary/Middle (classes 6-8), Secondary (classes 1-10), Senior Secondary (classes 1-12), Intermediate/Junior College (classes 11-12) – calls for some standard realignment with new uniform nomenclature across the country. Accomplishment of such realignment of the school system with uniform nomenclature of schools is very crucial as it is also expected to reach out to the maximum number of non-literates through adult education.

Further, NEP 2020 intends to broad-base school education across all modes. Here, it is essential to note that school education includes equivalent adult education through ODL mode as well. "To facilitate learning for all students, with special emphasis on Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs), the scope of school education will be broadened to facilitate multiple pathways to learning involving both formal and non-formal education modes. Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Programmes offered by the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and State Open Schools will be expanded and strengthened for meeting the learning needs of young people in India who are not able to attend a physical school. NIOS and State Open Schools will offer the following programmes in addition to the present programmes: A, B and C levels that are equivalent to Grades 3, 5 and 8 of the formal school system; secondary education programmes that are equivalent to Grades 10 and 12; vocational education courses/programmes; and adult literacy and life-

enrichment programmes. States will be encouraged to develop these offerings in regional languages by establishing new/strengthening existing State Institutes of Open Schooling (SIOS)” (MHRD, 2020: 10-11). All adults who missed out education in their school age will have the full opportunity to accomplish the same now through NIOS and SOSs.

As per NEP, 2020, development of NCFs and SCFs (NEP Paras 1.3, 4.30, 5.28, 21.5) is very crucial for implementation of the policy. The four National Curriculum Frameworks, viz, National Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCFECCE) — in two parts, namely, a sub-framework for 0-3 year-olds, and a sub-framework for 3-8 year-olds, National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE), National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE), and National Curriculum Framework for Adult Education (NCFAE) will provide broad guidelines in the area of ECCE, School Education, Teacher Education, and Adult Education for quality and equitable education. The most surprising lapse that needs to be noted here is that, unlike NCFTE, there is no separate National Curriculum Framework for Adult Educators (instructors/teachers) who are to work at Adult Education Centres (AECs) at the community level and those to serve at AECs to be set up in HEIs. Further, to note: “Vertical mobility of teachers based on merit will also be paramount; outstanding teachers with demonstrated leadership and management skills would be trained over time to take on academic leadership positions in schools, school complexes, BRCs, CRCs, BITEs, DIETs as well as relevant government departments” (MHRD, 2020: 22). However, it does not provide for any such job security and mobility of adult education instructors/teachers at the grassroots level, and also adult educators/educationists at higher levels.

Reflections on Chapter 21 under Part-III of NEP 2020: This chapter focuses on ‘adult education and lifelong learning’ as two key focus areas. The provisions (MHRD, 2020: 51- Paras 21.1, 21.2, 21.3 and 21.4) highlight: (i) the opportunity to attain foundational literacy, obtain an education, and pursue a livelihood as basic rights of every citizen and the significance of literacy and basic education vis-à-vis the progress of individuals, society and the nation; (ii) innumerable disadvantages that a non-literate member of a community suffers in different fronts in life and lists abilities required to overcome these disadvantages as an illustrative list of outcomes to be achieved through adoption of innovative measures for adult education; (iii) volunteerism and community involvement and mobilization as key success factors of (a) adult literacy programmes, in conjunction with political will, organizational structure, proper planning, adequate financial support, (b) high-quality capacity building of educators and volunteers, (c) contribution of successful literacy

programmes to the growth of literacy among adults, and (d) the increased demand for education for all children and to the greater community contribution to positive social change; and (iv) the need for strong and innovative government initiatives for adult education to facilitate community involvement and the smooth and beneficial integration of technology to expedite the aim of achieving 100% literacy.

What can be observed from these provisions is that the above conceptualization of literacy and basic education does not differ much from what has been defined in NAEP document or subsequently in NLM or Saakshar Bharat documents. However, what matters is the manner in which the policies are implemented. For instance, why was National Institute of Adult Education (NIAE) established in 1991 (in violation of the clearly laid down policy provision leading to litigation and finally to its closure as well) and also rendered it 'erstwhile' (including demolition of the very building where NIAE was located/established)? Was there any accountability fixed on the concerned implementers who flouted the policy provisions in a blatant manner? Why is it that the state-level resource support structures in adult education such as SRCs, which were strengthened during the NAEP period and 1986 policies, and POA 1992, have been weakened and made defunct in the field at present? Whether such undoing with NIAE and the SRCs was provided for in the very policies or was it done by any amendments to the policy/policies? If not, why and how all these arbitrary undoing of such structures did happen? In other words, why the same kind of consultation process as was done while making the policy was not followed while closing down or rendering them defunct? Now also (under the extant new policy), can there be any guarantee that there will be effective implementation of NEP 2020 as far as Chapter 21 (adult education and lifelong learning) is concerned? One has to wait and watch how the integration of adult education infrastructure with the formal school system and HEIs proceeds and with what kind of consequences and accountability on the concerned at the helm of (new) affairs.

When we read: "Strong and innovative government initiatives for adult education to expedite this all-important aim of achieving 100% literacy" (MHRD, 2020: 51, Para 21.4) in conjunction with Paras 21.5, 21.6, 21.7, 21.8, 21.9 and 21.10, some hope lurks. First, an outstanding adult education curriculum framework will be developed by a new and well-supported constituent body of the NCERT that is dedicated to adult education, so as to develop synergy with and build upon NCERT's existing expertise in establishing outstanding curricula for literacy, numeracy, basic education, vocational skills, and beyond. The curriculum framework for adult education will include at least five types of programmes, each with clearly defined outcomes: (a) foundational literacy and numeracy; (b) critical life skills (including financial literacy, digital literacy, commercial skills, health care and awareness, child care and

education, and family welfare); (c) vocational skills development (with a view towards obtaining local employment); (d) basic education (including preparatory, middle, and secondary stage equivalency); and (e) continuing education (including engaging holistic adult education courses in arts, sciences, technology, culture, sports, and recreation, as well as other topics of interest or use to local learners, such as more advanced material on critical life skills). The framework would keep in mind that adults in many cases will require rather different teaching-learning methods and materials than those designed for children (MHRD, 2020: 51-52, Para 21.5).

These provisions are not new in any way when compared with the earlier programmes such as: Literacy programmes (Total Literacy and Post-literacy), Equivalency Programmes (EPs), Income Generating Programmes (IGPs), Quality of Life Improvement Programmes (QLIPs), and Individual Interest Promotion Programmes (IIPPs). If at all there is any difference, it is all in renaming and re-ordering of these programmes with descriptions of the components that go into them. However, one can only hope that these innovative initiatives will put in public domain at least all the (basic) literacy, post-literacy and continuing education materials hitherto developed and used by different SRCs, among others, as a part of implementation of literacy and adult education programmes/missions since 1960s till date in the form of a dedicated portal for the benefit of adult learners, as a part of comprehensive e-resource bases under the new policy!

Second, suitable infrastructure will be ensured so that all interested adults will have access to adult education and lifelong learning. A key initiative in this direction will be to use schools/ school complexes after school hours and on weekends and public library spaces for adult education courses which will be ICT-equipped when possible and for other community engagement and enrichment activities. The sharing of infrastructure for school, higher, adult, and vocational education, and for other community and volunteer activities, will be critical for ensuring efficient use of both physical and human resources as well as for creating synergy among these five types of education and beyond. For these reasons, Adult Education Centres (AECs) could also be included within other public institutions such as HEIs, vocational training centres, etc. (MHRD, 2020: 52, Para 21.6). But the policy is silent about who will man these centres, and what kind of (additional) qualification such as Post-Graduate Certificate, Post-Graduate Diploma or Master's in Adult Education is required to be possessing/obtained by them for effective implementation of adult education.

Third, the instructors/educators will be required to deliver the curriculum framework to mature learners for all five types of adult education as described in the Adult Education Curriculum Framework. These instructors will be trained by the

National, State, and district level resource support institutions to organize and lead learning activities at Adult Education Centres, as well as coordinate with volunteer instructors. Qualified community members including from HEIs as part of each HEI's mission to engage with their local communities will be encouraged and welcomed to take a short training course and volunteer, as adult literacy instructors, or to serve as one-on-one volunteer tutors, and will be recognized for their critical service to the nation. States will also work with NGOs and other community organisations to enhance efforts towards literacy and adult education (MHRD, 2020: 52, Para 21.7).

As a part of this initiative, though National Centre for Adult Literacy (NCAL) has been established in NCERT, if similar structures are established in the State and district level formal institutions on permanent basis, that will be a fulfillment of the long-awaited boon to the field of adult education. Of course, in this context, all the Departments of Adult, Continuing Education and Extension (DACEEs) and/or the renamed Departments of Lifelong Learning and Extension (DLLEs) in different Universities also need to play an active and dynamic role to address the issues of professionalisation of adult education and protect the interests of their products (alumni) as well as the disciplines of 'adult education' and 'lifelong learning' by paving the way for the establishment of similar Departments in all the colleges across the country.

Fourth, all efforts will be undertaken to ensure the participation of community members in adult education. Social workers/counsellors travelling through their communities to track and ensure the participation of non-enrolled students and dropouts will also be requested, during their travels, to gather data of parents, adolescents, and others interested in adult education opportunities both as learners and as teachers/tutors. The social workers/counsellors will then connect them with local Adult Education Centres (AECs). Opportunities for adult education will also be widely publicized, through advertisements and announcements and through events and initiatives of NGOs and other local organisations (MHRD, 2020: 52, Para 21.8). It calls for active involvement of community-based organisations with community-specific mechanisms, the modalities of which are required to be worked out in clear terms for ensuring such participation. In this context, the now defunct SRCs in different states, which find no mention in the new policy, can also play their role as voluntary organisations by forming a 'National Consortium of SRCs' and by encouraging formation of 'State Consortium of NGOs' in each state and 'District Consortium of NGOs' in each district to chalk out their self-styled dynamic agenda to continue to serve as a crucial resource support system of its own kind and character to demonstrate their latent potential in appropriate manner in the larger interest of the nation.

Fifth, improving the availability and accessibility of books is essential to inculcating the habit of reading within our communities and educational institutions. This Policy recommends that all communities and educational institutions — schools, colleges, universities and public libraries — will be strengthened and modernized to ensure an adequate supply of books that cater to the needs and interests of all students, including persons with disabilities and other differently-abled persons. The Central and State governments will take steps to ensure that books are made accessible and affordable to all across the country including socio-economically disadvantaged areas as well as those living in rural and remote areas. Both public and private sector agencies/institutions will devise strategies to improve the quality and attractiveness of books published in all Indian languages. Steps will be taken to enhance the online accessibility of library books and further broaden basing of digital libraries.

For ensuring vibrant libraries in communities and educational institutions, it will be imperative to make available adequate library staff and also devise appropriate career pathways and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for them. Other steps will include strengthening all existing libraries, setting up rural libraries and reading rooms in disadvantaged regions, making widely available reading material in Indian languages, opening children's libraries and mobile libraries, establishing social book clubs across India and across subjects, and fostering greater collaborations between education institutions and libraries (MHRD, 2020: 52, Para 21.9). These stipulations are also not new, and effective implementation of such provisions is long-awaited, as the same did not become a reality during the periods of the previous policies. However, if these provisions are translated into a reality on a sustainable basis at least during this policy period, that will be a remarkable contribution to the field of adult education.

Finally, technology will be leveraged to strengthen and even undertake the above initiatives. Quality technology-based options for adult learning such as apps, online courses/modules, satellite-based TV channels, online books, and ICT-equipped libraries and Adult Education Centres, etc., will be developed, through government and philanthropic initiatives as well as through crowd sourcing and competitions. In many cases, quality adult education could thereby be conducted in an online or blended mode (MHRD. 2020: 52-53, Para 21.10). While the quality technology-based options are always attractive, ultimately it is only effective implementation of this kind of provisions that will have a long-lasting impact on the promotion of lifelong learning among all adult learners in this ICT-driven world. Further, recognition and accreditation of prior learning of all categories of adults through effective integration of the formal, non-formal and informal systems of learning and education only can provide an effective mechanism for the realization of their dreams of lifelong learning.

In view of all the above, the significant place of adult education in NEP 2020 needs to be understood mainly from the critical point of view of its intended integration with formal educational institutions at different levels. "Fundamental principles of NEP 2020 include: synergy in curriculum across all levels of education from early childhood care and education to school education to higher education" (MHRD, 2020: 5). Towards this end, the policy exhaustively provides for not only national curriculum frameworks for different levels of school education but also for teacher education. To be precise, in addition to providing for NCFTE, it provides for training of workers/teachers of ECCE: (i) Current Anganwadi workers/teachers through a systematic effort in accordance with the curricular/pedagogical framework (NCPFECCE); (ii) Anganwadi workers/teachers with qualifications of 10+2 and above with a 6-month certificate programme in ECCE; and (iii) Those with lower educational qualifications with a one-year diploma programme covering early literacy, numeracy, and other relevant aspects of ECCE. On the other hand, though the policy also provides for NCFAE, it does not provide for any specific curriculum framework for training of adult educators/instructors, nor it provides for integration of their training components with NCFTE.

In other words, integration of 'adult education' and 'lifelong learning' components with NCFTE at all levels is a critical point worth serious consideration by all the teacher educationists and adult educationists and other concerned implementers of the policy. For instance, the 4-Year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), a dual-major holistic Bachelor's degree offering B.A. B.Ed., B. Sc. B. Ed., and B.Com. B.Ed. will be offered from the academic session 2022-23. By 2030, ITEP will be offered by multidisciplinary institutions and will become the minimal degree qualification for school teachers. Further, NEP 2020 proposes diverse teacher education programmes, both pre-service and in-service, including B.Ed. (2-year and 1-year duration), M.Ed., and Ph.D. degrees in education, in all multi-disciplinary institutions. Multidisciplinary higher education institutions offering the 4-year in-class integrated B.Ed. programme and having accreditation for ODL may also offer high-quality ITEP and B.Ed. programmes in blended or ODL mode. But regarding adult education, though it provides for NCFAE, it is silent about the curricular frameworks for adult educators/instructors. Since teaching adults is tougher than teaching children in the school, it would be more meaningful if NCTE can make it mandatory for all the institutions offering any of the teacher education programmes mentioned above, i.e. 4-Year ITEP, B.Ed. (2-year and 1-year duration), and M.Ed. to incorporate 'adult education' and 'lifelong learning' as compulsory courses in their curriculum.

Further, such integration would help in effective utilization of the services of the trained teachers during evenings, weekends and holidays for teaching of adults and

the community. In addition, even in all Bachelor of Arts (General Education), and Master of Arts (Education) programmes, which are not professional like B.Ed./M.Ed., it is more meaningful to mandate inclusion of the two courses — ‘Adult Education’ and ‘Lifelong Learning’ — as compulsory courses, or at least as optional/elective courses in their programme frameworks. Such mandates by NCTE to include ‘Adult Education’ and ‘Lifelong Learning’ as compulsory courses in the case of all professional teacher training programmes (i.e. 4-Year ITEP, B.Ed. 2-year and 1-year durations), and in all non-professional programmes [i.e. Bachelor of Arts (General-Education), and Master of Arts (Education)] would strengthen not only teachers’ understanding of adult education but also their role in effective implementation of adult education and lifelong learning programmes. Adult educators and educationists can only hope such a mandate follows from NCTE which can pave the way for ever-lasting and very sound integration of adult education with school education and higher education, and also various streams of the system in the country!

As per NEP, 2020 (Para 21.5), National Centre for Adult Literacy (NCAL) has been established in NCERT which is mainly responsible for the development of Primers, other online and offline learning resources and the development of the first National Curriculum Framework for Adult Education. Accordingly, Primer for Adult education is to be developed for non-literates of 15 years and above age group. The NCAL has prepared Primers on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) in Hindi. Process for the preparation of E-Primers, E-contents and Audio-Videos of Adult Education is also going on.

The first Primer on foundational literacy and numeracy for adult learners was prepared by NCERT and circulated to States and UTs on 30th December 2020. AE Bureau, NCAL, NIOS, and DAE will collaborate with various Ministries/Departments to prepare Teaching-Learning materials (TLM)/Primers for Critical Life Skills, Basic Education, and Continuing Education under convergence. TLM/Courses for Vocational Skills Development will be provided by the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship for the beneficiaries of NILP (Government of India, 2021: 72). However, it would be very useful if a special portal is developed by evolving an appropriate strategy for collecting and uploading of different types of literacy, post-literacy and continuing education material, among others including various audio and video programmes developed earlier by different SRCs and other institutions in different States/UTs. Such a portal can play a promising role in sustaining, promoting and enriching the skills of adult learners.

Marching Towards International Assessment – Need for robust demonstration

When the implementation of NEP 2020 is gearing up the country to become 'Vishwa Guru' in education, it is appropriate to take note of one very important development in this context. On January 28, 2019, the Government of India (GOI) signed an agreement with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to participate in the 2021 administration of its Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). PISA is a triennial international survey based on competency assessment that aims to evaluate education systems worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students in Mathematics, Science, and Reading. In the similar way, the Government of India (GOI) needs to move further to sign another agreement with the same OECD for 'Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies' (PIAAC) to put Indian adult learners' skills also for testing on international footing as this survey measures adults' proficiency in key information-processing skills — literacy, numeracy and problem solving. Further, all the adults of different ages need to be enabled to promote their learning, living and working environments with gender equity and equality to move on the path of sustainable lifelong learning. Since NEP 2020 is making its strides now, it is time to subject not only 15-year-old students but also all adult learners to the respective international surveys/assessment programmes so as to enable them to compete and shine in the international arena.

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Understanding the Culture of Sports: A Study of Malabar Region in Kerala

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Abstract

Shared values, assumptions, and beliefs within a geographical area form part of culture. Sports fall under the purview of entertainment in all the definitions given to culture. What if a single sport could connect every human being in a region? What if, like religion and customs, this sport also brought people together? Then that sport itself can be called the culture of that region. This research examines the culture of sports in the Malabar region through the perspectives and experiences of professional football players. Documenting the culture of sports, the coexistence of sports and community, sports for individual benefits and as social capital, the evolution of sport in a region, and factors that favour its wide popularity, would better help showcase it and use it as a role model for the entire country. This paper tries to define sports culture as a subtheme in the definitions given to culture.

Keywords: *sports, culture of sports, Malabar.*

Introduction

“O sport, you are peace! You forge happy bonds between the people by drawing them together in reverence for controlled, organised, and self-disciplined strength. Through you, the young of the entire world learn to respect one another, and thus the diversity of national traits becomes a source of generous and peaceful emulation.”

- Pierre de Frédy, Baron de Coubertin

Football is the primary source of happiness and enjoyment for the majority of Malabar's youth and children. Residents of Malabar consider football more than a game to them; it is intangible and challenging to convert into a state that a person can understand by reading a research paper. Nevertheless, there is a need to document

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it so that people who have not experienced it can understand how a sport and community can coexist.

Sport is an organised, competitive, and skilled physical activity which requires devotion and fair play. It is regulated with rules to display with utmost discipline. This physical activity requires skills, techniques, and sound mental health (Kulki, 2019).

Sports is an activity bound by rules and regulations. Even though it was just a leisure activity in ancient days, sports later had implications ranging from poverty alleviation to a medium for international relations. Sport is all about presenting an individual, sometimes within a team or alone within the limits of a playground.

Sport is defined differently in all definitions. Any physical activity carried out in a competitive environment demands mental or physical work, is bound by some rules and regulations, and may or may not entertain spectators. Sport has been considered an essential part of a group or a city's activity since historic and prehistoric times. Sport is both a science and an art. Well-known in classical Greece and the Roman era and epitomized in *mens sana in corpore sano* (a healthy mind resides in a healthy body), the sport has a beneficial physical, emotional, and educational impact on the individual. Sport is one of the few things that transcends social and economic barriers and brings people together. It prompts people to let go of their couches and engage in activities that demand both mental and physical work. The United Nations recognized the need for sport long ago and included it as one of the agenda to achieve sustainable development by 2030.

The United Nations Office of Sports for Peace and Development listed some unique ways to utilize sports for more extensive benefits; these are the goals that sports can contribute to achieving the SDGs.

- Sports principles such as fairness and equality can serve as examples of an economic system that relies on fair competition and promotes a level playing field. By strengthening skills and principles such as teamwork, collaboration, fair play, and setting goals, sports can teach and practice transferable job skills that encourage job readiness, productivity, and income-generating activities. Sports provide a platform to raise funds to alleviate poverty. Sports itself has grown into an international industry that provides employment opportunities directly and indirectly.
- For participation in Sports, the right to adequate food is necessary. Sport can encourage balanced diets, inform individuals about sustainable food production,

and promote better nutrition that discards foods produced by industry and replaces them with natural and healthy foods.

- Physical inactivity is the fourth risk factor for global mortality, identified by WHO. Participation in sports is the most accessible and economic countermeasure against this threat.
- Sports can encourage inclusion and promote equal participation for girls, women, and physically challenged personnel. Sports can nurture leadership skills and focus capabilities—sports and physical education help increase students' attendance in educational institutions.

Football, called soccer in some parts of the world, is a team game that acquired its current form in England in the mid-nineteenth century. Looking back to history, playing with balls, including kicking, was started in China in the third and second centuries BC. Football is played with a spherical ball, and a team consists of eleven players. It is played on a rectangular field with two goalposts at each end. Each team will try to move the ball to the opposition's post while they defend the opposition from moving the ball to their post. Two hundred teams participate in the World Cup qualifier, an international competition conducted by FIFA (the International Federation of Association Football). People in most countries admire, watch, and play football, making it the world's most popular sport.

When the Gulf Migration began, people in Malabar essentially relocated to Arabian countries in search of work. The money that flowed from there transformed the four districts that became part of Malabar. People started investing in their favorite game, which led to the introduction of day-night Seven's tournaments in every part of Malabar. It continues in this region; players from different countries come to play in seven tournaments as they realize that it offers a better income. The Sevens tournament's acceptance in Malabar is understandable by the number of spectators, and it is more than double the number coming for an Indian Super League (ISL) match in Mumbai Stadium.

Sports and Society

As a tool, sports have the potential to promote a sense of belonging in society and encourage integration between majority and minority communities. It is crucial in establishing identity and providing a mechanism for breaking down the barriers imposed based on socio-cultural identities. Sports associations, with equal inclusion and appreciation, are considered to provide new radical environments (Rao, 2014). Sports have been recognized as one of the most relevant institutions for creating

inclusivity. In Rwanda, a country in Africa, when the government planned to rehabilitate people, the tension between the two ethnic groups, Tutsi and Hutu, was one of the most threatening problems.

The Rwandan government invested a large share in sports, which showed a change in a positive direction. The results were gradual. To achieve a goal in sports, one must be disciplined and show team spirit. Social inclusion is the process of creating a fair and equitable system that makes it easier for people to choose and engage in a wide range of activities, including sports (Frisby and Ponc, 2013)

Sports can unite the community if any conflict occurs within it. By keeping all kinds of personal issues and challenges, people forget about playing as one unit; when they match with other communities, teams come together and play as one (Hussain, 2018)

Sports and Health

Sport constitutes a subset of physical activity. Physical activity is a critical behavior in health. It can improve health and reduce disease and disability in the population (Pate, 2019); studies have considered sports as a single entity and a subtopic of the larger one, physical activity. Not all physical activities are considered activities that qualify as sports because certain conditions are needed to be satisfied. Sports and health have an inevitable relationship; a sport demands both physical and mental work most of the time. In the present scenario, there is a shift in diseases from communicable to non-communicable. Musculoskeletal disorders are the most prevalent cause of chronic disability in industrialized nations. Chronic low back pain (CLBP) is an increasing disability, more rapidly than any other form of disability. It imposes an enormous financial strain on healthcare systems worldwide and causes personal suffering. Studies have said that regular exercise (a relatively inexpensive and easily administered approach to therapy) could address the increasing incidence of low back pain (Dvorak, 2009).

The players achieve motivation as individual development results in a willingness to work harder. Football is a potent tool where coaches and players collectively exchange their own beliefs simultaneously, improving the distance between them (Sangria, 2017); mental health is also essential, other than the physical aspect of health. Sports, more than entertaining the participants and spectators help motivate and instil confidence, and they also create unity and understanding between the people who are part of them. Sports are more acceptable and loved among children

and youth. Studies have proven that being involved in school sports helps children nurture some basic skills and creates hardworking behaviour. Also, sporting competition plays a vital role in developing a teenager's character (Bowen and Hitt, 2016). Football also promotes social interactions that impact the quality of life and demonstrates the potential to support active lifestyle adherence (Khan, 2012).

Sports in India

Sports like kabaddi and football are increasingly popular in India. In viewership, this sport has increased by over 65 percent year after year. However, they are in no way close to cricket. In India, we can see the hegemony of cricket; Indian sports are all about cricket. Both from the citizens and the state, cricket has received high-level recognition. The Indian cricket team is number one among the cricket-playing countries. The BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India) is the richest among all other countries' cricket governing bodies. Cricket has been promoted and fed to children from their childhood days; at the same time, all other sports are neglected due to a lack of results and limited possibilities. So, studying the state of other non-cricket sports in the country is important, as is contextualizing their emergence as a battle against cricket hegemony (Thomas, 2015)

Cricket was introduced chiefly in cities; infrastructures like ground and all built-in major cities opened them more opportunities for cricket. India's attitude towards sports was always at stake, politicians always captured its authority, and their approach towards sports and sports persons has been neglectful and apathetic. Neither sufficient infrastructure nor basic facilities were provided to the athletes of the country.

Half of the Indian population is under the age of 25; the country is young, which is impressive because this is happening when the rest of the world is aging. Young people require places and facilities to engage in sports. Danes are the world's happiest people, and Sport has much to do with that. India, too, could learn a few lessons and change its sporting landscape. It would be more competitive for a sporty society, less likely to get sick, and cause a drain on the exchequer. Its old people are likely to be fitter (Kumar, 2013)

Sports and Malabar

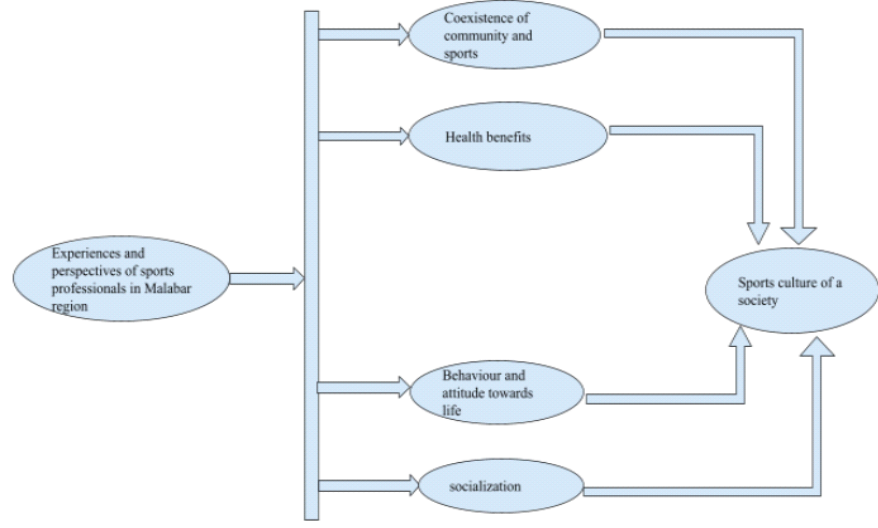
Football's story cannot be seen as a mere leisure activity by dislocating it from the socio-cultural world in which this game is played. This game attracted Malabari

people because of its easily understandable rules and less expensive nature—convictions reduced the gap between them (Ali, 2016). A study of 4 years, that is from 2000 to 2004, in the districts of Kerala shows that Malappuram has the least number of suicides in a year (Mathews, 2006). The study reveals that religious orientation in childhood is one of the prominent factors in reducing suicide rates in the Malappuram district of Kerala (Mohammed, 2013). People in Malappuram consider football a part of life; it acts as a uniting factor among them. They have the habit of facing life situations in a let it go manner, which helps them to stay out of depression and despair.

Field of Study

Malabar region of Kerala, before dividing into five different districts in 1957, formed the northern part of Kerala. Kannur, Wayanad, Kozhikode, and Malappuram were the areas chosen for this study.

Conceptualization of Study: Theoretical framework Conceptual framework



Ecological Systems Theory

The Ecological Systems theory treats individuals as active agents who constantly shape and are shaped by their environments. It attends to how multiple systems'

roles, norms, and rules shape behaviour. According to Bronfenbrenner's theory, Perception plays a vital role as he emphasizes the importance of perceptual factors in understanding behaviour and human development (Bronfenbrenner 1979). Football and community co-exist in Malabar, and they both contribute to each other. Individuals are shaped by the values given by football, and in turn, individuals play a role in developing football in society.

Research Objectives of the Study

- To understand the intersection between sports and health
- To understand the perspectives and experiences of the sports professionals
- To understand influence of sports in shaping behaviour and attitudes towards life
- To identify the role of sports in the process of socialization

Design of the Study

The study was conducted using a qualitative research design. This methodology helped understand how individuals were transformed into professional footballers. The narratives provided an understanding of how the participants experienced the coexistence of football and community.

Sampling and Sample Size

Participants were chosen through purposive sampling. For this study, the key informants were sports professionals living in Malabar.

Data Collection

The data was collected till saturation. In all eight in-depth interviews were conducted in the study region. *Panthuparanja Malappuram Kissa* and *Salam Football* published two related works on local football history, contributing secondary data for the study.

Tools for Data Collection

In this study, the researcher used an interview guide consisting of open-ended questions to gather the information surrounding the role of Sports, perceived benefits of its social model, and strategies and experiences in reaching out to the community to cover each objective, respectively.

Findings and Conclusion

Evolution of Football as a Popular Game

“British took everything except *Thiruvathira* (a local festival in Kerala) and *Njattuvela* (an ancient system prevailed in Kerala to calculate the suitable period for cultivation),” is a saying in Malayalam. However, the British gave back something in return; English and Railway were vital; football was something Malabarians (Malabar people) appreciated equally.

Football was first propagated on this soil by the Malabar Special Police (MSP), formed in 1852 with its headquarters in Malappuram to suppress the anti-British riots. They also introduced volleyball, basketball, and hockey. Following the Malabar Uprising of 1921, the natives distanced themselves from the whites. The rationale behind these ‘games’ was that this strategy drew people closer to them, looking at them with only fear. Malappuram natives run into the vast meadow of football because they watched the game from outside the field in the early days, then learned the game and got ready for a friendly match with the whites over time. The game nests flourished in and around Malappuram, Pondicherry, and Areekode, where the Malabar Special Police camps were set up.

“In those days when we were afraid of whites, we first saw the game of football hidden in the bushes around the army barracks in Nilambur. We did not get the ball they were playing, so we started the game with a thick ball wrapped in rubber.”

- Khan (2018)

To the British, who wore boots, the natives clashed barefoot. In the early days, the people of Malappuram used to use football as a turban made and beautifully covered with banana leaves. Later, it became a rubber ball and became real football at a very late stage. All other three games other than football had vanished from the ground. The Malabar football association was formed even before forming the state of Kerala. There are three different stories of three different legends to understand the evolution of football in Malabar. Firstly, Moideen Kutty, an international player in Young Indians, a former football club in Malabar, a remote village resident, and one of their favourite players in the study region where football has become an intrinsic part of their lives.

Kulamaattikkalathil Moideenkutty also known as “Malappuram kutty” was the first football hero of Malappuram. After the partition, he was born in Malappuram and became a football marvel in British India and Pakistan. He would kick the ball to

the goal post with the strength of iron and was so popular with the name ‘Iron Man’ in the playground. He became famous from even early years of his life by playing in local clubs. In 1944, at the age of 17, he joined the Indian Royal Air Force team as the British were amazed by his play. Moideenkutty was the only Indian in the Air Force team to become a striker with ten English players. In major cities, including Bangalore, the Air Force team won with the help of Moideenkutty’s goal. Moideenkutty, who went to Pakistan after the partition of India, became an Air Force star player there too. In 1952, Kutty became a member of the Pakistan national team for the first time. He made his debut at the Asian Quadrangular Cup in Ceylon. In 1953 (Rangoon), 1954 (Calcutta), and 1955 (Dhaka), Moideenkutty became Pakistan’s top scorer in the Quadrangular Cup. In 1962, Moideenkutty scored two goals in the second half against the hosts Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in the woods, perhaps the record in world football today.

Young Indians were the team of florists and porters and were the football team of Kozhikode, especially Palayam in the 1980’s. The club was born out of the love of football of ordinary workers. It included the then famous players, including T Surendran, M Balakrishnan, M Kumaran, KP Rajappan, KP Venugopal, VC Ashok Kumar, Usman Koya, and others. The club became a hit. A large number of workers and traders from Palayam, the major center of the city, would come to watch the game of the Young Indians.

The third story is about the Chennamangaloor village, the Grameena Vayanasala, Local football team. Then football was shifted to the fields. After the harvest, modified rubber balls were brought, which could dance on the remaining sharp paddy. With gradual development, the people of this village, which was almost isolated, started going to the surrounding villages for competition. For others, the village organised football championships. The village and the locals joined hands with the players. It grew into a stage of enjoyment and pride with charm.

“In those days, finding the cash to buy boots was a big problem. Only a few have boots. Then I went to a bucket fund collection to buy boots for the rest. When that was not enough, we relied on the areca nuts at Oramkuzhi garden in Pottassery without our father’s knowledge. Finally, the locals treated us with paratha and beef when we won the match.”

-Salam Football

For the next decade, that is in 1980’s, the Youth Library (The local football club of Chennamangallur) went undefeated in most of the tournaments in the Kozhikode district. Chennamangallur stood with the team like a single soul on a single wheel.

“There will be one or two elders called “moons” in the playground every day. They are the main characters of the games. They will step up to the ground borders and be qualified at the game’s early start. Everyone else will stand in front of these locals as a group of two. Slogans affirmed earlier in secret will be called out aloud. Then they would ask, “who wants jackfruit or mango ... America and Russia do not want any”. Thus goes the part joining. The elders would think cleverly, show the signs, and tell me that it was Russia and mango for me. The elder’s side, which is called Russia, is open, and the Russian is on the side, and the other is on the side of the other elder. This is the auction call-up of the day. Abdul Salam stood unique among us as amazed as he fried mustard in the playground with the football ball. He has always been a star player in this call-up.”

-Salam Football

For the past 30 years, cricket has been a hot topic in India, and while media and commercial monopolies such as television have made cricket the main and only Sport of Indians, irrespective of their rural affiliation, the Malappuram football field is in full swing. Malappuram district hosts over a thousand tournaments with and without tickets.

i. Factors that Favoured the Growth of Football

Anti-imperialist sentiments, love, brotherhood, fearlessness, compassion, and the desire for freedom are all ingrained in the blood of the people of Malappuram. These unique virtues and their crazy passion for football are the same. They rotate unrecognizably like the top and bottom of a ball. The topography of Malabar is very relevant for this Sport; it has a flat area, long paddy fields, and large compounds resulting in the conversion of these spaces into small and extensive grounds. When the summer season comes, all paddy fields will be free after harvesting in every village; these are later converted to stadiums to conduct tournaments. According to one of the respondents, the situation of spaces availability and accessibility can be observed as:

“There were several reasons why football received more acceptance than other regions in India and why football, not any other games. Less expensive as compared to other games and easy to learn. The topography of Malabar was congenial for making numerous grounds; almost all football associations in Malabar started from any paddy fields or compounds. Compared to other places of Kerala, Malabarians consume a considerable amount of non-veg (Beef, Chicken, and Mutton), which increases the heat in the body contrary to other games played at that time; football aids in burning it out.”

-NiyasKunnamangalam, Santhosh trophy winner, Karnataka

Joint family culture existed in Malabar until the beginning of the 21st century, with approximately 20 to 30 members in every family. Out of them, there used to be a player who could inspire every youngster in the family. Like that, there used to be a local celebrity in every village, the best player in the area. He could be the past or present international or state, or district level player; the recognition and respect he received motivated the entire masses.

It is more convenient than other games to play, with just one ball as a tool and less complexity keeping the financially backward people familiar in football. In addition, the possibility of the inclusion of 22 people helped popularize football. Inspiration from the recognition and acceptability received by senior and former players is also a major motivating factor.

ii. Popular Game

Football has become more popular than any other sport because of its democratic values and morals dissolved in it. Like the country, each village had its own game and players' heritage and pride to remember and cherish. Some played the game, those who had given their lives to the game, those whom the game gave life to, those whose life has become a game, those who have been pushed out of the realm of life by playing, those who have climbed to heights, those who have fallen. Also, many people have become outcasts on the playing field of fate. *Creeside* is a village that has contributed many football talents to the country and the Malayalam land. These are the people who took the game seriously. So for footballers, life is not just a game; it is a life and soul.

Football documentary director Madhujanardhanan, who became helpless to compile a list of players who played for the state from the district, said it was impossible. That much is the wealth of football there.

2. Coexistence of Football and the Malabar Community

i. Football and Malabar

"Now I run a sports store. I have seen many parents buy a pair of boots, a jersey, and books and uniforms."

-Nishad Mavoor

Many true revolutionaries were killed and hanged by the British, but they could not defeat them. People of Malabar who had played on the same soil were well-known social reformers. Variyan Kunnath and many unknown reformers fought

bravely against the British. It is not the same football played in Manipur or Germany; it is discrete. If football has the same meaning in the entire world, Malabar has a different one. Football has no language; football itself is a language. Every football player in Malabar is an asset to society.

They built grounds by investing their money and time; they discovered novel versions of footballs, Sevens (seven players in a team), Fives, and Threes, and formed new rules and regulations because limitation of space or lack of several players should not restrict them from playing. They started Mud football (played in wet and marshy lands) to play in the rainy season. After harvest, every field will be converted into football grounds. With that, schooling and football will be not only parallel but also equal.

“While I was teaching a part of the Adhyatmaramayanam Kilipattu of Ezhuthachanin class, Nasser Chalakal came up with a notice. The paper was empty when I looked. I asked him with my eyes what had happened; Nasser whispered in my ear that “Today there is a match at Panikkarapurayu, right? It is with Mavoor; we should rock it”. Unknowingly a smile appeared on my face. I tried to escape from students by saying that it was not for them. It was a time when holding the position of assistant manager of the Brazil Chennamangallur team. This is not just the story of Nasser. When it became the season of Sevens, football was the only thought of the people of Chennamangallur during food and sleep.”

-Salam Football

Today, the game has found its way into popular culture with films and stories made about it. Football has always become a game of the masses. So, it is little wonder that the game has made its way into popular culture. Malayalam films have been made on the game. Stories have been written. Moreover, one can safely assume that the trend will just go on, considering how Seven's form of football is gaining popularity across the state.

“In Hartals, you can see people playing football by placing a pair of stones in two ends on the public roads of Malabar. The success of every football tournament indicates the bond between Malabar and football.”

Suhail Thiruthiyad, Calicut Interzone winner, Farook College (2016)

If a man takes a ticket of 20 rupees to watch a match, 2 rupees will directly go to any human welfare activity, and everyone knows it; this also motivates people to watch football from galleries. This humanitarian aspect also plays an inevitable role in linking football and Malabarians. In an official sevens tournament a minimum of

five thousand spectators used to be there; it crosses more than 20 thousand for finals and semi-final matches.

When we talk about the players' glory, we need to remember the football lovers and organizers who make the football ground exciting. It is these players who instil confidence and enthusiasm in the players. Furthermore, those people sitting near the border of the ground who are concerned about the pride of their land and team often remain unrecorded nowhere in the history of football. For them, football is a blood-soaked thing more than just entertainment. The passion behind this game is not the slight thought of localism but the great excitement of humanity. They will be present near the borderline of the ground with lime wherever the tournaments are participated by the team of their home country or club by giving inspiration and excitement to the players. They will be present in every village and country, making every victory a celebration of the country and turning every competition into a festival. Football would not be so exciting and beautiful without these people who spend their own time and money to reach the ground.

ii. Football as a Social Capital

The social values and social capital that football in Malabar passes to the community are different from other regions. Football aids in being more social rather than selfish; it teaches individuals some qualities like the value of hard work, punctuality, commitment, teamwork, respecting opponents, and also physical and mental health benefits.

Football is one of the fundamental contributors to community development. The ground itself is a society; players irrespective of religion, race, and caste will be there in your team or opposite team. Essential learning from football is if your teammate commits any mistakes, the team will motivate him and try to compensate for it as a team; this team feeling transfers to Malabar people because the majority are either players or once played. To love and compete with each other simultaneously, understand everyone's flaws, and try to compensate for them as a team. It aids in nurturing a society that reacts when any wrongdoings are spotted.

Football connected them, brought them together, and led to socialization. This led to the formation of many associations and clubs. In the 2018 and 2019 Kerala floods, when official rescue forces were unable to reach the remote areas of Malabar, it was these associations of youngsters led by elders that saved the lives of thousands; it is just a single example to cite their work. Every tournament conducted puts aside

a considerable share of its profit for welfare activities. Seven tournaments conducted in Malabar provide jobs for thousands of players and people who sell food items in the galleries. In Malabar, there are around 60 official Seven's tournaments and approximately a thousand local tournaments conducted in a single season.

"The basic aim of football is building a healthy mind and body; it makes a healthy society".

-Shareef Areekod, Santhosh trophy winner kerala (2017)

To join government services or any professional jobs, not just competitive exams or educational qualifications but also sports, is an option.

Training of children who can transmit positive energy to society. Football is one of the primary contributors to community development. Qualities like commitment and team feeling help us sustain relationships with family, friends, and society. If a player in the losing team gets frustrated, winning team members, instead of celebrating, console him/her, it happens mainly on the playgrounds only.

"There are around 63 registered camps in Kozhikode district (a district in Malabar region) only, the lion's share of parents who bring their child to camps are very well aware that not every child will become professional players but what prompts them to do is other benefits it gives to a child."

- JiyadKaruvanthiruthi, (2017) Santhosh Trophy winner (Kerala)

Malabarians conduct numerous tournaments; not a single tournament is conducted for any monetary benefit; it is either for collecting funds to run their football club or for any welfare activities. Sevens Tournament Committees in Malappuram contribute more development work and funds to the country than a district Panchayat member. Such committees run everything from charitable activities to ground construction. Sports professionals spread positive messages and encourage welfare activities through social media handles.

iii. Individual Benefits

These include hard working mentality, punctuality, game spirit, commitment, respect to teammates and opposite team players; planning short-term and long-term goals and working to achieve them; and ability to change oneself as per the demands of the situation. They understand the situation, have quick decision-making, skills to implement those decisions, capacity to act when wrongdoings are spotted.

When a striker loses a ball by his mistake, a defender investing all his efforts tries to retrieve it and gives it back to the same striker, the confidence we are passing to him, and when he scores the goal, the confidence he is passing to us—appreciating and supporting each other on the ground.

“Consider a situation in football, conceding a goal in the 92nd minute to make the score a draw, and in the final minute, we are either conceding a goal or scoring a goal—the capacity of the mind to develop from zero. Situations change instantly in football. A commoner faces ups and downs in life, numerically approximately twice or thrice in a day, but in football, it happens hundred times in a single match. We may win today, lose tomorrow, and vice versa. We may lose to the same team we won last time by a high margin. This instability, ups, and downs situation trains you to face any situation in life. If a human being takes 100 decisions in a day, a football player takes more than 1000 decisions in a 90-minute match.

If a player receives the ball while playing, he examines its speed and height, using which side he wants to control it, to which he wants to pass, using which part of the body, and at what speed. A player takes these decisions and implements them. If a person can act and react to this much in a short period, it equips him to overcome any struggles in social life. if a player can use these skills in his education and social life and transmit them to others, it contributes to community development.”
-NiyasKunnamangalam, Santhosh Trophy Winner, Karnataka

The most important factor to developing resilience and peace is the capacity to face defeats. Most often, struggles are breaking the equilibrium of our life and mind. For a player, he faces it almost every day. Sometimes, he wins or loses, but he continues playing with more confidence and putting more effort.

iv. Role of Institutions

Religion, family, educational institutions, and government were the four institutions mentioned by participants. All participants had the same views that religion played no role in shaping an individual into a football player and the prevalence of sports culture in Malabar. However, they pointed out that faith in any god helps to have a hopeful and peaceful mind.

“Religion gives a positivity, peace and hope to commit hard work.”
-Suhail Thiruthiyad, Calicut Interzone champion (2016)

Combining every institution, Family, Religion, educational institution, and government produces a player. A single institution cannot do that. I cannot mention a single person but a group of people from family, educational institutions, and the village who motivated and stood beside me to raise me as a football player.

Every participant received his initiation for a football career either from family or educational institutions. Sports quota is a reservation in every college for sports players. Also, the government offers jobs for those who excel in sports. Both these provisions motivate players to remain in the profession of sports. Every Panchayat in the Malabar region owns a stadium; they utilize every possible fund available from the government for the growth of football. Politicians who want to influence the vote bank of youngsters, consider it worthwhile in investing in the sports infrastructure.

Conclusion

From time immemorial, the passion shared by Malabar is football, and the festivals celebrated are football matches, in which there is no difference between the players and the spectators. The experience is that people take pride in discussing this game in every household. Such conversations are not new anymore. It is an emotional tradition that has been growing for generations.

Kerala is rapidly becoming a middle class and moving towards the path of racism, fascist orientation, and socialist allegiance through apolitical arguments or reactionary politics. Malappuram is sure to be the last place in that line as the proclamation of colourful popularity and the effects of Carnival culture are rippling through the playgrounds. Football associations in each place are the best antidote as the country moves towards the path of racism, fascist orientation, and socialist allegiance through rapid apolitical arguments or reactionary politics.

We need to focus on football; those football grounds have taught us eternal friendship and survival lessons. That is how the place was inextricably linked and united, no matter how hard it tried to divide. The poorest people worldwide play football; tangible change in the world is the change in the poorest people, and they are the neediest in this Culture. That is where football can interfere; that is the success of football. Identify the driving forces of this Culture and ensure its sustainability.

Sports remain essentially a neglected topic for research in the country. A sport has limitless capacities, as highlighted by its power to unite young people of diverse backgrounds and provide them the means for a more fantastic future. Like food

culture, football culture is an excellent indicator of the socioeconomic and even political conditions of a place where it is practiced. Sports as a field of study is significant because it aids in understanding and critiquing many elements of a society and its Culture.

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Effectiveness of Experiential Learning as a Pedagogy in Higher Education: A Study of SFIMAR

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Abstract

With the change in the teaching style to develop engagement among students and let them enjoy learning, experiential learning is gradually gaining momentum. 'Rote Learning' is getting replaced by more pragmatic 'Learning by Doing' in a controlled environment, which is more a learner-centred approach. The main focus of the study is to capture the practices followed at SFIMAR and its outcome to gauge the effectiveness.

This study takes SFIMAR (St. Francis Institute of Management & Research) as a case study where few teachers used certain proven or innovative experiential learning activity as a pedagogy for their respective subjects. At the end of semester/trimester, faculty submitted their report on the activity and students submitted their descriptive feedback. These materials were taken as data source to check whether outcomes expected by teachers are experienced in similar manner by students.

Studies found that innovation in teaching is the prerequisite for a novel learning environment. The study captured the objectives of the activity/project, implementation of the approaches they followed, and the learning outcomes achieved. Feedback from a few students were taken to validate the effectiveness of the experiential learning method. Activities which were repeated over years took care of students' feedback to modify the approach next year and get better result.

It is grounded that experiential learning helps in stimulating curiosity of the students and make them more capable in understanding and approaching the problem in a

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more pragmatic way benefiting them both in their academics as well as in their professional lives.

Keywords: *Experiential learning, decision making, problem solving, innovative pedagogy.*

Introduction

The extent of student engagement in higher education has increased tremendously in the last decade. Teacher-centric approach is taking a back foot while the learner-centric approach is coming to the forefront. In this context many new experiments are done to measure the effectiveness of various pedagogical initiatives and how they could be related to various subjects. The phase-wise implementation of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India considers ‘Foster Experiential Learning and Critical Thinking for Employability’ as one of its major objectives. Experiential Learning encourages ‘Learning by Doing’. Many management education institutions are now trying out various forms of experiential learning as an innovative pedagogy, which is also an important criterion for getting institute and course accreditation. St. Francis Institute of Management & Research (SFIMAR) is a management education institute founded by ‘The Society of the Congregation of Franciscan Brothers’ to impart quality and value-based management education. Organisations are focusing on applied learning with emphasis on individual immersion (Rodríguez and Morant, 2019). Necessitated by global upheavals, SFIMAR realized that there is a need for a high level of cross-cultural awareness and an understanding that education is considerably more than memorizing data about certain fields and varied people while sitting in a classroom. SFIMAR motivates its faculty members to bring in innovative experiential learning ideas into teaching and is quite flexible to provide required support.

Literature Review

Organisations and educational institutions are mainly concentrating on teaching and training approaches that emphasize students’ active immersive experience and involvement throughout the course. Theory like experiential learning focuses on how managers are able to process and adapt novel experiences into essential knowledge assets, and how such experiences improve their levels of fulfillment, motivation, or performance at the management level. When aiming to give students with essential practice-based information and learning by doing insights, applying this paradigm to the classroom setting becomes critical (Rodríguez and Morant, 2019). To respond to the needs of the environment, higher education institutions should have flexible curricula. With projectbased learning, students participate in

multidisciplinary applied research and development under the supervision of teachers, whereby collaborative and networked education often answers to the needs of working life. These projects may encourage entrepreneurial activities within a higher education institution while also assisting students in pursuing their own business ventures. Because many research and development initiatives involve worldwide collaboration and finance, international activities are also important components of networking (Kettunen & et al., 2013).

For students, educators must arrange learning activities. Students' confidence in their skills to execute in the real-world which will improve themselves when they have opportunities to encounter aspects related to cognitive and affective domains of learning in a controlled environment (Murphy & et.al., 2011). Innovative pedagogy can give chances for the educator and his or her students to grow as individuals in connection to one another. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) is becoming more vital in education for long-term growth. New pedagogies, including inquiry-based learning, problem-based learning (first adopted in 1969 at McMaster University School of Medicine), play-based learning, and design-based learning, have been presented in accordance with these concepts (Zhao & et al. 2021).

Educational systems, including curriculum, must be reformed in order to produce critical and creative thinkers who are committed to contributing to the knowledge society. Knowledge construction, problem-solving, and innovation, as well as skilled communication, collaboration, self-regulation, and the use of technology for learning, are the 21st-century learning outcomes. These put the student at the centre of educational processes. Students participate actively in the learning process, paving the way for them to become knowledge builders. As the name implies, and in contrast to traditional educational settings, innovation in education will change students from "knowledge consumers" to "knowledge creators" by placing them at the centre of creative educational environments (Fýndýkođlu & et al., 2016).

Knowledge of various cultural competency aspects, development of culturally competent communication skills, acquiring culturally competent nursing practices, increasing self-awareness of cultural competence, and developing self-efficacy in a variety of cultural circumstances were all built (Marja & et al., 2021). Although the physical environment of teaching has changed to some extent, the core pedagogical method and underlying assumptions about learning and knowledge transfer are essentially unchanged. In these circumstances, there's a chance that broad adoption of simple learning technologies like Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) will be misinterpreted as educational innovation. However, in the second phase, learning

technologies are employed in novel ways to go beyond what was achievable in the classroom, or to blend old procedures with ineffective and valuable e-learning modes to satisfy new teaching and learning objectives and purposes (G. Salmon, 2005). Learner-centered and problem-centered techniques are frequently considered as having higher potential to transfer to the next generation than subject-centered ones. Flexibility is essential for meeting the different learning demands of diverse student cohorts. Technology, a diversity of instructional techniques, and choice and flexibility in assessment are all necessary to enable flexibility, variety, and choice while maintaining adequate standards. Teachers at various higher levels of education utilize a variety of techniques, including customization, small learning communities, student advisors, interdisciplinary curriculum, peer tutoring, peer instruction, and team teaching (Naz & et al., 2017).

Innovative pedagogy is defined as a proactive effort to more creatively incorporate instructional ideas and methodologies into classroom learning. The goal is to guarantee that students accept full responsibility for their education and actively pursue their goals. Simultaneously, the instructor serves as a facilitator in attaining the specified learning goals. Students' engagement, motivation, and critical thinking improve as a result of innovative teaching, providing them a reason to stay in school and complete their education. It may be claimed that successful use of creative teaching is critical to increasing student engagement and enthusiasm in skills-based courses like computer craft, as well as lowering school dropouts, truancy, and poor academic performance (Fýndýkoglú & et al., 2016).

Universities are increasingly focused on providing cutting-edge research and increasing their social presence and impact. Teaching and professors are not at the top of their priority list. To execute change, you'll need an institutional plan. Institutions must adopt a new mindset when it comes to their procedures and beliefs (Peredes & Freitas, 2018).

Research Question Development

In experiential learning (EL) individuals become noticeably more accountable for their own learning under this experience-based learning framework, and there appears to be a strong relationship between the learning experience and reality (e.g., role playing, business games, computer-based simulations, virtual reality, etc.). According to Peris Otiz et al. (2016) fostering an experience-based learning environment combined with educational, technical, and pedagogical tools is becoming increasingly important to universities.

Project Based learning (PBL), which is another popular form of EL, is known for promoting deeper learning of knowledge-in-use. PBL is based on four main theoretical concepts: activity building, contextual learning, social interactions, and cognitive tools (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). PBL comes in several forms (Barron et al., 1998; Krajcik et al., 1998), but they all have the following characteristics: PBL employs a motivating question that is relevant to the students. This question piques students' interest and keeps them motivated over time. Teachers and communities have embraced project-based learning as an energizing method for motivating students to study (Beneke & Ostrosky, 2009; Chu, Tse, & Chow, 2011). Student-driven projects can get off topic, resulting in missed teaching time, failure to meet academic requirements, and ineffective participation (Blumenfeld et al., 1991). Barron and his colleagues (1998) feel that PBL has been shown to be motivating for students in studies, and preliminary data suggests that it improves student learning of difficult subjects as well as other abilities such as problem solving and confidence (Kokotsaki, Menzies, & Wiggins, 2016).

Many models were developed to streamline experiential learning over a period of time. David Kolb was the first to introduce the ELT (Experiential Learning Theory) Model in 1984, who was highly influenced by John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, and Jean Piaget. This model focuses on describing the process of how to transform experience and knowledge. Kolb's Model has been criticized by many people on the ground that enough attention is not given to reflection (Bond, Keogh and Walker, 1985), culture-based difference (Anderson, 1988) or context and emotion (Bond, Keogh and Walker, 1996). Bergsteiner et al., (2014), in an endeavor to develop a more concrete model, based on various criticisms of Kolb's model, introduced two learning cycles (popularly known as Twin-cycle Model of EL), one for CAP (Concrete-Active-Primary) domain and other for APS (Abstract-Passive-Secondary) domain. The paper inferred that the intention of a student to learn from an activity depends on how he judges about what is to be learned, which will ascertain his experience whether it is concrete, abstract, active, passive, primary or secondary.

According to Radovic et al. (2021), EL process is influenced by personal factors like demographics or personal characteristics such as integrity, openness and commitment (Chi, 2013), and organizational factors related to learning tasks and processes. Another study done by Gustafson and Branch (2002) suggested the hybrid method by combining theory and practice driven approaches. Influenced by this mARC, this model was developed. This model gives a structure to help develop an effective EL environment. The model emphasizes on the use of critical elements which have a fostering role and a strengthening role. This also gives importance to reflective and collaborative learning activities (Radovic et al., 2021). Most of the

studies were examined through experimentation in engineering colleges, nursing colleges or at school level, but very few studies were administered at MBA college level though many institutions are practicing it either in a formal or informal way. Therefore, this paper tries to address the questions:

1. What are the effects of these EL activities on students' learning experience?
2. Can these EL activities support a subject specific, as well as a holistic curriculum?

Context, Method Design and Results

At SFIMAR every month IDEA (Innovation and Development for Excellence in Academics) Committee meeting is held to brainstorm various innovative pedagogies and report on the activities conducted. As a part of Project Based Learning (PBL) it was decided that in every semester/trimester each student should get an opportunity to work on at least two PBLs. Depending on the requirement of the subjects, faculty members decided on the type of EL methods. For some subjects, simulation games were chosen, while for some other subjects, certain other activities were designed. Some of these were followed over years, and some were taken as odd activities during the semester or trimester. Out of many EL programmes, 6 were chosen for this study which followed mARC Model (Radovic et al., 2021), where critical elements were used to discuss and explain the concepts. Teachers played the fostering role in going through the EL process thereby applying Gustafson and Branch's (2002) hybrid method of combining theory and practice driven approaches.

The ELs followed a three-stage approach suggested by Dogantam (2020), i.e. preparation; implementation; evaluation and reflection. The major objective of all these ELs was to develop students' employability skills in the form of increase in confidence, better communication skills, group dynamics, decision making ability, etc.

Table 1 summarizes the activities conducted, objectives behind each activity and the teachers' inference on the achievable Learning Outcomes (LO). Faculty as educators played the role of contributing instructional support in the learning process of the student with the expectation of some achievable LOs. These LOs support the active learning style and in turn stimulate intellectual curiosity, individual creativity and enhance the performance of psychomotor skills (Murphy et al., 2011). At the beginning of the semester/trimester, faculty submitted the objectives of the EL activity in their session plan, and at the end they submitted a report mentioning their inference on achievable LOs.

Table 1: Subject-wise ELs and Teachers' Expected Los

Sl. No.	Subject & Experiential Learning Pedagogy	Description of the activity	Teacher's inference on achievable Learning Outcome
1	Marketing Management – Marketing Plan	Description: It is a 3 month activity. Students are shared with guidelines to make the marketing plan and the marking scheme. The plan outline includes situation analysis (competition, market condition, socio-political environment, etc.), problems and opportunities, objectives, budgeting, strategy and action plan. At the beginning, groups are formed and a product choice is given for which the marketing plan to be developed. The activity is monitored regularly and assistance facilitated by the subject faculty for better understanding. It focuses on all elements of Marketing Management like 4P's, marketing research, pilot run of the product, etc. Objective: to develop conceptual knowledge and explain the applicability of theory in a real marketing/business situation.	–The project based study enabled students to assess and improve their ability of problem solving and creative suggestion along with innovation, in a business scenario through the preparation of a marketing plan. It helped them identify key wants and needs of stakeholders involved in the plan development based on the principles of Marketing Management. –The project also imparted soft skills like effective communication including presentation skills, listening skills, persuading, pitching etc., and present the solution as a well formulated marketing plan with financials, in an orderly manner.
2	Public Relations— SFIMAR Brand Development	Description—Public Relation helps in the development and maintaining of a favourable brand image and builds instrumental relationships with various stakeholders of the organization. This activity helped students to get a platform to work on a real-time scenario and showcase a public relation activity for SFIMAR. Every year new ideas are generated through a brainstorming session by students and then groups are formed to work on various responsibilities. Examples of such activities are—Street Play performed at many shopping malls at Mumbai in association with NGO Green Yatra to create awareness on 'Padh Lagao, Jeevan Bachao', or, running a '#SelfieWithGuru' campaign to increase the visits in college social media pages. Objectives: --To learn how to practically conduct a PR campaign and monitor for smooth performance of the activity --To understand the importance of measuring the outcome and learn how to improve --To study how to gain recognition, develop sustainability and get accepted by various publics	–Students got the exposure/experience to conduct a real time PR campaign for the institute and the institute also benefited out of it. From which students got the sense of achievement, –Many times, while running the campaign, students faced certain difficulty and learnt how to do crisis management, an important component of PR. –Students learnt the importance of measurability of an activity to gauge its success. – Students gained the learning about marketing, budgeting, developing and execution of an activity. – Students learned various managerial skills like time management, stress management, people management and group dynamics, sense of accountability, etc.

3	Financial Management— Bean Game	Description—Managing money means making choices. There is never enough money available for all of the things anyone would like to have or do. This game helped students to decide what is most important to them. This game may be played individually, but optimum results come from playing in a group of 2 or more. Divide participants into groups of at least 3 and not more than 6. Each individual/group receives 20 beans and a set of spending category sheets. The individual/group must decide how to spend their “income” based on life circumstances, values and goals. Each item has a set number of squares which indicates how many beans are needed to “pay” for that item. The game is played in rounds followed by discussion questions: Round 1- Why did you choose the items you did? In what ways were you influenced by your values? Your goals? Your previous experiences? Compare what you spent your beans on with another individual/group. Round 2- Your income has just been cut to 13 beans. What will you give up? What changes will you make? Make changes until you only have 13 beans on your spending sheets. DQ: What kinds of items did you choose to give up? Why? What did you learn about yourself and money in this process? Compare your budget-cutting choices with another individual/group. Objectives --To analyze the difference between want and need --To understand the importance of budgeting --To analyze the allocation of money --To evaluate the effectiveness of financial planning and saving	--Realization of self-identity towards purchasing behavior of a ‘fad’. --Preparation of a Budget. --Allocation of money for future life’s choices. --Utilize judgment in spending financial planning and saving.
4	Rural Marketing— Making of Documentary Video	In Marketing, the knowledge of the target consumer is a very crucial factor. The subject Rural Marketing in Indian context is having a very high importance as 70% of the population resides in rural areas and constitute a big market. To fight competition many renowned companies are doing various types of rural marketing activity to reach out to this target group. Students need to understand this group separately as a segment and how they differ from urban crowds. As a part of experiential learning activity, student groups are formed (preferably 3 to 4 students in one group), who decide on a business line, study in detail about it from the available information, then visit rural areas to take interviews of related people, shoot video and make a documentary film. This is an ongoing activity during the semester. At the end of the semester, groups showcase the documentary and give a presentation on their overall learning from the activity. Objectives --To develop a foundation to apply knowledge and concepts for understanding rural consumers --To bring about the understanding of how to differentiate between urban and rural consumers --To expose students to the rural market environment and understand the opportunities and challenges	--Students learn the perception building process of rural consumers. --With the ethnographic approach of data collection, students learn the purchase behavior pattern of rural consumer. --Students got the opportunity to compare 4 P’s and 4 A’s of rural marketing.

5	Marketing Research and Analysis— Research Project on a given topic with empirical evidence	Understanding a concept by doing is always higher than that of just by learning. Keeping this in view, a project was conceptualized on the Marketing Research Process which is a part of the syllabus of the subject Marketing Research and Analysis. The entire class was divided into 11 groups and the project was undertaken as per the description as appended below: 1. Background/Introduction 2. Problem/ Opportunity statement 3. Research Questions 4. Research Objectives and Hypotheses 5. Methodology 6. Developing questionnaire and Data Collection 7. Data Analysis and Interpretations 8. Summary of Findings 9. Suggestions/Recommendations 10. Limitations 11. Future scope of research 12. Conclusion of Project 13. References 14. Appendix The evaluation of the project was done in a phased manner with 3 initial progress evaluations at the end of each month from project commencement. The final evaluation was done through a group presentation on the completion of the project. Objectives: -- To make the student participants to gain insights from firsthand information obtained through field research and interaction with stakeholders --To make the students to get involved in a teamwork as the project is group based project and intra group activities are more emphasized	-- The students will gain understanding on field research and interaction with stakeholders. -- The students will also get involved in teamwork as the project is a group-based project and intra group activities are more emphasized.
6	Social Media Marketing & Digital Marketing— Business Website development	Students were divided in groups of 2 for this project. They were asked to choose the theme and design the website using webs.com interface (free website designing application). Students were asked to design 5 pages on the product and services, payment option and company details, contact details and maps etc. Using various social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram, etc., helps in creating business brand awareness and attracting target customers. So each group was then asked to create a Facebook promotion Page for the website designed and link the website to the Facebook Page. Students were also asked to design promotional posters for a demo social media campaign as a part of the project. This involves creating multimedia content to engage the customer base, running campaigns on social media for specific offers or promotions. The promotional Material was designed using Canva.com (free designing software application) Objectives: --To explore trends in website designing w.r.t interactive UI/UX features --To design web content for website and webpages popularly used on social media platforms --To promote web posts, blogs, social media pages, e-content using various social media platforms	--To create web elements like buttons, banners & Bars and User Interface designs. --Setting up page layout, colour schemes, contract, and typography in the Website designs. --Best use of social media and payment portals for revenue generation. --Setting up a perfect landing page for business, clients and yourself. --Understand what social media is, the various channels through which it operates, and its role in marketing strategy --Designing Social Media Pages and Campaign, Posts, Events etc. for promotion related activities.

Table 2: Student Insights

Sr. No.	Subjects and ELs	Subject-specific LOs as felt by students	General LOs as felt by students
1	Marketing Management – Marketing Plan	- How to develop marketing strategies - How 4Ps/7Ps are inter-related and how to create, communicate and deliver value to customers through product development	- Learning from one another (Boulton, 2020) - Higher order critical thinking and synthesis skills (Lee et al., 2009; Liaw et al., 2009; Keane et al., 2013) - Application of knowledge in real life situation - Problem solving and decision making (Keane et al., 2013) - Better understanding of the subject - Review and Evaluation of decisions through learning from experiences - Effective communication skills (Keane et al., 2013) - Increased student engagement (Boulton, 2020)
2	Public Relations—SFIMAR Brand Development	- Crisis management & measurability - The activity showed how a PR activity can help a business, as the college social media pages received plenty of likes and follows in a week and helped build better relationships with its stakeholders (#SelfieWithGuru Social Media Campaign) - Learnt about the challenges in executing the PR campaign (Street Play- ‘PedhLagao, JeevanBachao’ in shopping malls)	
3	Financial Management—Bean Game	- Financial Planning and Budgeting - Learning about spending and savings, and how to manage with limited funds	
4	Rural Marketing—Making of Documentary Video	- Opportunity to explore how various marketing related activities, process and institutions function in a rural or semi-urban settings - Followed and traced each and every step along the value chain right from the villagers who produced the items to the end consumer or the institutional customer - The field visit in group provided great insights on the role of various stakeholders associated with marketing in non-urban settings	
5	Marketing Research and Analysis—Research Project on a given topic with empirical evidence	- All steps of marketing research process was clearly understood, including the development of the report - Use of market research data in strategy development	
6	Social Media Marketing & Digital Marketing—Business Website development	- Use of various web elements - Usage of various digital marketing strategies for a Business Website.	

Sample and Demographics

The case study reflected on classes where each of these subjects was taught, with an average age range of 23 to 26 years. All of them were SFIMAR management course students. They worked on these EL activities during their semester/trimester within a predetermined timeline. Throughout the semester/trimester regular interaction between students and faculty members took place, which followed mARC Model of EL. Marks were assigned with each task as a component of internal assessment which was added in the final exam of that subject. After the completion of the semester/trimester students were told to briefly mention their experience and evaluation with each activity. Randomly 4 responses from each subject area were picked up to form a sample size of 30.

The responses were then analyzed and categorized under two headings: Subject-specific LOs and General LOs. These are listed in Table 2 as students Insights. A comparison is made after this between teachers' expected achievable LOs and students' perception towards achieved LOs.

Discussion and Findings

Incorporating EL in higher education for MBA students to teach practical approaches was definitely challenging, but it fetched a better result, as perceived by SFIMAR faculty members and students. The research strongly supports the positive impact of pedagogy as it created more student involvement and engagement, which is in line with Boulton's (2020) study. It encourages learners to explore the situation and apply the skills required (Edwards, 2016), moving beyond the teacher's expectations. Teachers also felt it was easier to give quick feedback to the students and relate the learning again in classroom teaching for better understanding (Boulton, 2020). It was observed that students' self-learning pace through the activities was seen to be visibly improved as compared to the previous batches, which again supports Boulton's (2020) views.

The study found that students embraced the activities with high enthusiasm, which is also a finding of Heurtas-Valdivia (2021) and contradicts Armstrong's (2003) experience. Our study is more aligned to Ozogul et al. (2020), as it reported an increase in confidence level while giving students the feeling of being happy and comfortable. The 'teaching methodology' factor in the faculty feedback form also received a high score of 4.7 out of 5. One typical observation from the study is that the ELs which got repeated over years gained better results in each consecutive

year, giving a signal that while conducting the activity even teachers could note certain areas of improvement and worked on it for better learning of the students. Teachers realized that students should be clearly informed about the objectives and evaluation guidelines to have a clearer picture of how to perform. Also, it was noticed that since marks were assigned with the activity, students took it more seriously as 'Learning and Performing through Fun'. One-time activities for subjects like PR were highly accepted by students where faculty member used his critical thinking to develop the project and students used their creative skills to execute the activity.

Conclusion and Future Scope

As a higher education practitioner, it is important that best pedagogical tools should be adopted for expected results. With the flexibility given by SFIMAR management to impart the best education, faculty members are committed to serving the student community with either proven EL techniques or developing a new one based on the subject requirement. This approach has undoubtedly complemented teaching related to real-world scenarios and enhanced the teaching-learning process. Though the study highlighted many findings, possibly there is a limitation with the sample size. A large sample would have offered a more detailed and reliable result. The study also opened another avenue of thinking as to how students process these learnings in future days. Embedding EL in higher education as a pedagogical tool may extend collaborative learning opportunities for students of different courses.

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Reflective Practices in Adult Education for Life Long Learning

• Seema Yadav¹

Abstract

Reflection is a central idea in many teaching-learning theories. It has varying connotations and degrees of importance depending on the situation. The idea of reflection is essential to discourses on experiential learning and, more specifically, to adult education theory. A perspective that prioritises inventive concepts and more innovative discussion may benefit reflective practice. Mentees may develop greater autonomy in their teaching and begin the process of developing an authentic and independent teaching practice by engaging in a more structured reflection process that incorporates adult learning assistance. In order to strengthen their mentees' autonomy and competency as instructors, mentors may have the opportunity to practice self-reflection, engage in intellectual discourse, and debate difficulties with their mentees via supporting adult learning in teacher education. Reflective practice focuses primarily on using the imagination to create new scenarios. It is a method to sort through the surrounding turmoil to fully understand what is happening. Reflective practice enables students to visualise and comprehend their professional lives, which helps them comprehend an issue or be able to view several possibilities or techniques of thinking and learning. Knowing about their knowledge and experiences can be beneficial to students.

Keywords: *adult education, adult learner, life-long learning, reflective practices.*

Introduction

In adult education theory, and more specifically, in discourses on experiential learning, reflection is a crucial idea. It can be taken to mean the “activity in which people recall their experience, think about it, reflect on it, and assess it (Boud & Walker, 2006). John Dewey initially saw reflection as a form of critical inquiry into

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“primary experience” that was required for cognitive “meaning-making” and for examining the veracity of presumptions (Dewey, n.d.).

David Kolb created his well-known “learning cycle,” which identified “reflective observation” as a stage in the human learning process in which we step back to understand and conceptualise our experience. Kolb heavily drew on the work of Dewey, Piaget, and the action research model of Kurt Lewin (Mezirow, 1990).

According to Stephen Brookfield, for such a transition to occur, we must engage in a process of “critical reflection” in which we question our presumptions (Brookfield, 1998). Reflection’s worth as a technique for learning is debatable. Cognitive reflection is the primary method through which people draw information from their concrete experience, according to the prevailing “constructivist” approach to experiential learning (Kawalilak & Groen, 2019). A common educational tool used in both formal and informal learning processes and activities for individuals and organisations is reflective practice. He claimed that in order to improve pupils’ learning through reflective practice, one must, first and foremost, be able to grasp the imaginative aspect within oneself (Elidóttir, 2019).

Reflective Practice: The Basic Concept of Professional Growth

Reflective practice is ingrained in many adult learning techniques and is based on paradigms that see learning as a self-regulatory process (Knowles, 1970).

Reflective practices can help our implicit bodily experience and conceptual components of consciousness engage in a learning dialogue (Jordi, 2011). Reflective practice is a pedagogical tool that is frequently utilised in formal, informal, individual, and organisational learning activities and processes. The definition and use of reflection have undergone significant development and modification (Mezirow, 1990).

The concept of reflection is crucial to adult education theory and, more particularly, to discourses on experiential learning. It can be understood that it refers to the “activity in which people recall their experience, think about it, consider it, and assess it (Boud & Walker, 2006).

Reflective practice is a pedagogical tool that is frequently utilised in formal, informal, individual, and organisational learning activities and processes. The definition and use of reflection have undergone significant development and modification (Mezirow, 1990).

Reflective teaching and learning strategies have the capacity to incorporate a variety of cognitive and non-cognitive components that constitute human experience and consciousness (Jordi, 2011). It examines contemporary methods to competency-based training (CBT) and reflective practice after first examining the theoretical underpinnings of each. The objective of reflective practice is addressed if these two can coexist in educational practice and in an instructional or training setting. In adult education and training, CBT and reflective practice are not seen as being mutually equivalent (Hackett, 2001).

According to Brookfield (1998), reflective practice involves recognising one's evaluation competence and areas for improvement, as well as knowing oneself as an evaluator, determining one's own requirements for improved practice, and pursuing professional development to achieve those needs.

Practitioners in many professions have come to the conclusion that theory belongs in an ivory tower since it is neither practical nor relevant to those who are in practice. Education is no exception due to the recognised gap between theory and practice (Kaufman, 2019).

In all facets of education, the author contends, reflective practice might profit from a viewpoint that emphasises imaginative ideas and more innovative conversation. In order to improve students' learning through reflective practice, one must first and foremost be able to grasp the imaginative element within oneself (Elíðóttir, 2019).

In four interconnected stages of assessment practice, (Archibald, 2021b) claimed that evaluative thinking encourages reflective practice. This framework can act as a guide for practice when teachers and facilitators select activities and subjects to promote reflection, as teaching and training in evaluation should ideally provoke critical reflection among all learners. Early exposure to a methodical strategy to encourage thought is necessary to take advantage of the chance. Reflection involves not just describing an experience but also analysing it. It is not a skill that comes naturally or intuitively; instead, it must be learned via repetition. Being an excellent lifelong learner requires it (Kaufman, 2019).

Reflective Practice in Adult Education

A variety of teaching-learning theories share the idea of reflection, which has multiple meanings and varies in importance depending on the setting. Reflection as a process is typically described within theories of adult education as the logical analytical process through which people draw information from their experience

and create meaning for learning. In adult education, reflective techniques can help us learn how to communicate with both our implicit bodily experience and our conceptual parts of awareness (Jordi, 2011). The autonomy of mentees in their teaching and teacher preparation is encouraged, but only to the extent that the mentor sees it as having a good impact on the students' learning (Dorner & Káplár-Kodácsy, 2020).

The idea of reflection bears extremely distinctive genetic material in the notion of adult education. The elevation of the mind and soul above nature and the human body in Cartesian and Christian traditions has resulted in a swollen head ever since reflection was born (Jordi, 2011). (Elíóttir, 2019) claimed that the most effective method of learning is through reflective practice. Teachers and teacher educators must be aware of the use of imagination in reflective practice and must not be afraid of the creative spirit by developing their own voice, their own vision, and breaking free from rigid and out-dated conventions.

Reflective mentoring requires a planned, on-going process of participant observation, monitoring, reflection, planning, and cooperation. (Dorner & Káplár-Kodácsy, 2020) undertook a study to investigate how mentor instructors conceptualise mentoring for reflective practice in qualitatively diverse ways, as well as how they transfer this into real mentoring practices. At primary and secondary schools in Hungary, ten of us senior mentor teachers had interviews. With varied degrees of incorporating the idea of reflective practice and engaging mentees as adult learners, mentor instructors were found to oscillate between fragmented and coherent conceptions of mentoring for teaching.

Reflective practice is a method of mutual learning that is distinguished by fragmentation rather than a continuous flow of collaboration between mentors, mentees, students, and faculty and staff in schools and universities (Dorner & Káplár-Kodácsy, 2020).

Given the complexity of the authentic teaching self, mentors' self-reported reflective strategies that are, to some extent, in line with mentees' adult learning processes appear to be dependent on students' actual, frequently ad hoc needs and academic obligations. As a result, they are hardly reconciled. These methods can be used in various ways whether in mentoring adult learners or instructing students (Dorner & Káplár-Kodácsy, 2020).

An overall framework for facilitating adult learning in teacher education could be advantageous to mentors. With the ultimate goal of developing mentees' autonomy

and competency in teaching, this would present possibilities for self-reflection practice, idea exchange, and problem-solving. There are conceptual and practical connections between critical thinking, critically reflective practice, and evaluative thinking that can encourage more explicit engagement with ideals that support social justice in evaluative thinking and evaluation (Archibald, Neubauer, & Brookfield, 2018).

In order to position themselves, acquire clarity, organise and carry out instruction in a purposeful and understandable manner, and reflect on their own professional theory and practice, professors and staff must: When working as an education professional, directed reflection is both a tool and a responsibility (Wilhelm, Förster, & Zimmermann, 2019). When adult learners were discussing complex ideas, creative strategies that had the ability to establish rapport, provide time and space for deeper reflection, and allow thought to be made visible proved invaluable. It is now more important than ever to create and maintain spaces for discourse in order to enable effective navigating through and reduction of present issues and tensions experienced. It was determined that taking a step back to pause, think, examine, and understand is necessary in order to go forward with work in intelligent, intentional, and meaningful ways of reflective practices (Kawalilak & Groen, 2019).

According to Parker & Roumell (2020), workforce disruption has serious effects on both workers and global economies, frequently necessitating that adults change careers or upskill in order to keep their jobs. Parker & Roumell (2020) recommended deliberate practice, mental simulation, and reflective meaning making as techniques to achieve efficiency and transfer learning outcomes pertinent to a changing workforce.

Individuals can participate in self-directed learning, independent or group experiments with theories in their teaching practice, and departments can offer formal professional development. Faculty members can also gather in informal learning groups like journal clubs (Dong, Lio, Sherer, & Jiang, 2021).

Reflection can assist in sorting through the complex web of deeply ingrained personal conceptions about teaching and learning that are based on a set of principles, theories, and practices. For thinking about how to go beyond traditional conceptions of reflection and make reflection relevant to professional growth and lifelong learning, reflection can offer a useful framework.

Importance of Reflective Practice in Adult Education

In order to grasp the essence of comprehending teaching and learning practice,

(Elíðóttir, 2019) discusses the significance of thinking beyond the box. The purpose of this self-study is to design a method of professional development for teacher educators that the author can use with teacher students.

Archibald (2021a) came to the conclusion that theory-informed case reflections indicate that evaluative thinking plays a significant part in both educational contexts.

Parker & Roumell (2020) suggested mental simulation and reflective meaning making as appropriate techniques to build on fundamental domain knowledge and attain efficiency and transfer outcomes.

Elíðóttir (2019) explains how reflective practices can bring together a dialogue between the lived experience and understandings based on imaginative meanings. Reflective practice could benefit from a perspective that focuses on imaginative thoughts and more creative conversation in all facets of education.

In order to increase students' learning through reflective practice, it can be claimed that it is necessary to be able to understand the imaginative element inside oneself in order to improve adult students' reflective learning. In-depth personal views about teaching and learning that are rooted in a system of beliefs, theories, and practises can become tangled in the process of reflection.

An Adult Learner: Reflective Practices

The best way to categorise adult learners is based on their unique personal and contextual characteristics as well as their level of self-regulated learning capacity. Self-regulated learning, in the context of mentoring, refers specifically to the capacity of the mentee to understand new information constructively at his or her own pace through self-reflection supported by the mentor's on-going reflective practice (Dorner & Káplár-Kodácsy, 2020).

Supporting adult learning in teacher education could provide mentors with opportunity to practice self-reflection, engage in intellectual conversation, and discuss challenges with mentees in order to increase their mentees' autonomy and competency as teachers.

The debate of complicated ideas among adult learners was extremely beneficial when using creative methods that have the potential to establish rapport, provide time and space for deeper reflection on issues, and enable thought to be made visible (Rainford, 2020).

New directions for the fundamental education and on-going professional growth of evaluation practitioners and academics are based on a constant critical introspection, research, and action that examines one's own paradigmatic assumptions (Archibald et al., 2018).

A skilled environmental adult educator, according to the participants' perceptions, must demonstrate a strong knowledge foundation in terms of subject-matter and pedagogical issues as well as specific competencies in communication or in the management of group dynamics (Gavrilakis, Daskolia, & Blintziou, 2020). It is also important to note that the majority of participants support the aspects of the co-learner and reflective practitioner when describing their work as environmental adult educators.

The objectives of andragogy and self-directed learning, (Jennings, 2007) said, were honourable. These should be explored in continuing medical education in a reasoned, knowledgeable, and evidence-based manner, recognising complexity and avoiding unsupported assertions, academic orthodoxy, and political expediency.

Adult education concepts and methods can also assist students in focusing on the potential for social justice evaluation while also preparing them for on-going professional growth and making them lifelong students of evaluation (Archibald, 2021b).

Archibald (2021a) recommended that doing exercise some critical thought and meta-reflection on the reflections offered here, which adult learner may do by compiling a short list of takeaways and implications for the practice of teacher evaluation.

Reflective practices would provide opportunities for practising self-reflection, exchanging ideas, and sharing challenges with the ultimate goal of developing mentees' autonomy and competency in teaching. Mentors in this teacher training could benefit from such a structure (Dorner & Káplár-Kodácsy, 2020).

Teachers should approach theories and ideas with a critical eye and be prepared to verify them through real-world experience and study, even when theoretical insights can help guide practice (Dong et al., 2021). Kawalilak & Groen (2019) came to the conclusion that in our classrooms, we may engage students in reflective discussion by purposefully designing areas where they can discuss concepts, see how they might be applied to their own professional life as educators, and write about their experiences.

Reflection can be a useful framework for considering how it is possible to go beyond conventional notions of reflection and to make reflection relevant to professional growth and lifelong learning. Adult teachers and educators will continue to advance in their responsibilities as educators by applying reflective practise theories in practice, collecting feedback from students and peer observers, and reflecting on practice. Reflection and practice are necessary for applying reflective practise ideas to adult education.

Conclusion

The process of reflection is typically characterised in terms of the logical analytical process by which people derive information from their experiences and create meaning for learning in theories of adult education. Reflective exercises can help us to better integrate the many, frequently disjointed components of awareness and human experience (Boud, 2001). The instructor can create a more comprehensive understanding and practice of reflection by recognising and interacting with characteristics that are typical of the integrative and meaning-making path of experiential learning (Jordi, 2011).

Understanding educational theory can improve curriculum development, teaching, and learning by allowing for its practical application in the classroom. In the course of adult learners' discussions of challenging ideas, creative approaches that have the capacity to establish rapport, provide time and space for in-depth reflection, and make thinking visible have proven useful. Mentees should start working on an authentic and independent teaching practice by performing a more structured reflection process that incorporates adult learning support. Reflective practice is largely about utilising the imagination to come up with new scenarios. In order to completely comprehend what is happening, it is a technique to sort through the surrounding chaos. In order to better understand a problem or to be able to see various options or methods of thinking and learning, reflective practice enables students to visualise and understand their professional lives. Students can get benefit from knowing about their knowledge and experiences.

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Status of Government Elementary Schools and Community Participation in Longleng District of Nagaland

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Abstract

The present study attempts to examine the status and prevailing condition of government elementary school education in Longleng District of Nagaland. In this study, a descriptive survey method was used. The study sought: (i). To examine the status of government elementary school education in EBRC Longleng Block; (ii). To identify the issue confronting elementary schools; (iii) To investigate the changes in school education that has occurred thus far; and (iv) To offer some suggestions for the improvement of schools. From the study, it was found that the elementary school education in the beginning was not properly functioning, but over the years, the number of schools increased, and at present, the government elementary schools have become quite satisfactory as a result of the communitization process and SSA programmes. However, despite the improvement seen in recent years, there were still some problems like the lack of properly trained teachers, inadequate TLM funds, insufficient sports equipment, and shortage of teachers, particularly in science and mathematics, as well as the lack of fourth grade staff in the schools. The participation of the community, EBRC, and some other mass-based organisations of NGOs has contributed towards the enhancement of school education in both urban and rural areas.

Keywords: *status, challenges, elementary schools, communitization, Nagaland.*

Introduction

Longleng District is also considered as the 'Land of Handicraft' where people indulged and involved in craftsmanship to fulfill needs and aspiration of the individuals,

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family and economic progress. Longleng District, the home to the Phom Naga Tribe is located in the North Eastern part of Nagaland.

The educational system during the pre-British period was in the form of dormitory system also known as Morung system, which served as centre for learning for unmarried men. Young people were trained in many different types of activities. Elders of the Morung gave instructions in all aspects of life and imparted knowledge of tribal tradition, basket making, folk-song, folk-dance, story narration, discipline, hard work, norms, rules and regulations of village festivals and celebration, art of warriors, etc.

The first formal school in Phom area was established way back in 1884 at Tamlu by the British Gorkha Troops in which Alphabets and numbers were taught in Assamese medium. But the school closed down after one year. It was only in 1931, after a gap of more than 45 years, with the help of one native teacher from Tamlu village, the school restarted, which was later upgraded to upper primary school i.e. up to class IV. The first school with middle school stage (class-VIII) was established at Longleng only in 1953 while it was still subdivision of Tuensang district. A full-fledged High School (up to class X) was opened in 1972 and at Tamlu in 1963. Thereafter, primary schools were established in almost all the villages and later five Middle schools were established at Yachem in 1966, Shakshi in 1967, Bura Namsang in 1968, Namching in 1969 and Yogam in 1980.

Hence, it may be said that indigenous form of education existed among the Phom community in Phom dominated areas till 1951. For the first time in 1953 a school came into being which marked the beginning of modern education in this area. Till the seventies, the students of Phom community attained only up to Middle School and for the further study, students were sent to other neighboring Districts or places.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), flagship programme of Government of India aimed at universalization of elementary education for the children in 6-14 age group, is being implemented through a district level decentralized management framework involving local bodies, namely, Village Education Committee (VEC)/ Town Education Committee (TEC)/ Ward Education Committee (WEC), etc., under communitization process since 2002-03.

In Longleng, there are two Educational Block Resource Centres (EBRCs) such as EBRC Longleng Block and EBRC Tamlu Block. These two blocks under

Longleng district play an important role in improving quality of education. The EBRCs under SSA conduct in-service teacher training and provide academic support to teachers and schools on a regular basis as well as help in community mobilization activities. Supervision and monitoring on all activities including academic and finance are carried out by the District Mission Authority and the EBRC Coordinators and reports are submitted to the State Mission Authority (SMA).

There are some studies on elementary education and community participation. Sharma R.C (2002) on Elementary Education, Non-formal Education and Operation Blackboard dwelt on the problems faced by the rural areas. This study showed that though many changes were brought about in the primary schools, they still faced shortage of teachers, lack of quality education and other facilities unlike the urban areas.

Buno L & Rukhono Iralu (2011) studied quality achievement in elementary education in Nagaland under Sharva Shiksha Abhiyan and recommended to promote children to be active participants in a knowledge society and for implementation of educational interventions with involvement of stakeholders, especially teachers, parents, community and Panchayat Raj institutions and voluntary organisations. This study underlined another important observation that is to make primary and middle school curriculum content relevant and appropriate for the pupils. The study also stated that awareness and skill development in areas of school supervision and inspection, maintenance of register, finance accounting, knowledge of rights and responsibilities are all essential for effective functioning.

Keithellakpam, B (2016) pointed out that there were many Government primary schools but they were not developed adequately and also not maintained properly. Many defects existed as compared to private schools.

Sentimenla Jamir (2022) found that most of the people in the community were aware of the communitization process implemented in the elementary schools. However, some of the problems revealed by the study were illiteracy, excessive personal responsibilities at home and lackadaisical attitude of the parents towards education. These were still the major causes of hampering active community participation in elementary education in Nagaland.

Looking to the state of Nagaland, it requires good research studies on Government elementary school education and in this context the present study was taken up.

Statement of the Problem

The study examines the status of Government elementary school education under EBRC Longleng block, the emerging issues and the role of Head-teachers, teachers, students and parents in the elementary schools and thereby suggests measures for strengthening the schools and its functioning.

Objectives of the Study

The study focused on four objectives, viz., (i) To examine the status of government elementary school education EBRC Longleng Block; (ii) To identify the problems faced by the elementary Schools; (iii) To study the changes made so far in the government elementary schools particularly after implementation of communitization process; and (iv) To suggest measures for the improvement of government elementary schools

Research Questions

The study set certain research questions, such as: (i). What is the status of Government Elementary School Education in EBRC Longleng Block?; (ii) What are the problems faced by the government Elementary schools?; (iii) What are the changes made so far in government elementary schools since the implementation of communitization process?; and (iv) What are some suggested measures for the improvement of government elementary schools?

Methodology

For the present study Descriptive Survey Method was used. The sample of the study comprised of fifteen schools - ten primary/middle schools from villages and five primary/middle schools from Longleng town and within it 150 students - 100 students in the village schools and 50 students in the town schools; 45 teachers - 30 from the village schools and 15 from town schools and all the 15 school heads, 45 parents - 15 from town and 30 from the village. Simple random sampling technique was used for selecting the schools and convenience sampling was used for teachers, students and parents. The present study used 3 questionnaires and 1 interview schedule for collection of data and information from the given population. The questionnaire for the head-teachers was structured with 18 questions; that for the teachers was structured with 17 questions, and for students, 10 questions. One structured interview schedule was used to get information from parents. The responses were analyzed by the calculation of percentages and presented in the tabular form.

Analysis and Interpretation of the data

Table 1: Total number of schools under EBRC Longleng Block

Sl.No	Categories	No. of Schools
1	Primary only	34
2	Primary with Upper Primary	15
3	Primary with Upper Primary and Higher Secondary	1
4	Upper Primary Only	1
5	Primary with Upper Primary and Secondary	9
6	Upper Primary with Secondary	5
	Total	65

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Table1 shows that the total number of schools under EBRC Longleng block was 65 schools. Out of this, 34 were primary only, 15 were primary with upper primary, 1 was primary with upper primary and higher secondary, 1 was upper primary only, 9 were primary with upper primary and secondary and 5 upper primary with secondary.

Table 2: Total number of Classrooms under EBRC Longleng schools

Sl.No	Categories	No. of Categories	Percentage
1	Under Construction	7	1.41%
2	Need Major Repair	30	6.02%
3	Need Minor Repair	53	10.64%
4	constructed well	408	81.93%
	Total No. of Classrooms	498	100%

Table 2 indicates the total number of school classrooms under EBRC Longleng block were 498. Out of this, seven were under construction, 30 need major repair, 53 need minor repair and 408 classrooms were well constructed.

The total number of schools under EBRC Longleng Block was 65, and out of this, only 9 schools had computer with CAL Lab facilities and the rest 56 schools were without computer facilities.

The total number of teachers under EBRC Longleng Block was 630. Of this, 416 teachers were regular, 209 teachers were under contractual basis and only 5 teachers were under the category of part time.

The status of teachers with computer training is 63.40% male teachers, and only 36.60% female teachers. 64.70% male and 35.30% female teachers received training in CWSN (Children with Special Needs) under EBRC Longleng Block.

Elementary teachers under EBRC Longleng Block is 630, both in urban and rural schools, out of which 53.4% were male and 46.6% were female. The social category/caste of teachers employed under elementary schools EBRC Longleng Block reveals that the general category was 3.97%, SC category teachers were 0.77%, ST teachers were 93.17%, OBC category was 1.91%, and only 0.16% teachers were from other category.

The categories of teachers who were teaching in different classes reveals that 52.60% were teaching in primary level, 30.23% under upper primary level, 2.30% under primary and upper primary level, 11.10% under secondary level, 0.47% under higher secondary level, 2.60% under upper primary with secondary classes, 0.70% under pre-primary and primary level and none was teaching specifically under pre-primary level.

The detailed percentages about schools without proper facilities under EBRC Longleng Block indicates that the total number of schools is 65, and out of this, 1.50% schools were without proper functional toilet, 56.90% were without proper functional water facilities, 41.60% were without proper electricity facility and 0% were without adequate classrooms.

Responses from the Head Teachers

Status of Urban Head-teacher at the school: 100% of the Urban Head-teachers were male. 60% of Head-teachers with Matriculation, 20% with PU qualifications and 20% with B.A qualification. 40% of the head teachers were with D.El.Ed. (DIET) trained and 60% were found untrained. 60% of Head-teachers had 10-20 years of teaching experiences and 40% had 21-30 years teaching experience.

Status of Rural School Head-teacher: 100% of the Rural Head-teachers were male. 40% were with Matriculation, 40% with PU qualifications and 20% with B.A qualification. 40% of the head teachers were with D.El.Ed. (DIET) trained and 60% were found untrained. 90% of Head-teachers had 10-20 years of teaching experiences, while 10 % had 21-30 years teaching experience.

Status of both Urban and Rural schools infrastructure/building: All the schools were Hill Type/Pucca buildings.

Status of informal education under urban and rural schools: The school students were not satisfied with the given informal education. 20% schools conducted field trip, 0% of tour and 60% schools conducted other activities like sports, picnic, teacher's day, etc. No schools conducted excursion and tour activities.

Status of co-curricular activities of urban schools: 100% of schools conducted annual picnic, 100% of schools conducted annual sports, 100% observed Teacher's Day, 40% of conducted drawing competition and 100% conducted Children's Day. No schools conducted debate, quiz competition, cultural day activities.

Status of co-curricular activities of rural schools: 100% of schools conducted annual picnic, 100% of schools conducted annual sports, 100% observed of teacher's day, 60% conducted drawing competition and 100% conducted children's day and 60% conducted cultural day. No schools conducted debate, quiz competition activities.

Status of central scheme fund received at urban school: 100% of the students mentioned that the schools provide free textbook, 100% of them indicated that the school provided free uniform, 40% said that the school provided free stationeries and none of the students received of free rain coat. All the schools were providing mid- day meal scheme.

Status of central scheme fund received at rural school: 100% of the students mentioned that the schools provided free textbook, 100% of them indicated that the school provided free uniform. None of the students received free raincoat and free stationeries. All the schools were providing mid-day meal scheme.

Status of necessary facilities available at urban schools: 40% of the schools had computer facilities, none of the schools had playground, 60% of the schools had proper chairs, 100% had proper electricity, 100% had proper toilet but only 60% had separate toilets for boys and girls, 40% had safe drinking water facility, only 20% received teaching learning materials. None of the schools had library, canteen and sports materials in their school premises.

Status of necessary facilities available at rural schools: 20% of the schools had computer facilities, 40% of the schools had playground, 80% of them had proper chairs, 30% schools had proper electricity, 50% of the schools had proper toilet facilities and only 40% had separate toilets for boys and girls, 10% had safe drinking water facility, only 10% received teaching learning materials and 10% get sports materials regularly. None of the schools had library and canteen facilities in their school premises.

Status of Mid-day meal under both urban and rural schools: 100% of the schools under Longleng block both in urban and rural schools provide mid-day meal weekly and none of the schools are providing every day.

Proxy teachers in urban schools: 20% of the schools had the proxy teachers.

Proxy teachers in rural schools: 40% of the schools had the proxy teachers.

Responses from Teachers

Status of the teachers under urban schools: 60% were male teachers, 40% were female teachers. As per their educational qualifications, 40% were Matriculate, 40% were PU and 20% were B.A. 40% teachers were trained with D.El.Ed. (DIET), none of the teachers with B.Ed. degree. 60% teachers were untrained. 80% of teachers had 10-20 years of teaching experience and while 20% had 21-30 years teaching experience. While, 40 % of teachers were between 30-40 age group, 60 % of Teachers were 40 years and above.

Status of teachers under rural schools: 43.3% of the teachers were male and 56.7% were female teachers. As per their educational qualifications 13.3% were Matriculate, 40% were PU and 46.7% were B.A. 40% teachers were trained with D.El.Ed. (DIET), none of the teachers with B.Ed. degree. 60% teachers were untrained. 83.4% of teachers had 10-20 years of teaching experience and while 16.6% had 21-30 years teaching experience in terms of age, 60 % of teachers were between 30-40 age group and 40 % of Teachers were 40 years and above.

Class-test conducted by teachers: In urban area, 33.3% of the schools conducted the class test weekly, 13.3% monthly, 40% end of the lesson and 13.3% of the school on specific date. In rural area, 53.3% of the school conducted class test weekly, 20% monthly, 23.3% end of the lesson and 3.3% of the school on a specific date.

The area of student's interest: In urban area, none of the teachers stated that students were interested in homework, 26.6% teachers stated that the students were interested in play, 6.6% teachers stated that the students were interested in study, 60% in co-curricular and 6.6% in others like handicraft. In rural level, 6.6% of the teachers mentioned that students were interest in homework, 23.3% of the teachers stated that the students were interested in play and 86.6% in co-curricular activities and 3.3% in any other activities.

Orientation Program for teachers: All the teachers (100%) of the schools in both urban and rural areas had attended orientation programmes.

Responses from Elementary Students

Status of Elementary students: 46% were boys and 54% were girls from urban area. In rural area, 36% were boys and 64% were girls.

Responses from both urban and rural students: 100% of the students mentioned that the school provided free text book, 100% indicated that the school provided free uniform, 100% said that the school provided mid-day meal with more effectively in both urban and rural elementary schools, 100% of the urban students responded that the schools provided first aid but only 60% of the rural school students responded that the school provides first aid and in both urban and rural schools 40% students mentioned that the schools had separate toilets for boys and girls.

Responses from Parents

Status of the parents: 40% were male and 60% were female from both the areas.

Parents–Teachers meeting: In urban school, 20% of the parents stated that the school convened meeting with parents once in a year, 40% said twice in a year, 20% stated that school convened meeting weekly and only 20% commented that that the school never convened meeting. In rural schools 40% of the parents responded that the school convened meeting once in a year, 10% said weekly in a year, and another 50% of the parents said that the school never convened parents meeting.

Parents’ awareness on Free and Compulsory Education up to 14 years: All the parents, both in urban and rural areas, were found to be informed and aware of such policy regarding free and compulsory education being implemented under primary to elementary education by the Government.

Parents visit to school: 13.3% of the parents visited the school monthly, 20% of the parents mentioned that they visited school alternatively (sometimes) and 66.7% of the parents never visited the school in urban. However, in rural areas, 23.3% of the parents visited the school monthly, 16.7% visited the school alternatively (sometimes) and 60% of the parents never visited the school.

Problems Being Faced by the Urban and Rural Schools under EBRC Longleng Block

Problems being faced by the urban and rural schools: 13.3% of the schools faced problems related to lack of cooperation from community, 33.3% of them lack of teachers training, 33.3% face lack of office staff, 46.6% faced problem with lack of fencing/surrounding walls, 46.6% faced insufficient fund, 46.6% faced problems of insufficient teachers, 93.3% faced problems with lack of sports materials, 80% lack of separate staff rooms, 73.3% faced problems with lack of computer facilities and 46.6% of them faced problem with in availability of proper electricity.

Problems faced by urban elementary schools

The specific problems faced by the rural schools were:

1. There are some TEC chairmen who were too authoritarian in dealing with the schools which created lack of cooperation between them.
2. In all the schools, the Head-teachers and teachers were mostly matriculate and with Class XII educational qualifications and 60% were untrained and without courses like D.El.Ed., and B.Ed training.
3. The elementary schools are facing more problems with the lack of sufficient office facilities like trunks, chairs, fans and almirah. The existing facilities were only those that were issued during the inauguration of schools, thereafter, there was no good quality materials provided by the Government.
4. The schools were also facing problem with lack of fencing and retaining walls. Such problems prevailed in all the schools. Rather than permanent surrounding walls, fencing made of bricks, there were temporary fence made up of local timber and bamboo.
5. The Government does not respond to the grievances and proposals sent for fund from the schools, which affect progress and development of the school.
6. The elementary schools faced serious problems related to the lack of teachers in subjects like Maths, Science, English and Computer, etc.
7. And above all, the essential requirements in the schools were materials for games and sports, other co-curricular activities were not provided by the Government in the schools. As a result, the schools failed to organize and initiate those activity-oriented programs for students.

Problems faced by rural elementary schools

1. In rural areas, many schools were not properly looked after. There was

inadequate fund release and there was lack of cooperation by the VEC in the functioning of the schools.

2. The study revealed that the in-charge/Head-teachers were given opportunity based on seniority without looking at the background and the educational qualification and training obtained. 60% of rural Head-teachers were untrained.

3. They were also facing lack of office facilities like computer settings, electricity, almirah, chairs/tables and fans, etc. Furthermore, the chairs/tables, cupboards, etc., were getting worn out as they were made of wood 10 – 15 years ago.

4. Majority of the elementary schools had no proper maintenance of surrounding walls, fencing and entry gate, which was not safe or secure for the students and schools.

5. The schools were not satisfied with the allocation of funds by the Government.

6. The schools faced problem with lack of teachers in subjects like Science, Maths, English, Computer and Vocational teachers.

7. And 90% of the schools were not getting the sports materials to initiate and organise physical activities, games & sports in the schools for skill development of the students. The Government should take serious note of these issues for the effective functioning of the schools.

Changes made so far in government elementary school education

1. Participation of community: In the past, community participation was very rare in the field of education, but as the study shows, there has been more participation and involvement of community in school education for the progressive development.

2. Consistency of Mid-day Meal: Not only the government but even community with the help of some NGOs took up the responsibility for the improvement of the elementary school both in urban and rural areas. The school students were receiving mid-day meal consistently without delay and the community had also shown much concern for it.

3. Regular maintenance of attendance register in the office: The regularity of Head-teacher and teaching staff in their duties in the school had immensely improved since the implementation of Communitization on Elementary Education. The community had arranged some persons responsible for the programmes of school.

4. Awards and Records: Under EBRC Longleng Block some of the teachers in elementary schools were awarded by the District Administration for 'best conduct'. Students' participation also recorded many good positions in the competitions.

5. Increase in enrolment of girls in schools: Due to the parents' awareness of government policy on Free and Compulsory Education even the enrolment of girls students had increased. The enrollment of girls in the schools was 14.6% more than the boys.

6. Increase in trained teachers: More teachers were found to be attending training programmes organised by ERBC Block. More teachers were getting trained in D.El.Ed., and B.Ed. programmes.

Suggestions for improvement of elementary education in Longleng block EBRC

1. Teaching Learning Materials: For smooth functioning and development of the school education more relevant teaching learning materials should be provided on time.

2. Educational field trip or tours should be organised in the schools and students should be encouraged to learn about other cultural practices and environment to widen their mental horizon.

3. Laboratory facilities: It is important to have well-equipped laboratory particularly for science subjects. There is an urgent need to promote science education in Nagaland. It has become imperative to create interest in science education for the society to progress.

4. School Library: Schools should maintain libraries with good collection of textbooks and reference materials, related to the school subjects appropriate for children. Computer facilities should be made available.

5. Facilities for sports and games for both girls and boys should be provided adequately. It was very disheartening to note that in some schools, the girls were not getting opportunity to play any games while boys were involved in playing games and sports. Therefore, the facilities should be provided without any discrimination.

6. School Canteen: For adequate refreshments of students and staff, canteen with basic facilities and adequate food should be provided; clean drinking water supply should be made available in the schools.

7. Co-curricular activities: It has become more important to initiate and organise the co-curricular activities in the schools for the skill development of the students. Performing Arts and Fine Arts activities such as instrumental music facilities, drama, and debate may be organised in schools.

8. Adequate Computer facilities: The Government should provide adequate computer facilities in the school along with computer instructor.

9. Records maintenance: Proper record of each student should be maintained and follow up action/or remedial programmes should be organised for the slow learners.

10. Parents role: Parents should motivate their children to get interested in their studies. They can also make suitable arrangements to facilitate them in studies.

11. Time table for students: Parents should provide sufficient time for children to study especially in morning and evening. Furthermore, parents should monitor children in the use of their smart phones.

12. Skill development programmes: Schools should organize good skill development programmes for both teachers and students. Workshop and orientation programmes in teaching methodology should also be organised for the teachers in the schools for better teaching learning process. This has assumed more importance in the context of NEP 2020.

13. Competent leadership: Elementary schools in Longleng EBRC Block require competent leadership who will be able to serve the community with commitment, help strengthen and develop school education.

14. Encourage resource person from the community: The schools and TEC/VEC should encourage intellectuals, learned and educated person like Doctor, Engineer, Musician, Forestry and Agriculturist, etc., for community engagement programmes. They should be invited as guest resource persons for the program/occasion.

15. Adult Education Programmes: Andragogy may help rural uneducated folks in creating awareness on the importance of quality education and imparting knowledge for carrying out their roles and responsibilities towards school education effectively in this fast-changing world.

Conclusion

The word Phom is considered as the “Land of Cloud”. The Phom tribe is a major tribe of Nagaland. Longleng District was established in 2004, bifurcated from Tuensang District. The school system in the land of Phom community was first started with the system of dormitory or morung, where boys and girls were imparted knowledge as their first stage of education. The children were taught skills, folklores, norms and customs by the elder leaders who were already at the high level of stage in the morung. The real formal education was obtained from especially the neighbour district of Ao community. The first educational institution of Phom community was started at Tamlu area which is also an important town under Longleng district and later education spread to the other areas of the community.

The findings of the present study indicates that visible improvement has been made in many areas such as better student enrolment, retention rate and performance; better teachers and staff regularity and teachers’ performance; improved multiple

activities oriented programmes for students; orientation and training for the teachers; increased involvement of the community and parents; and better improvement and development of physical infrastructure. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan of the Union Government, for universalization of elementary education, has achieved significant success and has demonstrated positive trends in several key indicators. As part of the effort to improve quality of education, regular in-service training programmes are organised for teachers in the District and academic support provided through BRC. There are two EBRCs under Longleng District- Longleng Block and Tamlu Block. These two blocks take control and perform functions over every elementary school education. The elementary schools in the Longleng EBRC Block have indicated more quality of education although not without problems remaining. Some of the issues and problems raised by the stakeholders were poverty and illiteracy of parents, insufficient financial assistance, inadequate supply of teaching learning materials, lack of computer setting, improper electricity connection, lack of proper cooperation from authority and lack of separate staff and head-teachers room.

Though the schools faced many different problems, it was largely believed that the government elementary schools increased in number and brought tremendous change and progress in the field of education for the people of Phom Community. Besides, due acknowledgement must be given to the communitisation process which is unique programme implemented by the Govt. of Nagaland. The Communitisation process is a mechanism which encourages the community to come to the school and facilitate the school to reach out to the community. There is strong collaboration between the community and the Government. This initiative of giving ownership to the community is fostering enormous community participation in several villages and towns and it is felt that this may be the best way to move forward towards universal and quality elementary education in the state. The Nagaland Government initiated this programme for the sustainable development.

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Positive Emotions, Relationships, Meaning, Engagement as Mediators between Accomplishment and Creativity among Indian Youth

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Abstract

Creativity has a lot of benefits when nourished. If it is suppressed, it becomes the reason why so many youths become miserable before their 30s and feel like they have gone nowhere in life. Interventions to improve Creativity have proven successful in cognitive aspects, but positive psychology aspects are still in their infancy. It is important to consider the positive psychology aspects in enhancing Creativity, or else, it might lead to "Negative Creativity".

The current study examines the positive psychology variables, i.e. Positive Emotions, Relationships, Meaning, and Engagement, as mediating variables between Accomplishment and Creativity. Four hundred and seven samples from the youth population from various states of India, i.e. Karnataka, Maharashtra, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, completed a questionnaire package consisting of The Kaufman Domains of Creativity Scale (K-DOCS; Kaufman, 2012) and PERMA-Profiler (Butler and Kern, 2016). As an initial step, Pearson- Product moment Correlation was done to understand the relationship between the variables. The results disclosed positive and significant correlations between the study variables, thus allowing for further analysis. The obtained data were further analysed using Mediation Analysis. The results showed that the indirect path effect by which Accomplishment influences Creativity is via Positive Emotions, Relationships, Meaning, and Engagement. The study's implication is at the policy-making level. The government of India can use the developed model to make amendments in Education Policy. This model can be applied to the student's regular curriculum so that learning becomes easy, creative and pleasurable for them and contributes to the overall holistic development of the person in the longer run.

Keywords: *PERMA, creativity, Indian Youth.*

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1. Introduction

Creativity is defined as “thinking of novel and productive ways to conceptualize and do things; includes artistic achievement but is not limited to it” (Seligman, 2021; 29). The essential elements of Creativity are originality plus adaptiveness (Seligman, 2021; 110). The scientific study of Creativity is considered a significant part of the positive psychology movement (Simonton, 2002; Adams, 2012; Kaufman & Beghetto, 2014). Therefore, among many other reasons, Creativity is worth studying because it is an inherently interesting phenomenon and one of the life skills, which is also recommended by the Department of Mental Health, World Health Organization (1999). It is also the basis for historical, technological or cultural advances (Gabora, 1997; Simonton, 2000), enhances entrepreneurial or business performance (Amabile, 1988; Florida, 2002), promotes positive educational outcomes (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2010), and also it enhances mental health and wellbeing (Cropley, 1990; Forgeard & Elstein, 2014; Forgeard, Mecklenburg, Lacasse, & Jayawickreme, 2014; Kaufman & Sexton, 2006; Richards, 2007).

Richards (2019), a professor at Saybrook University, USA, a psychologist and psychiatrist, in her book “Everyday Creativity and the Healthy Mind: Dynamic New Paths for Self and Society”, writes,

“Everyday Creativity is...fundamental to our very survival. A creative style of living, coping with difficulties and weaving possibilities, can not only produce useful accomplishments for self and world but can offer the creator new resilience, perspective, aliveness at the moment, joy, and purpose in life.”

The Creative Life may not always be delightful but follow it because it can eventually lead to a profound and more meaningful sense of wellbeing. Creativity, which has a lot of benefits when nourished, if suppressed, it becomes the reason why so many youths become miserable before their 30s and feel like they have gone nowhere in life. Staff (2013) further says that today’s youth have no idea what they want to do because they hate whatever they do, and it is all because society is telling them what to do rather than allowing them to create their opinions and make their own decisions.

In a release by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (2003), The National Youth Policy of India (2003) defines the youth population as those aged 13-35 years. The United Nations defines “youth” as persons aged between 15 and 24. However, this definition is flexible (Youth, 2020). Youth is the most essential and dynamic

division of the population in any country. India is considered one of the world's youngest nations, with more than 62% of its working-age group (15–59 years) and more than 54% of its total population below 25 years of age. It was further opined that the average age of India's population by 2020 will be 29 years (Panda, 2018). In their article (*Youth and Creativity*, 2015), UNESCO mentions that Nations will see development when young entrepreneurs gain access to enhancing artistic and creative skills that can foster more dynamic creative sectors and strengthen the development of professional associations, networks and alliances for young cultural and creative professionals. The Vice President of India, addressing the students at the first Graduation Ceremony of PSG Institute of Technology and Applied Research at Coimbatore, (PIB, 2019) has called for tapping the creative potential of the country's youth to make India a leading knowledge and innovation hub. So, concluding the news releases of eminent Human Development Organisations and talks of India's prominent leaders and worldwide, it can be said that developing Creativity in Youth is very much needed for the betterment of the individual and the country.

Literature suggests various methods may foster creative thinking, like, concept mapping techniques such as mind mapping or brainstorming variations (Gordon, 1961). Forgeard and Eichner (2014) mention two types of creativity-based interventions: interventions in which Creativity is the main target (and is seen as an end in itself), and interventions in which Creativity is used as a tool to increase other aspects of psychological wellbeing. Interventions to improve Creativity have proven successful in cognitive aspects, but in positive psychology aspects, the researches are still in its infancy. It is important to consider the positive psychology aspects in enhancing Creativity, or else it might lead to what Cropley, 2012 calls "negative creativity". Almost all existing empirical and theoretical work on Creativity to this point, however, has focused on the positive outcomes from Creativity (James et al., 1999).

Creativity is seen as producing valuable products (concrete or abstract) in new ways. Discussions of Creativity tend to believe that it is always socially desirable. Though Creativity can produce damaging or unpleasant results to other individuals, groups, or society at large, a few individuals have mentioned the possible chances of "Negative Creativity"; and that side of Creativity has received relatively little theoretical attention or research. To rule out the negative side of Creativity, Positive psychology variables are required.

So, fostering positive psychology variables and Creativity is important so that the youth can become positively creative and avoid showing up Creativity, which is

destructive. With this intention, the researchers have chosen the PERMA model (Seligman, 2011), which is a widely recognized and influential model in positive psychology over other wellbeing models, that is, the Sustainable happiness model, which proposes that multiple factors account for wellbeing (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005), to enhance Creativity because the PERMA model is a recent model. This model gives us a complete framework for understanding wellbeing and a foundation for improving wellbeing. There are higher chances of improving Creativity with ease because it contains all positive variables like Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment.

Seligman (2011) has introduced the PERMA model of flourishing, which includes five domains related to psychological wellbeing: (1) Positive Emotions (P), (2) Engagement (E), (3) Relationships (R), (4) Meaning (M) and (5) Accomplishment (A). The wellbeing model has suggested providing a framework based on positive psychology principles. It can lead to increased health, life satisfaction, improved Creativity, and ultimately moral development and civic citizenship.

In this research paper, PERMA is defined as:

- P (Positive Emotion): What we feel: pleasure, rapture, ecstasy, warmth, comfort and likeness (Seligman, 2011).
- E (Engagement): Engagement is about Flow: being one with the music, time stopping and losing self-consciousness during an absorbing activity (Seligman, 2011).
- R (Relationships): Relationships refer to feeling loved, supported, and valued by others. Having positive relationships with others is an integral part of life, feeling good and going well (Seligman, 2011).
- M (Meaning): Meaning refers to having a sense of purpose in life, a direction where life is going, feeling that life is valuable and worth living, or connecting to something greater than ourselves, such as religious faith, a charity or a personally meaningful goal. Meaning provides a sense that life matters.
- A (Accomplishment): Accomplishment can be objective, marked by honours and awards received, but feelings of mastery and Accomplishment are also important. It involves working toward and reaching goals and completing tasks and everyday responsibilities (Butler & Kern, 2015).

The following researches examine the relationship between PERMA and Creativity. In her famous broaden-and-build theory, Fredrickson (2004) points out that an increase in positive emotions will lead to a broader thought-action. This ultimately leads to more creative, flexible, centralizing and open thinking and action

patterns. A study conducted by Gasper (2004: 223) with undergraduates found that sadness inhibits new ideas. This may be because when individuals are sad, they are warier at making mistakes and exercise more restraint. Conner (2016), a researcher at the University of Otago in New Zealand, and two American researchers analyzed various surveys from over 650 young adults who had filled out daily online diaries for 13 days. Among many other things, the questions asked how much time they spent in creative endeavours each day and about their wellbeing: their levels of positive emotion, negative emotion, and “flourishing”—an overall sense of meaning, engagement, purpose, and social connection in their lives. To understand what causes what, the researchers compared measures of Creativity on one day with the measures of wellbeing on the next day and vice versa. Results showed that people who engaged in more creative activities than usual reported increased positive emotion and flourishing the next day, while negative feelings didn’t change. According to Cohn et al. (2009), experiencing positive emotions is associated with more achievement, not simply because individuals are left feeling better, but also because a broadened mindset helps them develop positive emotions and achieve Flow.

According to Csikszentmihalyi (1996), Flow may increase Creativity in at least two ways: First, by increasing the hard work needed to gain the required knowledge to pursue an idea. Second, the state may facilitate creative thinking. Studies have found significant relationships between levels of Flow in music students and the quality of their group composition as measured by creativity ratings (MacDonald, 2006). A study also indicated the same in ensemble performance and improvisational jazz (Sawyer, 2007) and levels of Flow and engagement, enjoyment, and absorption in the creative writing process (Forgeard et al., 2009). Dietrich, who researched the concept of Flow and transient hypo frontality, explores the neurological profile of Creativity in his text “How Creativity Happens in the Brain”. He suggested that “Flow represents a third mode of creativity, alongside the deliberate and spontaneous modes of creative thinking” due to the certitude that Flow appears to involve processing in the implicit system (Dietrich, 2015). Emotional contagion theory explains that emotions can be transferred from one person to another, meaning if you carry positive emotions, you can transfer them to others.

In a research study done by Chang et al. (2020) the results say that when athletic class students constantly stay positive, their positive emotions get transferred to each other, which builds a positive relationship in the team. An article written by Northwestern Medicine Staff (2017) mentions that being in a loving relationship can give an individual a sense of wellbeing and purpose. It’s possible that having a sense of purpose can add years to your life. Kaufman (2018) mentions that *Creativity* can

enhance *life's meaning* in his article. In support of this article, Feeney & Collins (2014) in their research say, Supportive relationships help people find a sense of purpose and meaning in life. Wellington (2017) mentions that one absolute requirement for the flow state of mind is a clear sense of purpose. It would help if you felt an authentic connection to the meaning behind your work to devote yourself to fulfilling it at the moment. Kaufman (2016) says that Flow — the mental state of being completely present and fully immersed in a task — strongly contributes to Creativity. When an individual is in a Flow state, the creator and the universe become one, outside distractions subside from consciousness, and one's mind becomes fully open and attuned to the act of creating.

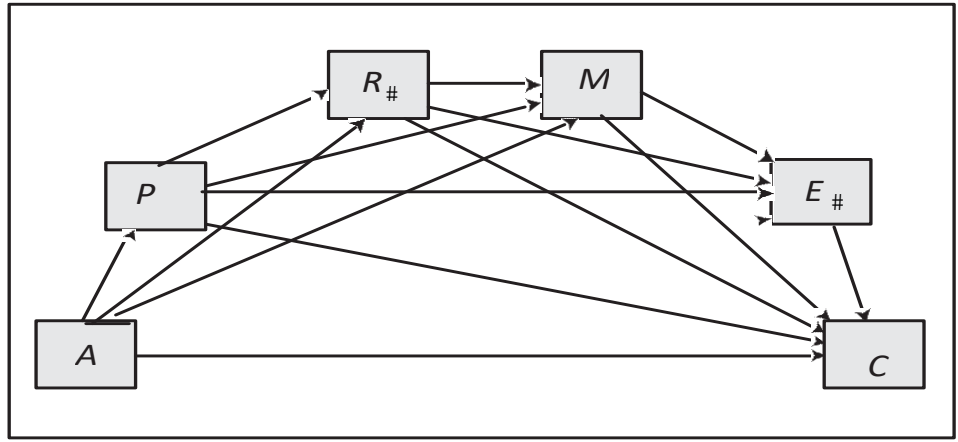
From the introduction and support of previous research, it can be concluded that Creativity, which is defined as “thinking of novel and productive ways to conceptualize and do things includes artistic achievement but is not limited to it” (Seligman, 2021: 29). The essential elements of Creativity are originality plus adaptiveness (Seligman, 2021: 110), which is a very important variable that needs to be studied in young adults. Researchers should explore new ways with PERMA variables to enhance Creativity in an individual, which contributes to the betterment of humankind. From the introduction, it can also be seen that, in previous research, this relationship between PERMA and Creativity has been well-established in different populations (Fredrickson, 2004; Seligman, 2011). The PERMA variables within themselves are highly correlated; complementing this point, research reported by Butler and Kern (2016) supported the five-factor structure of the PERMA model. Confirmatory factor analysis showed that the inter-correlated Five-Factor Model aptly fits the data and that the five factors were generally reliable. In a study done by Carvalho (2021), Confirmatory factor analysis revealed that the PERMA model of five inter-correlated factors is the best data fit.

However, from the literature, we can observe the possibility of “chains” of influence, but it remains unclear what path PERMA variables take to increase Creativity. This research is done to understand the chain of influence so that it fills the gap in the knowledge, as well as help the researchers to develop further the intervention based on the path discovered in the paper.

So, based on the review of literature, the researchers observed the probable path which PERMA variables take to increase Creativity among Indian Youth. After data mining, the researchers decided Accomplishment to be an independent variable and have come up with the below-mentioned path to understanding how PERMA variables take to increase Creativity.

Figure 1

The conceptualized model to assess direct and indirect relationships between Accomplishment, Positive Emotions, Relationships, Meaning, Engagement and Creativity.



2. Method

Objectives

The study's objectives are to: assess Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishment and Creativity among Indian Youth; to find the correlation between variables of the study among Indian Youth; and find the path by which Accomplishment enhances Creativity among Indian Youth.

Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant correlation between study variables among Indian Youth.

H2: There is a significant indirect effect of Accomplishment on Creativity via Positive Emotions, Relationships, Meaning, and Engagement.

Research Design

The research design used here is the Correlational Design. The correlational design is used to understand the relationship between the variables. In correlational

research design, researchers use the statistical correlation test to measure the degree of association (or relationship) between two or more variables or sets of scores. The degree of correlation between two variables is classified in the correlation coefficient. This point is also supported by Creswell (2012: 338). This opinion also suggests that the researchers in this research do not attempt to control or manipulate the variables in the experiment; instead, they relate using the correlation statistics, two or more scores for each person.

Sampling

The researchers adopted the convenient sampling method. The researchers collected the sample from 407 participants from Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala states of India who belonged to 18- 35 age group.

Criteria

Inclusion criteria:

The National Youth Policy of India (2003) defines the youth population as those in the age group of 13-35 years. The World Health Organization (n.d.). defines ‘Adolescents’ as individuals in the 10-19 years age group and ‘Youth’ as the 15-24 year age group. At the same time, ‘Young People’ covers the age range 10-24 years. The United Nations defines Youth as 15 to 24 years of age (Youth, 2020). As there are various definitions, and there are no clear guidelines for determining what ages should be included in the designation of Youth, and there is a lack of consensus among international experts, in this research, Youth between the age group of 18- 35 is considered for the study.

Tools

This section comprises information regarding the tools used to assess Creativity and PERMA among Indian Youth.

The Kaufman Domains of Creativity Scale (K-DOCS) (Kaufman, 2012)

The researchers employed the above tool in the current study to measure participants’ creativity in five broad domains: Everyday (11 items), Scholarly (11 items), Performance (10 items), Scientific (9 items), and Artistic (9 items). Sample items included:

- “Writing a poem” (Performance).
- “Writing a computer program” (Scientific).
- “Writing a letter to the editor” (Scholarly).
- “Teaching someone how to do something” (Everyday).
- “Appreciating a beautiful painting” (Artistic).

The participants were asked to compare themselves with other people about their age and life experiences. They then indicated the degree to which they think they are creative for each item on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (much less creative) to 5 (much more creative). The tool has adequate reliability and validity.

Reliability

Coefficient alpha reliabilities for the five scales for the total sample and each half-sample was done. All values are at least .80, indicating adequate internal consistency reliability for each of the five scales (Kaufman, 2012).

Validity

A factor analysis of 2,318 college student responses led to 50 items and five broad domains: Self/Everyday, Scholarly, Performance (encompassing writing and music), Mechanical/ Scientific, and Artistic. Correlations between the five creativity domains and the Big Five personality factors were consistent with past research, lending evidence of convergent validity (Kaufman, 2012). Coefficient alphas and coefficients of congruence were generally strong.

A study done by Awofala (2017) provided incremental validity to the multidimensional nature of the Kaufman Domains of Creativity Scale, thus reinforcing the five-factor model, namely Mechanical/Scientific, Scholarly, Performance (encompassing writing and music), Self/Every day, and Artistic.

PERMA-Profiler

The tool (Butler and Kern, 2016) was designed to assess multidimensional wellbeing and the five components of the PERMA model (Seligman, 2011). This measure was built as a 15-item survey with each item scored on a Likert-type scale from 0 to 10. Three items assess each PERMA construct, and composite scores are averaged across the three items per construct. The measure includes additional items assessing negative functioning (three items for negative affect, forming

the *Negative Emotion* subscale, and a single item for loneliness) and the perception of physical health (three items).

Reliability

The PERMA-Profiler has demonstrated acceptable internal reliability and good overall fit in studies including over 15,000 participants worldwide (Butler and Kern, 2016).

Coefficient alpha reliabilities for the five scales for the total sample was done, and the values are Positive Emotions .781, Engagement .479, Relationships .729, Meaning .835, and Achievement .720.

Validity

Ryan, 2019 reported that PERMA Profiler scores showed moderate and statistically significant convergent validity with scores on self-reported physical and mental health ($r = 0.46$ to 0.68). The strongest associations were seen between PERMA wellbeing scores with depression scores (DASS-21; $r = -0.645$, $p < 0.001$) and mental health scores (SF-12 MCS, $r = 0.633$, $p < 0.001$). On the other hand, Negligible correlations were observed between PERMA wellbeing scores with either of the objectively measured outcomes, physical activity ($r = -0.026$) and sleep ($r = -0.047$).

Procedure

Once the ethical committee approved the topic, the researcher met the participants; personally. The researcher explained the research objective to them and asked about their willingness to participate in the research.

The researcher collected phone numbers of the participants willing to participate in the study, and the researcher sent Google forms to those participants with appropriate instructions. Once the participants completed filling out the Google forms, the researcher thanked them for their participation, and then the researcher analysed the data.

Analysis of data

The data were first analysed using Pearson Correlation to test the hypothesis, which states a significant relationship between the variables. Once it was found out

that the relationship between the variables is significant, the Mediation analysis was done using SPSS PROCESS macro, Model 6, to test the hypothesis, which states a significant indirect effect of Accomplishment on Creativity.

3. Results

Table 1: The correlation coefficient among Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationship, Meaning, Accomplishment and Creativity among Indian Youth

		P	E	R	M	A
E	Pearson	.222**	1			
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	407	407			
R	Pearson	.534**	.321**	1		
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
	N	407	407	407		
M	Pearson	.604**	.444**	.502**	1	
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
	N	407	407	407	407	
A	Pearson	.495**	.446**	.389**	.719**	1
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	407	407	407	407	407
Creativity	Pearson	.275**	.300**	.196**	.339**	.407**
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	407	407	407	407	407

Note. P stands for Positive Emotions, E stands for Engagement, R stands for Relationships, M stands for Meaning and A stands for Accomplishment.

Table 1 shows a positive significant correlation between Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationship, Meaning, Accomplishment and Creativity which is significant at 0.01 level. Although the correlation between the variables at 0.01 level it is found to be low.

The table indicates that, if Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment increases, Creativity increases and vice-versa. A research done by Wagner (2019) showed that in self-reports, all strengths including Creativity were positively related to all PERMA dimensions, and this previous study results, compliments the current study results.

Figure 2: Path model with standardised regression weights

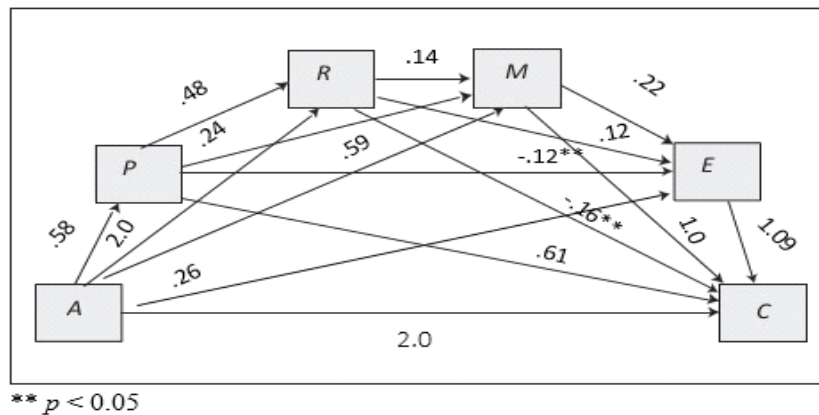


Figure 2 illustrates, the standardised regression coefficient between Accomplishment, Positive Emotions, Relationships, Meaning, Engagement and Creativity. The regression coefficient between Relationship, Engagement and Creativity was statistically significant. We tested the significance of this indirect effect using bootstrapping procedures.

Table 2 shows that the Engagement mediates the relationship between Accomplishment and Creativity. There is a significant effect of Accomplishment on Creativity via Positive Emotions and Engagement. There is a significant effect of Accomplishment on Creativity via Relationships and Engagement. There is a significant effect of Accomplishment on Creativity via Meaning and Engagement. There a significant indirect effect of Accomplishment on Creativity via Positive Emotions, Relationships and Engagement. There a significant indirect effect of Accomplishment on Creativity via Positive Emotions, Meaning and Engagement. There is a significant indirect effect of Accomplishment on Creativity via Relationships, Meaning and Engagement.

Table 2: Direct and indirect effect and 95% confidence intervals for the mediational model

Model Pathways		Estimated Effect	95% CI	
			Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
Direct Effects				
Accomplishment	→ Creativity	1.9395	1.0593	2.8197
Indirect Effects				
A	→ P → C	.3518	-.0182	.7525
A	→ R → C	-.0324	-.1898	.0974
A	→ M → C	.0547	-.5447	.5805
A	→ E → C	.2759	.0845	.5153
A	→ P → R → C	-.0435	-.2203	.1256
A	→ P → M → C	.0132	-.1303	.1532
A	→ P → E → C	-.0812	-.1838	-.0090
A	→ R → M → C	.0027	-.0312	.0361
A	→ R → E → C	.0288	.0039	.0732
A	→ M → E → C	.1401	.0308	.3157
A	→ P → R → M → C	.0037	-.0403	.0425
A	→ P → R → E → C	.0387	.0081	.0817
A	→ P → M → E → C	.0337	.0068	.0787
A	→ R → M → E → C	.0070	.0008	.0212
A	→ P → R → M → E → C	.0094	.0016	.0243
Note. P stands for Positive Emotions, E stands for Engagement, R stands for Relationships.				

Note. P stands for Positive Emotions, E stands for Engagement, R stands for Relationships,

M stands for Meaning, A stands for Accomplishment and C stands for Creativity.

The table 2 also indicates that the Positive Emotions doesn't mediate the relationship between Accomplishment and Creativity. Relationships doesn't mediate the relationship between Accomplishment and Creativity. Meaning, doesn't mediate the relationship between Accomplishment and Creativity. There is no significant indirect effect of Accomplishment on Creativity via Positive Emotions and Relationships. There is no significant indirect effect of Accomplishment on Creativity via Positive Emotions and Meaning. There is no significant effect of Accomplishment on Creativity via Relationships and Meaning. There is no significant indirect effect of Accomplishment on Creativity via Positive Emotions, Relationships and Meaning.

The table 2 also shows that there is a significant indirect effect of Accomplishment on Creativity via Positive Emotions, Relationships, Meaning, and Engagement, which confirms the path assumed by the researchers.

The study suggests that Positive Emotions, Relationships, Meaning, and Engagement are the variables, through which the Accomplishment takes to enhancement Creativity. This shows the mediating role played by PERMA to enhance Creativity.

4. Discussion

The current study results indicate that the indirect path effect by which Accomplishment influences creativity is via Positive emotions, relationships, Meaning and Engagement. This path can be explained with the support of following researches.

According to Cohn et al. (2009), experiencing positive emotions is associated with more achievement, not simply because individuals are left feeling better, but also because a broadened mindset helps them develop positive emotions and achieve Flow. Emotional contagion theory explains that emotions can be transferred from one person to another, meaning if you carry positive emotions, you can transfer them to others. In a study done by Chang et al., 2020, the results say that when athletic class students constantly stay positive, their positive emotions get transferred to each other, which builds a positive relationship in the team.

An article written by Northwestern Medicine Staff, (2017) mentions that being in a loving relationship can give an individual a sense of well-being and purpose. It's possible that having a sense of purpose can add years to your life. In support of this article, Feeney & Collins, 2014 in their research, says, Supportive relationships help people aid a sense of purpose and meaning in life. Wellington, 2017b mentions that one absolute requirement for the flow state of mind is a clear sense of purpose. It would help if you felt an authentic connection to the meaning behind your work to devote yourself to fulfilling it at the moment. Kaufman, 2016 says that Flow — the mental state of being completely present and fully immersed in a task — strongly contributes to creativity. When in Flow state, the creator and the universe become one, outside distractions subside from consciousness, and one's mind becomes fully open and attuned to the act of creating.

The results also support the literature which tells that, Engagement is that strong variable which predicts Creativity (MacDonald, 2006; Forgeard et al., 2009 & Sawyer, 2007).

5. Summary

The results showed that there is a significant direct effect of Accomplishment on Creativity. The indirect path effect by which Accomplishment influences creativity are via Positive Emotions, Relationships, Meaning, and Engagement.

Government of India can use the developed model to make amendments in Education Policy. This model can be applied in regular curriculum of the students, so that learning becomes easy, creative and pleasurable for them and also it contributes to the overall holistic development of the youth of India. So this model can be used in policy making, so that the learning can be made better, rather than mere exchange of information.

Conflict of interest

We have no known conflict of interest to disclosure.

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Covid-19 and Challenges to Indian State: Public Health Policy Perspective

• Pradip Kumar Parida¹

Abstract

This paper attempts to critically examine the challenges that the state administration faced during a pandemic to counter various issues involved in the domain of public policy implementation, particularly in health and social sector. As Covid-19 has affected the whole globe, it has created insurmountable challenges to the public administration of any state and also to public policy. Addressing the problems of people due to Covid-19 and the consequences of the impact of Covid-19 on the life and livelihood of general public were major challenges for any country. In that background, this paper tries to examine the issues from the public policy dimension, and how the administration of the country- national government, state government, district administration and, at the local level, the Panchayati Raj Institutions, responded to address the miseries of the people.

Keywords: *Covid-19, Government, Public Administration & Policy, Health Governance.*

Role of State in Pandemic Situation

Covid- 19 is a complete game changer across the globe, and the subsequent lockdown as well as unlocking processes, in different parts of the world. It has severely affected our day-to-day existence, life and livelihood, productivity, income, employment opportunities, in agriculture and industry, and subsequently, the polity and governance. It has really exposed the resilience, preparedness, responsiveness, and capacity of the government machinery, particularly bureaucracy, to tackle crisis management and engage people in development activities by implementing programmes. It underlines the need for proper planning to provide people with various options for livelihood opportunities at the local level with locally available

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resources, like the activities undertaken by MNREGA, etc. The role of local administration and institutions of governance is crucial in this context (Mathur, 2011: 10-11). This was particularly the case, in the areas where the number of corona-affected people was increasing and rehabilitation of the village returned laborers to their settlement, by providing them gainful employment opportunities and engaging them in various rural development programmes. That was the crying need of the hour. The important issues were the production and distribution of masks, identification of vulnerable communities, proper transportation, isolation of migrant workers, food and accommodation, medication, and subsequent rehabilitation by providing income generation activities (Planning Commission, 2021).

As Covid-19 has affected the whole globe, developing countries along with developed countries were equally affected. However, the administrative machinery in India at various levels has tried its best to address this problem, from prevention to isolation, quarantine, medication, cure, at individual and community levels. As a result, the death rate of Corona affected people across the globe was very disturbing. However, the percentage of people affected and death in India was comparatively less, in comparison to developed countries, like USA, France, Italy, UK, etc. (WHO, 2021). There were variations among various states in terms of the spread of Corona and death casualty. The state, district, and local administration played a significant role and contributed immensely to addressing the gravity of the situation. The facilities available at the existing public health institutions like government hospitals, PHC, CHC, and district headquarter hospitals were not adequate to address the severity of this pandemic. However, putting them together in the right place, linking them properly, keeping the affected people in proper places for quarantine, and providing them food, medicine and shelter became very important in this context, and were successfully administered by the respective district administrative machinery in many states.

Impact on Productivity: Agriculture and Industry

Mass migration and exodus of workers from the metro cities and Industrial townships to villages in the far-flung rural areas, in the aftermath of the declaration of complete lockdown, was unprecedented in the recent times. It will remain forever in our memory. It looked like a horrific scene from a Hollywood horror movie, where countries go to war and the whole civilization is wiped out due to war, and people are leaving their motherland or moving to another place (country) for their survival and existence, with an uncertain future. That has happened in the Covid-19 scenario. However, the fundamental difference was that here people were returning

to their respective villages and native places. But there was no certainty that they will get jobs or come back again to the places where they worked or lived for a long time. With bags and baggage overhead, old age parents, sick children, putting them on cycle, people were walking down, carrying the children on shoulders and dragging bags on the road and walking down thousands of kilometers, just to reach their desired destinations or villages. It reminds us of the movies depicting the stories of partition of countries followed by mass migration.

Closure of industries in the industrial township led to large amounts of unemployment and loss of livelihood and income for thousands of people. There were no alternatives for earning. How could they run their families for their day-to-day existence? Their survival was at stake. People were crying in panic. The government did not have adequate support for them. Where will they go? The private sector did not have sufficient resources to support them. Everybody was in the dark about what to do at such a critical juncture in the world. Trade and commerce were totally closed down, at least for a couple of months. There was no movement of vehicles and a lack of transportation facilities. That led to a situation where there was no movement of goods or factory products, even the consumable items of daily needs, vegetables, rations, etc. Though at certain places there were provisions for rations and other basic needs by government and non-governmental agencies/civil society organisations, those were not sufficient to cater to the needs of the whole population. Gradually, the market opened. But it had taken a long time.

When the people returned to their respective villages, many of them took to agriculture for their existence and livelihood. As a result of which, there was massive agricultural production, particularly in the fruits and vegetable sector, and also gradually expanded access to the local market. At least these items were sold to people and they had access to these edible items, which created some sort of stability in the sense people can now have something to eat and live. Interstate movements were restricted initially. Subsequently, it was opened with reasonable restrictions.

The movement of trains, buses, and trucks was limited. Over a period of two years, it was opened up completely. Though the restrictions imposed by the government on vehicles and peoples' movement were followed, in some places with a considerable amount of precaution and in many places without observance of any protocol. However, the restrictions imposed by the civil administration and the role of police to declare 'Containment Zones' and putting people in isolation or home restriction had a tremendous impact on the containment of Corona. It had a positive impact on people and society (*The Economic Times*, 2021).

The loss of National Income was primarily due to a lack of production in industry, and fewer activities in trade and commerce. The service and production sectors were completely closed down. It was indeed a great loss for the country in terms of national income, growth, and GDP. National income reduced to abysmal condition. The growth rate in GDP was extremely low and it has a negative trend. The new mantra at this juncture was 'work from home'. A large number of people attended office through online mode, particularly in white-collar jobs. The people working in the IT sector, banking, and other IT-related sectors were not largely affected due to innovative ways of doing the work, like 'online work' and 'work from home' systems. However, other sectors were negatively affected where physical presence is necessary for the work. Under these precarious conditions, the whole world and our country started to cope with 'neo-realism' or 'neo-normal', and 'continue to live and work with Corona viruses'.

Vulnerability of Education due to the Impact of Covid

Covid had severely affected the education system across the globe. Students/children were the worst affected by this phenomenon. Online education started, as schools, colleges and universities were closed down physically for approximately 2 years. Initially, there is no vaccine for children below 12 years. The problem was overcome late. School is the space where children meet their friends, and teachers on a day-to-day basis and engage with them in learning while playing, singing, jumping, and even fighting with friends and peer groups in a playful mood. That is the socialization process of a child in a primary school. However, once it was closed due to Covid-19 and online teaching-learning started, the children could not get the space that used to be previously at school, enjoying the mode of learning by playing, singing, and following others. He or she has just tried to mug up what has been taught to him/her by a teacher on the online mode. Hence, the whole pedagogy of learning and education system gets questioned. What is the end result here? What are the outcomes? Through this process, we have spoiled the education system and learning process of children. In many areas of our country, particularly in rural areas, far-flung from the district headquarter or cities, tribal and hilly areas, where network connectivity is a great problem, how could the children have been connected online? Many children from far-flung rural/hilly areas missed the opportunity of online learning. The same happened with the online examination system. The results were precarious. The evaluation system was not proper.

In the context of higher education in India, i.e. colleges, universities, vocational institutions, engineering, medical, pharmacy, agriculture, and para-medical colleges were affected severely. These courses are heavily dependent upon practical classes

and learning from experiments in the laboratory. What about those aspects of teaching-learning in the Corona period? Due to the lack of these facilities, the learning outcome of students could not become proper. How can a student of science, applied science, engineering, and medicine learn from books without practical knowledge, for roughly 2 years? Simply mugging up theoretical issues from the online mode of teaching is not adequate enough to cater to the academic needs of students. It won't suffice the purpose of education and its objectives. Education is not simply getting a degree at the end of the day. It's about the practical application of knowledge or theoretical inputs from books into solving our day-to-day life problems and its application to address societal developments.

Experience from Different States

Though the Government of India (GoI) at the central level, and many state governments in their respective state levels, responded proactively to address the problem by whatever means available, from health check-ups, quarantine, hospital admission, isolation, and social distancing, which resulted in less casualty in comparison to other developing and developed countries. What are the mechanisms followed by various states in India? Some states responded immediately and there were positive results, whereas some states were struggling to control it. The casualty is very less in some states, i.e. Kerala, whereas, the casualty was very large in some states, like Maharashtra. Why were there significant differences?

The case of West Bengal to handle Covid-19 is very important in this context. How did the state government respond to citizens in times of crisis? As a matter of fact, the cases were increasing like anything in West Bengal till June end of 2020. The situation became so complex that the state government did not allow the team sent by the central government for proper inspection so that proper identification could take place and appropriate rehabilitation policy and programmes could be implemented. Rather, the state considered it as an unnecessary interference in the jurisdiction of the authority of the state government by the Central government.

The situation worsened due to politicization, rather than addressing the genuine problem. This is due to political differences between the party in power in the state and at the Centre. The ideological feud running between them overshadowed the urgency and emergency of the situation. It led to a situation where people were sandwiched between two governments. The consequences were visible in addressing the crisis in the public health system there. The health governance system had collapsed to a large extent in the state.

Whereas Kerala was successful in addressing the pandemic from the very beginning, primarily due to its medical preparedness and robust public health system, and infrastructural facilities available at local levels. For example, even the PHC & CHC apart from District level hospitals were already prepared to gear up for the challenges encountered due to the sudden rise of Covid cases. Odisha has shown tremendous results due to handling the mass migration of laborers from outside the state, particularly from Gujarat and Maharashtra. There were buses and trains full of passengers from these states returning home, due to the sudden imposition of lockdown. The state, district, and local administrations looked into the matter in a holistic manner. Their isolation and creation of containment zone, staying there for 10 days with basic amenities, cooked meals for them, and other necessary things apart from medication, led to less mortality in Odisha in comparison to other states. The Odisha government went a step forward by declaring the Sarpanch or Mukhia of every Gram Panchayat (GP- the lowest level institution of PRIs), as the nodal officer and empowered them with Magistrate Power to control the law and order situation during the pandemic. This was unprecedented in the post-independent history of the state. The immediate implementation of MNREGA and some state government-sponsored schemes provided them with alternative livelihood generation at the local level in villages.

Maharashtra is a classic example where the death toll increased like anything, primarily in metros like Mumbai, Nagpur, Pune, etc. As there was the high density and lack of a large number of beds and hospitals and the affordability factors made people suffer due to Covid. Though government machinery was prepared to face any casualty, the end result was not positive, as many people died, particularly from poorer sections, as they could not afford to get oxygen cylinders, which were sold on the black market and could not afford private hospitals as the beds in government hospitals were already packed. The same situation was visible in Delhi, being the national capital with a population of more than one crore. The existing health infrastructure could not cope with the pressure, due to the sudden rise of Covid patients. Though the Delhi government tried its level best to address the pandemic situation, the number of patients outnumbered the beds and facilities available in the hospitals. That led to a situation, where there were large numbers of death tolls, in spite of a robust mechanism of the Delhi government to address the health needs of people living in the NCR region. Nonetheless, the demand outnumbered the supply, which triggered the severity of the critical situation (Sood, Kapur and Oomen, 2021).

The example of Uttar Pradesh compels us to find out reasons for not being able to handle the situation, primarily due to its large size and vast population, and lack of adherence to law and order. The people in this state, to a large extent, did not obey

the rules and standards mentioned by the central and state government. Without a mask, sanitizer, or containment zone, everything became unsystematic. The death toll increased like anything. The public administration in the state had tried to tackle it. However, the district administration and the panchayat administration, which are doing the work at the cutting-edge level, failed to foresee the problem and address them. This led to catastrophic results for the people affected by Corona virus. The bottom line was that the states who responded immediately with serious concern had shown positive results. The reverse was true for other states, which lacked seriousness. These are the case studies in the domain of 'Public Administration' and analysis of reasons for 'Policy Paralysis' (Shriram, 2005: 21-30).

Role of PRIs and Local Institutions in States Handling Corona Issues

During the 1st and 2nd phases of Covid, each and everybody was concerned about recovering from Corona. At the local level, how the district administration with the presence of institutions like the Block office, line department of various government agencies, and the active participation of people through PRIs- the institutions of self-governance - could address this problem to the maximum extent possible? That is through identification of vulnerable sections of the society/migrant workers village, their Covid test, isolation, and quarantine process, offering them food as there were no job, their health issues, and how to keep them and their family updated about the latest development and make them understand that there is no stigma attached to it. In the post-Covid-19 scenario, how to settle them through jobs at the local level like MNREGA and other schemes? There is a need for policy analysis in this context to look into it from a development administration perspective. The local bureaucracy, starting from the state government to the District Headquarter to the Block level to Panchayat/village level- wherever they have done good work and responded proactively with humanitarian approach and sensitivity, empathy towards the people, in general, and affected people in particular, the results were tremendous (Sanghi, 2021). There was a substantial impact on the village population. This was clearly noticed in certain states. Though within a state, there were variations, where there was a strong presence of credible institutions of governance at the local level, the benefits to the poor and needy had really trickled down *NIHFW*).

The existence of democratically elected people's institutions, like PRIs, can play an important role by arranging the workforce who were sitting idle at home, searching for their livelihood- bread and butter, put them in gainful employment activities through MNREGA and other schemes, distribution of food to the needy jobless, poor, destitute, migrants, many of them were homeless, lack of purchasing

power, even to purchase their daily needs, how to address this genuine problem? It's a very important and primary task to identify them in addressing their problems, which are multi-pronged. As a matter of fact, the PRIs with the help of district administration could handle the situation at ground zero, more efficiently than any other institution (*Planning Commission, 2021*). Panchayats had shown that 'whenever there is willpower and funds, they can create wonders'. At the local level, they successfully handled the situation. It has a tremendous effect on the people- from health, survival, and livelihood aspects. However, there were contradictions visible in some parts of the country. The crying need of the hour was how to address the immediate needs of villagers, and migrant workers at the local level. There were success stories also (*ICMR, 2021*).

Critical Issues

Covid-19 has completely turned down the day-to-day life system, and livelihood opportunities, particularly those who were working in unorganised sectors of our country along with health issues and education of children. It was a great challenge to the whole administration in our country, starting from national to local. The challenges, particularly in the health sector were not at all easy to address. In a situation like this, where nobody knows what can be the probable solution to a particular problem, how could the administration have handled the emergency situation? What are the options available there? What are the problems encountered by common citizens in their day-to-day life in their respective spheres? In fact, nobody had any concrete idea or information regarding how to tackle Corona. Subsequently, the discovery of vaccines has given us relief.

Role of Media and Mass Communication Agencies

The spread of rumors by some sections of the media and disgruntled elements in our society and many mischief-mongers in our country created hurdles for the smooth flow of proper information. Considering the literacy rate, awareness levels, accessing media both print and electronic, and the motivation among people to overcome these obstacles in a collective manner, were really herculean tasks for everybody. The local media to a large extent has no credible sources of information. National media was somewhat divided on the basis of ideology and political affiliation. Some of them criticized the national government like anything by depicting the negative side of the pandemic. Failure of government, particularly in the health sector and health governance system, i.e. lack of availability of beds, medicine, testing facility, oxygen cylinder, subsequently it's black marketing, an increasing

number of the death toll and lack of proper amenities in the cremation grounds became daily affairs. However, some sections of the media also highlighted the significant steps taken by the respective governments at the Union and state levels respectively, apart from discussing the problems encountered by the common citizens of the country. They provided a rosy picture by depicting the success stories only and actions taken care of by the government.

However, the need of the hour was how to inform the common citizens of the country about the myths and realities of Covid. Its genesis, spreading mechanism, precaution to be taken, medication system and procedure to be followed in case of affected persons, etc. The tragedy was that the information was not available properly, to the common citizens (Das, 2021). The stigma attached to the Covid patients or death due to it and the critical problem of cremation of dead bodies were unprecedented. That became painful for everybody. In a pandemic situation, considering the urgency and the emergency of the situation, the administration must be prepared to provide some relief to common citizens, in terms of proper flow of information and awareness generation, which was lacking initially in case of Corona.

Conclusion

How to bring efficiency and effectiveness to the governance system? (In the context of the existing situation in our country, administering vaccines, providing proper information, creating adequate opportunities for livelihood generation, providing a robust and well-connected public health system, and training manpower to tackle emergency situations due to Corona, were indeed the herculean tasks not only for the administration but also for the whole population. It was a lifetime experience for all of us.

It was a new dimension in our public policy system, to engage the whole population to overcome the barriers created by Corona. How to do it? It's a matter of great concern for all of us - academicians, planners, policymakers, public health experts, public administrators, industry people, corporate sector, business institutions etc. Our country, along with the world, has overcome this situation and prepared us and ourselves to encounter any such situation in the future, not only in terms of medical emergency but also in terms of alternatives in livelihood generation, industrial production, and diversification of agricultural activities. This is apart from the creation of cottage and small-scale industries to cater to the needs of people at the local level in all fronts – be it health, education, employment, livelihood, etc. That is the crying need of the hour.

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Dimensions of Women Empowerment: Study on Women in Kudumbashree in Kerala

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Abstract

The Kudumashree Programme in Kerala is widely acknowledged as a model of poverty eradication and women empowerment. The idea of women empowerment follows a multi-dimensional approach as it encompasses economic, political, social, cultural, personal and family aspects. Since women are an integral part of every economy, women empowerment is of the utmost importance in order to achieve enduring and sustainable social growth. The objectives of the paper are to analyze the factors that motivate women to join Kudumbashree and to analyze the empowerment of women in Kudumbashree with respect to various dimensions of their life. The selected districts were Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Pathanamthitta. A total of 600 women from Kudumbashree units, 200 from each district, 100 from rural and 100 from urban forms the sample. A structured questionnaire was used to analyze the motivational factors and women empowerment. Univariate and Bivariate analysis have been used to interpret the data. Factor analysis is used to find the various dimensions of empowerment of women. While analyzing the factors for joining Kudumbashree in the present sample, it is seen that earning livelihood comes as the first priority followed by the provision of availing loans. The factor analysis identified the six domains of women empowerment which are self sustainability, personal empowerment, decision making, technological empowerment, financial empowerment, and frugality. In this study, the contribution of the personal empowerment factor to women empowerment is lesser compared to other factors. Capacity-building initiatives to improve skills will help increase the personal empowerment of women that will be easily achieved in an educated society like Kerala.

Keywords: *Kudumashree, women empowerment, decision making, self-sustainability, poverty eradication.*

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Introduction

Kudumbashree is a State Poverty Eradication Mission implemented by the Government of Kerala through local self-government institutions. The functions of the Kudumbashree are to focus upon (a) economic development and (b) social development (John, 2009; Vijayanand, 2009). Kudumbashree has adopted the strategy that any woman 18 years of age or above residing in Kerala state can become a member of the Kudumbashree unit (known as *Ayalkoottam* in Malayalam) irrespective of whether she belongs to Below Poverty Line (BPL) or not. This creates an opening for the above poverty line (APL) families to enter the community structures of Kudumbashree. Several government schemes and projects are linked with the Kudumbashree mission for ensuring the rights of economically and socially vulnerable women. It is a Self-Help Group in Kerala that disburses micro credits to women in order to make it easier for them to participate in entrepreneurial activities (Kudumbashree, 2013-14). The Kudumbashree programme in Kerala is widely acknowledged as a model of poverty eradication and women empowerment. The idea of women empowerment follows a multi-dimensional approach encompassing economic, political, social, cultural, personal and family aspects. Since women are an integral part of every economy, women's empowerment is of utmost importance to achieve enduring and sustainable social growth (Kabeer, 2009). Empowerment would catalyze women to be economically independent, self-reliant, and have positive esteem to enable them to face any difficult situation. The provision of microfinance is essential to achieve women's empowerment in Kerala. Kerala is the only state in India where women outnumber men in the population (1084 women for 1000 men, Census of India, 2011). The women in Kerala live six years longer than men. Kerala leads the other states of India in women's education, according to the 2011 Census (91.98%).

The study by Joseph et al. (2020) showed that the socio-economic empowerment of women has increased through the Kudumbashree. Selvi and Pushpa (2017) found that Kudumbashree was able to achieve the social and economic development of women. Kudumbashree had a direct influence over the living status, health, education and nutritional needs of the women (Jose J, 2015). But another study by Venugopalan K (2014) concluded that women empowerment was achieved by Kudumbashree only to a limited extent. Jose R et al. (2021) remarked that there is a positive sign of empowerment found in various domains of empowerment of the members of Kudumbashree. On these highlights, the present study analyses women's empowerment through Kudumbashree with respect to various dimensions of their life in three districts of Kerala, namely Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Pathanamthitta.

Objectives

The objectives of the paper are to analyse the factors that motivate women to join Kudumbashree and to analyse the empowerment of women in Kudumbashree with respect to various dimensions of their life.

Data and Methodology

The highest number of Neighbourhood groups (NHGs) are found in Thiruvananthapuram District, followed by Kollam District, and the lowest number of NHGs are found in Pathanamthitta District. So data were collected from these three districts with equal representation of women from rural and urban areas. A total of 600 women from Kudumbashree units, 200 from each district, 100 from rural and 100 from urban, form the sample. A structured questionnaire was used to elicit information regarding motivational factors and women empowerment. Univariate and Bivariate analyses have been used to interpret the data. Factor analysis was used to find the various dimensions of empowerment of women.

Factor analysis

Factor analysis is an explorative analytical tool. Factor analysis reduces the information in a model by reducing the dimensions of the observations. Factor analysis has several different rotation methods.

Eigenvalue

The Eigenvalue is used to decide how many factors shall be required in the analysis. If the Eigenvalue drops below one, it means that the factor explains less variance than adding a variable would do (all variables are standardised to have mean=0 and variance=1). The factors whose Eigenvalues are greater than or equal to one are retained in the analysis.

Factor loading

Factor loadings represent how much a factor explains a variable in factor analysis. Loadings can range from -1 to +1. Loadings close to -1 and +1 indicate that the factor strongly affects the variable. Loadings close to zero indicate that the factor has a weak effect on the variable.

In the factor analysis, the following variables were taken to describe women empowerment.

1. Have any savings
2. Decision on the education of children
3. Decision on the marriage of children/dependents
4. Decision on medical treatment
5. Decision of acquisition maintenance of assets
6. Purchase of household items
7. Improved skills and awareness
8. Ability to resist exploitation
9. Ability to interact effectively
10. Improved status of living
11. Courage to visit any bank or office attained
12. Know how to rotate and manage money
13. Capacity to make most profitable use of income and credit
14. Know how to operate a computer
15. Know how to operate a mobile phone
16. Know technological developments in agriculture and industry

Analysis

Profile of the sample

The description of the characteristics of the population under study in terms of factors which determine the composition of the population is vital in a sample-based study. Age-wise break up of women shows that great majority of women belongs to the category of more than 35 years of age and only 11.3 per cent of women are young (less than 35 years of age). Of the total women, 44.5 per cent is in 50+ age group. The proportion of respondents who are in the age group 50 above, is slightly higher in Thiruvananthapuram (51.5%) followed by Kollam (46.0%) but in the case of women below 35 years of age, the highest proportion is in Pathanamthitta (14.5%) in comparison with Thiruvananthapuram (10.5%) and Kollam (9.0%). Education plays an important role in women empowerment as it influences the attitude of the women and their standard of living. The educational level of women shows that more than fifty per cent (53.7%) are having school education 5-10 years followed by more than 10 years of school education (18.3%). Among women, 12.0 per cent have got graduation and while comparing the districts it is seen that graduated females are slightly higher in Thiruvananthapuram (14.0%) in comparison with Kollam (12.0%)

and Pathanamthitta (10.0%). According to place of residence, it is seen that an equal participation of women from rural as well as urban areas is present in the sample (Table 1).

Table 1 Profile of the sample

Age	Thiruvananthapuram (%)	Kollam (%)	Pathanamthitta (%)	Total (%)
Less than 35	21 (10.5)	18 (9.0)	29 (14.5)	68 (11.3)
36-50	76 (38.0)	90 (45.0)	99 (49.5)	265 (44.2)
50 above	103 (51.5)	92 (46.0)	72 (36.0)	267 (44.5)
Education				
Illiterate /upto 5	33 (16.5)	35 (17.5)	28 (14.0)	96 (16.0)
5yrs-10yrs	98 (49.0)	102 (51.0)	122 (61.0)	322 (53.7)
11- 12yrs	41 (20.5)	39 (19.5)	30 (15.0)	110 (18.3)
Above 12 yrs	28 (14.0)	24 (12.0)	20 (10.0)	72 (12.0)
Place of residence				
Urban	100 (50.0)	100 (50.0)	100 (50.0)	300 (50.0)
Rural	100 (50.0)	100 (50.0)	100 (50.0)	300 (50.0)
Type of ration card				
APL	84 (42.0)	72 (36.0)	75 (37.5)	231 (38.5)
BPL	116 (58.0)	128 (64.0)	125 (62.5)	369 (61.5)
Marital status				
Married	145 (72.5)	161 (80.5)	158 (79.0)	464 (77.3)
Unmarried/Separated	19 (9.5)	10 (5.0)	11 (5.5)	40 (6.7)
Widows	36 (18.0)	29 (14.5)	31 (15.5)	96 (16.0)
Social group				
General	103 (51.5)	72 (36.0)	81 (40.5)	256 (42.7)
OBC	69 (34.5)	102 (51.0)	72 (36.0)	243 (40.5)
SC	28 (14.0)	26 (13.0)	47 (23.5)	101 (16.8)
Position in Kudumbashree unit				
President/secretary	29 (14.5)	26 (13.0)	29 (14.5)	84 (14.0)
Volunteer	35 (17.5)	27 (13.5)	36 (18.0)	98 (16.3)
Members	136 (68.0)	147 (73.5)	135 (67.5)	418 (69.7)
Years of experience				
1-5 years	64 (32.0)	63 (31.5)	48 (24.0)	175 (29.1)
6-10 years	27 (13.5)	60 (30.0)	37 (18.5)	124 (20.7)
>10 years	109 (54.5)	77 (38.5)	115 (57.5)	301 (50.2)

The government of India uses the Below Poverty Line as a criterion for identifying individuals and households in need of government help and relief and it basically reveals the household status in terms of income. About 62 per cent of women possess the BPL ration cards and it is clear that in all the three districts majority of the respondents possess the BPL ration cards. The proportion of women who have BPL cards is higher in Kollam district compared to that of Thiruvananthapuram and Pathanamthitta. About 43 per cent of the population under study is in the general category followed by Other Backward Caste (40.5%). SC category forms 16.8 per cent. In Thiruvananthapuram and Pathanamthitta, general category forms the highest (51.5% and 40.5% respectively). In the case of OBC, 51 per cent from Kollam

shows the highest followed by 36.0 per cent from Pathanamthitta. A higher proportion of SC women is in Pathanamthitta (23.5%) when compared to Thiruvananthapuram (14.0%) and Kollam (13.0%). Majority (77.3%) women are married. Widows are also higher in number (16%) while 6.7 per cent are unmarried/separated. More than 70 per cent of the members from the three districts are married. Widows and unmarried or Separated women are higher in Thiruvananthapuram District (18.0% and 9.5% respectively).

According to the position in Kudumbashree units, it is seen that majority of the respondents (69.7%) are members, 14.0 per cent are Presidents/Secretaries and 16.3% are volunteers. Community health volunteer look after various health related aspects of the group members. Collection and Consolidation of accounts is the duty of income generation volunteer. Infrastructural development of the group is done with the help of infrastructural volunteer. District wise comparison shows that the percentage of president/secretary is almost equally distributed in all the three districts. The percentage of members is higher in Kollam (73.5%) in comparison with Thiruvananthapuram (68.0%) and Pathanamthitta (67.5%) whereas percentage of 'volunteers' is less in Kollam (13.5%). Years of experience in Kudumbashree has importance in raising their income and power to participate in the development process of their livelihood. Considering the fact that Kudumbashree is a team of women, years of their experience with Kudumbashree is a sure indication of their achievement. More than half of the members from Thiruvananthapuram and Pathanamthitta district have more than 10 years of experience in Kudumbashree.

Motivational factors for joining Kudumbashree

Kudumbashree is considered to be a model for state-guided initiatives for women for the enhancement of the livelihoods of poor families but its present-day significance goes well beyond this. The mission of Kudumbashree to eradicate poverty through women empowerment has indeed touched many phases of lives of women through its integrated, far-reaching approach. The development of the women community through the activities of Kudumbashree in various fields and their improved standard of living forced other women to join the scheme. While analyzing the factors for joining Kudumbashree in the present sample, it is seen that earning livelihood comes (39.3%) as the first priority followed by provision of availing loans (32.7%). This is because Kudumbashree is giving loan without any collateral security. Some members (9.2%) joined due to the influence of some officials. It shows that the guidance of the officials persuaded the women to join Kudumbashree. About 3 per cent of the women joined Kudumbashree after seeing the benefits attained by their neighbors.

The district wise comparison shows that earning for a livelihood is 48.5 per cent in Kollam, which is the highest, followed by 39.5 per cent in Pathanamthitta and 30.0 per cent in Thiruvananthapuram. Availing loans comes a major factor in Pathanamthitta (40.5%) and in Kollam (36.0%) and it shows almost equal proportions of women in each age group. The proportion of women below 35 is the highest for the factor of earning livelihood (44.0%) when considering the other age groups. Lower education seems to be a casual factor for women for joining Kudumbashree for earning their livelihood as it is seen that only 25 per cent opted that. About 36 per cent of women from APL families opines that earning livelihood is the main reason for their entry to Kudumbashree while it is 41.5 per cent of women from BPL families (Table 2).

Table 2 Motivational factors for joining Kudumbashree

Variables	Factors for joining Kudumbashree					Total (%)
	To earn a livelihood (%)	Influence of neighbours (%)	Motivation from officials (%)	Availing loan (%)	For Social development (%)	
District						
Thiruvananthapuram	60(30.0)	18(9.0))	24(12.0)	43(21.5)	55(27.5)	200(100)
Kollam	97(48.5)	0(0)	31(15.5)	72(36.0)	0(0)	200(100)
Pathanamthitta	79(39.5)	1(0.5)	0(0)	81(40.5)	39(19.5)	200(100)
Age						
<35	30(44.1)	0(0)	8(11.7)	22(32.4)	8(11.8)	68(100)
36-50	102(38.5)	8(3.0)	21(7.9)	86(32.5)	48(18.1)	265(100)
>50	104(39.0)	11(4.1)	26(9.7)	88(33.0)	38(14.2)	267(100)
Education						
Illiterate/upto 5	24(25.0)	3(3.1)	13(13.6)	32(33.3)	24(25.0)	96(100)
5-10 years	133(41.3)	9(2.8)	19(5.9)	116(36.0)	45(14.0)	322(100)
11-12 years	49(44.5)	4(3.6)	11(10.0)	28(25.5)	18(16.4)	110(100)
>12 years	30(41.7)	3(4.2)	12(16.7)	20(27.7)	7(9.7)	72(100)
Social group						
General	101(39.4)	17(6.6)	36(14.1)	65(25.4)	37(14.5)	256(100)
OBC	116(47.8)	2(0.8)	12(4.9)	81(33.3)	32(13.2)	243(100)
SC	19(18.8)	0(0)	7(6.9)	50(49.5)	25(24.8)	101(100)
Type of ration card						
APL	83(35.9)	6(2.6)	24(10.4)	84(36.4)	34(14.7)	231(100)
BPL	153(41.5)	13(3.5)	31(8.4)	112(30.4)	60(16.2)	369(100)
Place of residence						
Urban	106(35.4)	1(0.3)	31(10.3)	104(34.7)	58(19.3)	300(100)
Rural	130(43.3)	18(6.0)	24(8.0)	92(30.7)	36(12.0)	300(100)
Total	236(39.3)	19(3.2)	55(9.2)	196(32.7)	94(15.6)	600(100)

Availing loans is higher among women from APL families (36.4 %) in comparison with BPL families (30.4%). It is seen that more members from rural households joined Kudumbashree 'to earn a livelihood' (43.3%), while more members from

urban households (34.7%) joined for the purpose of availing loans. Very few members from urban households (0.3%) joined Kudumbashree due to the ‘influence of neighbors’, similarly few members from rural households (8.0%) joined due to ‘motivation from officials’.

Various dimensions of Women empowerment using factor analysis

Table 3 Eigen Values by Components

The Eigen values and percentage of variance about women empowerment are given in Table 3

Total variance explained			
Component	Initial Eigen values	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	4.26	26.625	26.625
2	2.739	17.12	43.745
3	2.0	12.498	56.243
4	1.511	9.446	65.689
5	1.145	7.155	72.844
6	1.016	6.347	79.191

Table 3 explains Eigen values by components. It is clear that 6 factors showed the initial Eigen values greater than 1. All the 6 factors after extraction cumulatively account for 79 percent of the total variance scores of women empowerment. The first factor accounts for 26.625 percent (Eigen value 4.26) of the total variance of women’s empowerment. The second factor explains 17.12 percent (Eigen value 2.739), the third factor accounts for 12.498 percent (Eigenvalue2), the fourth factor accounts for 9.446 percent (Eigen value 1.511) and the fifth factor shows 7.155percent (Eigen value1.145), the sixth factor accounts for 6.347 percent (Eigen value 1.016).

Rotated factor coefficients of perception about women empowerment are given in Table 4. Based on the Eigen values six factors retain in this analysis. These six factors represent about 79 percent total variation on the response variable. The variables with high loading on a factor will provide the meaning and interpretation of the factor. The variables Improved skills and awareness, Ability to resist exploitation, Ability to interact effectively, Improved status of living, Courage to visit any bank or office attained have higher loading with factor 1. Hence this factor is named as “Self Sustainability Factor”.

The variables, Know how to rotate and manage money, Capacity to make most profitable use-of income and credit, Know how to use a mobile phone have higher loading with factor 2. Hence this factor is named as “Personal Empowerment Factor”. The variables, Decision on education of children, Decision on marriage of children dependents, Decision on medical treatment have higher loading with factor 3. Hence this factor is named as “Decision Making Factor”.

The variables, Know how to operate a computer, Know technological developments in agriculture and industry have higher loading with factor 4. Hence this factor is named as “Technological Empowerment Factor”. The variables Purchase of house hold items, Decision on acquisition maintenance of assets have higher loading with factor 5. Hence this factor is named as “Financial Empowerment Factor”. The variable have any savings have higher loading with factor. 6. Hence, this factor is named as “Frugality Factor”.

Table 4 Rotated Component Matrix

Women empowerment variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
Have any savings	0.034	0.05	0.007	-0.047	0.019	<u>0.935</u>
Decision of education of children	0.076	0.096	<u>0.76</u>	-0.079	0.057	-0.119
Decision of marriage of children	0	-0.048	<u>0.837</u>	0.162	0.235	0.079
Decision of medical treatment	-0.009	0	<u>0.854</u>	0.039	0.227	0.061
Decision of acquisition maintenance of assets	0.047	-0.016	0.234	-0.026	<u>0.898</u>	0.004
Purchase of household items	0.019	0.095	0.243	0.066	<u>0.883</u>	0.026
Improved skills and awareness	<u>0.697</u>	0.083	0.037	0.416	-0.049	0.23
Ability to resist exploitation	<u>0.755</u>	0.157	-0.042	-0.084	0.132	0.308
Ability to interact effectively	<u>0.907</u>	0.034	0.145	0.189	-0.036	-0.102
Improved status of living	<u>0.912</u>	0.018	0.107	0.208	-0.071	-0.13
Courage to visit any bank or office attained	<u>0.806</u>	0.133	-0.113	-0.077	0.11	-0.038
Know-how to rotate and manage money	0.136	<u>0.86</u>	-0.029	0.175	0.055	0.131
Capacity to make most profitable use-of income and credit	0.166	<u>0.82</u>	-0.012	0.337	-0.005	0.133
Know how to operate a computer	0.072	0.09	0.054	<u>0.837</u>	-0.049	-0.061
Know how to use a mobile phone	0.029	<u>0.857</u>	0.101	-0.128	0.032	-0.149
Know technological developments in agriculture and industry	0.179	0.139	0.022	<u>0.853</u>	0.106	-0.009

Table 5 -Distribution of women by their status in various dimensions of empowerment

Dimensions	Low	Medium	High
Factor 1 (Self Sustainability)	23.2	13.5	63.3
Factor 2 (Personal Empowerment)	30.5	24.5	45.0
Factor 3 (Decision Making)	11.0	11.5	77.5
Factor 4 (Technological Empowerment)	19.3	16.2	64.5
Factor 5 (Financial Empowerment)	9.7	17.7	72.7
Factor 6 (Frugality)	18.5	0.0	81.5

Table 5 gives the distribution of women with respect to 6 dimensions of empowerment. The six factors are named according to their nature of variables involved. The six domains identified are Self Sustainability Factor, Personal Empowerment Factor, Decision Making Factor, Technological Empowerment Factor, Financial Empowerment Factor, and Frugality Factor.

In the first factor of self sustainability, which comprises five questions obtained from the factor analysis, about 63 percent have high empowerment, about 14 percent of women have medium empowerment, and 23 percent have low self sustainability. In the second factor 31 percent women are in low empowerment, 25 percent women have medium empowerment and 45 percent have high empowerment. In the third domain of factor, 78 percent women have high decision-making power. From the fourth factor it is clear that, about 65 percent have high technological empowerment. In the financial empowerment domain, about 73 percent are at highly empowered. Among the six factors, percentages of respondents with low values are the highest for the factor 2 which is personal empowerment factor and it is followed by self sustainability.

Discussion and Conclusion

Kudumbashree, launched by the Government of Kerala in 1998 to eradicate poverty in rural and urban areas of Kerala through community development schemes, is now considered as one of the most significant women-empowering projects in India. Kudumbashree has enhanced leadership and entrepreneurship and the capacity of women to work and earn together. The status of women in family and society has thus substantially improved. The study has provided insight into the motivational factors for joining the Kudumbashree units and the women empowerment acquired after joining the Kudumbashree. The most important factor for joining Kudumbashree

was to earn a livelihood, followed by provisions to avail loans. The study results concur with Boniface, P. J et al. (2012) that the Kudumbashree mission, through its host of income-generating activities and programmes, empowered poor women economically and socially.

Empowerment cannot be studied in a single notation. In this study, the principal axis factoring method was used to analyse women empowerment and to identify the major domains that determine women empowerment. The present study suggested six domains of empowerment such as self-sustainability, personal empowerment, decision making, technological empowerment, financial empowerment and frugality. With the 16 variables describing women empowerment, it is visualized that women can be transformed into an empowered society in economic, social, and self-sustainability aspects after joining Kudumbashree. The finding of this study that the Kudumbashree scheme helps in the economic empowerment of women has significant implications. The economic empowerment of women leads to plenty of positive impacts on the social and economic aspects of society as a whole (Cholappallil D, 2021, John A, 2017). The activities of Kudumbashree enable women to indulge in decision-making, earn better from limited resources, and enhance self-sustainability (Praveen, K. V 2015). Raising the personal empowerment of women is an essential ingredient for realizing the full potential of women empowerment. But in this study, the contribution of the personal empowerment factor to women empowerment is lesser compared to other factors.

Like many other studies, this research has empirically found that the Kudumbashree programme has helped to empower women in Kerala. The personal empowerment factor is not so impactful on women empowerment in Kerala. Therefore, capacity-building initiatives to improve skills contribute to the personal empowerment of women that can be easily achieved in an educated society like Kerala.

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Community Engagement in Higher Education in National Education Policy 2020: A Study in Delhi NCR

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Abstract

Education is the most important key in order to head towards socio-economic development. It also enables people to understand their rights, duties and to live better standard of life. The Department of Adult Continuing Education and Extension (DACEE), University of Delhi conducted one research in Anna Nagar Community, ITO Delhi as a “Pilot Study” under their “University-Community Interface”. The study was conducted during May this year, to analyze the status of foundational literacy and numeracy, financial literacy and digital literacy. The awareness among the people of Anna Nagar Community about Health, Hygiene and Menstruation was also studied. The survey took place with the help of one schedule by the students of DACEE with 34 respondents. 5 communities are selected for the University-Community Interface study in the Centenary Year of University of Delhi in order to fulfill the Social Responsibility of Higher Education Institutions as per the National Education Policy 2020.

Keywords: *JJ Colonies, financial literacy, digital literacy, skill mapping, health and hygiene, National Educational Policy 2020.*

Introduction

As per the guidelines of national curriculum framework of UGC January 2022, community engagement is considered as the social responsibility of higher educational institutions (HEIs) in India. In the community, people require need based education and skill for their overall development (UGC, 2022). The National Education Policy 2020 has underlined that HEIs should engage themselves in community service and social work as their third dimension of extension (MHRD, 2020: 36; 38). It implied that both would stand to gain mutually by their inter-connection in community work

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and extension. It also implied that without fulfilling mutual benefits, community engagement does not serve the purpose of social responsibility of HEIs. The HEIs must link their learning with community service. The HEIs can also link research with the local knowledge and channelize knowledge in a productive way. The people of the JJ Colonies can be part of University-Community Interface as community volunteers. The objectives lie on extending the uses of technology and equipment with skills and competencies that are critical to shaping individual aspirations and creating awareness on various aspects of critical skills among people of JJ colonies.

The time has come when India needs to move towards complete literacy and not merely the basic literacy but also the financial and digital literacy. Today these along with the skills are important to lead a decent life. For reaching the goal, we need to design the need-based programmes for different sections of the community. We all need a shelf of core life skills like planning, focus, self-control, awareness and flexibility. These skills support the development of foundational skills such as literacy, numeracy, and digital skills and can also be utilized in several areas, such as gender equality in education, environmental education, peace education or education for development, livelihood and income generation, and for positive health promotion among others. The people are facing the challenges for basic literacy, financial literacy, digital literacy, etc. In this, HEIs can play a very important role to make them aware about these necessities of life to get a sustainable life. In this context, training will help them to realize their fullest potential.

Under the auspices of “**University-Community Interface**”, a pilot survey was conducted at Anna Nagar Community, ITO Delhi. Using this research schedule, the main study will be conducted at rest of the four communities: Shri Ram Community, Nand Lal Community, Outram Lines Community and Valmiki Basti in Delhi. The variations and the similarities will be checked among these communities and suited need-based programme will be designed after the need assessment through the research.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

- To find out the literacy status.
- To know the financial awareness among people.
- To know the status of digital literacy.
- To identify the interest of people in terms of skill.

- To do the skill mapping in the community.
- To understand the concept of health and hygiene among the people.
- To identify hygiene problem related to menstruation and awareness about that among them.
- To identify and train community volunteer to promote university community interface in DU Centenary year.

Understanding the above objectives of Communities interface, it is important to tune the learners of communities with basic critical skills and relevant competencies to enable them to take logical decision and understand the basic critical skills needed beyond the subject competencies to carry out their successful academic and non-academic life.

Delimitations: This is the pilot study based on a small number of respondents and it may not be representative for the whole Delhi NCR, but the data represent Anna Nagar Community, ITO. Also, the main study will be conducted in other four identified communities of Delhi to check if the result varies.

Literature Review

Scholars who have studied about the role of the university maintain that it can play an important role in addressing the problems faced by the society. Challenges such as poverty, Illiteracy, lack of awareness etc. in order to achieve the social advancement. Kotecha (2010).

W. James Jacob and others, in their book, have defined the different levels of community engagement in HEIs at international, regional, national, provincial/state and local level. The authors have defined the different activities that can take place between HEIs and communities at different level. Research projects are one of the initiatives that can be used for community engagement in HEIs, while others are collaboration initiatives, co-sponsored meetings, sports events, etc. The digital media, libraries and e-content can prove to be key levers in providing the communities the information about various things. The communities can help providing human resources to the HEIs and, the HEIs, in return, can provide them training, so that they would be more employable. Higher education traditionally has three functions: one is teaching and training; second is, research and innovation; and the last one is community development or extension services. (Goddard 2007; Duke 2008). The students can play an important role in community service activities at all levels.

W. Singh, in his study, has revealed the importance of community-university joint engagement in India and how it can provide the sustainable solutions to different challenges. The author has done the documentation of such practices in India between the communities and HEIs. The author has done the study on impact assessment of Community-University Interface. The result shows that Community-University Engagement doesn't have only two stakeholders, viz., community and university but, it also affects a number of sub-stakeholders like students, as they can get an experiential learning; teachers can take out socially relevant research as part of the curriculum; and the communities get the empowerment and sustainable livelihood.

In their book, Agarwal T. has written on Afghan refugees in the HE system in Delhi, in which they took 17 Afghan refugee students in HEIs in Delhi. The study sees not the "Community engagement" but the community experience in the HEIs in Delhi. The experience of Afghan refugees varied on various factors such as previous schooling experiences, cultural and language differences, financial provisions, etc.

Research Methodology

The descriptive survey approach is used for the analysis. It is an approach of descriptive research that stands for the kind of study which uses both qualitative and quantitative data to gather the information. Both the selection of the communities and collection of data was done through the convenience sampling.

A schedule consisting of 35 questions was developed for the purpose of University-Community Interface under University social responsibility for Centenary Year of University of Delhi. The pilot study was conducted with the help of Scholars of DACEE at Anna Nagar Community, ITO of Delhi in May this year, 2022. The schedule was developed to figure out the status of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, Digital Literacy, Financial Literacy, health and hygiene, and lastly, the skill mapping was done. Anna Nagar Community of ITO Delhi was selected for the pilot study. Both qualitative and quantitative aspects have been taken into consideration while preparing the schedule.

This is a pilot study, and the main study will be conducted in rest of the four communities, viz., Shri Ram Community, Nand Lal Community, Outram Lines Community and Valmiki Basti in Delhi. The variations and the similarities will be checked among these communities and suitable need-based programme will be designed after the need assessment through the research.

Data Analysis and Discussion

The data demographics can be bifurcated based on gender, religion, category, age group, marital status and residential stay in Delhi. The questions were divided in six themes: 1st, demographic and socio-economic information, 2nd Questions for basic literacy status, 3rd, digital literacy status, 4th, financial literacy status, 5th, health and sanitation and last the skill mapping.

1. The Demographics and Socio-Economic Details; With respect to gender, 38% respondents are males and rest are females. No one has reported among transgender or any other gender category. The study tries to focus on the diversity of the communities; for that, it has taken into account the different variables such as the age group, their religion, and their social category, etc. The respondents were mainly in the 15-25 years age group, representing 53%, whereas 26% belonged to 25-40 years, 18% respondents were from 40-55 years age group. The percentage of the respondents in the more than 55 years category was negligible.

The religious orientation of the respondents reveals that 73% are Hindus, 21% are Muslims and 6% are from other religious beliefs. India is a very diverse country and to study any community it is very important to understand the background of the population of the study. Category is yet another important factor for that. The social categories who participated in the pilot survey shows that 38% are unreserved, 12% is OBC, 35% SC, 6% ST and 9% other categories, 53% respondents belonged to the 15-25 years age group. 50% respondents were unmarried and 44% respondents were married, whereas 3% respondents were widowed. One point to notice here is that no respondent was a divorcee. The reason behind this can be that divorces are seen as social stigma among middle class communities.

In respect of the employment status, it turned out that only 3% of the respondents were engaged in Government jobs. Maximum people were self-employed, mostly, they run their shops. The second major category was the people working in Private Limited Company; rest were engaged in some other small work. The males are mostly engaged in economic activities and females are mostly either housewives or doing something staying at home only. The females work as self-employed as the shop owner, they take care of shop whole day, or they give home tuition. Even after having higher educational level, very few females go out to earn.

Native Place: This question was asked to understand the pattern of their native place and know the state to which the majority of people belong. Maximum people

in Anna Nagar Community live there since birth. According to the respondents, it is the second generation living in Delhi, their parents came to Delhi and the major purpose for coming here is employment, with education, coming as the second major reason. The majority of the people belong to the neighboring state of Uttar Pradesh. Earlier, the community was mainly South Indian people but, with time, people from other states also came and stayed here. 41% of the respondents said the primary purpose for coming in Delhi was the employment. 17% respondents accepted education as one of the primary reasons for coming here. 15% respondents, who were females, reported marriage as the reason for shifting to Delhi.

If any Organization working in the community: Respondents asked if any organization or NGO is working in their community. The intention was to check their awareness level. 65% respondents responded they were aware about it, while 12% were not aware of any organization. 20% respondents said that there is no organization working for them but that too was wrong, as more than one organization is working for the betterment of the community. One Asha Clinic which provides free health facility, few students also come to teach them on Sundays and one more NGO works in the field of Education and Health.

Problems faced by the community: Maximum NGOs work in the area of Education and Health among Anna Nagar Community. But when the question asked on what problem according to them their community faces, the respondents listed drinking water issues and sanitation issues. Toilet facility is the major issues faced by the people of Anna Nagar Community. As informed by one respondent it is not allowed to have the personal toilet in that community. There is a need to foresee these issues as well. One respondent expresses his community's need of having security cameras on streets because many robberies take place in their area. The educational institutions are quite far, and their quality is not as good.

2. The Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Status: The people in Anna Nagar Community were not only literate but also fairly educated also. The educational level was high among females as compared to males. The literacy level among the people of Anna Nagar community was quite high, although it is still not 100%, but the new generation is literate. Only those who are old or in their mid-age, lack the foundational literacy skills. Efforts should be made in the field of lifelong learning/ education for all. 85% of the respondents did their schooling from government school. They belong to low and middle-income group, and it is hard for them to afford the schooling from private schools. In such areas, the accessibility to government education institutions should be good. Not only the accessibility but the quality of education delivered should also be of good quality.

3. Digital Literacy Status: As mere literacy is not enough for human development, the University-Community Interface has taken the digital literacy as one component of study. Especially after the COVID situation when the schools and offices were closed and all the work was being done online, the digital literacy has become more important. It was seen that only one member in a family had smart phone, the children as well as their parents did not know how to use mobile for educational purpose, i.e., taking online classes, making assignments and submitting online etc.

Having smart phone and using social media: 24 respondents have smart phone. Five people do not have one, and another five respondents reported using the smart phone of another member of the family. 59% of respondents use social media account like, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, etc. This shows that they not only own the smart phone but also know how to operate it. 41% respondents don't use any social media account, although 70% own the smart but they don't know its full use.

Laptop/Computer: Only 6 respondents reported having laptop/computer. 27 do not seem to have a computer. One reported having one at home. In many jobs and courses, it is important to have a laptop. In the time of Corona, many people who were engaged in private or non-permanent jobs, lost their jobs. While applying for the other jobs (work from home), having no laptop proved to be a big roadblock for them.

4. Financial Literacy Statuses: Being financially literate is yet another kind of literacy which is important for leading a satisfactory life. People from low literacy backgrounds are not aware of different things related to financial awareness which make them more prone to get duped. It also stops them to get the full benefit of different government schemes. For all these purposes, financial literacy is very important.

Having a Bank Account and who operates: 79% respondents have bank account and 65% out of them know how to operate their bank account, whereas 25% respondents' account is managed by the males of the family. We can interpret that the bank account is either run by the respondents only or their father/husband/son operates their account. No account is operated by the females of the house.

Benefits from Government schemes in Bank Account: As mentioned earlier, lack of financial literacy deprives people from getting the full benefit of government schemes. Because people are not aware of the schemes, and they do

not register their bank account for those schemes, so that they can get the financial support from the government into their bank account.

To the question “Are you getting benefit from government scheme/policies directly in your bank account?”, only 26% respondents accepted that they are getting the government schemes benefits in their bank account. Many of them were those who got the money during lockdown. 65% respondents denied getting any benefit in their bank account, whereas 9% were not sure if they are getting any government scheme benefit in their bank account or not.

Basic use of Bank Account: 68% of respondents know how to credit money or withdraw money from the bank account. And 29% respondents did not know how use the bank account. Whereas 3% respondents were those who needed someone’s help in depositing the money in bank account. The negative tendency was seen towards online banking, 74% respondents do not use online banking and only 26% use the online banking.

5. Health and Sanitation: This is really an important factor to take care in slum areas. It is one of the major concerns in JJ colonies of Delhi. So, this issue was covered in this study in Anna Nagar community. Here, the people face many problems related sanitation. The survey revealed that many of them do not have the personal toilet and they use the public toilet, which leads to many diseases.

The one case of toilet at home turned out that because their father was really ill and he was unable to use the public toilet, but the construction was in process only when he died. They are not allowed to have personal toilet in Anna Nagar Community, 6% respondents even use the open space as toilet, when sometimes the lines are big and they are getting late, they avoid the public toilet and use open space. The toilet is one of the main issues faced by the people of Anna Nagar Community.

Free Health Benefit: Here one important thing to note is that no Mohalla Clinic is active in Anna Nagar Community. One NGO, Asha Clinic, works for them, so 56% respondents agreed that they are getting the free health benefits from Asha Clinic, while 44% said they are not getting any free health benefit.

Awareness about Menstruation: When we are talking of health and sanitation, we cannot skip the topic of menstruation. It is an important issue faced by women, especially in the lower middle-class families where the awareness is not really good, and the steps should be taken in this direction.

What are the Reasons for not using the sanitary pads? The survey revealed that 73% respondents use sanitary pads. 21% don't use the sanitary pads, 6% respondents, who were males, did not know if the females of their home use sanitary pads or not. The 21% respondents who do not use sanitary pads gave the reasons for not using it, its high cost. Lack of awareness and shyness are main reasons for not using the sanitary pads. The proportion is 15% and 14% respectively.

6. In respect of the **skills already proficient**, mostly females know beautician and tailoring skills, whereas the males know very less in these skills. A few of them know computer and similarly, a few know the driving skill as they are working as personal drivers.

Of the **skills they are interested in learning**, that could be useful for future planning, the study found 11 males are interested in learning computers, whereas just 2-3 expressed interest in learning cutting and tailoring, electrician, handicrafts and plumbing. In the case of females, the difference is very striking: 9 were interested in learning Beauty and Wellness, 10 in computer and 6 in cutting and tailoring. In hospitality, electrician and handicrafts, its only one each with interest in learning these skills.

Maximum number of males are interested in learning the computer and IT related skills, few of them are interested in learning the cutting and tailoring skills as well. 11 males said they would want to learn the computer skills. They have options to choose more than one skill. On the other hand, females were interested in learning the computer skills along with beautician and tailoring skills.

Community Volunteer: Finally, the purpose was to motivate the people of community to become the community volunteer for running the Programmes of University-Community Interface smoothly. 74% of respondents were interested in becoming the community volunteer. We can consider them and allot them some work in order to meet the objectives effectively.

Major Findings and Suggestions

The major patterns and findings which came into sight were as follows:

(i) Toilet issue: The toilet issue can be considered as one of the major problems faced by the people of Anna Nagar Community. As stated by one of the respondents, only houses situated at the front line of the community are allowed to have their personal toilet, as a result of which maximum people there use the public toilet.

(ii) Drinking Water Issue: The Anna Nagar Community faces the water crises at a critical level, especially the drinking water issues. Sometimes, they wait for the whole day for the water and the quality of the water is also not good. This leads to several water borne diseases.

(iii) Higher Education Level among Females: It was found in the Pilot study that the educational level was higher among the females in comparison males, the reason can be that males have this family responsibility to earn as they belong to the middle-class background, also they are more prone to get into the bad habits of alcoholism.

(iv) Sanitation issues: It is not only the toilet issue, but also the sanitation issue is very common issue faced by the people of Anna Nagar Community. The community is situated alongside the drainage, it causes the smell and other sanitation related issues. Also, because majority of the people use public toilet and both the quality and the quantity of toilets in the area are bad, few people use the open space for this purpose. Which eventually raises the serious concern of sanitation.

(v) Security Issues: The robbery is becoming common day by day, people from the community complained that it is not safe to park their vehicles outside as they either got stolen or gets damaged. It would be quite helpful if there will be CCTV camera in the community. The crime rates will go down and they will feel more secure.

(vi) Unavailability of Good Educational Institution Nearby: The children of the community feel hard to keep their studies going as the educational institutes or the schools are quite far from the community; they have to travel a lot for that, so quit their education because of that. The boys are mainly uninterested in the studies of other skill development, so the value education is needed in the community. The girls, on the other hand, have the responsibilities of taking care of household work and as mentioned earlier, the community faces the drinking water issue, and it leads to the dropout rates also. One specific study can be done to see the impact of bad quality of water over Girl's Education.

(vii) Unskilled men: The males of the community are mainly engaged in the random private work and they lack skills, whereas maximum females opt the skills of cutting and tailoring, cooking, beautician, *Mehndi* etc. We can easily appreciate that employable skill training programs should be organised in the community.

(viii) Awareness about Sanitary Pads: The study revealed that females were quite educated in comparison of the male population, it was reflected in the awareness about sanitary pads as well. Females were not only aware of it but also using sanitary pads. Although male member of the family doesn't interfere much in the topic, so they did not know if the females of their family use sanitary pads or not.

(ix) High Cost and Shyness are the main reasons for not using the sanitary pads: The reason that few females were not using the sanitary pads were majorly the high cost and shyness. The health and hygiene programmes specially for women should be conducted and they should be provided with free or at least easily buyable.

(x) Financial Literacy: The people were using the bank account on their own and we hardly find few people whose father/brother/husband was operating their bank account. To our surprise, we find not even a single person whose mother/sister/wife was operating their bank account even after having higher education level. It indicates two things first is that both the males and females are financially literate and financial literacy is something part of their daily life. Second thing is, even after being educated, the females don't really use it in proper way. Still the male member goes out earn, although few females have opened shop in their home but they don't go out to earn.

(xi) Digital Literacy: In comparison to financial literacy, the people need more support on digital literacy. Maximum people have smart phones but not all of them have a social media account. It shows they are not that good in operating the smart phone for educational purpose. Training sessions for that can be conducted.

(xii) Fully Settled Community: After the study we found out that the people are living here in Anna Nagar Community since their birth or even before that. This community is not recently developed, but it is a fully settled community.

Major Suggestions

- (i) Short term training sessions for the use of mobile for educational purpose.
- (ii) Initiate the skilling programme for both men and women.
- (iii) Conduct Value Education sessions to motivate the people of community for being the better vision of themselves.
- (iv) Awareness campaign on Health and Sanitation for women and Alcohol reduction for men.
- (v) Select the community volunteer and design a procedure for university-community interface.

Conclusion

In India, the population is increasing drastically but, not everyone has the access to basic amenities. Here, education becomes even more important. Specifically talking about Delhi, it is the capital of India and people from all over the country come here for various reasons such as employment, education, marriage, etc. But, as not everyone gets there where they thought of going, they end up in JJ Colonies of Delhi. According to the Delhi shelter Board, there are 375 JJ clusters in Delhi at present. And most of the people living in these communities don't have the access to essential needs such as safe drinking water, toilet and education.

Even though the people of the Anna Nagar Community are living here since at least one generation, the basic needs mentioned above are still the topic of concern. The career opportunities or the career exposure is the need of the people of Anna Nagar, especially the male population as they are mostly engaged in random private work as driver, cleaner, labor etc. The average educational qualification is up to 5th and 10th among males, whereas it is 12th and graduation among females. Two ladies were even post-graduate from the University of Delhi. The university will be working on the need assessment on five identified communities of Delhi under its Centenary Year. The result shows that many people were interested in becoming the Community Volunteer. The community volunteer will help the university in planning and executing any programme which will be run by DACEE. The result also shows that the females majorly have their own shops, there is big scope of entrepreneurship programs in this community.

Scope for Future Studies

- How does the availability and quality of drinking water affect the Girl's Education in Anna Nagar Community, ITO Delhi?
- What entrepreneurship programmes can be organised for the people of Anna Nagar Community ITO Delhi?

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State Resource Centre, Tamil Nadu (1977-2002): A Quarter Century of Progress

• R. Rajan¹

Igniting Momentum with NGOs for Adult Education: The First Decade

The State Resource Centre, Chennai was established in 1977, consisting of 6 staff, with Dr. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah and Sr. Catherine Mclevey as its founding President and Secretary respectively. One of the first tasks on hand was creating a favorable environment so that National Adult Education Programme could be launched. This made the first year a dynamic one with many programmes.

The second year saw the Centre (i.e. SRC) training 400 field level functionaries. There were 2 primers, one general and the other a client specific were brought out, along with a training manual for animators. Apart from other programmes, Annual Conference was held for the first time.

By the third year, the SRC had gathered momentum with many NGO's joining hands in the implementation of Adult Education Programmes. Workshops, seminars and conferences were organised to argument the required resource support. Various primers, 6 supplementary materials and other relevant printed materials including an evaluation pack were brought out.

The year 1980-81 saw the introduction of general primers, motivation numeracy games, 19 supplementary readers, 3 manuals and 4 evaluation materials. Staff members participated in the training programmes, seminars and workshops organised by the other institutions as well. A research initiative on learners' attitude towards literacy was conducted. On the 1st of October 1981, CBAE programme was launched in 5 villages of Ellapuram Block in Chengalpet District, thus, heralding the Cadre Based Adult Education (CBAE) Programme.

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For year 1981-82, 60 training programmes supported by the SRC (Centre, for short). Centre in 1981- 82, 7 were planned and organised. Kalankarai villakkam, a Non-formal Education primer was published along with 12 post-literacy materials.

During 1982-83, the Special Cell for Women SC/ST began to function in the Centre, with the aim of creating awareness among this special group. We participated in 76 training programmes, 8 workshops and 9 seminars.

On language and arithmetic skills, two primers were released along with 3 supplementary readers, a post-literacy serial on “Do it yourself”, two knowledge building books, a manual for animators and a book on simulation games in Adult Education.

MOE Commends SRC’s Leadership Support in Adult Education

The report of the Fourth All India Conference of State Resource Centres convened in 1982 summarises the progress of this State Resource Centre in the following words (Ministry of Education, 1982).

“The State Resource Centre, Tamil Nadu has done valuable work in the field of training, creation of environment and involvement of students in Adult Education programme. A recent impetus to its creditability is that it has been recognised as a Research Institution by the University of Madras. This has enabled it to sharpen its research orientation and perspective to many of its activities. It has also made significant efforts in the field of training of workers of “Population Education”.

Enhancing Its Reach in Coloration with NGOs

During the next year, 1983-84, 1903 field functionaries were trained through 51 training programmes.

The Department of Material Production organised a workshop on Curriculum Development for 3 stages of Adult Education. 2 supplementary readers under the serial of Leaders with a primer for women, were designed along with 2 other supplementary readers and a collection of songs on awareness. “Designing of Tools Evaluation of the Present Adult Education Programme” was the perspective of the workshop conducted this year.

The initiatives undertaken during 1984-85, included 68 training programmes, 7 seminars, 7 workshops/conferences, 18 consultancy meetings, 3 evaluation visits,

and 9 meetings and 1 leadership and social service camps were organised. 'Namum Karpom' was the title of a primer for Pondicherry Union Territory. "Nae Padika" was an innovative primer exclusively prepared for Tribals in a writer's workshop, besides 4 other supplementary materials.

In 1985-86, the SRC Staff were brought under a time scale of pay in line with the Government of India Pay Scales. An evaluation of the State Resource was conducted by Mr. Guhan of the Madras Institute of Development Studies. 12 programmes including 7 training, 2 regional seminars and 3 writers' workshops, were organised during 1985-86.

Independently and in collaboration with other agencies, 65 training programmes were organized, benefiting 3115 field functionaries. The SRC also participated in 21 other programmes, organised by various other agencies.

The primer "Namum Karpom" was revised and another primer for women in 3 parts was prepared. 3 supplementary readers, 1 post-literacy manual, 2 training manuals and 7 publications on Population Education were released.

The Mass Programme of Functional Literacy was launched in May 1986. In 1986-87 a total of 852 programme officers were trained under MPFL. An exhaustive literacy kit was prepared and distributed throughout the State. 27 training programmes, 3 Regional Conferences, Annual Conference, 1 seminar and 2 meetings had coverage of 1254 beneficiaries. The Centre also participated in 76 other training programmes, 12 seminars, conferences and meetings. Integrating population concepts, a primer for women alongwith 8 supplementary readers and 6 story cards for neo literates were published.

An exclusive Department for Population Education, integrating the concept of Population Education in Adult Education Programme was created in 1987-88. Apart from training programmes, "Ezhuthukkal Arivom", a primer with a workbook and guide was prepared apart from 4 alphabet cards and a set of numeracy card. Personnel from SRC participated in 13 training programmes for the N.S.S. Programme Officers and in 19 volunteers training programmes under MPFL. This, along with 9 training programme for field functionaries and 20 animators training programmes were the major events during this year (SRC, 1988)

Techno-Pedagogic Spearhead of NLM in Tamil Nadu

In 1988-89, the National Literacy Mission (N.L.M) was launched in a big way

by His Excellency the Governor of Tamil Nadu at a function in Madurai. SRC personnel participated in 8 training programmes, benefiting 425 N.S.S. Programme Officers, under MPFL and 15 other Programmes. Besides, the SRC organised 23 training programmes, 7 seminars, conferences/workshops. Along with 9 Post-Literacy materials, a manual and a set of knowledge building books, and a separate primer for tribal in Kalrayan Hills were released. During the year, a total of 1,03,482 literacy kits were distributed.

The International Literacy year saw the Centre's activities registering a massive increase, to create a conducive atmosphere to celebrate the I.L.Y. in fitting manner. A massive function was organised on the 12th of January 1990 in Madras. His Excellency the Governor inaugurated the I.L.Y. It was in this year, that the Ex-servicemen Adult Education Programme was initiated.

Orientation training for the personnel from the District Resource Units, Master Trainers Training programmes under Ex-servicemen Adult Education Programme, Prerak trainings were some of the important programmes organised this year. It included 7 training sessions for NSS Programme Officers organized under MPFL. In all, the SRC sponsored 82 training programmes. 'Kai Vilakku' a primer with a workbook, guide, a set of books for stage I of Non-Formal Education a Tamil alphabet chart, a book on arithmetic and 3 Post-Literacy materials were published.

The year 1990-91 had many fruitful events. Under the direction of the Govt. of India, 'Pudiya Pathai' 3-part primer with the in-built formative and summative evaluation incorporating the concept of IPCL was prepared for the MPFL. More than 1500 master trainers were trained under the Mass Programme of Functional Literacy. Many public sectors like Ordnance Factory, Madras Rubber Factory, BHEL, Avadi Heavy vehicles Factory, Quality Assurance Establishment, COAST Guard joined us in exercise of eradicating illiteracy in their respective areas (SRC, 1990-91).

The UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok sponsored a workshop for the production of neo-literate materials for women. The State Resource Centre, Madras was selected as a co-sponsor of this programme and given the responsibility of translating the neo literate materials brought out in the workshop in Tamil.

The first batch of districts 'commencing the TLC as well as voluntary agencies have availed the services of the State Resource Centre for training, materials preparation and evaluation. A 3-part primer Arivoli Deepam was prepared under the guidance of the State Level Committee for the TLC Districts and Voluntary agencies.

The SRC which has been housed in rental buildings since 1977 has managed to move to a building of its own. Thanks to the financial help from the Govt. of India and the Govt. of Tamil Nadu. The building is rightly named appropriately as Adiseshiah Bhavan in remembrance of the support of Dr. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah to SRC and the literacy moments in India.

During the year 1991-92, Sivagangai and Pudukottai Districts entered into Total Literacy Campaign. Right from sensitizing the Campaign approach among the Districts Collectors and the officials to designing the appropriate Project Plan, the State Resource Centre collaborated with the respective districts and the Government of Tamil Nadu.

During this year, the primer “Arivoli Deepam” in three parts prepared by us and approved by the Expert Committee on IPCL materials was put to use in all the TLC Districts. To involve Voluntary Agencies in Total Literacy Campaign, two workshops were organised, one at Kodaikanal and the other at Madras, in collaboration with the Directorate of Non-Formal Adult Education. State Level Master Trainers were selected and training programmes were organised, one at Kanyakumari, and the other at Triuchirappalli.

Annamalai University implemented the rapid literacy campaign in 4 blocks in Cuddalore District. The SRC took the initiative in organising the training of volunteers and supplied 94,989 literacy kits in this programme. The Cadre Based Experimental Programme was initiated in Sholingar, Vellore District in coordination with REED, Voluntary Agency.

In 1992-93, the State Literacy Mission Authority Council was formed and had its first meeting on 18.12.1992 at the Secretariat, fort. St. George, Madras. The Director, SRC was invited to participate in this meeting. During this year, a special Leadership Programme for women was organised by the SRC in collaboration with District Arivoli Iyakkam, Kanyakumari District. As an outcome designed a Kalajatha Training Programme and organised for all the Voluntary Agencies involved in the Total Literacy Campaign. Santhome Communications Centre and Chozha Creations availed the services of SRC in their video productions for the Directorate of Adult Education, New Delhi (SRC, 1993).

Heading Providing Trainings and TLMs for Arivoli Iyakkam in TN

In 1993-94, the General Body of State Resource Centre was reconstituted along

with the new office bearers electing Shri C. G. Rangabashyam, I.A.S (Retd.) as the Chairman. The coverage of Total Literacy Campaign (Arivoli Iyakkam in Tamil Nadu) in districts increased from 8 in the year 1992-93 to 17 in 1993-94.

Similarly, Voluntary agencies in three districts Kancheepuram, Tiruchirappalli and the Chennai were given opportunity to organize Total Literacy Campaign in their areas. The increased coverage in Total Literacy and Post-Literacy Campaign had brought with it higher responsibilities and work load for SRC. Another important programme during this year was 'Educated Volunteer's Scheme' launched by Government of Tamil Nadu.

The resource support was provided by SRC for organising training programmes and support of teaching/learning materials. On the advice of the Government of India, the SRC organised two Media cum Writers Workshops to orient the writers to develop neo literate materials. A number of popular writers in Tamil participated and acquired the specialized skill of writing CE books for neo-literates.

In 1994-95, the Government of India requested the SRC, Chennai to prepare a report of the progress made in achieving the Total Literacy in Tamil Nadu. This experience sharing report, compiled by the SRC, Chennai was released on the International Literacy Day at New Delhi.

Peers' Mouthpiece in Literacy: Bringing out News and Views Bulletin

Similarly, the idea of bringing out an information bulletin with a view to coordinate the activities of all the SRCs in the country was conceived by the Directorate of Adult Education, New Delhi and State. The SRC, Chennai was entrusted with this task. Readily agreeing to such a novel bi-monthly newsletter, all the SRCs promptly sent their activity reports for the first issue.

The Bulletin titled "News and Views", a newsletter of the SRCs in India was designed in a record time with the information, articles and felicitations sent by officials from the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, New Delhi. During this year, A Mission Statement for the State Resource Centre, Chennai was evolved by organising a workshop on 14-11-1994.

Liaison Point for National and UN Agencies Extension Initiatives in Related Areas

The year 1995-96 marked the beginning of an era for resource diversification.

The State Resource Centre ventured into publicity and motivational programmes for the CDD/WATSAN project of UNICEF, Chennai at Erode District. Encouraged by the success of the programme, UNICEF invited the SRC to plan for a publicity and motivation programme for their other projects – POWER in Salem PLP and CDD / WATSAN in Chennai slums etc. Similarly, VHAI, Chennai funded for a statewide motivational programme for AIDS Project; by this time, all the districts joined the Total Literacy Campaign. Non-Formal Education materials for the Stage I & II were revised according to MLL norms developed by NCERT, New Delhi.

In the year 1996-97, SRC focused on sensitizing the literacy beneficiaries on Panchayat Raj. A manual for orienting the trainees on Panchayat Raj system was developed and with this a number of training programmes were organised at the State level. Two other innovative programmes during this year, viz., Involvement of Industries in literacy promotion in collaboration with CII; and Integrating Development Programmes with Literacy targeting Health & Women Development. During this year, National level workshop on Integration of Population Education with Adult Literacy was held at Kodaikanal on May 27-28, 1996. This workshop was organised by the SRC in collaboration with the Directorate of Adult Education, New Delhi.

Continuing Education Programme: SRC, Chennai Serves as Support Backbone

In 1997-98, the Continuing Education Programme was initiated at the state level. Preparing them for CEP, the SRC developed a set of training package on continuing education with a number of training manuals and resource materials with media software support.

The following training manuals were developed during this year.

1. Trainer's training manual on Continuing Education Programme.
2. Training Manual for Nodel Preraks/Preraks of Continuing Education Programme.
3. Training Manual on Self-Help Group.
4. Training Manual on Participatory Rural Appraisal.
5. Training Manual on Youth Development.
6. Training Manual on Gender Issue.
7. Training Manual on Concurrent evaluation for Post- literacy programme.

Dr. Alan Roger, Director of Education and Development, London visited SRC and discussed about the production of Post-Literacy/CE books for the neo literates developed by the SRC (SRC, 1998).

By the end of year 1998-99, except four districts which were in the last leg of the Total Literacy Campaign, all the other 25 districts had implemented the Post-Literacy Programmes. Of them, 9 districts embarked on the Continuing Education Programme.

The activities throughout the year were concentrated on training the functionaries of Continuing Education; viz the DAEOs, DRU Personnel, District Project Co-ordinators, Block level Coordinators and Nodal Preraks/Preraks. During the year, the Directorate of Non-Formal Adult Education invited the SRC to act as a member in the state level screening committee for selecting Continuing Education Books.

Similarly, the SRC complied, at the request of Saksharatha Samithi of Bangalore, in the preparation of basic literacy materials Part I, II & III for the Urban Tamils Population of Bangalore City.

As a special programme, the SRC organised two experimental programmes on Continuing Education: one in Pondicherry and the other at Pottalpudur, Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu. The programmes at Pondicherry aimed at formation and organising Self Help Groups. The programme at Pottalpudur aimed at experimenting various inputs focusing on the four components of Continuing Education Programme.

In the year 1999-2000, the SRC focused on preparation of training materials on the target specific programmes, viz.,

- (1) Equivalency Programmes,
- (2) Income Generating Programmes,
- (3) Individual Interest Promotion Programmes,
- (4) Quality of Life Improvement Programmes

The SRC made an innovative attempt in the preparation of CE books by simplifying the stories written by popular writers like Sundara Ramasamy, Sivasankari, Jayakandan and Raj Narayanan.

Similarly, a short stories competition was organised in collaboration with Dinamani Kathir (Leading Tamil Weekly) and selected stories were published as CE Books. Two Neo-literate materials on Tribals–Kurumbargal and Irulargal were also brought out during this year.

To publicise the concept of continuing education through Mass Media, the SRC prepared 40 slogans / 23 Jingles and songs in a workshop inviting experts/writers and free lancers.

This was compiled in a book form and then sent to all AIR stations in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry. Another innovative effort made during this year was a poster competition conducted on the eve of International Literacy Day. In Collaboration with Dhinamalar, leading Tamil daily Newspaper, the poster competition was organised.

In 2000-2001, the SRC developed two skill development vocational primers: one on Mushroom farming and the other on Poultry for the benefit of neo literates in post-literacy and Continuing Education Programme.

These primers were meant to motivate them to learn vocational skills and, at the same time, improve their literacy skills. Similarly, with a view to popularising the rural folk arts, especially stories in the oral format, the SRC decided to collect such stories and bring out a set of neo- literate materials.

In this regard, the writers selected for the assignment visited the continuing education districts for collection of popular stories from neo literates. Based on the collection, CE books four categories were brought out during this year.

A study on the researches and evaluations conducted in the field of adult education in Tamil Nadu from 1988 to 2000 was conducted during this year.

A detailed report was also brought out. Another study on 'Mutram' magazine was carried out, sponsored by UNICEF.

The main objective of the magazine was its relevance, appeals to the women in low income group (SHGs) and its impact on their lives. During this year, the SRC has been nominated as the Nodal agency to operationalise the Task Force for Adolescent Programmes in Tamil Nadu. The main objective was to evolve strategies to address adolescent issues and involving NGOs to address them.

In 2001-2002, the SRC had undertaken few innovative attempts in the field of preparation of materials. 'New Life' – Primer for the visually handicapped was developed and printed in Braille letters along with Tamil letters engraved.

This special primer will be useful for visually handicapped adults and those who are partially blind. Two different skills-based primers 'Agriculture' – A primer for the farm labourers and 'House' – A primer for the construction workers were also developed.

For the urban neo literates, CE books on Rainwater Harvesting, Recycling of waste and welfare schemes of Chennai Corporation were developed. In training, the SRC identified State Level Master Trainers among the CE districts and conducted training in three batches. In all, 75 Master Trainers for 18 districts benefited through this programme. They will train the grass roots level functionaries of CE in their respective districts.

Sensitization programmes for village panchayat were organised in Vellore and Dindigul districts during this year. Training manuals on four components of CE were also brought out during this year by the SRC on:

- Equivalency Programme
- Income Generating Programme
- Quality of Life Improvement Programme
- Individual Interest Promotional Programme

In conclusion, started in a humble way, the State Resource Centre has grown to its present status. Thanks to our founder Chairman Dr. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah and his successors, Dr. R. Jayagopal, Shri. C.G. Rangabashyam and Dr. K. Govindaraju, the Members of SRC / TNBCE, the past Directors and staff as well as all the Academic / Administrative staff without whose support and dedicated services, the success would not have been possible.

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Framework for Professionalization of Special Needs Education: An Indian Perspective

• Devaraj Balappagari¹

Abstract

In India, the professionalization of special needs education has undergone various models of schooling and training strategies of teachers to understand and address special educational needs. It is rooted in the initiatives of missionary organizations, and full-fledged Government intervention began in the 1970s. The framework has been characterized by provisions of special and integrated/inclusive education, supply of assistive aids and appliances, and training of educators. The majority of the framework has been formulated based on the framework advocated by international laws and comprehensive recommendations of committees on disability affairs from time to time. Disability laws/policies and mainstream national education policies have been paying considerable attention to education for PWDs. Rehabilitation council of India act (1992) is the first legislation in Indian disability history to formulate training policies for the professionalization of special needs education and regulate special educators. However, the mandate of the disability framework contradicts the mandate of the mainstream educational laws/policies regarding professionalization of special needs education. Based on this backdrop, this paper aims to understand how the framework for special needs education, has been designed, its gaps and its consequences. The author would use the method of policy analysis to critically examine the policy documents.

Keywords: *professionalization of special needs education, disability framework, education for PWDs.*

1. Introduction

Right to compulsory education (RTE) is a milestone in Indian history. Besides RTE, various laws and policies have been designed to provide suitable education to

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persons with disabilities (PWDs) from time to time, including the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) Act 1992, Persons with Disabilities and Equal Opportunities (PWD) Act 1995, National Policy for PWDs (2005), and Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act 2016. This legal/policy framework is considered the basis for special needs education, and its mandate includes special, integrated, and inclusive education; the supply of assistive aids; and training of teachers to understand and address the special educational needs of students with disabilities.

In India, Special educators are considered rehabilitation professionals, and the RCI act is the regulatory body that frames training policies for professionals who desire to become teachers to teach SWDs. Currently, there is a dearth of special educators who are recognized and registered under the RCI act. According to the affidavit submitted by the Ministry of Education to the supreme court of India, there are only 28,535 special educators and about 4.33 lakh general teachers, who were given some training to teach about 22.5 lakh students with special education needs. At present, only 1,20,781 special educators are registered with RCI. The affidavit did not provide data on the specialization of special educators in each disability. If available, more inferences could be drawn. Hence, by considering the existing disability framework, this paper aims to address how the framework for special needs education has been formulated, and how effectively it addresses the needs of special educators in India. Additionally, this paper intends to identify the gaps in the framework and explore the consequences of the gaps.

2. Methodology

This paper will use the method of policy analysis to understand how the framework for special needs education has been designed and to identify major gaps in the policy. Legal and policy documents from 1992 to 2020 will be reviewed and analyzed. The RCI act of 1992 was the first legislation regarding the training of professionals for special needs education. Since then, various schemes, action plans, and mainstream laws for PWDs have been designed. Hence, the context for this paper is the enactment of the RCI act which will help us understand policy shifts in the framework for special needs education.

3. Review of Literature

3.1 Special, integrated, and inclusive education

The professionalization of special needs education has been characterized by various models of schooling for individuals with special needs, the supply of assistive

aids and appliances to meet their educational needs; and training of teachers and other stakeholders to better understand and address special educational needs at different levels. The major models include special education, integrated and inclusive education, and home-based schooling for individuals with severe disabilities. The term “special education needs” is not another term used exclusively for the needs of individuals with disabilities. Rather, it refers to the needs that are currently unmet in mainstream education (Kothari, 2012). The oldest and still dominant model of education for SWDs is special education (Kothari, 2012; Kundu, 2000; Singal, 2009; Sorrells et al., 2004; Tomlinson, 2012, 2017). While it had been dismissed in favour of integrated education, ‘integration’ refers to the admission of a student into a non-special or mainstream school without necessarily adjusting the curriculum to their different abilities (Kothari, 2012). On the other hand, ‘inclusive education’ refers to the kind of educational environment that is necessary to make inclusion in mainstream schools possible for children who have traditionally been excluded.

Special needs education in India is rooted in the charity model (Obiakor et al., n.d.; Singal, 2006; Tiwari et al., 2015). In the 1880s, Christian missionaries began setting up institutions for special needs education i.e., schools for the blind, schools for the hearing impaired, schools for the mentally handicapped, etc. The first school for the blind was founded by Miss Annie Sharp in Amritsar in 1887. Thereafter, several other schools were started in various states (Antony, 2013; Das & Shah, 2014; Shahab & Begum, 2018; Sharma & Deppeler, 2005; Thirumurthy & Jayaraman, 2007). By 1944, there were about 32 special schools managed and owned and managed by the British Indian government, missionary organizations, societies, and provincial governments. The number of special educational institutes rose to 150 by 1979.

In India, until the 1970s, education for SWDs was mainly provided through the special education model, with most special schools being supported and run by charity organizations and voluntary bodies. However, during 1970s, the State started playing a pivotal role in formulating policies and schemes related to special needs education. Both before and after Independence, several committees were constituted to comprehensively study the conditions of PWDs and recommend appropriate measures to provide suitable education. For example, committee on blindness (1942) and Bahurul Islam committee (1987) recommended integrated education for mild and moderate disabilities, the establishment of residential schools for physically and mentally handicapped, certain relaxations for hearing impaired students, incorporation of disability-related issues in teacher training courses, etc. Particularly, the committee on blindness emphasized the setting up of residential schools with competent staff

and other facilities. It prioritized special schools for totally blind students, with separate schools for boys and girls.

During the 1970s, the Government of India started promoting integrated education for individuals with special needs. NEP (1968) and NPE (1986/92) both advocated for an integrated model of education. In 1974, the Government launched Integrated Education of Disabled Children (IEDC) programme to promote the integration of students with mild to moderate disabilities into regular schools and to retain SWDS in the regular school system. Under this programme, financial aid was provided to the children to cover the cost of books, school uniforms, transportation, and other special equipment and aids. However, the success rate of the programme was very limited in the first phase due to the non-availability of trained and experienced teachers, the lack of orientation among regular school staff about the problems of SWDs and their educational needs, the non-availability of equipment and educational materials and the lack of coordination among various departments in the implementation process (Rane, 1983).

In 1987, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), UNICEF, and the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) jointly designed the Project for Integrated Education for the Disabled to strengthen the IEDC plan. PIED adopted a “Composite Area Approach” that consisted of all regular schools within a specified area. These schools had to share resources such as specialized equipment, instructional materials, and special education teachers among the blocks. A multi-level approach had been adopted for teacher training. Those who completed the final stage of the training could act as resource teachers to teach SWDs. The modified programme showed some positive implications due to well-planned and better management skills, encouraging many states to implement the scheme. Both teachers and students developed a positive attitude towards SWDs to some extent.

Approximately 13000 students have been admitted to regular schools and about 9000 teachers have received some kind of training as part of the programme. Although the initiative has yielded optimistic results, it has encountered several challenges such as poverty, negative attitude of non-disabled individuals towards PWDs, lack of an appropriate mechanism for dissemination and public education, insufficient resources, difficulty in providing required training to stakeholders, coordination issues between different ministries, lack of teacher training, etc. (Ahmad, 2015; Cooc & Kiru, 2018; Obiakor et al., n.d.; Sharma & Deppeler, 2005; Singal, 2006).

The IEDC programme was revised in 1992 to address some of the challenges it

faced. Under the revised scheme, schools providing integrated education to PWDs received 100% assistance, and various non-government organizations were also fully funded to implement the programme.

The programme was implemented in 26 States and Union Territories, serving more than 53,000 students enrolled in 14,905 schools (Sharma & Deppeler, 2005). Notably, Kerala showed a high success rate, with the programme being implemented in about 4,487 schools, benefitting around 12,961 children.

The concept of inclusive education was introduced to India through the Salamanca statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994) and the United Nation Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) 2006. India has been one of the key participants in both of these political commitments. The objective of the Salamanca statement was education for all. It advocated for fundamental shifts in the policy framework to promote the approach of inclusive education. The statement has influenced Indian policies to promote inclusive education, and various provisions have been included in RTE act and Sarva Siksha Abhiyan programme (2000).

Despite systematic efforts, there is still a huge number of children with disabilities who are not attending any educational institution. According to the State of the Education Report for India: Children with Disabilities (2019), about 75 percent of the children aged five and about 30-40 percent of children between the ages of 5-19 do not attend any type of schooling. There is a wide gap between boys and girls with disabilities who attend school, and the dropout rate at each successive level of education is very high. Additionally, the lowest number of children attending formal education are those with learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities and mental illness, and multiple disabilities (Agarwal, 2020; Das & Shah, 2014; and UNESCO, 2019).

A large number of SWDs are out of the formal education system due to various challenges like in accessible schools, institutes, buildings, toilets, libraries etc. In addition, there is a lack of awareness among parents of SWDs, lack of trained teachers, delay in the recruitment of trained staff, lack of a proper support system for students with high-supportive needs. Furthermore there is a lack of positive attitude of teachers and non-disabled individuals towards SWDs. Another important challenge is that most of the special/inclusive schools are located in urban settings, while 69% of PWDs live in rural areas (Narayan & Patnaik, 2020; Taneja-Johansson, et al., 2021).

3.2. Assistive aids and appliances

The supply of assistive aids and appliances is crucial in ensuring equal and full participation of SWDs in the education system (Singal, 2006). These aids and appliances can be classified into three categories. i.e., (1) devices for daily living such as prostheses and orthoses, tricycles, wheelchair, surgical footwear and other devices; (2) educational aids including Braille equipment, Dictaphone, CD player/tape recorder, computers, and other low vision aids; and (3) special mobility aids like canes for the blind, hearing aids, educational kits, communication aids, assistive & alerting devices, and devices suitable for the persons with mental disabilities.

The Scheme of Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids/Appliances (ADIP Scheme) is a centrally sponsored scheme under the department of PWDs. It grants financial support to purchase assistive aids and appliances for social and psychological rehabilitation, as well as to enhance educational and economic potential (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, 2022). However, according to Amba (2017), the distribution of these aids and appliances is very limited and does not reach PWDs living in rural areas (Antony, 2013; Singal, 2006; Taneja-Johansson et al., 2021). In addition, the imposition of GST on raw-material used in the production of assistive devices has made them less affordable. The Ministry of financial affairs, Govt. of India, brought most assistive devices under 5 percent and 12 percent GST categories.

3.3 Professional development of teachers

Persons with disabilities are not a homogeneous community. Each person with a disability has her/his own unique needs in terms of education and training. Individualized plans and teaching strategies are required to understand and address the educational needs of each disability (Das & Shah, 2014; Kundu, 2000; UNESCO, 2019). The lack of awareness on diversity of educational needs of students with disabilities and the absence of practice-based evidence are the major challenges that affect the adaptation of pedagogy. For instance, teaching stem subjects to SWDs requires additional attention and investment of time, depending on the type of disability. Special needs teachers can understand the special educational needs of the students, but they lack subject knowledge. On the other hand, general teachers are equipped with subject knowledge, but lack an understanding of special needs (UNESCO, 2019: 74).

Special educators should possess additional competencies in addition to knowledge of subject content, pedagogy, and methodology such as knowledge of

assistive devices, braille/sign language or format and mode of augmentative communication, and methods and strategies to understand and address the special educational needs of disabilities. In addition, Special educators should be competent enough to deal with various settings of schooling i.e., special, inclusive and homebased education.

The disability framework has been trying to address the training of professionals to meet the demand in the field of special education. The National education policy (1986/92) proposed the reorientation of teacher training to address the difficulties of SWDs, particularly among those dealing with primary education. The NEP (2020) recognizes the urgent need for special educators at various levels of schooling. The policy states that secondary specializations can be developed among subject teachers and generalist teachers during or after pre-service training preparation. However, the disability framework emphasizes the development of primary specializations in teacher training courses.

The co-teaching model and itinerant inclusion teacher model are predominant models employed to teach SWDs in integrated/inclusive settings. However, various studies noted that these models did not give satisfactory results due to a lack of supportive system and resources. In the Itinerant inclusion teacher model, teachers travel from school to school offering remedial teaching, but they get very limited time to spend in each school. General educators expressed difficulties with this model stating that it disturbs the daily teaching pattern. (Tiwari et al., 2015).

The State of education report for India (UNESCO 2019) states that at present, 9 million teachers are employed across the country, ranging from elementary level to higher secondary level. However, there are significant variations in the type of schools and student-teacher ratios across the country. In a recent verdict, the supreme court observed that there are only 28,535 special teachers for 22.5 lakh students with disabilities, indicating a dearth of special educators in the country. It also directed the GOI to notify the norms for student-teacher ratio of special/inclusive education and start the appointment process on an urgent basis. The top court accepted the petitioners' recommendation to adopt pupil-teacher ratios of 8:1 for children with cerebral palsy; 5:1 for children with intellectual disability, ASD and specific learning disabilities; and 2:1 for deaf and blind students; as well as a combination of two or more of the seven disabilities.

Teachers face certain structural and methodological challenges when teaching SWDs. The studies such as Pavan John Antony and others (2013), Ashwini Tiwari and others (2015), and Ajay Das (2013) found that many teachers fail to understand

the concept of inclusion and doubt their abilities to manage the special educational needs of SWDs. Several other studies including those by (Ashwini Tiwari, Ajay Das and others (2015) also noted that large class sizes, gaps between general education and special education, lack of sufficient resources, lack of rewards, etc., are major challenges expressed by teachers in teaching SWDs in general schools. Negative attitude of educators towards SWDs, a cynical understanding of the concept of disability, lack of focus on SWDs in the class, etc., remain major challenges that hinder academic performance of SWDs. Most general school teachers don't encourage these students to participate in class discussions (Das et al., 2013; Ghosh, 2016; Singal, 2006; Taneja-Johansson et al., 2021; Tiwari et al., 2015).

Mapping Indian policies

Provisions for training professionals to teach SWDs are embedded in national education policies and mainstream disability laws/policies. However, the RTE act had no mention of SWDs in the original act, and they were only included in the socially and economically disadvantaged category in the 2012 amendment. The RTE mandates that general teachers teach SWDs in neighbourhood schools and home-based schools. On the other hand, according to the RCI mandate, special educators should teach SWDs in special, inclusive, or home-based schooling. Before understanding the major gaps in the framework, it is important to consider some of the major provisions of disability laws/policies.

The RCI act is the first legislation in India's disability history. Enacted in 1992, it emphasizes formulating or taking appropriate measures towards rehabilitation and education for people with disabilities. It was amended in 2000 to regulate and monitor the training of rehabilitation professionals, promote research in rehabilitation and special education, and maintain a register of information that consists of information about rehabilitation professionals. These registered rehabilitation professionals can practice anywhere in the country, hold office in the governmental or non-governmental sector, authenticate any document pertaining to PWDs and provide witness in the court of law on disability issues.

Secondly, PWD act is the first comprehensive legal framework on disability to ensure full participation and equal opportunities. It mandates the provision of integrated education to mild and moderate disabilities and special education to severely disabled students along with vocational training. It also focuses on undertaking research on special education, assistive devices, and building barrier-free environment. However, this legislation has been replaced with the RPWD act in 2016.

Thirdly, the national policy for PWDs (2006) has been framed in accordance with the PWD act of 1995. This policy recognizes persons with disabilities as valuable human resources for the country and adopts special provisions to develop special schemes/programmes on education and rehabilitation. According to this policy, rehabilitation facilities are classified into three categories such as physical rehabilitation, educational rehabilitation, and economic rehabilitation. Physical rehabilitation services include early intervention, providing assistive mobility devices and other counselling services. Physical rehabilitation services are integral parts of medical, educational, and social rehabilitation programmes.

The National policy for PWDs has adopted a set of action plans and strategies to achieve the mandate of the PWD act (1995) regarding education and manpower development, i.e., training of teachers and other rehabilitation professionals to meet the requirements of pre-schooling for SWDs, special/inclusive education, home-based education through Training modules for teachers for inclusive education, diploma, degree and high-level programmes in special education, and training of caregivers for home-based education; building barrier-free and accessible institutes/campuses; and other measures.

Fourthly, the enactment of RPWD act is a key step towards protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. The provisions in this act fit well within a rights-based approach. The mandate of this act includes education, social security, employment, equal and full participation, building an inclusive society, equal access, and a barrier-free environment for persons with disabilities. Section 16-18 of the act advocate provisions and measures for education, training teachers and other professionals, and research in the field, i.e., inclusive education until the age of 18 years, reasonable accommodation, and accessible methods of communication. This includes periodic survey to identify PWDs, establishing adequate teacher education institutes and resource centres to support educational institutions at all levels of schooling, providing training and employment for teachers, including those with disabilities who are qualified in sign language, Braille, and teaching children with intellectual disability. Additionally, the act provides necessary training to professionals and staff to support inclusive education and provides teaching learning material and other assistive aids.

The evaluation of policy documents reveals various gaps in the rulebook itself and implementation level. The composition of the council is itself very problematic as RCI has no representation from NCFTE, and vice versa. RCI act doesn't set any regulations for the employment patterns of special educators and rehabilitation

professionals. Both mainly focus on pre-service training but are completely silent on in-service training strategies. Particularly, RCI doesn't even mention it. Another major issue is that there are no clear norms for the registration of special educators working in government sectors. Hence, it can be stated that the legal and policy framework on training professionals for special needs education has failed to address various ground realities.

There are several ambiguities across the provisions of the acts. For instance, the implementation and monitoring of special education rest with the ministry of social justice and empowerment, department of PWDs, whereas the implementation of integrated/inclusive education, RTE and others lies with the ministry of education. RTE act mandates provision of free and compulsory education to all until the age of 14 years. On the other hand, the RPWD act states that free and compulsory education should be provided to all benchmark disabilities until the age of 18 years.

The RCI-recognized courses provide necessary training to deal with the special educational needs of disabilities based on the type of disability. In the recent past, as part of the SSA programme, NCFTE has gone to the extent of providing modular training to general educators on teaching SWDs. Without having professional capabilities in braille/sign language, alternative modes of communication, and identifying the educational difficulties in the classroom, general teachers are allowed to teach in an inclusive setting. This move is quite detrimental to the education of PWDs, and also employment patterns of RCI-recognized special educators.

The mandate of RCI act and NEP (2020) have contradictory provisions for training teachers to understand and address special educational needs. The NEP 2020 states that secondary specializations can be developed among subject teachers and generalist teachers during or after pre-service training preparation for professional development of special educators. However, the RCI mandates the development of these specializations as primary specializations to address the various needs of each disability with courses at various levels recognized from diploma to research level. The educational needs of students with disabilities differ from one disability to other. Thus, in terms of developing areas of specialization for educators to deal with various requirements of education for PWDs, NEP 2020 contradicts the RCI mandate. NEP 2020 does not mention early childhood education for SWDs.

The lack of harmonization between RTE act and RPWD act in the legal and policy framework for professionalization of special needs education is another important concern. RPWD act (2016) mandates all educational institutes should provide reasonable accommodation according to the individual requirements to ensure

full inclusion. However, the act does not prescribe clear norms and standards to provide reasonable accommodation, individualized support, and full inclusion. The RPWD act indicates inclusive education and access to free education until the age of 18 years. But RTE act does not define the term inclusion and mandated access to free education until the age of 14 years only. Therefore, it indicates that a lack of political will is the major impediment to the effective formulation and implementation of legal/policy framework and to strengthening professionalization of special needs education.

5. Discussion

It is important to reiterate that RTE act (2009) is a constitutional amendment, while all disability laws are ordinary laws. Hence, it is the general understanding that any statute or policy after the enactment of RTE act should meet its mandate. However, none of the disability laws have a constitutional mandate.

The policy framework for professionalization of special needs education is designed both in accordance with recommendations of committee reports and the guidelines/framework set by international treaties and proclamations. For example, RCI act has been formulated based on the Behrul Islam committee report (1987). The PWD act (1995) has been designed in accordance with the Proclamation on the Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region 1992. And, the recent RPWD act has been formulated to ratify the UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (2006).

There are several structural and functional issues in formulating the framework for disability-related issues. Often, the GOI does not conduct proper consultations among major stakeholders, including special educators and rehabilitation professionals who deal with primary and secondary education, parents/guardians of PWDs, and disability rights organizations. Also, whenever GOI shares any draft for feedback/comments from the public, it is not sensitive to make such draft available in accessible modes or formats for the blind and hearing impaired. Additionally, when any bill is tabled in the parliament, there is hardly any discussion on disability related issues due to a lack of representation from the PWDs and a lack of interest and expertise among the members. Another important impediment in the process of effective policy formulation is the lack of transparent data on PWDs. Although counting has been done in the census and other surveys in India, some types of disabilities are left out from the mainstream data due to a lack of understanding among officers about disability aligned concepts and a lack of clear norms for the usage of terms to address various disabilities.

6. Conclusion

This paper aimed to address the development of the framework for special needs education in India. The mandate of the framework includes special/inclusive education, the supply of aids and appliances and training of teachers. RCI act is the first legal framework pertaining to the training of professionals to understand and address special educational needs of SWDs. It came into force before NCFTE. Since then, laws, policies and action plans have been designed from time to time to strengthen special needs education. RPWD act mandate of providing free education until the age of 18 years to PWDs enhanced the RTE mandate of free and compulsory education until the age of 14 years. However, there are multiple ambiguities among the mandates of various laws and policies, leading to a lack of convergence among implementing agencies.

Despite having a legal/policy framework for professionalization of special needs education, many SWDs are out of the formal education system. Education for PWDs has been encountering major traditional problems, like lack of trained personnel, lack of resources and infrastructure, lack of willingness of teachers to include SWDs in mainstream education, architectural barriers, deficient understanding of disability, etc, revealing that the major problem lies with implementation aspects.

Towards the end, this paper noted that the framework for special needs education has been formulated based on the recommendations of committees and international law, such as the UNCRPD and other proclamations that pertain to the rights of PWDs.

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Engaging Children during Covid-19 for Functional Literacy of Adult Learners: A Case Study

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Abstract

During the Covid-19 pandemic Aparna Trust took the initiative to provide online tuitions to their students. An interesting intervention was made to take them on virtual travel to different states of India as part of their Social Studies. Three groups of children from classes 6 to 8 were involved in the project “Bharat ki Sair”. During one session, the Chairperson motivated them to teach their non-literate mothers at home. Eighteen children volunteered and were trained to use literacy primers developed by the Lady Irwin College through a project “Padai Ka Maza”.

The mothers requested the NGO to provide them with an opportunity to come to the centre and learn. A motivated staff member was designated to teach them. Initially, they came for two days a week but decided to come thrice a week. As most of the 18 women had never been to school and were at different levels of literacy, the centre utilized a hybrid mode of learning and used WhatsApp to facilitate learning in small groups. To make learning more accessible and engaging for the women, primer lessons of part 1 were converted into video lessons. On International Literacy Day, 8th September 2022, women learners came to the college with their children and shared their experiences. They also interacted with the learners of another NGO and college students through interactive fun activities.

Keywords: *Life skills, literacy, COVID-19, students, motivators, women’s empowerment.*

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Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.6 relates to ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. The principles, strategies, and actions for this target are underpinned by the contemporary understanding of literacy as a continuum of proficiency levels in a given context. It goes beyond the understanding of a simple dichotomy of ‘literate’ versus ‘illiterate’. Therefore, actions for the target aim at ensuring that by 2030, all young people and adults across the world should have achieved relevant and recognized proficiency levels in functional literacy and numeracy skills that are equivalent to levels achieved upon the successful completion of basic education. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 accords the highest priority to achieving Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN). In line with the New Education Policy 2020, ‘Adult Education’ is now called ‘Education For All’ (Department of Education, Government of India, 2020; UNESCO, n.d.).

Life skills are the group of psychosocial competencies that help a person lead a healthy and happy life (WHO, 2003). These skills are usually clubbed into three major categories: a) Thinking skills (critical thinking, creative thinking, problem-solving, decision making), b) Personal skills (self-awareness, self-management of stress, anger, emotions, and time), c) Social/Interpersonal skills (communication skills, empathy, cooperation). Building life skills through functional literacy is the desired outcome of any programme for the empowerment of women. Development sans literacy is unsustainable (Seth, 1997; UNFPA, 2000).

Building the life skills of adolescents is an investment for the future. Confident, well-informed, and responsible young people can engage in constructive community action (Seth, 2007; Seth and Khanna, 2011). This is the story that emerged during COVID-19 when children motivated their non-literate mothers to learn. The women enhanced their life skills by persuading the NGO where their children took tuition, to allow them spaces to learn. The outcome – a group of highly motivated mothers, proud of their family support and ready to march forward.

Beginning of a new journey

Arpana Trust is an NGO that operates in Molarbund, Delhi. The organization provides tuition support to around 1000 students in the mornings (boys) and evenings (girls). During the COVID-19 period (2021), the NGO conducted online classes and provided smartphones to needy students with the condition that the families would make the mobiles available to the students for online classes.

To break the monotony of the kids of classes 6th to 8th, they were offered the opportunity to take virtual trips to different parts of the country. In consultation with the teachers and management, it was decided that each class would have a one-hour session on Wednesdays, during which the children would explore one state per month. At the end of each state covered, the students participated in a quiz and enjoyed it a lot. With guidance, the teachers became comfortable conducting the sessions. Additionally, the chairperson, manager, and a senior teacher also participated to make the sessions interactive.

During one of the travel sessions attended by chairperson Mrs. Sushma Agarwal, she suggested to the children “These days you are at home and your mothers are also home. Most of your mothers are illiterate. Why don’t you teach them?”. This was taken as an opportunity to make an emotional appeal to the students, and 18 out of nearly 100 children (in three groups) volunteered. This marked the beginning of a dream project – “*Padai Ka Maza*” (Fun of Learning), which Mrs. Agarwal wholeheartedly supported. She explained “once in six months when we have PTM (Parent Teacher Meeting), we talk to parents. Fathers rarely attend, and the mothers tell us that they do not know if their child is studying, even holding the book upside down. When asked about homework, he shows notebook, but we don’t know when and what was done....”. She believed that the literacy project would benefit the children as well.

Online training was organized for the student volunteers in July 2021. The purpose of the training was to prepare them to teach someone in the family basic literacy skills. They were made familiar with the method of teaching adult learners using the literacy primer “*Padhe aur Jaane*” developed by the Lady Irwin College (Delhi University), Department of Development Communication and Extension. Qualities of a good teacher were emphasized hoping that in the process of teaching someone, they would enhance their own life skills as well. They were also taught the method of assessing the level of literacy before starting to teach.

Coming to the centre

In August 2021, the women requested the NGO to allow them to go to the centre for offline learning as they found it difficult to learn effectively from their children and they wanted to learn in a group. The NGO chairperson granted permission as the centre was closed and the staff in charge of fieldwork agreed to teach them at the centre. Thus began a new and exciting journey. We maintained contact with the children and the women through WhatsApp and it became a family project with some husbands encouraging their wives as well.

Initially, the women were coming to the centre twice a week – with a focus on reading and writing. However, after a few months, they expressed the need to learn numeracy as well and started coming three times with Tuesdays being dedicated solely to numeracy. There is an in-built evaluation for them to know their progress after every four lessons. An assessment at the time of joining the class is also done.

Activities at the centre included fun activities like making words from alphabets and *matras* written on 2.5 centimetres square paper chits which were placed in envelopes. Each learner added more alphabets to their envelopes as they increased their vocabulary. In WhatsApp videos, each learner proudly showed the words they learnt. They also sang songs written on charts and displayed on boards with those who could read pointing to the words being sung. The bonding with them strengthened with every online interaction.

Celebrating Women's Day

Amidst COVID-19 protocols, the women celebrated Women's Day on 8th March 2022. By now, they had formed a cohesive group and had decided to wear pink saris. Some guests also participated in the function – dancing, singing, games, and experience sharing. An interesting game was played called '*Mansik Swasthya Varnmala*' (Mental Health Alphabets). A chart with associated emojis and words related to mental health was hung on the wall, with each alphabet representing a different word. With their eyes covered with a dupatta, the player had to touch an alphabet on the chart and then untie the dupatta to read the alphabet and words written in the block. They were also required to say a few words related to the word, for e.g., 'M' for '*Madad*' (help); 'G' for '*Gumsum*' (withdrawn); 'Kh' for '*Khushi*' (happiness). If they were unable to recognize the alphabet and read the word by themselves, they were helped by others. However, each person could say something meaningful associated with the words.

Locked again at home

In January 2022, the COVID-19 situation in Delhi had become serious again and as a precaution, groups were discouraged to meet physically. The women were not allowed to come to the centre. However, the desire to learn remained high among them and they wanted to continue learning. Since a good rapport had been formed with the women, it was decided that they could form small groups and meet once a week on WhatsApp. Four groups were formed and each group met for one hour. During this time, each learner was given individual attention for about fifteen minutes. Additionally, there was interaction not only with the women but also with

their family members, mainly children and some husbands as well. Follow-up interaction enabled them to sustain their motivation to continue the learning and teaching process. Women took turns to talk and show their progress. Nevertheless, the method was found to be quite effective in communicating with them. This was a temporary phase, and soon the centre was open to children and women.

Recognition of school children as Volunteer-Teachers

During COVID-19, children were not able to give time to their mothers but were encouraging them to go to the centre and learn. They also took pride in their mothers' learning. Interactions on WhatsApp calls at a personal level during the lockdown provided an opportunity to interact with the children. However, the need to meet them was realized, and an interesting session was organized at the centre, where children played *antakshri* with their mothers. Women wrote the letter of the word of the song with the help of their children when needed. Experiences were also shared.

To give recognition to the students for their hard work, it was decided to meet with the principals of the schools (boys and girls) where children were studying. Two mothers and Saraswati's daughter Anjali volunteered to go with the NGO worker to the local schools. While permission was not granted to enter the boys' school without the permission of the Directorate of Education, the team was allowed inside the girls' school, where, unfortunately, the principal was not available. However, the Counsellor was very encouraging and promised to fix a meeting with the school Principal.

Training Volunteers from other NGOs

Encouraged by the success of the PKM (Padai Ka Maza) project of Arpana Trust, Lady Irwin College organized a training programme for volunteer teachers of Vaish Welfare Trust, a Delhi-based NGO, and Aseem Library in the college on 27th July 2022. This event provided an opportunity for the postgraduate students of the department to engage in experiential learning, plan and conduct training, and learn about the department's important initiatives in the area of adult education and women's empowerment.

International Literacy Day

On September 8th, 2022, Lady Irwin College organized a literacy day event that was attended by sixteen women and sixteen children. Eleven women learners from

Vaish Welfare Trust, who used the same teaching methodology, also participated in the function. They were very excited to come to the college and some had never travelled by the Delhi Metro before. Despite facing challenges, Santosh, who was six months pregnant with haemoglobin level as low as 6 and got a blood transfusion a day before the event, the participants were determined to attend. Although Santosh was discouraged from joining the group, she showed up at the metro station and joined the group.

It was an opportunity for the college students to plan and conduct interactive group activities. In addition to a puppet show and some floor games, the learners, volunteer teachers, and their children also shared their experiences. Certificates for participation in the *Padai Ka Maza* project were given by the chief guest Ms. Kalpana Kaushik, Director Indian Adult Education Association, and the Director of the college Prof. Anupa Siddhu. Learners were motivated to work hard and pass the literacy exam to earn the Certificate of completion.

The thirst for knowledge and learning among women has increased, and they have expressed a desire to learn tailoring and other skills for income generation. Ms. Kaushik informed them about the opportunities available for continuing their learning through NIOS (National Institute of Open Schooling).

Methodology of teaching

While teaching at the Lady Irwin College, we felt the need to develop our own literacy primer after reviewing existing literacy primers developed by various State Resource Centres (SRCs) and NGOs. Fortunately, we were working with students and had the opportunity to use their creativity for developing a primer through an Extension project that was part of their curriculum in the 1980s. The primer used an Eclectic approach which is a combination of Synthetic or Alphabetic (phonic) and Analytic methods. We revised the primer based on feedback from learners and volunteer teachers.

The literacy primer “*Padhe Aur Jaane*” is in three parts. Part 1, consisting of 12 lessons, enables a learner to read the stories of Part 2. These stories are based on case studies of women and focus on selected themes for discussion. Part 3, which covers Numeracy, was taken from the State Resource Centre (SRC) of Bhopal. It was published with the support of Vaish Welfare Trust. Part 1 of the Primer was converted into a Talking Book using the Multimedia Print Reader (MPR) technology. The MPR technology is a giant leap in educational technology allowing people to hear the text while reading along.

During COVID-19, smartphones were used to make video recordings of each lesson of Part 1 of the primer, which was used as a communication tool. Sharing the recorded video lessons with learners, and receiving feedback was useful for making changes. The videos were given to Lady Irwin College, Department of Development Communication and Extension, to not only fill gaps but also add value to the resource materials generated. The videos were also shared with literacy experts and field workers. The materials are accessible on a link to the Department of DCE on YouTube ([https:// youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2Aqs3s5Ljba3B4uIokdDzmtbC7jyVHWv](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2Aqs3s5Ljba3B4uIokdDzmtbC7jyVHWv)).

Assessment of Learners

The literacy primer Part 1 has guidelines for the facilitators, which are reinforced during the training programme. It also includes a literacy assessment test to determine the learners' literacy level at the time of joining. All the literacy primers approved by the National Literacy Mission have built-in evaluation after every four lessons. This helps the learner to review their own progress and the organization monitor their progress.

To assess the progress of the learners and their level of confidence, it was decided to take 11 '*Panchantantra*' stories to the centre in bold print with visuals. Recognizing that they were not confident in reading full stories, they were encouraged to volunteer for reading the stories demonstrating how to read the story title and the text written in bold print. They were assured that even though they would not be able to read difficult words that they had not learned, they would surely be able to read some sentences with comprehension. Help was offered if needed. The purpose of this exercise was to find out how many would feel confident enough to try reading unknown texts in the presence of others, enhancing their life skills by giving them confidence, which is an important goal of adult education.

With encouragement, all the books were taken up by the women for trial. They were given some time to go through the books. Some were overjoyed as they had never held a storybook before. However, Saraswati returned the book quickly after realizing that it was a task beyond her competency. Nevertheless, each learner came up one by one and sat on a chair facing the audience. They were able to read and show the title of the book, and some could read a few lines from the first page with help. Most of them who had finished Part 1 were able to read with comprehension and were applauded by others. One learner who had come for the first time had studied till class 4 many years back and wanted to revive her skills. She read with ease but without comprehension.

Women were advised to take the books home and read them with the help of their children, who were supporting their efforts. It was decided to meet after a month with the children and discuss the stories they had read, what they enjoyed, and what they learned. Thus, the need for a library was felt. Nadira Chaturvedi was approached, and she sent more books for women with bold prints, and thus Aseem Library for women was started. She agreed to help in monitoring the progress of adult readers and provide them with need-based reading materials.

In preparation for celebrating International Literacy Day and going to Lady Irwin College on 8th September 2022, the women were motivated to take Basic Literacy Examination for getting certificates. A total of 19 women appeared for the examination. It was the first time they had taken a test and were very nervous but excited. While most of them successfully attempted the reading test, half of them scored poorly on the written test. None of them passed the numeracy test because they had not learned multiplication and division. Initially, the focus of “*Padai Ka Maza*” was on enabling them to enjoy reading within the limited constraints of their time. However, a few months after they began their classes, they expressed their interest in learning numeracy. Now, encouraged and motivated by children, they are requesting sessions five days a week and have become regular attendees.

Key Learnings

- Adult learners need the support of their family members. Children can be motivated and trained to become facilitators, enriching their own life skills while spending quality time with their mothers and other non-literate members of the community.
- It is crucial to train student volunteers and make them feel valued for getting involved in a noble mission. Teachers can play an important role in encouraging and recognizing students to become volunteer teachers for adult education.
- The learning process for adult learners becomes enjoyable and meaningful only if they can comprehend and relate it to their lives. There are plenty of edutainment materials available for teaching-learning. Selecting appropriate materials and using them effectively is an important aspect of volunteer training and management as well.
- The use of technology can improve learning outcomes and make the process enjoyable and interactive. It also helps monitor progress on the ground.
- Partnership between academic institutions and NGOs can be very fruitful for optimizing the use of available resources, strengthening programmes on the ground, and providing experiential learning to the students.

- Libraries are an essential component of adult education programmes. Reading materials that are relevant and appropriate for their learning levels with plenty of pictures, motivates the learners and facilitates rapid learning. Stories of women, produced independently by the women, and for the women, can be an outcome of the project.
- Children and college students can make a significant contribution to developing communication materials for promoting literacy and life skills.
- A non-threatening environment needs to be created for subjecting adult learners to the assessment process.
- Basic literacy should be the foundation for skill training for income generation.
- Women prefer to learn in groups, motivating each other. They can form support groups and actively participate in community development programmes.

Literacy, Library, and Life skills (3Ls) are integrated aspects of a meaningful programme for adults based on the principles of Enjoyment, Engagement and Empowerment (3Es) of all stakeholders involved in the teaching-learning process.

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Modern Usage of Technology in Science Teaching

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Abstract

This article examines the modern usage of technology in science education, exploring its significant impact on teaching and learning. Technology has become increasingly important in education, particularly in science education. With the introduction of technology in education, the roles of teaching and learning have evolved. As a result, the future trend in educational methodology and strategy is geared towards integrating technology into the classroom. In higher learning institutions, technology can be used as a strategic instructional medium to facilitate teaching and learning in science. The use of technology-based learning in education has the potential to improve education, empower people, and strengthen governance. Presently, technology-based learning includes smart boards, QR codes processed with Android phones, Hi-Tech labs, Tablets, E-books, Streaming videos, and Digital libraries. The Department of Education, Tamil Nadu has been providing smart classrooms and Hi-Tech laboratories for High schools and Higher Secondary schools to foster students' concept, knowledge, interest, and involvement in learning science. This article emphasizes the significance of modern usage of technology in science teaching and how it is helpful in the promotion of science teaching in the present scenario.

Keywords: *modern technology, science teaching.*

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Introduction

The use of technology in science education has become increasingly common in recent years. This includes tools such as:

1. Interactive simulations and virtual experiments that allow students to manipulate variables and observe the effects (Liou and Chang, 2018).
2. Online learning platforms such as MOOCs provide students with access to a wealth of resources and educational materials.
3. Augmented and virtual reality (AR/VR) applications, which provide immersive experiences for students to explore scientific concepts and phenomena (Wuet al., 2013).
4. Data analysis and visualization software that allow students to analyze and interpret scientific data (Vavra, Janjic, Loerke, Phillips, Norris & Macnab, 2011).
5. Robotics and coding programs that introduce students to the basics of programming and engineering (Benitti, 2012).

Overall, technology has provided new and innovative ways for students to engage with scientific concepts and has made science education more accessible and interactive.

Interactive simulations are computer programs that allow students to manipulate variables and observe the effects in real time. They provide an engaging and dynamic way for students to explore scientific concepts and experiment with different scenarios (Christensen, De Aquino & Degrande, 2011). Some examples of interactive simulations in science education include:

1. Physics simulations that allow students to explore the laws of motion and energy.
2. Biology simulations that demonstrate biological processes and systems, such as cellular respiration and circulation.
3. Chemistry simulations that allow students to visualize and experiment with chemical reactions and processes.
4. Climate and weather simulations that enable students to explore patterns and trends in weather data.

Interactive simulations can be utilized in both traditional classroom settings and online learning environments. These simulations can facilitate a deeper understanding

of complex scientific concepts by allowing students to explore and experiment in a controlled, virtual environment.

Virtual experiments are computer simulations that mimic real-life scientific experiments. They allow students to conduct experiments in a safe and controlled environment and provide an alternative to traditional hands-on experiments in cases where access to equipment or hazardous materials may be limited. Studies have clearly documented the value of technological capabilities for enhancing the presentation of complex or abstract content, such as computer visualization techniques (Lewis, Stern, & Linn, 1993). Some examples of virtual experiments in science education include:

1. Virtual dissection simulations in biology provide students with the opportunity to explore the anatomy of different organisms without the need for physical specimens.
2. Virtual physics labs that allow students to perform experiments on motion, force, and energy without the need for physical apparatus.
3. Virtual chemistry labs that provide students with the ability to conduct chemical reactions and observe the results, without the need for access to potentially dangerous chemicals.
4. Virtual astronomy simulations that allow students to explore the stars, planets, and galaxies without access to telescopes.

Virtual experiments can be used to complement or supplement traditional hands-on experiments and can provide students with a deeper understanding of scientific concepts by allowing them to explore and experiment in a virtual environment.

Online learning platforms are websites or applications that provide students with access to educational materials and resources. They can be used for both formal and informal education, and can provide students with a flexible and convenient way to learn. Some examples of online learning platforms in science education include:

1. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) that offer free or low-cost courses on a wide range of scientific subjects taught by experts in the field.
2. Learning management systems (LMS) that are used by schools and universities to provide students the access to course materials, assignments, and assessments (Nadire & Muhammed Sharif, 2014).
3. Online tutoring platforms that connect students with tutors for personalized support and guidance.

4. Science-focused websites and apps that provide students with access to videos, animations, interactive simulations, and other educational resources.

As mentioned above, online learning platforms provide convenient and accessible ways for students to learn that complement traditional classroom-based instruction. They also help in breaking down barriers to education by providing students with access to resources and educational materials regardless of their location or socio-economic status.

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are online courses that are open to anyone, anywhere in the world. They are usually offered by universities and educational institutions to provide students with high-quality educational resources and materials. Some of the features of MOOCs include:

1. Open enrollment: Anyone can enroll in a MOOC, regardless of their location, educational background, or experience.
2. Access to educational materials: MOOCs typically include videos, readings, assessments, and other educational resources.
3. Interactivity: Many MOOCs include interactive features such as discussion forums, quizzes, and peer assessments.
4. Certificate of completion: Some MOOCs offer a certificate of completion for students who successfully complete the course.

MOOCs provide students with high-quality education at a low or no cost and help break down barriers to education by making educational resources and materials available to anyone with an internet connection. They can be particularly useful for students who are interested in science education, as many MOOCs offer courses on a wide range of scientific subjects, taught by experts in the field (Ortega-Sánchez, & Gómez-Trigueros, 2019).

Learning Management Systems (LMS) are software platforms that are used by schools, colleges, and universities to manage and deliver educational content to students. Some of the key features of an LMS include:

1. Course management: An LMS provides a centralized location for teachers to upload course materials, assignments, and assessments, making it easy for students to access these materials.
2. Assessment tools: An LMS includes tools for teachers to create and administer assessments such as quizzes, exams, and projects.

3. Communication and collaboration: An LMS provides a platform for students and teachers to communicate and collaborate through features such as discussion forums, messaging, and video conferencing.
4. Analytics and reporting: An LMS provides data and analytics to help teachers track student progress and assess their performance.

LMSs are widely used in education, as they provide a convenient and efficient way for schools, colleges, and universities to manage and deliver educational content to students (Nurakun Kyzy, Ismailova & Dündar, 2018). They can also help to improve student engagement and outcomes by providing students with access to educational resources and materials, and by facilitating communication and collaboration between students and teachers.

Online tutoring platforms are websites or applications that provide students with access to tutors who can offer personalized support and guidance. They can be used for a wide range of subjects, including science, and can provide students with a flexible and convenient way to receive help with their coursework. Some of the key features of online tutoring platforms include:

1. Access to tutors: Online tutoring platforms provide students with access to a pool of tutors who can offer support and guidance.
2. Scheduling: Online tutoring platforms typically provide students with the ability to schedule sessions with a tutor at a time that is convenient for them.
3. Live support: Online tutoring sessions typically take place in real time, allowing students to receive immediate feedback and guidance from their tutor.
4. Personalization: Online tutoring platforms can match students with tutors who specialize in the subject they need help with, ensuring that they receive tailored and relevant support.

Online tutoring platforms can provide students with a flexible and convenient way to receive support and guidance with their coursework (Dolenc et.al, 2015). They can also help to improve student engagement and outcomes by providing students with personalized and tailored support, and by allowing them to receive help at a time that is convenient for them.

Science-focused websites and apps are digital resources that provide students with access to educational materials and resources that are specifically focused on science (Castek & Beach, 2013). Some examples of science-focused websites and apps include:

1. Science encyclopaedia: Websites that provide students with access to a wealth of information and resources on a wide range of scientific subjects, including articles, videos, and images.
2. Interactive simulations: Apps and websites that provide students with interactive simulations and visualizations of scientific concepts and processes, allowing them to explore and experiment in a virtual environment.
3. Science games and quizzes: Websites and apps that provide students with engaging and educational games and quizzes that help reinforce scientific knowledge and skills.
4. Science videos: Websites and apps that provide students with access to a wide range of science videos, including animations, lectures, and documentaries.

Science-focused websites and apps can provide students with a more accessible and engaging way to learn about science and can supplement or complement traditional classroom-based instruction. They can also help to break down barriers to education by providing students with access to educational resources and materials regardless of their location or socio-economic status.

Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) are technology-based educational tools that can be used to enhance science education. AR and VR provide students with immersive and interactive experiences that can help to bring scientific concepts and processes to life (Nielsen, Brandt & Swensen, 2016). VR is a growing era and its significance to science education is gaining momentum day by day (Durukan, Artun & Temur, 2020). Some of the ways that AR and VR can be used in science education include:

1. Interactive simulations: VR can be used to create immersive simulations of scientific concepts and processes, allowing students to explore and experiment in a virtual environment.
2. Visualization of scientific data: AR and VR can be used to visualize scientific data in a more engaging and interactive way, making it easier for students to understand and retain the information.

Field trips: VR can be used to create virtual field trips, allowing students to explore and learn about scientific subjects in a virtual environment, without the need for physical travel.

3. Experiments: AR and VR can be used to create interactive and engaging simulations of scientific experiments, allowing students to conduct virtual experiments in a safe and controlled environment.

AR and VR have the potential to revolutionize science education by offering a more immersive and engaging learning experience for students. These technologies can help eliminate educational disparities and ensure that anyone with access to an AR or VR headset can benefit from the learning opportunities offered by these tools.

Data analysis and visualization software are tools used to collect, process, and visualize data. These tools are commonly used in science and research to help students better understand scientific concepts and theories. Some of the key features of data analysis and visualization software include:

1. **Data collection:** Data analysis and visualization software can be used to collect data from a variety of sources, including surveys, experiments, and simulations.
2. **Data processing:** The software can be used to process data, performing tasks such as data cleaning, transformation, and aggregation.
3. **Data visualization:** The software can be used to create a variety of visualizations, such as charts, graphs, and maps, which can be used to help students understand and interpret data.
4. **Data analysis:** The software can be used to perform a variety of data analysis techniques, including statistical analysis, machine learning, and data mining.

Data analysis and visualization software can help students to understand complex scientific concepts and theories by allowing them to work with real data and see the results of their analysis in a visual format (Olsson, Mozelius & Collin, 2015). They can also enhance student engagement and improve learning outcomes by providing students with hands-on experience with real data and by making it easier for them to see the results of their analysis.

Robotics and coding programs are educational tools that are designed to teach students the principles of robotics and computer programming. These programs can be used in science education to help students understand key concepts in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) (Altin & Pedaste, 2013). Some of the ways that robotics and coding programs can be used in science education include:

1. **Robotics simulations:** Robotics simulations can be used to create virtual robots and environments, allowing students to experiment and learn about robotics concepts in a safe and controlled environment.

2. **Robotics projects:** Robotics projects can be used to give students hands-on experience with building and programming real robots, helping them to develop their STEM skills and knowledge.
3. **Coding simulations:** Coding simulations can be used to teach students the basics of computer programming, providing them with a visual and interactive way to learn and practice coding skills.
4. **Robotics competitions:** Robotics competitions can be used to encourage student engagement and provide them with an opportunity to apply their skills and knowledge in a real-world context.

Robotics and coding programs can provide students with a fun and engaging way to learn about STEM subjects and develop important skills, such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and collaboration. They can also help break down barriers to education by making STEM education accessible to students who might not have access to the materials and resources needed to participate in traditional STEM programs.

Smart boards are interactive whiteboards that are commonly used in schools for educational purposes. They consist of a large display screen, a computer, and a projector, and use touch-sensitive technology to allow users to interact with the display using a stylus or their finger (Aktas & Aydin, 2016).

Smart boards can be used in a variety of ways to enhance science education, such as:

1. **Interactive lessons:** Smart boards can be used to create interactive lessons that help students understand scientific concepts and theories. For example, teachers can use smart boards to create animations, simulations, and interactive diagrams that help students visualize complex concepts.
2. **Collaborative learning:** Smart boards can be used to facilitate group work and collaborative learning, allowing students to work together on projects, presentations, and assignments.
3. **Real-time feedback:** Smart boards can be used to provide real-time feedback on student work, allowing teachers to identify areas of strength and weakness and provide immediate support.
4. **Access to multimedia resources:** Smart boards can be used to access a variety of multimedia resources, including videos, images, and online resources, helping to make science education more engaging and interactive.

The use of smart boards in science education has the potential to improve student

engagement, outcomes, and overall satisfaction with science education by providing students with interactive and engaging learning experiences. They also help democratize education by making educational resources and materials more widely available and by providing students with real-time feedback and support. **QR codes (Quick Response codes)** are two-dimensional barcodes that can be scanned using a smartphone or tablet with a camera (Karahan, et al.,2017). In education, QR codes can be used in a variety of ways to enhance science teaching and learning.

Some of the ways that QR codes can be used in science education with an Android phone include:

1. Access to multimedia resources: QR codes can be used to provide students with instant access to multimedia resources, such as videos, images, and online articles, helping to make science education more engaging and interactive.
2. Interactive assessments: QR codes can be used to create interactive assessments that allow students to test their knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts and theories. For example, teachers can create quizzes that students can take using their Android phones with instant feedback provided via the QR code scan.
3. Virtual field trips: QR codes can be used to provide students with virtual field trips, allowing them to explore scientific concepts and theories in real-world settings. For example, teachers can create QR code scavenger hunts that students can complete using their Android phones.
4. Enhancing lab experiences: QR codes can be used to enhance lab experiences, allowing students to access information and resources related to the experiment they are performing. For example, teachers can provide students with QR codes that link to videos, images, and online articles that provide additional context and background information.

QR codes offer an engaging approach to science education by using technology that students are familiar with. They provide a fun and interactive way for students to learn and make educational resources available to a wider audience. QR codes can provide students with a fun and interactive way to learn about science, and they can help to break down barriers to education by making educational resources and materials available to a wider audience. By leveraging the technology that students are already familiar with and use regularly, QR codes can make science education more accessible and engaging.

A hi-tech lab in school education refers to a laboratory equipped with advanced

technology and resources designed to support hands-on learning and experimentation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects.

Here are some of the features and benefits of a hi-tech lab in school education:

1. **Advanced equipment:** Hi-tech labs are equipped with advanced equipment, such as high-tech microscopes, 3D printers, and computer-controlled experiments, allowing students to perform hands-on experiments and explore scientific concepts in more depth.
2. **Immersive learning experiences:** Hi-tech labs provide students with immersive learning experiences, allowing them to visualize and interact with scientific concepts in a hands-on way.
3. **Increased student engagement:** Hi-tech labs can help to increase student engagement, motivation, and achievement in STEM subjects by providing students with hands-on, interactive learning experiences.
4. **Career preparation:** Hi-tech labs provide students with hands-on experience using cutting-edge technology and resources, helping to prepare them for careers in STEM fields.
5. **Collaborative learning:** Hi-tech labs can be used to facilitate group work and collaborative learning, allowing students to work together on projects, presentations, and assignments.

A **hi-tech lab** can provide students with the tools and resources they need to learn about science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in a hands-on, interactive way. (Strauss& Kinzie, 1991) advocates to offer students the opportunity to engage in hands-on learning and advanced technology, resulting in a positive impact on student learning outcomes and their readiness for careers in STEM fields.

Tablets in school education refer to the use of tablet computers as educational tools in the classroom. (Habler, Major and Hennessy, 2016) highlights the importance of the usage of Tablets which provide students with a portable and convenient way to access educational resources, software, and learning management systems.

Here are some of the benefits of using tablets in school education:

1. **Portability:** Tablets are portable and easy to use, allowing students to access educational resources and materials from anywhere, at any time.
2. **Interactive learning:** Tablets provide students with interactive learning experiences, allowing them to engage with educational resources, such as multimedia presentations and simulations, in a hands-on way.

3. Digital learning: Tablets provide students with access to digital learning materials, including e-books, videos, and educational apps, allowing them to learn about science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects in an engaging and interactive way.
4. Improved student outcomes: Research has shown that the use of tablets in education can lead to improved student outcomes, including increased student engagement, motivation, and achievement.
5. Collaborative learning: Tablets can be used to facilitate group work and collaborative learning, allowing students to work together on projects, presentations, and assignments.

Tablets provide students with a convenient and portable way to access educational resources and materials, allowing them to learn about science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in an engaging and interactive way.

E-books in school education refer to the use of digital books as educational resources in the classroom. E-books are digital versions of traditional printed books that can be read on tablet computers, laptops, or e-readers (Lai, 2015).

Here are some of the benefits of using e-books in school education:

1. Convenient access: E-books can be easily accessed and downloaded from anywhere and at any time, providing students with convenient and immediate access to educational resources.
2. Digital learning: E-books provide students with access to digital learning materials, allowing them to learn about science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects in an engaging and interactive way.
3. Interactive learning experiences: E-books can be interactive, allowing students to engage with learning materials in a hands-on way, such as highlighting text, taking notes, and using interactive features.
4. Improved student outcomes: Research has shown that the use of e-books in education can lead to improved student outcomes, including increased student engagement, motivation, and achievement.
5. Cost-effective: E-books can be less expensive than traditional printed books, providing schools and students with cost-effective access to educational resources.

E-books offer students a portable and convenient means to access educational resources and materials, enabling them to learn about science, technology, engineering, mathematics, etc. in an engaging and interactive way.

Streaming video in school education refers to the use of video content delivered via the internet as educational resources in the classroom. Streaming video platforms such as YouTube, Vimeo, and educational platforms like Khan Academy and Coursera provide students with access to a wide range of educational videos including lectures, tutorials, and interactive simulations.

Here are some of the benefits of using streaming video in school education:

1. **Access to multimedia learning resources:** Streaming video provides students with access to a wide range of multimedia learning resources, including video lectures, tutorials, and interactive simulations.
2. **Improved student engagement:** Research has shown that the use of video in education can lead to improved student engagement, motivation, and achievement.
3. **Personalized learning experience:** Streaming video can be accessed from anywhere, at any time, allowing students to learn and review materials at their own pace.
4. **Increased understanding:** Streaming videos can provide students with a visual representation of complex scientific concepts, helping to improve understanding and retention.
5. **Cost-effective:** Streaming video is a cost-effective alternative to traditional in-person lectures and tutorials, as it eliminates the need for physical classrooms or expensive equipment.

A digital library in school education refers to an online collection of educational resources and materials, including books, journals, articles, and multimedia content, that can be accessed and used by students and teachers.

Here are some of the benefits of using a digital library in school education:

1. **Access to a wide range of educational resources:** Digital libraries provide students and teachers with access to a wide range of educational resources, including books, articles, and multimedia content, allowing them to find and use the resources they need to support their learning.
2. **Improved student outcomes:** Research has shown that the use of digital libraries in education can lead to improved student outcomes, including increased student engagement, motivation, and achievement.
3. **Convenient and accessible:** Digital libraries can be accessed from anywhere and at any time, providing students and teachers with convenient and immediate access to educational resources.

4. Cost-effective: Digital libraries can be cost-effective alternatives to traditional physical libraries, providing schools and students with access to educational resources without the need for physical books and journals.
5. Environmentally friendly: Digital libraries can help reduce the need for paper-based educational resources, helping to conserve natural resources and reduce waste.

A digital library provides students and teachers with a convenient way to access educational resources and materials, allowing them to find and use the resources they need to support their learning (Chowdhury, Landoni & Gibb, 2006). By leveraging the latest technology, digital libraries can help to improve student outcomes and provide students and teachers with the tools and resources they need to succeed.

The Department of Education of the Government of Tamil Nadu has played a significant role in promoting modern science teaching methods in the state. Here are some of the contributions made by the department in this regard:

1. Adoption of technology-enhanced learning: The department has promoted the use of technology in education, including the use of digital learning tools, such as learning management systems, online tutoring platforms, and educational apps to support student learning.
2. Implementation of e-learning programs: The department has implemented various e-learning programs such as online courses and digital libraries to provide students with access to educational resources and materials.
3. Support for teacher professional development: The department has provided support for teacher professional development, including training and capacity-building programs to help teachers improve their skills and knowledge in using technology in the classroom.
4. Encouragement of hands-on experiential learning: The department has encouraged hands-on experiential learning, including the use of laboratory activities and field trips to help students engage with science concepts in a practical and meaningful way.
5. Promotion of STEM education: The department has also promoted STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education, including the use of robotics and coding programs to help students develop skills in these important areas.

The Department of Education of the Government of Tamil Nadu has made significant contributions to modern science teaching methods in the state, promoting

the use of technology and hands-on experiential learning to support student learning and engagement. The department's initiatives and programs aim to prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century by equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge for success.

Multimedia in science education refers to the use of various digital media such as videos, images, animations, simulations, and interactive activities to enhance the learning of scientific concepts. It provides a visual and engaging experience that can help students better understand complex scientific phenomena, retain information, and increase motivation and interest in science (Scanlon, Hodgson & Taylor, 1996). Additionally, multimedia can provide opportunities for students to engage in inquiry-based learning and explore scientific concepts through hands-on activities. In short, multimedia can be an effective tool for improving science education by making it more engaging, interactive and accessible to students of all learning styles.

Premlatha, et al. (2015) explored the various models/components of e-learning. (Scanlon, et.al 1996) highlighted his experience in the design of media-based learning in science and discussed the implications of the experience for the design and development of multimedia teaching materials. (Kotiash, et al., 2022) stressed the importance of the usage of Multimedia technologies in learning science. (Kuchai, et al., 2022) analyzes the role of multimedia education in the formation of the information society. (Green, et al., 2022) describes a new open-access digital resource for teaching and learning life science. (Rolfe, et al., 2011) made a systematic review to evaluate the effectiveness of multimedia resources in tertiary-level life science education. Although it did not improve short-term learning gains in this scenario, multimedia improved learning gains in 10 of the 16 sub-group comparisons made across all the studies.

Despite the prospects of digital education (Singhal, 2017) felt that students are accustomed to face-to-face classroom learning and hence, some of them couldn't adjust themselves to the new academic environment while staying at home. There are pros of classroom teaching that digital or online education will find hard to replace, such as collaborative learning, enhancement of critical thinking skills, improvement of social skills, building organisational skills, keeping students stimulated, and development of important personality and career-building skills.

Reasons for using multimedia in science teaching:

1. **Engagement:** Multimedia can make science lessons more interactive and engaging for students, which can lead to increased motivation and interest in the subject.

2. **Improved Understanding:** Visual aids such as images, animations, and simulations can enhance students' understanding of complex scientific concepts and relationships.
3. **Accessibility:** Multimedia can provide equal access to information for students with different learning styles, promoting inclusivity and levelling the playing field for all students.
4. **Active Learning:** Multimedia can provide opportunities for students to engage in inquiry-based learning, where they can explore scientific concepts in a hands-on manner.
5. **Retention:** Studies have shown that multimedia can improve students' ability to recall information and retain what they have learned over time.
6. **Relevance:** Multimedia can help to connect science concepts to real-life situations and make them more relevant to students, which can increase their understanding and interest in the subject.

Technology has been widely adopted in science teaching to enhance students' learning experiences and achieve educational goals. Some of the ways technology is used in science education include:

1. **Digital Learning Tools:** Technology provides access to digital learning tools such as simulations, animations, virtual labs, and interactive activities that can help students to visualize complex scientific concepts and engage in inquiry-based learning.
2. **Online Resources:** The internet provides students with access to a vast array of science-related resources, including articles, videos, and educational games, which can help to supplement classroom instruction and promote self-directed learning.
3. **Data Analysis:** Technology can help students to collect, analyze and visualize data, providing them with hands-on experience in the scientific process and fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills in them.
4. **Collaboration:** Technology can facilitate collaboration among students, allowing them to work together on projects, share information, and engage in group discussions, even if they are not in the same physical location.
5. **Personalized Learning:** Technology can provide teachers with the ability to personalize learning experiences for individual students, tailoring instruction to meet their unique needs and learning styles.

In conclusion, technology has the potential to transform science education by providing students with interactive and engaging learning experiences, facilitating

collaboration and personalized learning, and improving access to educational resources.

Conclusion

The article concludes that while new technologies are transforming teaching and learning in science education, it is important to strike a balance between technology-based and face-to-face instruction. The advent of educational Technology is bringing digital revolutions into the classrooms, making teaching and learning more interesting and effective. Visual aids have replaced traditional chalk-and-talk methods, and new technologies like smart classes, VR, AR, QR codes, online tutoring platforms, LMS, and MOOCs have led to a paradigm shift in science education. The old method of chalk and talk is being done away with the introduction of visual aids. Education through new technology like the smart class, VR, AR, QR, Online tutoring platforms, LMS, MOOC's had brought a paradigm shift in the teaching learning process in Science education.

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• V. Jagadeeswara Rao¹

• M. C. Reddeppa Reddy²

The book entailed ‘Dr. G.N. Reddi: The Doyen of Rural Reconstruction’, has been compiled and edited by Prof. M.C. Reddeppa Reddy, Former Director, Dept., of Adult & Continuing Education, S.V. University, Tirupati. It carries a large number of messages from VIPs including Dr. P. Ramachandra Reddy, Hon’ble Minister of Panchayat Raj and Rural Development, Govt., of Andhra Pradesh.

The book has seven sections. In Section- I, the articles, both English and Telugu, are arranged in 149 pages. There are about 30 articles in English (pages 1-80) and 17 articles in Telugu (pages 81-150) written by eminent personalities from different walks of life, with varied experiences with Dr. G. N. Reddi. The authors share their memories, anecdotes, achievements and visionary thinking of Dr. G. N. Reddi and narrate their association and services in the sector of rural reconstruction. These articles present him mostly as a fore-runner of the movement of rural reconstruction in India and abroad. The authors also describe Dr. Reddi’s inner life – the ideas, beliefs, thoughts, convictions and vision, and the contents of book are exhaustive. The articles also describe Dr. Reddi’s vast experiences, his treasure of knowledge, and his dedication and commitment towards the development of poor are quite notable and noble. The articles also noted that Dr. Reddi lived in the hearts of lakhs of people with his selfless services and social work. In essence, the book reflects his multi-talented personality, the tireless sharing and caring attitude and, above all, his utter devotion towards rural reconstruction.

Section - II of the book provides six lyrics (poetry) contributed by both academics and social activists (pp.151-162). The lyrics include ‘Johar, Johar Goturi Narayana Reddi’ by D.Gurrappa Naidu followed by ‘Aatma Bhandhuvuku Atmeya Nivali’ by

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A. Vasundhara, 'Pedala Palita Pennidhi Dr.G.N. Reddi Gariki Guru Dhakshina Swaramalika' by T. Subbanna, 'Prajabandhu Peddayana G.N. Reddi' by K.C. Govindarajulu, PPEDS, Kuppam and 'Veedkolu Edhe O'nesthama' by T.Venkataiah. These reflect the nature and characteristics of Dr.G.N. Reddi, the role played by him and his contributions to the society.

Section - III 'Organisations founded and their accomplishments' contains 11 articles, written or extracted from different sources. These relate to various non-governmental organizations, viz., Indian Rural Reconstruction Movement (IRRM), Grama Seva Samithi (GRASS), which are initiated/launched by Dr. G. N. Reddi and are included in pages 177-214. These articles reveal Dr. Reddi's efforts to serve the different sections of marginalized and downtrodden people from time to time in Kuppam area of Chittoor district.

Section –IV contains about 43 short messages (in English and Telugu), collected from local leaders, activists, and beneficiaries. Some are drawn from the writings of book and are arranged sparingly in the form of Screens/Shorts throughout the book. These screens depict Dr. Reddi's holistic approach to empower the people, his personality, his dedicated social service and developmental principles, four-fold strategy, offering of fellowships to the educated youth to develop interest and positive attitude towards social service and creation of political awareness among the public.

The book also contains a series of Boxes/Frames, arranged sparingly across the pages, which provide information about the adoption of certain definitions (Peasant, Rural reconstruction), advocacy of human reconstruction model, Four-fold strategy, credo/dictum of rural reconstruction and dissemination of information through inspirational quotes, messages, similes, appeals etc.

Further, the book contains a 'Photo Section' that includes the exclusive photos relating to Dr. G.N. Reddi, such as his association with people, family members, awards, contributions, achievements, etc.

The book also contains 12 Appendices dealing with biodata of G.N. Reddi, Citations, Photocopies of published documents and reports, Abstracts, Book reviews of 'Fundamentals of Rural Reconstruction', which was published in 2018 and other valuable information about Dr. G.N. Reddi and his credentials.

In essence, every article/page of the book provides very precious information about Dr. G.N. Reddi and commemorates his services and accomplishments in the

sector of rural reconstruction. Overall, the editor of the book Prof. M.C. Reddeppa Reddy has taken meticulous care in collecting, compiling and editing the book. In short, this book - 'Dr. G.N. Reddi: The Doyen of Rural Reconstruction', is much useful for the people working in the field of rural development/reconstruction, students studying social and developmental issues, and the youth who are interested in bringing changes in the outlook of rural areas.

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The Association co-ordinates activities of various agencies – governmental and voluntary, national and international – engaged in similar pursuits. It organizes conferences and seminars, and undertakes surveys and research projects. It endeavours to update and sharpen the awareness of its members by bringing to them expert views and experiences in adult education from all over the world. In pursuit of the policy, the Association has instituted the Nehru Literacy Award and Tagore Literacy Award for outstanding contribution to the promotion of Adult Education and Women's Literacy in the country, respectively. It has also instituted Dr. Zakir Husain Memorial Lecture, which is delivered every year by an educationist of eminence.

The Association has brought out many publications on themes related to adult education, including Hindi editions of several UNESCO publications. It brings out the Indian Journal of Adult Education, Proudth Shiksha and IAEA Newsletter.

The Association acts as the Indian arm of the International Council for Adult Education, International Literacy Association and the Asian-South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education. Its membership is open to all individuals and institutions who believe in the aims and objectives of the Association.

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Roadmap for Integrating Total Quality Management in the Philosophy and Management Framework of Adult Education in Nigeria

• Kester Osegha Ojokheta¹

Abstract

One of the least discussed topics in Adult Education (AE) or Adult Learning and Education (ALE) is Total Quality Management (TQM) and its integration into its philosophy and management. The paucity of such discussions in ALE prompted the writing of this paper, which began with the discussion of the origin, definition, and basic characteristics of the Total Management System, as well as an overview of adult learning and education. The basic characteristics and principles of TQM and adult learning and education were presented. The paper argued that both TQM and ALE are compatible with each other. Arising from the comparison, the paper discussed the application of Deming's 14 Points TQM implementation framework in adult learning and education. Recommendations on the practical application of TQM in adult learning and education were made. The paper concluded that TQM brings practical tools to the philosophical framework of adult learning and education that empower the learners, facilitate change, aid problem-solving, and value continuous improvement and growth.

Keywords: *Total quality management, philosophy and management framework, adult education, continuous improvement and growth, lifelong learning values.*

Introduction

The underlying desire of any individual or organisation when embarking on a venture, project or programme is quality delivery of such venture, project or programme. Increasingly, quality makes the difference between success and failure. Sallis (2002) submitted that "quality is what makes the difference between things being excellent or run-of-the-mill". The emphasis on quality led to the emergence of total quality management, as a management philosophy, embraced by business organisations, and industries to be globally competitive producers of quality goods

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and services. Thus, total quality management is universally recognised as an effective management philosophy for continuous improvement, customer satisfaction, and organisational excellence (Sohel-Uz-Zaman and Anjalin, 2016). Even though total quality management was developed in the manufacturing sector, it has been found to be compatible and applicable in education in general (Lunenburg, 2010) and adult education in particular (Bierema, 1996). Therefore, this paper focuses on how total quality management can be integrated in the philosophy and management of adult learning education programmes since TQM offers a useful framework in adult learning and education.

Origin, Definition and Basic Characteristics of Total Management System (TQM)

Total quality management was first espoused and advocated by W. Edwards Deming in the late 1950s in the USA, but his ideas were not accepted by USA industry (Walton, 1986). However, Japan was the first country to embrace TQM to recover her economy after World War II (Oakland, 1993). The success of TQM implementation in Japan made this concept popular in many countries across the world. Originally, the concept was developed for manufacturing organisations, which gained popularity, and later, in other service institutions including bank, insurance, non-profit organisations, and healthcare, among others (Sohel-Uz-Zaman and Anjalin, 2016). TQM has also been found relevant to corporations, service organisations, Universities, as well as elementary and secondary schools (Lunenburg, 2010). TQM is now globally recognised as a versatile management tool applicable to any organisational setting.

1. TQM is a planned and systematic approach to ensure quality and continuous improvement.
2. TQM is a holistic management approach that incorporates all organisational activities to satisfy customers' needs and achieve overall organisational objectives.
3. TQM is a method by which management and employees are involved in an ongoing process of enhancing the production of goods and services.
4. TQM is a pragmatic model focusing on service to others.
5. In TQM, the customer is an exclusive issue and customer satisfaction is considered a major source of business or organisational success.
6. TQM leads to continuous improvement in the capabilities of the employees.
7. TQM helps in creating a culture of trust, participation, teamwork, quality-mindedness, enthusiasm for continuous improvement, constant learning and as a result, a working culture that contributes towards a firm's success and existence (Yusuf and Aspinwall, 2000).

8. TQM comprises a management doctrine and organisational practices aim to optimise both human and material resources within an organisation in the most efficient way, to ultimately attain the goals of the organisation.
9. TQM views an organisation as a collection of interrelated processes.
10. In TQM, “the driver of the entire system is the customer” (Ross, 1993).

The various definitions of TQM, as discussed above, provides its basic characteristics which are:

1. Customer satisfaction,
2. Continuous improvement,
3. Integration of people,
4. Functions and resources,
5. Systematic and structured approach,
6. Quality control at every level of the organisation and at every step of the operating process,
7. Development of human and organisational capabilities,
8. Efficient utilisation of resources,
9. People participation, and
10. Creating a quality culture.

Overview of Adult Learning and Education

Adult Education or Adult Learning or Adult Learning and Education (ALE), as UNESCO has appropriately termed it in its various documents, has been myopically misconceived by many as simply providing education to illiterates on how to read, write, and calculate simple numeracy or arithmetic; or a second-chance learning opportunity for non-literate youth and adults to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills and be able to function in their daily life with the skills (Ojokheta, 2020). In this sense, many, including educational policy makers, equate adult education with literacy education. Even the official education policy document of Nigeria recognises it in chapter four of the 6th National Policy on Education (2013) revised edition.

However, these perceptions are not in tandem with the global overview and perception of this field of study.

Some of the most concise perceptions of Adult Education are reproduced below:

1. Adult Education is “a process whereby persons whose major social roles are characteristic of adult status undertake systematic and sustained learning activities

for the purpose of bringing about changes in knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills” (Darkenwald and Merriam, 1982).

2. Adult Education is a field of “practice in which adults engage in systematic and sustained learning activities in order to gain new forms of knowledge, skills, or values” (Merriam and Brockett, 2007).

3. Adult Education is “an important tool to tackle social and economic inequality, reduce poverty, prepare global society for new paradigms of sustainable production and consumption, train skilled labour for competitive economies, create the basis for a culture of peace and conviviality, establish more harmonious relationships between human and natural environments, and develop the potential of all people” (UNESCO, 2009).

4. Adult Education is a fundamental human right “for the achievement of equity and inclusion, for alleviating poverty and for building equitable, tolerant, sustainable, and knowledge-based societies” (UNESCO, 2011).

5. Adult Education is “any form of learning that adults engage in beyond traditional schooling, encompassing basic literacy to personal fulfilment as a lifelong learner” (Spencer, & Lange, 2014).

6. Adult Education has made a long evolutionary journey from being merely a second-chance opportunity for illiterate adults to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skill; to a comprehensive canvas for providing education for all, throughout life, as lifelong and life-wide learning (UNESCO, 2017).

7. The Fourth UNESCO International Conference on Adult Education held in Paris in 1985 perceived Adult Education “as a means to achieve social justice and educational equality while its contribution to economic and social development was considered crucial” (UNESCO, 1985).

8. The Fifth UNESCO International Conference on Adult Education held in Hamburg, Germany in 1997 (popularly called the Hamburg Declaration) defined Adult Education as:

The key to the twenty-first century; it is both a consequence of active citizenship and a condition for full participation in society. It is a powerful concept for fostering sustainable development, for promoting democracy, justice, gender equity, and scientific, social and economic development, and for building a world in which violent conflict is replaced by dialogue and a culture of peace based on justice... (Hamburg Declaration paragraph 2).

The conference also called for “a set amount of time to be devoted to adult education, everywhere and by everyone – one hour a day – one week a year” (UNESCO/UIE, 1997).

9. The last UNESCO International Conference on Adult Education held in Belem, Brazil in 2009 stressed the broadness of the concept of Adult Education as a “significant component of the lifelong learning process, which embraces a learning continuum ranging from formal to non-formal to informal learning” and an “imperative for the achievement of equity and inclusion, for alleviating poverty and for building equitable, tolerant, sustainable and knowledge-based societies” (UNESCO, 2010, 2011; UIL, 2010b). The conference conceptually recognised adult education as very rich and multi-referenced. It conceptualised the field of study as “a significant component of the humanistic perspective of lifelong learning” (UNESCO, 2011; UIL, 2014).

10. UNESCO (2015) provided a comprehensive perception of Adult Education as “a core component of lifelong learning comprising all forms of education and learning that aim to ensure that all adults participate in their societies and the world of work. It denotes the entire body of learning processes: formal, non-formal and informal, whereby those regarded as adults by the society in which they live, develop and enrich their capabilities for living and working, both in their own interests and those of their communities, organizations and societies” (UNESCO/ UIL, 2016).

11. Adult Education constitutes a major building block of a learning society and for the creation of learning communities, cities and regions as they foster a culture of learning throughout life and revitalize learning in families, communities and other learning spaces, and in the workplace (2015 UNESCO Declaration).

12. Adult Education includes education and learning opportunities for active citizenship (variously known as community, popular or liberal education). It empowers people to actively engage with social issues such as poverty, gender, intergenerational solidarity, social mobility, justice, equity, exclusion, violence, unemployment, environmental protection, and climate change. It also helps people to lead a decent life, in terms of health and well-being, culture, spirituality and in all other ways that contribute to personal development and dignity (2015 UNESCO Declaration).

From the various perceptions of adult education presented above, it can clearly be seen that adult education means much more than the misleading and myopic perception usually associated with it by the generality of people. It is a field of study and practice relevant to promoting peace, social development, social justice, individual self-development, advancement and transformation, educational equality, lifelong learning, life-wide learning, and environmental protection and climate change education, among others.

Besides, adult education is considerably recognised and accorded top priority in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development approved by the United Nations in 2015 (United Nations, 2015; 2016) and the Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action (World Education Forum, 2015). Goal 4 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals focuses on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education as well as promoting lifelong learning for all. Out of the 10 targets of Goal 4, five targets were set aside for achieving adult education as shown below:

Goal 4: Target 3 called on all countries to ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational, and tertiary education, including university by 2030.

Goal 4: Target 4 called on all countries to ensure substantial increase in the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship by 2030.

Goal 4: Target 5 called on all countries to eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and children in vulnerable situations by 2030.

Goal 4: Target 6 called on all countries to ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy by 2030.

Goal 4: Target 7 called on all countries to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development by 2030.

These targets were overwhelmingly stressed in the vision of the Education 2030 Agenda which is designed “to transform lives through education by leaving no one behind and by recognising the important role of education as the main driver of development and for achieving the other proposed 16 SDGs” (World Education Forum, 2015).

Adult education is multi-disciplinary and multi-dimensional in nature whose scope is so expansive. UNESCO (2015) captured the aim of adult education as (1) “to equip people with the necessary capabilities to exercise and realize their rights and take control of their destinies; (2) to promote personal and professional development, thereby supporting more active engagement by adults with their societies, communities, and environments; and (3) to foster sustainable and inclusive economic growth and decent work prospects of individuals”.

The objectives of adult education, as specified in UNESCO's 2015 document, are to:

- i. Develop the capacity of individuals for critical thinking and to act with autonomy and a sense of responsibility;
- ii. Reinforce the capacity to deal with and influence economic and workplace advancements;
- iii. Contribute to the creation of a learning society ensuring equal learning opportunities for all to participate in sustainable development processes and community solidarity;
- iv. Promote peaceful coexistence and human rights; (e) foster resilience in both young and older adults; and
- v. Enhance awareness for the protection of the environment.

The document concluded that adult education is a crucial tool in alleviating poverty, improving health and well-being and contributing to sustainable learning societies. The detailed and comprehensive knowledge of adult education reveals that adult education, in its true and correct perception, is very wide in nature. It covers the entire activities of mankind in every phase of human existence. It aims at increasing the range of human experiences which individuals can respond to. It helps individuals to recognise the basic commonalities of human experiences, and aims at holistic development of the human person: persons who are open to change, continued learning, and self-actualisation (Ojokheta, 2020).

Compatibility of TQM with Adult Learning and Education

From the overview of adult learning and education (ALE) discussed above, it is evident that the richness of the field of study requires TQM as a management philosophy and model in the planning, organisation, administration, and implementation of the various programmes associated with its diverse forms and components. Similarly, a closer scrutiny of the basic characteristics emphasised in adult learning and education reveals compatibility with those emphasised in total quality management (TQM). TQM emphasises customer satisfaction, while ALE emphasises learners' satisfaction. Continuous improvement of the organisation is the hallmark of TQM, and continuous improvement of the learning process is the hallmark of ALE. TQM focuses on the integration of people and their participation in the success of the organisation, while ALE focuses on learners' participation for their success in their learning. The pragmatic model of TQM focuses on providing services to others, while that of ALE focuses on providing services to the learners. TQM is premised

on systematic and structured approach in organisational and learning management, respective. Creating a culture of quality is key to TQM, and creating a quality learning culture is equally vital in ALE, among others. Table one shows the comparison of TQM and ALE basic characteristics.

Table1: Comparison of TQM and ALE Basic Characteristics

Basic Characteristics of TQM	Basic Characteristics of ALE
Customer satisfaction	Learners' satisfaction
Continuous improvement of organisation	Continuous improvement of learning process
People's participation for organisation success	Learners' participation for their success in their learning
Quality culture for organisational management	Quality culture for learning management
Service to others	Service to the learners
Systematic and structured approach in organisation management	Systematic and structured approach in learning management
Development of human and organisational capabilities	Development of learners' capabilities to learn and apply such learning to their lives
Efficient utilisation of resources	Efficient utilisation of all resources to improve learning
Teamwork	Group work/collaborative learning
Enhancing organisational growth	Enhancing learner's growth

In a similar manner, Bierema (1996) concluded a comparison between total quality management and adult learning and education principles and concluded that they share some similarities. Bierema's comparison was based on multiple definitions of adult education (Courtney, 1989). Beder (1989) had offered four categorisation of the basic purposes of adult education which were: "(1) to facilitate change in dynamic society, (2) to support and maintain the good social order, (3) to promote productivity, and (4) to enhance personal growth". Adult education has also been defined as the process of development and growth "[The] progressive movement towards the solution of problems and development of abilities to counter similar future problems with greater competencies" (Boyd, Apps & Associates, 1980). It is in this context that Merriam and Caffarella (1991) observed that "most definitions of adult education involve behavioural change and experience". Based on this submission, Bierema, (1996), argued that "the similarities between TQM and adult education lie in the orientation of both toward creating change that results in an improved system".

Bierema (1996) summarised the compatibility of TQM with adult education or adult learning and education as shown in Table 2 on next page:

Table 2: A Comparison of TQM and Adult Learning and Education Principles

TQM Principles	Adult Learning and Education Principles
Continuous improvement in every facet of life and work	Lifelong learning
Customer satisfaction	Student/learners satisfaction
Participative management	Empowerment of the learner
Change	Transformation
Prevention rather than inspection	Inspection through testing ineffective. Prevent mistakes of learner
Breakdown barriers between manager and employee	Breakdown barriers between teacher and learner
Enabling management	Enabling learning
Information is key enabler	Knowledge is power
Know thy customer	Know thy student/learner
Systemic	Systemic
Teamwork	Team learning and team teaching
Coach versus manager	Teacher versus facilitator of learning
PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) Cycle	Learning contract

Source: Bierema, Laura, L. (1996). Total Quality and Adult Education: A Natural Partnership in the Classroom. *Innovative Higher Education*, 20, 3, 145- 159.

Applying Deming's 14 Points TQM Implementation Framework in Adult Learning and Education

The 14 points of W. Edwards Deming, adapted from Winn and Green's (1998) framework, is globally recognised as the framework of implementation of total quality management (Walton, 1986) and all the 14 points are applicable in adult learning and education. They are:

1. Create constancy of purpose- The starting point of implementation of TQM is for every organisation to develop a mission statement defining the organisational purpose or aim which is called *the constancy of purpose*. *In adult learning and education programmes, constancy of purpose can be defined as follows "to develop skills, attitudes, and motivation in adult learners so they become responsible citizens capable of making positive contributions to society"*. It must be stressed that developing a mission statement is not a trivial task; it requires a deep understanding of why adult learning and education programmes exist. Everyone involved in programme implementation must be carried engaged and empowered to contribute and add value at each level of the implementation process.

2. Adopt a new philosophy- Every organisation implementing TQM must insist on a new philosophy based on quality, which should be built on an atmosphere of cooperation among all staff rather than competition. Implementing an adult learning and education programme must emphasise the quality of cooperation among everybody involved. The question everyone involved must always ask is *“What can we, as adult learner’s facilitators, do to ensure every learner has the best opportunity to learn most productively?”*. This what the philosophy of quality preaches.

3. Cease dependence on mass inspection- To build quality, organisations operating TQM must focus more on the processes of producing products or services rather than solely relying on inspections. Emphasising processes allows the organisation to discover defects at various stages of production rather than waiting until the end for mass inspection. The analogy of this in adult learning and education programme is that we need to develop processes of learning among the adult learners, wherein there is less emphasis on testing but more focus on the progress of learning. For example, adult learner facilitators must prioritise formative assessment tests over summative tests. These formative tests must be conducted to ascertain the progress of learning of the adult learners rather than merely for the evaluation of learners’ performance.

4. End the practice of conducting business on cost alone- Organisations operating TQM to end the practice of conducting business on cost alone. This implies that organisations must consider the long-time benefits and values of producing a product or service rather than the cost of producing it alone. The analogy of this in adult learning and education programme is that if a new programme is being planned for implementation, such programme is bound to fail if the long-time benefits and values are not determined or ascertained. The long-time benefits and values of a programme are more important than the cost of planning or mounting it.

5. Constantly improve processes- Organisations operating under TQM must constantly improve their processes. The integration of this principle in adult learning and education programmes means that the processes of educating the adult learners must also undergo constant improvement. One must find whether the learners are more satisfied in their learning experience than before; and similarly, whether the facilitators are more satisfied in their role more than before. If the answer to these questions is no, we must promptly find out why and address the situation immediately. On the other hand, if the answer is yes, we must determine the processes that soled to this outcome. In other words, we must constantly analyse the processes to identify areas for improvement. This approach involves introducing innovations and incremental changes to the process.

6. Institute training- A TQM organisation must ensure that everyone in the organisation knows their job and responsibilities. Capacity development programmes should always be implemented to enhance the technical competence of all staff

members. The analogy of this in adult learning and education programmes is that we should consistently organise development programme for facilitators and other related personnel to enhance their capacity and competence in facilitating learning for adult learners, taking into consideration their unique characteristics during the facilitation process. We must provide training in TQM principles because the more the facilitators are aware of TQM, the more likely they are to apply it consistently during the facilitation process.

7. Institute leadership- Organisations operating under TQM must prioritize leadership over management. Everyone involved in an adult learning and education programme has some form of a leadership role to play. It is essential to strive to be a coach rather than a judge or overseer. A leader in adult learning and education must act as a designer or a creator of a conducive learning environment. They should identify and eliminate barriers to communication and effective learning. Their primary focus should be on ensuring the learners' satisfaction in their learning experience.

8. Drive out fear- In adult learning and education, fear constitutes a significant impediment to the success and learning performance of adult learners. Therefore, a good and efficient facilitator must do everything possible to instil confidence in the adult learners. He or she must work with the learners to make them believe in their ability to learn and achieve success. Facilitators prioritize learners' progress of learning over constant evaluation of the learners. Fear often arises in adult learners when facilitators excessively focus on evaluation mechanisms like tests, quizzes, and exams.

9. Break down barriers- Organisations operating under TQM must strive to break down barriers by promoting cooperation rather than competing among staff. Such organisations must encourage cross-functionality to address problems and process improvements. This principle is also applicable in adult learning and education programmes. A good facilitator must always encourage team-learning, and cooperative learning among adult learners, rather than promoting competitive learning. The best method to achieve this is through group work among the learners. The adult educator must involve all the learners in the decision-making process regarding what they want to learn, how they want to learn it, and how they want the learning to be evaluated.

10. Avoid obsession with goals and slogans- Organisations operating TQM must devise means through which workers can achieve a goal rather than simply telling them to achieve it without providing the necessary resources. In adult learning and education, learners must be provided with all learning materials and resources to make them achieve their learning goal. The provision of learning materials and other resources will positively impact their learning, while the absence of such support will negatively affect their performance.

11. Eliminate numerical quotas- Organisations operating TQM must eliminate numerical quotas because they become crutches of poor supervision. This principle is evident in the assembly line during the production process. If numerical quotas are established for workers, the quality will decrease. This principle also applies to adult learning and education. When implementing an adult learning and education programme, the primary focus must be on maintaining quality throughout the process. Only after ensuring the quality of the programme's implementation should the issue of quantity (i.e., how many people will participate in the programme) be addressed.

12. Remove barriers to pride of workmanship- Organisations operating under TQM must eliminate barriers to pride of workmanship. By involving workers in some of the decision-making processes, they can develop a strong sense of ownership that significantly impacts their attitudes. This also applies to adult learning and education programmes. This principle is also applicable to adult learning and education programmes. Empowering learners through cooperative, collaborative, or group work where they can share ideas and experiences fosters a strong sense of ownership over their learning. Barriers to learning among the learners should be dismantled; they can learn a lot from each other when engaged in group work and cooperative learning.

13. Organisation-wide involvement- For TQM to succeed in an organisation everyone must be involved in the organisational process and be aware of and concerned about their immediate customer. Similarly, in adult learning and education programme, everyone must be included in the process and implementation of the programme. For instance, facilitators who undergo capacity development trainings on new techniques and technologies to use during the facilitation process, are much more likely to suggest improvements based on the processes they have been exposed to.

14. Define management's responsibilities to make it happen- Deming emphasized that management at every level, especially the top level, should fully embrace and adopt TQM philosophy. It is crucial for Management to have a clear understanding of the significance of each of the 14 points in relation to the mission of the organisation. The analogy of this principle to adult educators is that everyone involved in the planning and implementation of an adult learning and education programme must wholeheartedly accept and adopt the TQM philosophy, and principles discussed above.

Practical Application of TQM in Adult Learning and Education: Some Recommendations

Integrating TQM in adult learning and education must be considered a worthy adventure by all scholars and practitioners. The values of quality, innovation, and

continuous improvements of programmes must be the embedded professional philosophy of all scholars and practitioners in adult learning and education. Two key areas in adult learning and education where the values of TQM can be integrated are the curriculum design and facilitation strategies. Therefore, a facilitator using a TQM-compliant facilitation strategy must have a framework discussed below:

1. Write the facilitation philosophy and values- A good facilitator must create a facilitation “vision and value statement” similar to the mission statements written in quality initiatives. In the spirit of continuous improvement, the vision and value statement should be regularly reviewed and enhanced, and it should be shared with the learners/beneficiaries of a programme during the meeting. At the end of the programme, a summative evaluation should be conducted among the learners/beneficiaries to assess their reaction and response to the facilitation philosophy and values.

2. Design the facilitation process and format- Facilitators should design facilitation process and format to foster personal growth and enhance the vision of the learners/beneficiaries. They should allow the learners/beneficiaries to participate both individually and collaboratively (in team work) and create a shared vision for what will be learned during the course. By doing so, learners are given control and flexibility in determining their learning objectives and plans. This aligns with the TQM principle of consensus decision-making.

3. Promote learners’ satisfaction- As continuous improvement and growth hold significance in both TQM and adult learning and education, learners must be given the opportunity to provide feedback periodically. Facilitators must respond promptly to these feedbacks. This feedback process could be facilitated through a folder system, wherein which learners receive a folder from the facilitator to share feedback at the end of every class, and subsequently return the folder to the facilitator for a response. Learners must be actively encouraged to express their expectations for satisfaction in the learning process.

4. Engage in participative and empowered facilitation- The learning should be designed to be interactive, experiential, and participative with very little reliance on traditional lectures. Learners should be given full authority to make decisions affecting every aspect of their learning. Each learning session must adhere to a *P. O. P* (Purpose, Outcomes, and Plan) agenda. Within this framework, each learning outcome should be accompanied by a clear goal and specified activities.

5. Encourage critical reflection from the learners- An atmosphere of trust is fostered when learners feel comfortable sharing their world views and engaging in constructive challenges with one another. This process aids them in mastering the art of dialogue. Learners can also be encouraged to write brief reflective opinions on topics of their choice as discussed in the class. The goal is to guide learners in

uncovering and appreciating their individual voices while nurturing the development of critical thinking skills.

6. Make use of Teamwork- In adult learning and education, learners bring a wealth of experiences and ideas to learning situations, contributing to a collective pool of knowledge from which everyone can learn. Therefore, a facilitator should encourage small teams to collaborate on exercises and reflect on topics covered and discussed in class. Teamwork offers learners the benefits of mutual learning from one another and lessens the dynamic in which learners expect to rely solely on the facilitator for all teaching. It should be noted that teamwork serves as the cornerstone of TQM.

7. Set the ground rules- Establishing ground rules or guidelines for treating team members with respect and dignity is also a core value of TQM value. Ground rules facilitate the involvement of all participants in the learning process. The facilitator must determine the ground rules explain them and share them with the learners during the initial meeting of the learning exercise. Subsequently, the class should collaboratively establish its own set of rules through consensus. Generally, ground rules include respecting individuals and ideas, fostering mutual support, and creating an environment where learners can take risks, learn, and grow.

8. Promote continuous improvement/lifelong learning- Given the significance of continuous improvement and growth in both TQM and adult learning and education, facilitators must develop diverse methods of facilitation that allow learners to express their views and opinions on any aspect of the learning process. Additionally facilitators must cultivate the practice of providing feedback in the subsequent class concerning all materials submitted by the learners.

Conclusion

The various segments of discussion in this paper demonstrate that TQM is a powerful tool suitable for adoption in adult learning and education, despite its initial development with manufacturing processes in mind. In other words, merging TQM with principles of adult learning and education can create a powerful partnership in any learning endeavour. TQM introduces practical tools into the philosophical framework of adult learning and education, empowering learners, facilitating change, aiding in problem-solving, and valuing continuous improvement and growth. The key elements of TQM that adult educators and practitioners must prioritize for the successful implementation of adult learning and education programmes include (1) garnering support of everyone involved in the planning and implementation of the programme, thereby promoting a teamwork attitude; (2) identifying the beneficiaries, (3) maintaining a steadfast focus on refining the process; and (4) employing Deming's 14 Points, as discussed earlier, as a guiding framework and checklist throughout the implementation of any adult learning and education programme.

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Situating the Social: Habermas and the Emancipatory Possibilities of Adult Education

• Akshiptika Rattan¹

Abstract

The paper attempts to establish crucial linkages between adult learning and the emancipatory possibilities of adult education. It relies upon the fundamental ideas offered by critical sociological theory, building upon the works of Habermas and the theory of communicative action. Throughout the discussion of critical and transformative learning concepts, the paper asserts the significance of acknowledging the social and cultural contexts of the adult learners within the learning process. Adult educators must suspend their preconceived assumptions and actively engage towards sustaining a more meaningful, dialogical, and transparent environment, considering the situated realities and requirements of the learners. Inculcating sociological sensibilities is indispensable to foster empowering and collaborative practices, build communities of practice, promote social change, and explore alternative pathways for learning and harmonious co-existence.

Keywords: *Adult learning, social context, emancipation, critical theory, social change, transformative learning, situated realities, sociological imagination, critical consciousness, life-world, discourse.*

Introduction

Adult education and lifelong learning intrinsically convey a simple but striking message: learning is essentially a lifelong endeavor. It is not just a continuous process but also requires structures and policies that support and encourage its realization, particularly among individuals and groups who have been systematically disadvantaged and marginalized. Two important works, 'The Three Dimensions of Learning' and 'Adult Education and Adult Learning' (Illeris 2002, 2004), delve into notion that learning primarily includes two intertwined yet distinct processes: the external and

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objective interaction between learner and the social, macro and material environment, and the internal and subjective-psychological process involving elaboration and acquisition. In the words of Jarvis, lifelong learning is defined as:

“The combination of processes throughout a lifetime whereby the whole person – body (genetic, physical, and biological) and mind (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs, and senses) – experiences social situations, the perceived content of which is then transformed cognitively, emotively, or practically (through any combination) and integrated into the person’s biography resulting in a continually changing (or more experienced) person” (2007: 1).

The point of crucial distinction of adult learning is that it is predominantly selective and self-directed, where adults make concrete and voluntary choices about what they want to learn and define the meaningfulness of the learning process in terms of their life-situations, social contexts, and the resources they already possess in their learning (Cranton, 2011). Although education of children and adults, both constitute educational enterprises, there are pivotal differences between the two in terms of educational genres, distinction of priorities, modes of provision, learning styles and institutional forms. The concept of ‘andragogy,’ a set of assumptions, principles and practices differentiates between adult learning and children’s learning and pedagogy (Forrest & Peterson, 2006). Its focal point is more on the characteristics of adult learners rather than the process of learning itself. Far from being reduced to a technique, it is largely a philosophy that serves as a guidebook for the teacher. According to Knowles who first introduced the term, adult learners possess the following main characteristics:

1. As maturity levels increase, an individual’s self-concept shifts from a dependent personality structure to becoming a more self-directing individual.
2. Adult individuals possess a rich reservoir of life-experiences that serve as a fecund resource of learning.
3. An adult learner’s willingness and motivation to learn are linked to the developmental tasks associated with their social role.
4. For adult learners, the concept and perspective of time different. They prioritize problem-solving and the immediate utility and application of knowledge.
5. The primary and overwhelming motivation is internal, rather than being externally driven.
6. Adult learners need transparency and clarity upon why they need to learn something (1980: 44-45).

The guidance, motivation, or compulsion, in the case of adult learning shall always be contextualized in relation to their own situated realities, embedded within their life-experiences and perspectives. Thus, adult education is perceived as an engagement with the community, which must consider both the social nature of learning and the complex and multi-dimensional social processes that are involved in it (Tuckett, 2015). Adult learning cannot be reduced to a simple acquisition of knowledge and skills, nor it can rely on strait-jacketed, pre-established and traditional pedagogical practices. The relevance of an education programme for adults, must bear upon their social and pragmatic realities and purposes and must be rationalized in a way that persuades and assures them of its meaning and utility. A simple and descriptive typology identifies four major traditions in adult learning – training and efficiency in learning, self-directed learning and the andragogy school, learner-centered education and humanistic education, and the critical pedagogy and social action (Romiszowski, 2011: 60). It is useful to design educational programmes for adult learners with a synthesis of philosophical and epistemological orientations of both ‘liberal adult education’ and ‘vocational adult education’ where these are not seen as mutually exclusive but complement one another (Forrest & Peterson, 2006: 116). The larger and final objective, therefore, is empowerment, to develop humans who are capable of adaptation, critical and independent thinking and decision-making, self-sufficiency, and free inquiry (Eylon & Herman, 1999).

In prevalent terms, adult education can be defined as “the continuing and resumption of formal, non-formal, and/or informal learning with general or vocational content after completion of initial training” (Kleinert & Matthes, 2010). The underlying value in adult learning and education is granting the individual his/her complete personhood along with both independence and freedom to make choices and decisive responsibility. Adults, it must be remembered, seek meaning – both every-day and transcendent, assess reasons, and engage in reflective discourse. Adult education, therefore, must be an empowering process and ensure that the individual is not stripped of his/her identity as an adult (Stanistreet, 2019:856). This, however, presupposes that the education programmes designed for adults must be flexible in nature. With a clear and broad framework in hand, these should not be fully pre-determined, definite, structured, or regimented; they must have an emergent property, and the adult educator must be conscious and sensitized towards providing space and autonomy to the adult learners. However, it is vital to note here that there are ongoing contestations regarding the assumptions that the adult learner is autonomous and in control of his or her learning.

Thus, for enhancing positive engagement of the participants, the fundamental challenge for adult education remains ensuring that the learning process and outcomes

are subjectively meaningful and fulfilling for the adults, while also meeting the objective criteria and standards. Learner identity is socially constituted and learning discourses themselves can reproduce power relations and perpetuate inequality. Adult educators, therefore, must ensure that the participants receive complete information and experience freedom from coercion or any sort of distortion. At the same time, the adult learners must be encouraged to weigh evidence, assess arguments and instill the ability to critically reflect upon assumptions. Adult education envisages the facilitator-learner relationship as being transparent and empathetic, with the instructor aiding in fostering the learner's ability to be autonomous and self-directed, and ultimately, self-learned (Belanger, 2011: 38). Thus, Adult educators, have an extremely responsible role to play at a societal level. It is through them that adult learning communities engaging in collaborative discourse can be created and sustained, where systemic distortions and alienation can be minimized.

Adult Learning and Emancipation: Building on Critical Theory and Ideas of Habermas

Critical theory and the ideas of Habermas in particular, offer rich opportunities and conceptual frameworks to discuss some of the fundamental issues in adult education. Building itself as a systematic alternative to the positivistic tradition in social sciences, critical theory emerged out of the work of the Frankfurt School. Habermas has exerted a wide-ranging and phenomenal influence in fields of sociology, political science, philosophy, law, and other areas. Habermas (1972) categorizes three generic cognitive areas in which human interest generates knowledge, referred to as 'knowledge constitutive' - empirical, historical-hermeneutic, and emancipatory.

In his quest of exploring the emancipatory possibilities of a reasonable and well-grounded critical theory, Habermas extends, synthesizes, and reconstructs the ideas of Durkheim, Marx, and Weber, as well as Parsons and Mead, alongside Horkheimer and Adorno. This endeavor aids him in his attempt to understand change and conflict and build his overarching sociological theory of communication action. Not limiting himself to conflicts based on social class, Habermas (1984) analyses new forms of conflicts that have emerged, particularly in the twentieth century. With the concern of rescuing reason and the unfinished project of modernity from the clutches of postmodern theory and formulating a new critical approach for analyzing society, Habermas develops an important distinction between instrumental and communicative rationality. Instrumental rationality, a product of capitalism and modern nation-state, pertains to adjusting the means to the end.

Communicative rationality, on the other hand, emerges from consensual human interaction, mutual understanding, social coordination, and free exchange of ideas. Habermas visualizes 'strategic action' as 'primarily oriented to achieving an end' and communicative action as, 'oriented to reaching an understanding' and 'a process of reaching agreement among speaking and acting subjects' (Fuchs, 2020:355). Here, action and pursuit of goals is based on a shared understanding that the goals are inherently meaningful and reasonable. His work recognized the irreconcilable tension between the micro-theory of rationality founded on communicative action and macro-theory of the structural integration of modern societies based on the mechanisms of the market. Habermas adopts a two-level concept of society, rejecting reductionist and unidimensional interpretations and allowing for both action-theoretic and a systems-theoretic analysis of the process of rationalization. Habermas attempts to overcome the dominance of one-sided narrative of rationalization that has been ushered by capitalism via the state and market transgressing their own functional boundaries and 'colonizing' the life-world. (Habermas, 1984: 140). Habermas sees societies as both systems and life-worlds and uses the term 'lifeworld' to denote the inter-subjective world, background consensus of everyday life, the huge stock of taken-for-granted assumptions and definitions that provide coherence, consistency, and stability in everyday lives. The decoupling of the lifeworld and the system threatens to pathologize the system (Gouthro, 2006:11).

The ideas of Habermas offer an epistemological foundation that grounds the optimal conditions for adult learning and education. It is important to underline that in communicative learning, validation is arrived at not just in terms of the accuracy of what is being communicated but also in the intent, qualifications, truthfulness, and authenticity of the one communicating (Habermas, 1984). Thus, the effort is to inculcate an empathetic understanding of the frame of reference of others and construct a common ground of consensus, while acknowledging and understanding the assumptions underlying disagreements. The conclusions drawn from this discourse of understanding are essentially tentative, with new arguments and paradigms continuously emerging and being incorporated. This perspective calls on educators to nurture a diversity of ideas, foster the sphere of free and non-coercive communication and debates, and provide learners with equal opportunities for critical reflection (Gouthro, 2006). Adult learning and education, hence, shifts from being ahistorical, universal, and decontextualized towards a more critical-dialectical discourse of building sociological sensibilities and addressing context related questions that include structural factors like gender, class, race, age, ideology (Tuckett, 2015; Alhadeff-Jones, 2020).

Essentially, adult learning and education requires the practice of ‘sociological imagination’ that analyzes the interplay between individual and society; agency and structure; history and biography; micro and macro, and the dialectical and reciprocal relationship between each of them. It needs sociological sensibilities that consider the complex intersections between – social structure, power, social and personal identity, subjectivity, situated experiences, meaning and practices (Mills, 2000). Adulthood is increasingly characterized by the de-standardization of the life-course, heterogenous patterns that break the routinized constructions of everyday life, and the uncertainty and frequency of organizational and technological changes that destabilize the pre-fixed notions of daily life (Alhadeff-Jones, 2020: 117).

Habermas’ ideas on the potential of civil society to transform itself into an instrument for de-colonizing the life world have offered a spectrum for critiquing the dominance of instrumental learning in adult education. They deconstruct the ways in which strategic action rooted in instrumental and technical rationality is antagonistic to the emancipatory interests of the common people. According to Habermas, civil society is:

Composed of more or less spontaneously emergent associations, organizations and movements that are attuned to how societal problems resonate in the private public sphere, they distill and transmit such reactions in an amplified form to the public (1984: 367).

In the context of adult education and the emphasis by Habermas on civil society, voluntary organizations play a pre-eminent role in furthering the interests of the people who have been largely neglected and pushed to the periphery. The reclamation of the public sphere and the sustenance of a culture of dialogue, debate and accountability thus become tasks of critical and humanistic adult education. The assertion of Denis Hayes (2003) becomes relevant here as he writes that Habermas’s theory of communicative action is responsible for a ‘therapeutic turn’ in pedagogy. Grounded in the emancipatory philosophy, adult education carries within itself the capacity to foster free spaces where citizens can debate and engage in an environment of non-coercion, escaping systemic pressures and compulsions. It is significant to assert here that the condition of free and rational discourse is also supportive for effective adult learning.

Critical and Transformative Learning: Towards Sociological Sensibilities

Critical pedagogy takes within its ambit the issues relating to power, oppression, and emancipation. It deals with interrogating the power relations that are embedded

in the social structures. It unravels the underlying and latent motivations and agendas geared towards the maintenance of the status-quo and established hierarchies. According to Burbules and Burk (1999: 55), 'From the perspective of critical thinking, critical pedagogy crosses the threshold between teaching critically and indoctrinating.' Edmund O'Sullivan (2002) proposes what is termed 'integral transformative learning' which encompasses environmental, spiritual, and self-related concerns, in addition to the social and political concerns of critical pedagogy. The essence of the concept, according to O'Sullivan, is encapsulated in the following words:

Transformative learning involves experiencing a deep structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feeling, and action. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and permanently alters our being in the world. Such a shift involves understanding of self and our self-locations; our relationship with other humans and the natural world; our understanding of the power relations in interlocking structures of class, race, and gender; our body awareness, our visions of alternative approaches to living; and our sense of the possibilities for social justice, peace, and personal joy (2002: 11).

Transformative learning nurtures and shapes people; 'they are different afterwards, in ways both they and others can recognize' (Clark, 1993:47). It delineates the way individuals interpret, construct, validate and reappraise their experiences. It acknowledges the socio-cultural context and explores the multiple ways in which it influences our own values, experiences, and meanings. Adult education thus has the potential, not just to identify but also to disrupt old boundaries and imagine new configurations with the possibilities of critical engagement and learning. It is within these very spaces that the potential exists to convert themselves into sites of critical pedagogy, transformative learning, and emancipation. According to Mezirow:

Transformative learning refers to the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discerning, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective, enabling them to generate beliefs and opinions that will prove truer or justified to guide action (2000: 7-8).

Transformative learning is more oriented towards the cognitive process of meaning-generation. It is seen as an important tool to address issues of oppression, social change, and personal empowerment. It holds the possibilities of renewed and revised understanding towards interpreting life-experiences, re-examining and changing established and normative frameworks and constructing critical outlooks –

what Mezirow (2000) terms a ‘disorienting dilemma’. The social emancipatory approach defines transformation as the development of critical consciousness, ‘the process through which men not as recipients, but as knowing subjects, achieve a deepening awareness of both the socio-cultural reality that shapes their lives and their capacity to transform that reality’ (Freire, 1976:27).

Thus, the idea of transformative learning strongly leans on the idea of communicative rationality (Habermas, 1984), critical consciousness and praxis, constituting a process that continually involves action, critical reflection, and dialogue (Brookfield, 1991). Mezirow (2000), borrowing from Habermas, identifies the process of transformative learning as incorporating reaching consensus through collaborative discourse, where validity claims and the validity of speech actions can be interrogated, and disagreements over truth claims are resolved through argumentation and debate. In the context of adult education, it needs to be pointed out that the work of Habermas is a powerful resource in the area of adult learning as it concerned with the ‘learning processes involved in the highest forms of learning, that is, the self-reflective discourses of collective learning. His multidimensional notion of ‘communicative competence’ serves to identify the competencies of the social subjects required to further the processes of social rationalization, especially in relation to democratization’ (Morrow and Torres, 2002: 120).

Conclusion

Theorists and researchers of adult education concur that in order to pursue the above goals, adult learning must indispensably involve two dimensions – social reproduction (the process of enculturation) and social-revolutionary learning (deconstruction and critique of the system and structures). Along with this, the constant threat of hegemonic ideologies and the groups whose interests lie in the maintenance of the status-quo, reverse and neo-colonization, must neither be ignored nor underestimated. In the words of Mezirow (1995: 57), ‘The social goal toward which adult education strives is one in which all members of society may engage freely and fully in rational discourse and action without this process being subverted by the system.’

A critical point, underlined by Habermas (1989) himself, is that civil society is frequently the location of sexism, casteism, elitism, racism, etc., and therefore must not be idealized as a utopia. Hence, it is always important to acknowledge its possibility of turning into a regressive space of prejudices and non-inclusion (Gouthro, 2006). The field of adult education, particularly the and adult educators, therefore, need to

constantly engage themselves in its renewal for the sustenance and realization of the values and philosophy of empowerment and emancipation. Stephen Brookfield in his classical work asserts:

For something to count as an example of critical learning, critical analysis or critical reflection, I believe that the persons concerned must engage in some sort of power analysis of the situation or context in which learning is happening. They must also try to identify assumptions they hold dear that are actually destroying their sense of well-being and serving the interests of others; that is, hegemonic assumptions (1991: 126).

Like any other field of study, adult learning and education, for its continuous evolution must necessarily reflect upon itself, engaging in rigorous self-critique at multiple levels - revisiting its disciplinary orientations, processes of knowledge production and dissemination, and institutionalization and policies. Adult-education and transformative learning must take into account the ways in which sociological factors and social contexts direct and determine the process of learning. Adult learners do not exist in a vacuum, nor are they frozen in space and time. They exist and interact within socio-cultural spaces and life worlds. Hence, it is pertinent to identify and analyze their situated realities, biographical and historical contexts and examine the continuous interplay between the micro and macro factors. Critical social science, particularly sociology, illuminates and locates learning within the social context of learners, and comprehending the ways in which it is intrinsically embedded in the processes and outcomes of learning. Adult education, as a field of inquiry, must be alert to the balance between its institutional and non-institutional logic, not allowing itself to disengage from the life worlds of adult learners (Milana, Rasmussen & Holford, 2016:535). There needs to be a constructive engagement between critical theory and the field of adult education for community-wide engagement and fostering the emancipatory of and collaborative practices.

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Happiness

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Abstract

Human beings are inherently social by birth, and the ever changing dynamics of the society have both positive and negative impacts on them. In this dynamically changing society, alongside the basic necessities of food, cloth and shelter, happiness has emerged as a fundamental human need. Some argue that happiness is influenced by external factors like society, relationships with family and friends, circumstances etc., while others argue that one must cultivate their own happiness, as it is primarily shaped by internal factors like inner peace and a sense of purpose in life. Happiness is now regarded as a multi-dimensional aspect and realizing its importance, many countries have established 'Ministry of Happiness'. In India, Delhi and Madhya Pradesh have taken the lead in planning for the promotion of happiness among citizens. In the light of all this, the aim of the present study is to produce a summary of studies on happiness through a systematic review of relevant literature. The researchers made an attempt to explore the concept of happiness, its importance, predictors, and various dimensions. The study also offers an overview of the "purpose of happiness studies" and the "research methodologies adopted in happiness studies". The study recommends that there is a strong need of studies for exploring the multi-dimensional aspects of happiness and the development of benchmarks and tools for measuring it. As happiness is a multi-dimensional concept, its integration into the curriculum should also be approached thoughtfully.

Keywords: *Happiness, factors of happiness, predictors of happiness, dimensions of happiness.*

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Introduction

Happiness serves as the “secret motive” underlying all the activities that people do and are willing to endure and it is the central concept in the definition of good life (Kammann et al., 1984). Happiness is now being explored by many disciplines like Economics, Psychology, Philosophy, etc., and has different philosophical, psychological, political, economic, cultural, religious, and health-related definitions/views which are undergoing revival continuously (Bremner, 2011). The psychological notion of happiness is undergoing a revival, shifting from a behavioristic approach towards a focus on positive human functioning. The shift has led to a growing trend towards studying wellbeing, happiness and other aspects of positive psychology. The importance of happiness is also being realized by many countries like Bhutan, Venezuela, and UAE who have already established Ministries of happiness. In India, the state of Madhya Pradesh has become the first to have a Happiness Department, with the objective of setting up “Anand Basti” in every district of the state. The Delhi Government has brought the concept of “Happiness” into school curricula through the introduction of the “Happiness Curriculum” in schools (SCERT, 2019). Also, the COVID-19 pandemic has made people realize the need for and importance of happiness. People have started exploring ways to improve their levels of contentment through various aspects of their lives.

Purpose of the study

The growing need for and importance of happiness has motivated the researchers to study more in-depth about it. Hence, the aim of the present study is to produce a summary on the concept of “happiness” as presented in various literatures. By analyzing the literature, the present study attempts to (i) explore the concept of happiness, (ii) study the importance, dimensions, and predictors of happiness, (iii) examine the purpose of happiness studies, (iv) review the research methodology adopted in happiness studies, and (v) explore the recommendation for further studies in happiness.

Methodology of the study

The researchers systematically reviewed the literature on happiness collected from various online sources like Shodhganga, Research Gate, Academic edu, Jstor, Google scholar, Sage, Elsevier, Taylor and Francis, and other e-journals. Keywords like happiness, factors of happiness, dimension of happiness, predictors of happiness, etc., were used to collect the literature on happiness. Only literature which would facilitate in meeting the purpose of the present study were considered for inclusion.

Concept of Happiness

Happiness is a strong indicator of quality life. It is not just a psychological trait and a temporary feeling; rather, it is the overall well-being of a person's life. It means something more specific, internal, and subjective (Bremner, 2011). Thus, rather than just being a state of mind, happiness indicates having a positive orientation towards a fortunate life situation (Griffin, 1979; Bremner, 2011). Although the word 'happy' may be used with many meanings in common language, its most important meaning philosophically is a complete and lasting sense of satisfaction with life as a whole (Tatarkiewicz, 1976, as cited in Kammann et al., 1984). Thus, philosophers consider happiness as a value or an approach to look at life (Eudiamonic).

Agarwal (2013) claimed that "Happiness is a state when an individual feels satisfied by how their life is going, has a positive emotional state, is able to maintain warm healthy interpersonal relationships, and has a positive orientation towards life". Yacobi (2015) pointed out that Happiness is linked to a quality life, which is often associated with well-being or satisfaction with life. James (2012) and Bhatpahari (2020) claim that "Happiness lies deep within us, in the very core of our being. Happiness does not exist in any external object, but only in us". Kansal & Paliwal (2012) assert that "Inner Happiness is a product of inner peace and to achieve inner happiness one is required to take care of their inner self and soul".

Psychologists on the other hand consider happiness as a state of mind which depends on aspects like life satisfaction, pleasure, positive emotional conditions, etc. The main accounts of happiness in this sense are hedonism, the life satisfaction theory, and the emotional state theory (Haybron, 2011). Hedonists identify happiness with the individual's balance of pleasurable experiences over unpleasant ones. Theories of life satisfaction define happiness as possessing a favorable attitude toward one's life, while emotional state theorists identify happiness with an agent's emotional condition as a whole. Thus, when attempting to study happiness, it should be understood as something beneficial, good for a person, enhancing one's well-being, and in relation to an individual's sentiments about life based on their own standards (Hedonic approach).

The hybrid theories on happiness examine happiness from various viewpoints. Argyle, Martin and Crossland, 1989 (as cited in Parmar and Vyas, 2018); Haybron, 2011; and Koydemir et al., 2013 look at happiness in an inclusive way as a sense of wellbeing and also as a state of mind. Thus, according to hybrid theories all the components of subjective wellbeing are included in "happiness". According to

Banavathy and Choudry (2013), happiness can be categorised into three kinds, i.e., Sensual/Material happiness (Visyananda), which is similar to hedonistic happiness; Aesthetic happiness (Kavyanada) equated to eudaimonic happiness/psychological wellbeing; and Existential/transcendental happiness (Brahmananda) related with self-realization. Salavera et al. (2017); Shrivastava et al. (2020); and Tabbodi et al. (2015) also adopted a hybrid approach and defined happiness as composed of multiple dimensions of cognitive and non-cognitive (emotional) aspects.

The cognitive component is related to life satisfaction, and the emotional component is related to pleasant and unpleasant emotions as well as unconscious and motivational processes through which a person judges the quality of life. Badri et al. (2018) and Hashim and Zaharim (2020) defined happiness as a feeling which occurs when an individual experiences more positive emotions, fewer negative emotions, and greater life satisfaction. Marathe (2021) and Joshanloo (2013) took one step forward and defined happiness from both the Indian and Western perspectives. According to the Indian perspective happiness is obtained by doing good to others and finding peace. According to the Western perspective on happiness, there are two kinds of happiness: hedonic and eudemonia. Hedonic happiness is related to immediate pleasure, while eudemonia is related to living a virtuous life and a sense of fulfillment of the purpose of life.

Moyano-Diaz (2016), through a phenomenography study, concluded that happiness can be described as a 'state' (of being), which means a sensation or feeling, a mood or a sense of balance. It indicates having good physical and mental health, feeling good in both work and leisure time, having a healthy family in a harmonious relationship, or having a well-paid job. Further, happiness is also accepted as an achievement that is derived from achieving goals, and while happiness as 'wellbeing' denotes a variety of statuses that depend on economic, physical, psychological, and social conditions.

Pillania (2020) in "India Happiness Report" claimed that both material and non-material conditions contribute to happiness, and to achieve happiness, an individual needs wealth, knowledge, and power. Baltaci (2020) defined that happiness is a judgment of a person about their life which includes two components, i.e., cognitive and affective. The happiness curriculum launched by the Delhi Government also emphasizes the promotion of sustainable happiness rather than focusing on one shot or temporary happiness (SCERT, 2019). Thus, it can be said that the trend in studying/ exploring happiness is moving towards the hybrid theories. Happiness is being accepted as a multi-dimensional perspective and there is no fixed and permanent definition of it.

Importance of happiness

Happiness is the central concept in the definition of the good life (Kammann et al., 1984). It is also used synonymously with subjective well-being and has a positive effect on the mental health status of a person (Fowler & Christakis, 2008, as cited in Heizomi et al., 2015). It enhances the quality of life, academic achievement, decision-making style, and positive outcomes in life (Tabbodi et al. 2015; Yildiz & Eldelekloglu, 2021). A significant and positive relation exists between happiness and spiritual intelligence (SI) (Tankamani & Shahidi, 2016; Awasthi, 2018). There is also a significant focal correlation between SI, happiness, and the quality of life (Ansari, 2015). Happiness is one of the strong indicators of well-being and reflects the self-esteem, sense of control, and resilience capacity of an individual (Li et al., 2001). Llenares et al. (2020) claim that there exists a significant correlations between gratitude and happiness.

According to Baltaci (2020), there is a strong negative relationship between students' happiness level and their problematic internet usage and smartphone addiction. Bhatpahari (2020) explored that there is a significant positive correlation between happiness and intrapersonal skills such as independence, emotional self-awareness, self-actualization, and assertiveness. Happiness has a positive correlation with parental acceptance, parental concentration, positive stability, and self-efficacy (Gautam, 2019). Goksoy (2017), using phenomenological research, revealed that social relationships, participation in school activities, and high academic achievement made students happy, while scolding and indifference made them unhappy. Bahiraeri et al. (2012) found that there is a significant correlation between happiness and various dimensions of personality. Moltafet et al. (2010) stated that a significant relationship exists among happiness, extraversion, and intrinsic religious orientation.

Predictors of Happiness

From the literature reviewed, it is clear that happiness is a multi-dimensional concept, and many external and internal aspects act as predictors of happiness. Some of the predictors of happiness include aspects like intolerance to uncertainty, cognitive flexibility (Yildiz & Eldelekloglu, 2021); problematic internet usage and smartphone addiction (Baltaci, 2020); creativity and spiritual intelligence (Tamannaeifar & Panah, 2019); personal standard perfectionism, emotional intelligence (Abdollahi et al., 2019); hardiness and perceived stress (Abdollahi et al., 2014); personality traits like extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness, feelings and affects, sensationism, judgments (Bahiraeri et al., 2012); and extraversion and intrinsic religious orientation (Moltafet et al., 2010).

Further, happiness is also a predictor of psychological well-being (Ghasempour et al. (2013) and the academic achievement of students (Salehi et al. (2014). Llenares et al. (2020) claim that happiness and gratitude are significant predictors of resilience among college students.

Dimensions of Happiness

According to Haybron (2011), measuring happiness in principle may be impossible because it involves multiple dimensions that cannot be precisely quantified or summed together. However, it is still feasible to develop approximate measures of happiness or at least its various dimensions. The literature reviewed reflects that happiness is assessed using a broad range of indicators such as wellbeing, hedonic state, emotional state, personal growth, relatedness, autonomy, competence, life orientation, etc. Marathe (2021) studied happiness from four dimensions: feeling responsible, healthy relationships, supportive approach, and positivity. The most commonly used Oxford Happiness Scale (OHS) (Hills & Arygle, 2002) studies happiness measured across seven subscales, viz., “self-efficacy, hope, life satisfaction, psychological fitness, being on a good mood, self-fancy, and aesthetic feeling”. Shrivastava et al. (2020) revealed that factors like education, sociability, health, entertainment, and sensation seeking were affecting the happiness of students. Agarwal (2013) studied happiness across four dimensions: Satisfaction, Positive Orientation, Healthy Interpersonal Relationships and Emotional State.

Thus, there is no definitive list of the main dimensions/factors of happiness. However, both materialistic and non-materialistic aspects like employment, good governance, trust, helping others, supportive relationships, etc., are considered chief correlates of happiness (Haybron, 2011). Arora (2020) studied that the happiness level of academicians in an organization depends on factors, namely, research activities, working environment, fringe benefits, personal growth, job security, salary, work-life balance, and involvement in social endeavors.

Studies on happiness were also carried out at the macro level. Happiness of individuals or the country as a whole was measured using various dimensions like work and related issues (earnings and growth); relationships (family and friends); health (physical and mental health); philanthropy including social concerns; and religious or/and spiritual orientation (Pillania, 2020). Helliwell et al. (2020) revealed the ranking of countries' happiness based on six factors of life evaluations: GDP per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, freedom to make life choices, generosity, corruption, and measures of positive affect like experiencing enjoyment, laughing

and negative affect such as anger, sadness, and worry. Avsec et al. (2015) measured the happiness of people in Australia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Mexico, New Zealand, the UK, and the USA people through three scales: psychological wellbeing scale, depression scale, life satisfaction scale and a questionnaire on happiness. The happiness curriculum developed for Delhi schools is based on the happiness triad: pleasure through our senses (momentary happiness), feeling in relationships (deeper happiness), and learning and awareness (sustainable happiness) (SCERT, 2019).

The above literature shows that, happiness is not a uni-dimensional quality rather, it is influenced by various philosophical, psychological, sociological, technological, and economical aspects and the variables with which it relates are significantly infinite.

Purpose of Happiness studies

By now it is evident that happiness is a multi-dimensional trait, and that there is no single definition which can be used to measure it. Thus, happiness is being explored from various objectives in mind. Moyano-Diaz (2016), Pillania (2020), Kansal and Paliwal (2012) and Agarwal (2013) conducted studies to understand the concept of happiness. These studies made an in-depth attempt to answer many questions related to concept of happiness by exploring it in through quantitative or qualitative researches. Researchers also carried out studies to explore the factors of happiness (Shrivastava et al., 2020; Mertoglu, 2020). Goksoy (2017) conducted a study to know what makes school students happy and unhappy. Marathe (2021) revealed four dimensions of happiness i.e., feeling responsible, healthy relationship, supportive approach, and positivity.

To study the influence of sociological, demographic, cyber, and psychological factors was the objective of many studies carried out in the area of happiness. The influence of various factors like gender, ethnicity, religion, household income of parents, education level of parents, academic performance, age, residential area, home, school, every day events, problematic internet usage, smartphone addiction, family relationship, spiritual intelligence, creativity, attributional style on happiness with regard to various target groups like adolescents, students, etc., were carried out by Baltaci (2020); Hashim & Zaharihm (2020); Gautam (2019); Badri et al. (2018); Parmar & Vyas (2018); and Kirmani (2016). Kurniati and Atikasari (2019) measured the happiness level of students in higher education.

Studies were also carried out to explore the correlation of happiness with many other variables. Relationship of happiness with humor styles (Yaprak et al., 2018)

and with stress (Abdollahi et al., 2014) were also explored. Salavera et al. (2017) explored the relation between the level of subjective happiness and coping strategies of secondary education students. Tabbodi et al. (2015); and Salehi et al. (2014) studied the relationship between happiness and academic achievement. Heizomi et al. (2015) conducted a study on “Happiness and its relation to psychological well-being of adolescents”. Salehi et al. (2014); Koydemir et al. (2013); Bahiraeri et al. (2012); and Francis et al. (2010) studied relationship and impact of personality on happiness. Relationship of happiness with various aspects of personality like religious orientation (Moltafet et al., 2010), decision making styles, intolerance to uncertainty, cognitive flexibility (Yildiz & Eldelekloglu, 2021), gratitude (Llenares et al., 2020), intrapersonal skills (Bhatpahari, 2020), and perfectionism (Abdollahi et al., 2019) were also explored.

Studies to explore the role/influence or correlation of spiritual intelligence with happiness and vice versa were carried out by (Vafaeeyan et al., 2015; Ansari, 2015; Tankamani & Shahidi, 2016; Awasthi, 2018; Choudhari & Singh, 2019; and Aliabadi et al., 2019).

It is evident from the above literature that studies on happiness are growing, and many factors act as predictors of happiness while also influencing it. It is also clear from the studies that happiness is related to many sociological, demographic, cyber, and psychological factors, serving as a predictor for many other variables.

Research Methodology adopted in happiness studies

Anyone working on “Happiness” is well aware of the linguistic difficulties surrounding the use of ‘happiness’, and it is for this reason, that the researchers tend to use technical/operationalized terminology in their work (Haybron, 2000). Majority of the studies reviewed used survey method to explore happiness, and OHS (Hills & Argyle, 2002) was the most used tool (Yildiz & Eldelekloglu, 2021; Baltaci, 2020; Tabbodi et al., 2015; Abdollahi et al., 2019; Parmar & Vyas, 2018; and Bahiraeri et al., 2012). Hashim and Zaharim (2020) used Malay version of OHS to study the role of socio demographic factors in happiness while, Heizomi et al. (2015) used its Persian version to study the relationship between happiness and psychological wellbeing. Llenares et al. (2020) used the Happiness scale developed by Fordyce (1988).

Salavera et al. (2017) used pre-developed Subjective Happiness Scale of Lyubomirsky & Lepper (1999) to measure the level of subjective happiness.

Bhatpahari (2020) used the Happiness scale developed by Sethi & Ajwani (2000) to measure the level of happiness. Koydemir et al. (2013) used “Ontological Well-Being” questionnaire developed by Simsek & Kocayoruk (2013) to study happiness. Mertoglu (2020) used Happiness Inventory developed by Telef (2014) to explore the factors of happiness. Francis et al. (2010), on the other hand, used a single item tool (It is important to me to make other people happy) to explore relation between personality and happiness. Shrivastava et al. (2020), and Hamka et al. (2015) used an open-ended questionnaire to explore the factors/sources of happiness. Pearson correlation coefficient was the most used statistical analysis technique to study correlation between happiness and other psychological variables. Statistical analysis techniques like Regression analysis, CFA and EFA were the most used statistical analysis to study about the predictors of happiness. Statistical analysis techniques like ANOVA and t-test were used to study the influence of various socio-demographic variables on happiness.

Thus, most studies reviewed used the survey design to study happiness. The Majority of studies used pre-developed standardized tools to study about happiness, while a few of them used self-made and open-ended questions for the data collection. The OHS was the most used tool in happiness studies. This suggests that there is a strong need for developing new tools to measure happiness. The data obtained using OHS, was analyzed using either Chi-square or parametric techniques. Only a few studies collected data through online mode and most of them collected data in physical/offline mode. Number of studies exploring the dimensions of happiness were also very less. Hence, there is a strong need to carry out more studies to explore the dimensions of happiness. The majority of studies used random sampling techniques for sample selections, and few of them used convenience or purposive sampling for the sample selection.

Recommendations for further studies on happiness

The studies carried out in the area of happiness recommended a need to conduct studies to explore the relationship between positive psychological traits and happiness (Abdollahi et al., 2019). There is also a need for more studies to explore the factors influencing happiness (Baltaci, 2020). A relationship and effect of psychological skills such as interpersonal relationship, stress tolerance, and mental health on happiness can also be carried out (Bhatpahari et al., 2020). Happiness studies can also explore the relationship between strategies to cope with stress and different subjective well-being components like subjective happiness, satisfaction with life, and affections (Salaver et al., 2017).

Conclusion

India stands at the 139th position among the 149 countries in the World Happiness Report, 2021 (Helliwell et al., 2021). Its rank is deteriorating year by year in both positive and negative effects of happiness and this cautions that there is a strong and immediate need to focus on inclusion of happiness in policies and programmes. The famous quote by Karl Pearson, “that which is measured improves” indicates that there is a strong need to increase research studies aimed at developing benchmarks and tools for measuring happiness. Happiness is a multi-dimensional concept, and its inclusion in the curriculum should be approached accordingly. It can thus be concluded that happiness is not merely a momentary surge of positive feelings, but rather the positive and lasting orientation of a person towards self and life as a whole, which serves to improve the overall quality of life.

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Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development Goals: Case Studies of Three Steel Industries

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Abstract

It has been almost a decade since mandatory Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was implemented under Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013, in India. The corporate sectors or industries are supposed to allocate a mandatory 2% of their net profit from the last three years towards specified areas of CSR activities, as outlined in Schedule VII of the Act. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were developed at the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Both CSR and SDGs were framed at the same time with a common focus on promoting quality education. Tracing the history of CSR in India, among all the industries, the steel sector in India emerged as one of the pioneers in giving importance to CSR activities for the promotion of education. The steel companies like, Tata Steel believe that the “community is the reason for the corporations’ very existence.” The present study aims to map the CSR activities in education undertaken by three steel industries: Tata Steel Limited (TSL), Jindal Stainless Steel Limited (JSSL), and Neelachal Ispat Nigam Limited (NINL), all located in Kalinga Nagar Industrial Complex in the Jajpur district in Odisha.

Keywords: *CSR, SDG, Steel, education, sustainable, activities.*

Introduction

CSR is a widely accepted concept around the world. The concept of CSR first gained importance when Peter Drucker discussed the social responsibility of business in his 1954 book, “The Practice of Management”. CSR’s central concepts are encapsulated in the phrases “do well and do good” and “triple bottom line or integrated

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responsibility” (Falck & Heblich, 2007). These ideas do have something in common today: an emphasis on “integrating traditional business problems, such as profit-generating for stakeholders, with sustainable development problems, societal and environmental difficulties” (Schonherr et al., 2017).

CSR, in our opinion, is an approach that continually strives to meet environmental, economic, and social criteria. “CSR is a business’s obligation to act in alignment with society’s overarching goals, thus directly linking with the concept of sustainable development” (Martinuzzi & Krumay, 2013); “CSR reaches beyond the borders of the corporation to include systematic linkages and interdependencies with stakeholders along the value chain” (Seuring & Gold, 2013); “CSR may also be implemented in different ways or phases, gradually leading to improved performance” (Martinuzzi & Krumay, 2013).

This assumption provides us with understanding that CSR acts on issues linked with sustainability. The broader picture of issues considered in CSR research includes system-wide sustainable challenges, such as, poverty, social justice, ecosystem degradation, peace, and human rights (Schonherr et al., 2017). CSR also works for the SDGs, as the goals are closely associated with the environmental and social issues that are directly linked to sustainability.

CSR aligned with the SDGs could provide an integrated framework for future-oriented CSR participation. The current set of 17 SDGs and their targets represent a comprehensive approach to the 2030 development agenda. The goals recognise the interwoven nature of issues, including “poverty, inequality, decent employment, gender equality, and environmental protection” emphasise and the necessity for all actors in society to collaborate to address them (Le Blanc, 2015).

The SDGs also broke the traditional boundary between the public and private sectors for the first time. “The private sector got the opportunity to be represented at the negotiation table and design a global sustainable development agenda with political and civil society leaders” (Scheyvens et al., 2016).

CSR in India

CSR is a very old concept in India (Tatjana et. al., 2007). Cultural and religious beliefs primarily influenced CSR in the pre-industrial age before the 1850s. The primary focus was on ethics, charitable actions, and other discretionary efforts for which no social obligations or standards existed. Historically, these behaviours were

seen as a social obligation owed by all entities, including corporations, to fulfil scripture-based commitments. The Indian merchant elite has deep roots in generosity, according to researchers.

The worldwide conversation on CSR has rapidly shifted away from charity to strategic CSR and shared values (Whitehouse, 2006). With the passage of the Companies Act in 2013, CSR became mandatory (Singh & Verma, 2014). India was one of the first countries to enact CSR legislation. The 2013 amendment to the Companies Act introduced a specific framework of procedures and methods to mandate CSR expenditure across India. While some Indian corporations had previously engaged in voluntary CSR activities, the new provisions established a formal requirement for organisations to participate in the societal and economic development process.

Any company with a net worth of 500 crores, a turnover of more than 1000 crores, or a profit of 5 crores or more in the previous financial year must comply with the mandated CSR requirements, according to Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013. According to Schedule VII of the Act, the corporation must spend at least 2% of its profit on CSR efforts.

The CSR laws expanded the scope of compliance and obligation requirements to encompass holding and subsidiary corporations, and overseas firms with branches or offices in India (Pattnaik & Shukla, 2018).

SDGs

The concept of “sustainability” dates from the 18th century. In a conference formed to look at the needs of present and future generations, the United Nations Brundtland Commission defined *sustainability* as “serving the requirements of the present without jeopardising future generations’ ability to meet their own needs” in 1987 (Ebner, 2007).

As the world changes, people are attempting to alter unsustainable organisational systems. “Business as usual” has become tough to claim. The United Nations responded by releasing the Agenda for Sustainable Development (SD). The resolute and inclusive universal international agreement promotes 17 SDGs, with 169 targets and over 500 indicators, to address society’s current overwhelming needs. The SDGs aim to enhance people’s living standards and well-being, eliminate poverty, promote peace and a more inclusive society, and reverse environmental damage (Nurunnabi et al., 2019).

The SDGs aim to accomplish the indicators that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) failed to achieve (UN, 2015).

The 2030 sustainability agenda is distinguished from its predecessor, the MDGs, in several ways. Firstly, it is characterised by its universal applicability, encompassing all individuals across all nations. Secondly, it places significant emphasis on the role of education and the quality of learning in fostering a more prosperous world. Thirdly, it prioritises environmental conservation as a crucial objective. Fourthly, it explicitly incorporates peace as a goal. Lastly, it integrates business as a key component of the agenda (Caprani, 2016). The United Nations (UN) has stated that the SDGs encompass the tripartite dimensions of SD, namely the economic, social, and environmental aspects (UN, 2015).

Goal 4 of SDG

The declaration on SDGs envisages a society wherein individuals have equitable access to education of superior quality across all levels. The SDG has set forth Goal 4, which aims to be accomplished by 2030, and the SDG declaration has proposed a range of criteria in pursuit of this objective. “To ensure (I) that all girls and boys accomplish accessible, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education resulting in relevant and effective learning results; (II) that all girls and boys have access to high-quality childhood development, care, and pre-primary education so that they could be ready for primary education; (III) equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational, and higher education; (IV) an increase in the number of youth and adults equipped with relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship; (V) elimination of gender disparities in education and equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations; (VI) that all youths and a substantial percentage of adults, both men, and women, attain literacy and numeracy; (VII) that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills required” (UN, 2015).

Steel Industries

India’s steel industry is a mix of public and private enterprises that contribute about 2% of the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Since the commencement of the Industrial Revolution, steel businesses have been among the first to demonstrate social responsibility. In 1892, Jamsheji Tata, the founder of the Tata group, used awards for scholarships for study abroad. The group, which began its industrial foothold in the steel sector, established India’s first science and atomic research

centres. TSL has also stated that it will not do business with companies that do not follow its CSR guidelines (Srivastava et al., 2012). In 2020–21, the corporation made a CSR contribution of about Rs. 222 crores. CSR is also defined by JSSL as tackling significant societal concerns and encouraging all stakeholders to participate in focused, long-term programmes and projects. CSR has been a cornerstone of success for NINL since the company's foundation.

Review of Literature: CSR and SDGs

CSR is a self-executed contribution to sustainable development (Mishra, 2021), and it promotes the SDGs (Silva et al., 2021). The SDGs are internationally recognised, comprehensive, and realistic frameworks for CSR and sustainability (Van Zanten & Van Tulder, 2018). However, a comprehensive plan is required to allocate the CSR funds and prioritise the SDG targets according to necessity and urgency (Zagloet et al., 2021). According to Bowen et al., 2017, achieving SDGs necessitates a trade-off between priorities in terms of investment and conditions. In order to appropriately channel resources and give each of the SDGs its due attention and concern, a solid administrative framework is also essential.

According to researchers, corporate contributions could help accomplish the SDGs by 2030. Corporations must adapt to future needs and become more honest about them to fulfil their social duties (Silva, 2021).

Ethics, human rights, society, economy, ecology, and companies are covered in sustainable development. On the other hand, CSR focuses on the environment, society, economy, and corporations (Behringer & Szegedi, 2016). It also demonstrates that both notions have a lot in common. According to Moon (2007), environmental and social responsibility is becoming more critical as a result of various worldwide shifts that actively encourage sustainable development.

CSR is concerned with long-term sustainability challenges and advocates for voluntary sustainability standards to assess CSR's impact (Giovannucci et al., 2014). According to Hopkins, (2002), long-term economic performance is influenced by the duty to sustainability. Corporations that engage in comprehensive CSR initiatives can assure long-term development and improve their image. As a result, CSR, or sustainability, has become an essential aspect of business, addressing business ethics, global corporate citizenship, corporate social performance, and stakeholder management.

Schönherr et al., 2017 investigated the links between CSR and SDGs, emphasising the importance of adopting a framework for CSR and advocating for

systematic management and measurement of commercial impact on SDGs. According to Korhonen (2003), “the concept of sustainability has notwithstanding become the base for CSR and corporate environmental management”, although the meaning of the term “sustainable development” has been extensively researched, and many advocates differ in their opinions. Several of the SDGs in the business world are entirely dependent on the implementation of CSR efforts.

In their study on CSR and sustainable development practices, Rahman and Islam (2019) noted that commercial banks in Bangladesh use CSR ideas to accomplish the country’s SDGs. The study found that increasing CSR actions aligned with the SDGs’ overall development.

CSR is widely documented as an essential component of the business process. This comprehensive strategy for sustainability benefits society, industry, and the environment. As a result, CSR is becoming an essential aspect of long-term development (Rahman & Islam, 2019). The literature study above demonstrates ample evidence of CSR’s connection to sustainability challenges and how CSR is critical for accomplishing SDGs.

Objectives of the Study

1. Mapping the CSR activities undertaken by the selected steel Industries under goal 4 of SDGs.
2. To explore the pattern of CSR spending of selected steel Industries with respect to goal 4 of SDGs.

Research Methodology

Secondary data such as CSR reports of the companies were used for the present study. A statistical tool such as the Percentage method has been employed to analyze and interpret data. The researchers used their compilation method to depict the different activities undertaken by the three industries in the field of Education.

CSR Initiatives Goal 4 of SDGs: Neelachal Ispat Nigam Limited (NINL)

The concept of CSR at NINL has been a foundation of success right from the establishment of the company. To lead their CSR activities, NINL has created a set of fundamental principles for itself that are “Care, Compassion, Commitment, and Trust.” NINL’s aim is to “be a reputable worldwide leader in the iron and steel industry, with a focus on people’s prosperity and environmental preservation.” To

achieve its objective, NINL is committed to continually improve its social responsibility, environmental, and economic policies in order to have a beneficial influence on society (NINL, 2015; NINL, 2016).

The company provides financial assistance to educational institutions and teachers under its signature programmes such as ***Financial Aid to Educational Institutions*** and ***financial Assistance to Teachers*** (NINL, 2015; NINL, 2016; NINL, 2017; NINL, 2017; NINL, 2018, NINL, 2019).

The company under the ***Donation of Inverters to School*** has donated three Inverters so far to one school. The company has also donated ***one water tank*** to a school (NINL, 2016).

CSR Initiatives for Goal 4 of SDGs: Jindal Stainless Limited (JSSL)

JSSL defines CSR as addressing crucial social issues and encouraging all stakeholders to participate in targeted long-term programmes. The company intends to initiate initiatives to achieve JSSL's overall vision of being an admired and respected socially responsible corporation. The company also believes that CSR should be the primary objective of its employees so that they devote their full support to CSR operations and ensure the company's comprehensiveness (JSSL, 2015; JSSL, 2016).

JSSL's ***Digital Equaliser Programme***, in collaboration with the American India Foundation, provided infrastructure to schools, such as laptops and overhead projectors. Presently, ten institutions have been adopted by the programme. Under the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, the schools adopted under the programme were all Computer Aided Learning (CAL) institutions. Under the programme, inverters were also provided to the institutions. More than 1222 pupils have benefited from subject-specific knowledge enhancement (JSSL 2018; JSSL, 2019).

JSSL administers the ***Early Childhood Care and Education Centre (ECCEC)*** programme on the premise that every child deserves a dignified existence with equal access to opportunities. One hundred ninety-five pupils in five locations have benefited from this programme (JSSL, 2018, JSSL, 2019).

JSSL has created the ***Jindal Institute of Industrial Training (JIIT)*** as part of its Skill Development Training programme. JIIT offers skill development courses in various fields, including business process outsourcing, computer application, computer hardware, information technology, cosmetics and wellness, advanced electrical application, ladies' tailoring and sewing, etc. Over a thousand students have benefited from the programme to date (JSSL, 2017; JSSL, 2018).

In order to provide children with quality education, JSSL introduced the ***Promotion of Education scheme***. JSSL has launched numerous programmes under the initiative, including the Scholar Programme, Navodaya Coaching Centre, Village Library, and Bridge Course Education Programme, among others. The programme also provided the students with school backpacks, play materials, and teaching and learning materials. The schools were supplied with additional instructors to enhance learning and instruction. Additionally, computer subjects were introduced in numerous institutions. The village libraries contained various farming books, patriotic books, epics, novels, Dharma Shastra, and children's literature. These initiatives have affected thousands of lives globally (JSSL, 2019)

CSR Initiatives Goal 4 of SDGs: Tata Steel Limited (TSL)

The concept of CSR is strongly ingrained in the ethos of TSL. In 1868, Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata founded the Indian company. TSL aims to “set a worldwide standard for value generation and corporate citizenship”. The corporation has continuously operated ethically, respecting human dignity and following regulations. The company's CSR mission is to “increase the quality of life in the areas they serve internationally by creating long-term value for all stakeholders”. TSL had been one of the pioneers and the very founder of Tata Steel laid the value of social responsibility as he said, “Community is the reason of the very existence of the Corporate” (TSL, 2015. TSL, 2016). Tata Steel promotes giving back to the community. TSL has changed countless lives throughout the years. TSL's SDG 4 accomplishments are listed below.

The ***Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS)*** was created to boost student health and education by providing nutritious lunches. TSL has provided food to over 112000 students daily in over 384 schools (TSL, 2015; TSL, 2016; TSL, 2021).

TSL initiated the ***Adult Literacy Programme (ALP)*** to help the Government of India. The government used Computer Based Functional Literacy (CBFL) to boost adult literacy. The CBFL methodology assists non-literate adults in acquiring reading, writing, and arithmetic in 50 hours over three months. Fifteen thousand adults are made functionally literate with the initiative by TSL (TSL, 2015).

The ***Jyoti Scholarship Tata Steel Scholarship (TSSPJS)*** help deserving SC/ST kids attend college. Jyoti fellowships are available to students from Class VII to post-graduation. So far, programme 11908 has supported SC/ST students (TSL, 2016; TSL, 2017; TSL, 2019; TSL, 2021).

To improve English, Maths and Science skills, ***Preparatory Coaching (PC)***

was launched. The project targeted 8th–10th graders. The initiative has impacted 5500 students so far (TSL, 2016).

Residential bridging courses help out-of-school kids return to school. The **Residential Camp Schools (RCSs)** project aims to re-enroll dropouts and disadvantaged children in child work. Five Residential Camp Schools for 410 kids were built. Six thousand five hundred seven dropouts were re-enrolled and 864 of 1548 kids were mainstreamed (TSL, 2018; TSL, 2019; TSL, 2020; TSL, 2021).

TSL established the **1000 School Project (1000 SP)** to promote education in 1000 Odisha government schools over five years. The project has helped 625000 children and built 2765 homes. The project aims to create Child labour-free zones. The project established 400 government school libraries. One hundred fifty schools were chosen for the Learning Enrichment Programme. The programme trained 4252 management committee members from 733 schools (TSL, 2018; TSL, 2019; TSL, 2020).

TSL started the **30 Model Schools (30 MSs)** project to provide Educationally Backward Block students with quality government education. Twelve schools were built and given to the state government, giving quality facilities to nearly 5000 pupils (TSL, 2017; TSL, 2018).

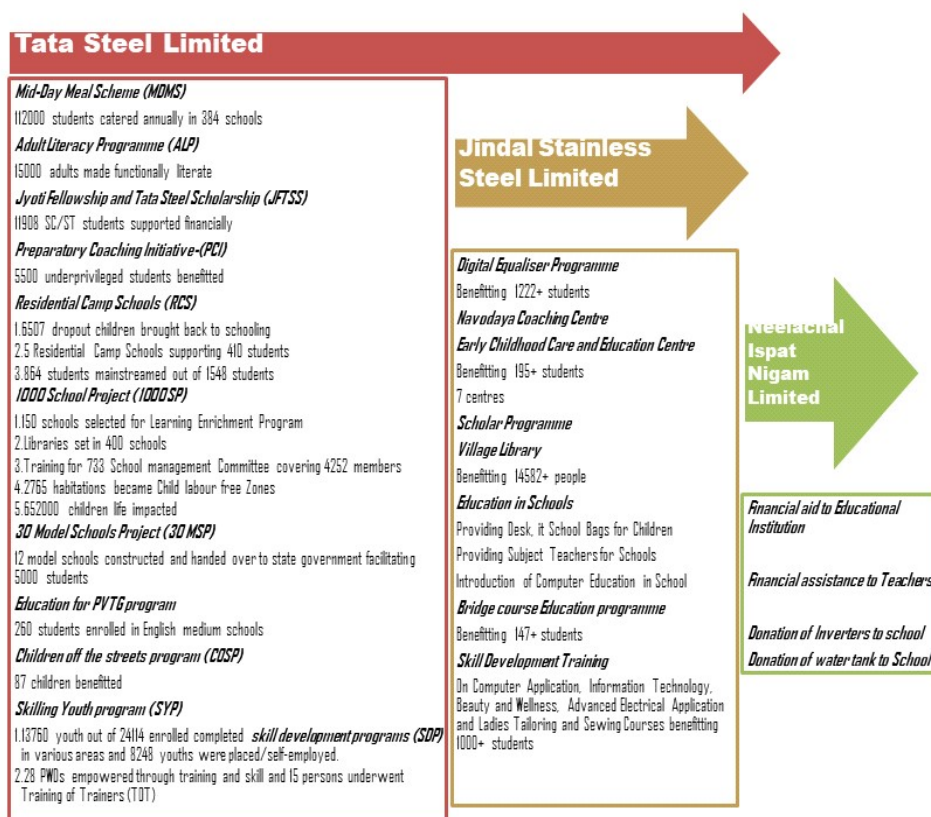
TSL empowers PVTGs with a superior education. The company started **Child Education for Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)**. Under the initiative, 260 students have enrolled in 7 residential English medium schools (TSL, 2019).

TSL also started the **Children off the Street Programme (COSP)** to help street children and give them a good education. It has empowered 87 kids (TSL, 2021).

Skilling Youth Programme (SYP) impacted 24114 youth. The programme teaches skills in construction, vehicle, motor driving, call centre, hospitality, nursing, industrial trade, and garment design. So far, 13760 youths' have completed the training successfully, out of which 8248 youths were either placed or were self-employed (TSL, 2015; TSL, 2016; TSL, 2017; TSL, 2018; TSL, 2019; TSL, 2020; TSL, 2021).

The reported CSR spending of the three steel industries after the implementation of compulsory CSR mandate differed from each other in a drastic manner. The reported spending of NINL ranged from 22.60 to 67.80 lakhs during the Financial Year (FY) 2014-21.

Fig 1.1: Three Steel Industries' CSR Activities under Goal 4 of SDG/ Education (2014-21)



Source: Authors own compilation

The spending in the case of JSSL was quite different compared to NINL. The company announced losses during 2014-16 as well as during 2019-21, and reported that “since there were no profits in terms of the provisions of Section 198 of the Act during last three financial years, the Company was not required under Section 135 of the Act, to incur expenditure on CSR during the financial year” (JSSL, 2015; JSSL, 2016). The company did not allot any money to their CSR cell during the years which resulted in non-functioning of the cell during the Financial Years. The company made profit during 2016-17 as reported in their annual report. The reports of the company also indicated that it spent around 1.07 crores, 2.26 crores, and 2.31 crores respectively during 2016-19 FYs. TSL had been consistent with their contribution towards society and reportedly spent in the range of 171-315 crores during the FYs 2014-21.

Table 1.1: Amount Spent by Industries on CSR (2014-21)

Financial Year	NINL	JSSL	TSL
2014-15	60.54	Nil	17146
2015-16	67.80	Nil	20446
2016-17	34.54	107.53	19361
2017-18	22.60	226.59	23162
2018-19	46.81	231.76	31494
2019-20	30.21	Nil	19299
2020-21	27.41	Nil	22198

Source: Annual Reports of respective industries

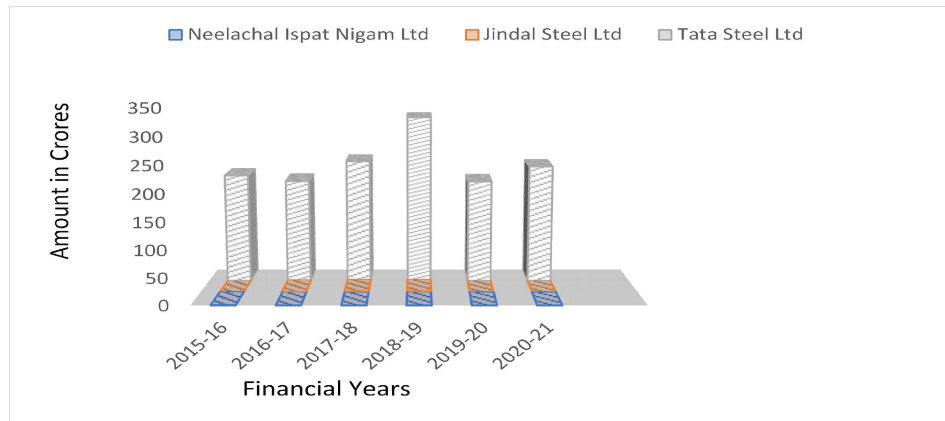
Fig 1.2: CSR expenditure by the three Steel Industries FYs 2014-21)

Figure 1.2 shows the highs and lows between the CSR expenditure of the three Industries respectively. TSL had no comparison in terms of expenditure with the other two steel industries, NINL and JSSL.

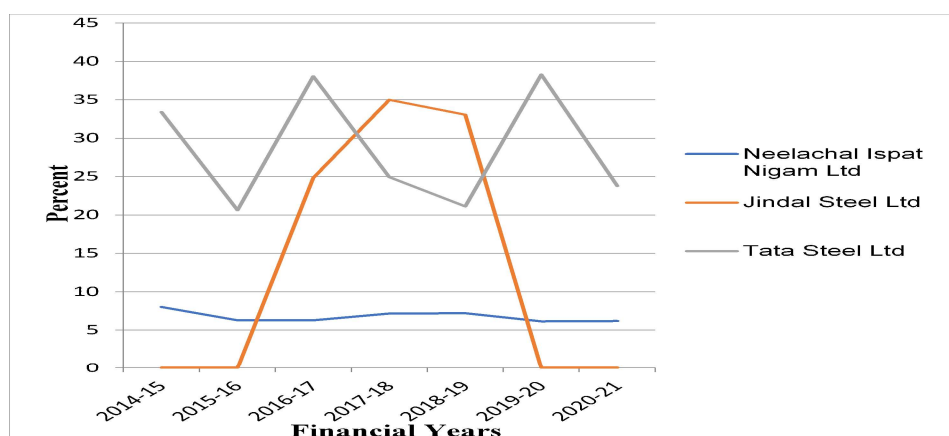
Table 1.2: Steel Industries' Spending on Goal 4 of SDG's

Financial Year	NINL		JSSL		TSL	
	Amount In lakhs	% of annual budget	Amount In lakhs	% of annual budget	Amount In lakhs	% of annual budget
2014-15	4.86	8.02	Nil	-	5731	33.42
2015-16	4.26	6.28	Nil	-	4221	20.64
2016-17	2.17	6.28	26.69	24.82	7371	38.07
2017-18	1.62	7.16	79.34	35.01	5781	24.95
2018-19	3.38	7.22	76.63	33.06	6652	21.12
2019-20	1.86	6.15	Nil	-	7392	38.30
2020-21	1.70	6.20	Nil	-	5281	23.79

Source: Annual Reports of respective industries

The CSR spending concerning goal 4 of the SDGs differs for the three industries. The spending for NINL for Goal 4 of the SDGs ranges from 1.70- 4.86 lakhs during FY 2014-2021. Meanwhile, the spending for JSSL ranges from 26.69-79.34 lakhs during FY 2016-2019. TSL alone outnumbers the combined spending of both companies. The spending of TSL for goal 4 of SDGs ranges from 42.21-73.92 crores during FY 2014-2021.

Fig 1.3: Percentage of Expenditure for Education by the Steel Industries during 2014-21



The allotment of budget for Goal 4 of the SDGs from the total budget of the industries also differs to a certain extent. As evident in Fig 1.3, during FY 2014-21, NINL spent 6.15-8.02 percent of the total budget for the education sector, whereas JSSL and TSL spent in a range of 20-40 percent of the total budget for the area.

Conclusion

The study observed that actions carried out towards Goal 4 of the SDGs varied from one organization to another due to differences in work culture, vision, and knowledge of their societal responsibilities. Apart from that, the variety of actions, effect, and outcomes differed among organisations. Some were unable to spend much due to their poor performance but still aimed to make some contribution rather than none. Certain businesses were unconcerned with CSR or the community, preferring to just follow the rules. On the other hand, some businesses did not consider complying with required standards since influencing the lives of community members was far more important to them than profit. According to the study, the education of youngsters is also improving as a result of such corporate CSR programmes.

The study's findings are comparable to those of Rahman and Islam (2019), who concluded in their study that corporations concerned about CSR issues increase their contributions to CSR year after year, ultimately leading to the attainment of the country's sustainable development goals. The current analysis also demonstrates that the three firms have contributed significantly to CSR. Our findings also show that because of the overlap with one or more areas of CSR, the actions were also in line with Goal 4 of the SDGs (Mishra, 2020). As a result, it highlights that expanded initiatives of CSR activities in line with the SDGs also bring about all-round development. Finally, it is not incorrect to suggest that corporate donations in the form of CSR or SDGs may assist governments in meeting the SDGs by 2030.

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Kanyashree Prakalpa: Empowerment of Girls in Mejia Block of Bankura District, West Bengal

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Abstract

In a country like India, where marginalised people are in huge numbers and the available public services are not commensurately adequate for them, one of the duties of the State is to protect these people. Both the Union and State governments are running public services in a ratio of around 2:1. The Kanyashree Prakalpa is a unique initiative that addresses the multiple needs of the society. It contributes to reducing drop-out rates, incidents of early child marriage, and post-early child marriage problems. It also increases the girls' enrolment and retention in their educational journey, fostering women empowerment. We conducted a small-scale door-to-door survey in the Mejia Block of Bankura district in West Bengal, involving beneficiary girls, their parents, teachers from institution associated with the scheme, 3-tier Panchayat members, and government officials. Our specific objective was to ascertain whether Kanyashree Prakalpa impacts women's empowerment beyond its general objectives. The study, undertaken in mid-2022, revealed many positive outcomes and societal impacts that contribute to accelerating women's empowerment.

Keywords: *women empowerment, early marriage, women's education, women dropout, entrepreneurship.*

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Introduction

“One of the factors a country’s economy depends on is human capital. If you don’t provide women with adequate access to education, healthcare and employment, you lose at least half of your potential. So, gender equality and women empowerment bring huge economic benefits.” –

Michelle Bachelet, President of Chile.

Woman, the born combatant, is still not ready to bury her hatchet. She longs for independence and the ability to make decisions within both the family and the greater society. Yet, she has to go through distress only. This scenario has remained a never changing story for centuries. In Indian society, the discrimination between men and women is deeply rooted. For centuries, women have been labouring labour for their family as well as for the society; yet have always been eliminated during the time of ultimate decision making at every stage of their lives. During the Vedic period, there were some women who showed their significance in society, such as Gargi, Maitreyi, etc. But the practice of “sastrya” was restricted to women of the elite society only. Gradually, the relatively respectable position they enjoyed in society eroded. Finally, in the early nineteenth century, women’s education became a practice, albeit not fully accepted in society.

After Independence, the condition of female education gained new momentum. After the formulation of the India’s Constitution, the guarantees of equal rights for men and women came into force. Article 14, 15 and 16 of part three of the Indian Constitution established a ground for right to equality in terms of freedom and opportunity. The necessity of women’s education was recognized by different commissions, committees and some social organizations.

The Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-49) and Mudaliar Commission (1952-53) (MOE,1953) delivered strong recommendations on the necessity of female education. Later, various commissions, such as the National Committee on Women’s Education (1958) (MOE, 1959), and the Hansha Mehta Committee (1961), underlined the need to reduce disparities between men and women through their recommendations.

The National Policy on Education (1986) emphasized on the removal of disparities between boys and girls. It envisaged that national education may play a vital role in the empowerment of women (MHRD, 1986: 6).

Kanyashree Prakalpa: West Bengal Initiatives for Girls Education and Empowerment

The Government of West Bengal has launched an ambitious scheme under the banner of Kanyashree Prakalpa or Kanyashree scheme⁴, with an overall attention on girl children and a target bound provision that includes:

- Free education for girl children
- Prevention of child marriage
- Back to school campus for dropout school girls
- Giving access to further education for better career
- Giving opportunity for higher education
- Delaying the age of premature delivery

In this way, Kanyashree Prakalpa is trying to facilitate the whole girl student community across Bengal by providing monetary assistance in terms of financial support. However, serious social prejudices and hurdles for girls' education still persist in society. In cases where parents can afford the educational expenses for only one child in the family, they tend to support their male child. Also, there are massive setbacks for girl children especially in their bringing up. Boys receive more care from their parents and extended family members during their formative years, while girls are generally taken for granted in most of the cases. In reality, female literacy rate and their level of education act as basic indicators of the societal progress. Higher levels of education for women not only impart greater awareness and contribute to social upliftment, but also play the role of catalyst in bringing improvements in their social, political, and economic conditions within society, leading to their overall development.

Passionate Emphasis on Girls Education and Women Empowerment in Literature

Purusottam and Mahanta (2009) in their paper "Women Empowerment in India" described the real situation of women empowerment in India. They have clearly stated that women are victims of social norms. People in Indian society including women themselves consider them as the soft part of the male dominated society. There are so many discriminations against women in the society, on the basis of their age, color, overall economic condition, residential status (Nayak, P. & Mahanta, B., 2009). Huis et al. (2017), based on their study of women's involvement in microfinance, have shown that women empowerment became a reality by achieving

⁴See the vision and salient points of the Scheme in: https://www.wbkanyashree.gov.in/kp_4.0/faq.php.

their financial sustainability. Sen & Dutta (2018) extensively discussed the Kanyashree Prakalpa (KP), launched by the West Bengal government. In their study, they have tried to measure in great detail the entire impact of the programme including its short term and long-term effects. The study found KP to be a catalyst for the social change of West Bengal. Besides this, the study also recommends a huge push from the state and beneficiaries to ensure its long-term effect.

Akhter & Deb (2020), in their study, tried to associate public libraries with Kanyashree Prakalpa which leads to women empowerment, especially in rural contexts. They found that in rural areas the programme has proven to be the most effective in this case. Halder (2018) elaborately discussed the objectives of the scheme and tried to clarify and eliminate the controversy regarding the objectives of the scheme among people of different identities. The study found that even though the programme might be effective in rural areas there are other challenges, such as early marriage impacting girls of slum areas of Kolkata. The statistics reveal that 25% of girls of these areas are threatened to get married before they reach their adulthood (Halder, 2018).

In summary, it becomes clear that educational factors do play an important role in empowering women. Therefore, govt. policies like Kanyashree Prakalpa, Beti Bachao Beti Pado, etc., accelerate the chances of girls getting an education, especially in rural areas (Agnihotri & Malipatil, 2018). The discussion above provides evidence regarding the contribution of Kanyashree Prakalpa in declining the dropout rates. This also holds true for the decline in the rate of underage marriages among the girls, as well as the increasing opportunities for women, allowing them to have a better standard of living and conditioning their level of thinking and views towards society. Yet, the role of Kanyashree Prakalpa in raising female education and empowering them needs further investigation. Therefore, it is evident that a gap exists, which has to be bridged with further exploration and understanding in this regard.

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis is selected to substantiate the current study:

There is no significant difference in opinions about women's empowerment in association with Kanyashree Prakalpa among the Kanyashree girls of Mejia block in the district of Bankura.

Objective of the study

The present study seeks:

- To assess the rate of success of Kanyashree Prakalpa in Mejia block.

- To consider how far this project is assisting the girl-students to make them empowered to take their own decisions and by themselves.
- To identify the problems faced by them on a regular basis in their rural setting and examine how Kanyashree Prakalpa is facilitating those students to overcome the barriers.
- To understand the views of girl students who are availing Kanyashree stipend facilities in this particular block.

Research Methodology

The present study is based on a face-to-face conversations with 100 female students from different schools and institutions residing in various localities within the Mejia block of Bankura district in West Bengal. A self-made structured schedule has been used for this primary research to conduct a study in both quantitative and qualitative approaches. During this study, the target respondents were mainly those girls who have already received Kanyashree one-time grant of Rs. 25,000/- to continue their education up to the age of 18, thereby promoting stability in their academic journey by delaying the age of marriage. After gathering their opinions, we preferred to use SPSS for statistical analysis, along with correlation, regression, and the stepdown model analyzer.

Data Collection Process

For data collection, we decided to visit BDO office to get a random list of Kanyashree grant holders. After collecting the sheets, we visited the respective schools and tried to verify the names of the scheme holders. Finally, we interviewed twenty Kanyashree girls on an average from each gram panchayet of the block. Mejia Block consists of five Anchals (gram panchayets) such as Ardhamgram, Kushtor, Ramchandrapur, Banjora and Mejia. In each respective village, we identified our target respondents by their names and interviewed them thoroughly according to our selected queries.

The Data

We have collected a detailed dataset for all 100 Kanyashree recipients including information related to their Academic Qualification, Name of the Institution, Name of the G.P, Occupation, Marital Status, Monthly Family Income, and Year of receiving K2. For reasons of brevity, only a few dimensions of the respondents are tabulated and provided below.

The data has no connection to the design and implementation of the Scheme. From our sample, we noticed that 39 respondents were recipients of K2 in the year 2016-17, followed by 27 who received it during 2019-20.

Table-1: K2 Recipients Year-wise

Year	K2 Recipients
2015-16	8
2016-17	39
2017-18	14
2018-19	11
2019-20	27
2020-21	1

Source: Primary data collected by us.

Table-2: Marital Status of K2 Respondents

Year	Married	Unmarried
2015-16	5	3
2016-17	14	25
2017-18	2	12
2018-19	3	8
2019-20	0	27
2020-21	0	1

Source: Primary data collected by us.

The vision of Kanyashree Prakalpa is to provide financial assistance for facilitating the girls' educational journey and delaying their marriage beyond the age of 18. It is probable that this message has not been conveyed by the administration and internalized by the society effectively, such that 14 of 39 K2 recipients were married during 2016-17, whereas all 27 K2 recipients during 2019-20 were unmarried girls.

Table-3: Monthly Family Income Profile of K2 Respondents

Income	Total Number	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Upto 9K	17	1	8	0	0	8	0
Upto 10K	14	1	3	4	1	4	1
Upto 12K	28	2	9	4	5	8	0
Above 12K	41	4	19	6	5	7	0

Source: Primary data collected by us.

Approximately 41% of the respondents hail from families with a monthly income more than 12K. The remaining, 59%, the predominant majority, make do with a

monthly income less than 12K. It's a cruel reality that 17% of the K2 recipients hail from families with a monthly income of 9K or lower.

Dependent Variable

The effectiveness of Kanyashree one time grant (Y) and the perception towards the effectiveness of Kanyashree Prakalpa in women empowerment (Z)

Independent Variable

The Independent Variables used in this study include: Educational status (X_1), age of the respondent (X_2), occupation of parents (X_3), monthly income of parents (X_4), monthly income of family (X_5), go to regular school or college (X_6), availability of food during school /college hour (X_7), electricity at home (X_8), availability of Aadhaar card (X_9), the school's or college's distance from your home (X_{10}), transport for going to school or college (X_{11}), accessibility of private tuition (X_{12}), effectiveness of Kanyashree grant for dropout girls (X_{13}), family consent for studying in school or college (X_{14}), role of school in getting Kanyashree grant (X_{15}), accessibility of Kanyashree Sangha (X_{16}), accessibility of rural public library (X_{17}), usage of public library (X_{18}), role of public library in getting Kanyashree grant (X_{19}), role of Gram Panchayats in getting Kanyashree grant (X_{20}), role of Block Development Office in getting public services (X_{21}), the effectiveness of Kanyashree one time grant (X_{22}) perception towards women empowerment (X_{23}), effective schemes for women empowerment (X_{24}), role of public libraries in women empowerment (X_{25}), role of public libraries in getting public services (X_{26}), role of public libraries in organizing training for women (X_{27}) and perception towards the effectiveness of Kanyashree Prakalpa in women empowerment (X_{28}).

Result and Discussion

Part I: Effectiveness of Kanyashree one time grant (Y) is the dependent variable

Table-1 shows how the effectiveness of Kanyashree one time grant (Y) is perceived by students themselves and how the independent variables signify the level of students' perception regarding Kanyashree Prakalpa and its impact on their education and career. The correlation between the two kinds of variables is also a key finding of the present study. The fact is that parents' financial condition has a strong relationship with their children's level of education. This particular locality

contains a variety of people with diverse occupations, primarily consisting most of the residents of working class people. The current study describes how parents' occupation (X_3) confers a strong positive impact on respondents' perception of the Kanyashree one-time grant scheme. Due to limited financial resources, parents often can't afford private tuition for their children, and mostly, it is the girl students who excluded from receiving special guidance after completing their schooling in most cases. When asked about this issue, a strong negative reflection emerged from their responses (X_{12}).

Table – 4: Correlation analysis between dependent variable Y and casual variables

Variables	'r' Value
Occupation of parents (X_3)	0.2458*
Accessibility of private tuition (X_{12})	-0.2089*
Effectiveness of Kanyashree grant for dropout girls (X_{13})	0.4024**
Role of school in getting Kanyashree grant (X_{15})	0.4863**
Role of public library in getting Kanyashree grant (X_{19})	0.2457*
Role of gram panchayats in getting Kanyashree grant (X_{20})	0.2832**
Role of Block Development Office in getting public services (X_{21})	0.3215**
Critical value (2-Tail, 0.05) = +or- 0.197 *Significant at 5% level	
Critical value (2-Tail, 0.01) = +or- 0.256 ** Significant at 1% level	

On the other hand, the effectiveness of the Kanyashree grant for drop out girls (X_{13}) had a strong positive impact in this regard. According to the girls, before the introduction of Kanyashree Prakalpa programme, girls used to experience troublesome situations that restricted them from continuing their studies at school. Thus, the monetary grant seemed like a boon to them. Hence, they expressed their positive views regarding the matter. As far as the educational institution is concerned, school is the only place where girls have access to information pertaining to studies, scholarships, monetary grants, and other government schemes for better opportunities. Therefore, a positive correlation was found between the role of school (X_{15}) in disseminating information regarding the Kanyashree Prakalpa and girls' opinion about their experience with schools in receiving the Kanyashree grant as a whole. Here, the roles of public libraries and Gram Panchayat had a strong and positive bearing on the perception of students on women empowerment. The role of the Block Development Office in this particular service had a strong and positive implication on the stakeholder's perception, which proves the activeness of the officials regarding the Kanyashree Project.

Analysis-2 depicts that all twenty-one variables show their regression effects with $\hat{a}$ and similar t-values. Their impact on the Kanyashree one-time grant (Y) expresses 45.05 per cent of the total collective effect ($R^2=0.45059$). The two variables, namely the monthly income of the Family (X_5) and the Role of school in obtaining the Kanyashree grant (X_{15}), significantly imply the effect of the whole regression on predictors.

From the Step-down regression model, it is seen that only one variable, named as role of school in obtaining Kanyashree grant (X_{15}) explains 23.64 per cent of the total effect. This means the remaining twenty variables explain the remaining 21.41 per cent of the total impact.

Part II: Perception level of students on women empowerment (Z) is the dependent variable.

Table -5: Correlation Analysis between dependent variable and the perception level of students on women empowerment (Z) and 27 casual variables

Variables	'r' Value
Age of the respondent (X_2)	0.3720**
Go to regular school or college (X_6)	0.2010*
Availability of food during school /college hour (X_7)	0.2077*
Electricity at home (X_8)	-0.2695**
Availability of Aadhaar card (X_9)	0.2186*
Accessibility of private tuition (X_{12})	-0.2491*
Effectiveness of Kanyashree grant for dropout girls (X_{13})	0.4633**
Role of school in obtaining Kanyashree grant (X_{15})	0.4574**
Usage of public library (X_{18})	0.2090*
Role of gram panchayats in obtaining Kanyashree grant (X_{20})	0.3645**
Role of Block Development Office in getting public services (X_{21})	0.3053**
The effectiveness of Kanyashree one time grant (X_{22})	0.3484**
Perception towards women empowerment (X_{23})	0.5101**
Effective schemes for women empowerment (X_{24})	0.4464**
Role of public libraries in getting public services (X_{26})	0.2039*
Critical value (2-Tail, 0.05) = +or- 0.197 *Significant at 5% level	
Critical value (2-Tail, 0.01) = +or- 0.256 ** Significant at 1% level	

It is evident from Table-2 that a maximum numbers of the fifteen independent variables are positively associated with the promotion of women empowerment (Z). It is to be noted that two variables, namely electricity at home (X_8) and accessibility of private tuition (X_{12}) exceptionally exhibit a strong negative association with the promotion of women empowerment (Z). On the other hand, the remaining thirteen variables keep a strong positive association with the promotion of women empowerment (Z). Variables such as the age of respondent (X_2), effectiveness of Kanyashree grant for dropout girls (X_{13}), role of school in obtaining the Kanyashree grant (X_{15}), role of Gram Panchayat in obtaining the Kanyashree grant (X_{20}), role of B.D.O office in obtaining public services (X_{21}), effectiveness of Kanyashree one time grant (X_{22}), perception towards women empowerment (X_{23}) and effective schemes for women empowerment (X_{24}) held a very strong positive bearing on the perception level of respondent towards women empowerment (Z). This suggests that all the female respondents are fully aware of the promotion of women empowerment through the above-mentioned factors.

Education empowers women to make informed choices and communicate effectively on related issues. During conversations with the female respondents, it became clear that poverty and inequity are the underlying contributors to school dropout cases, early child marriages as well as many maternal deaths. Evidence shows that poor households have more than twice the risk of having school dropout children compared to wealthy households. Nowadays, respondents from the specific blocks are already facilitated with electricity at home. Therefore, this is a common factor behind their privilege. That's why they were not terribly bothered with electricity connection, enabling them to focus on their studies and other household works with mental peace and confidence. The majority of the respondents face various problems while pursuing school or higher education with financial problems and large family sizes often leading them to give up on their studies mid way. That is why the main motto of these women students is to secure jobs and become financially established. In fact, many parents also hope that higher education will empower their daughters to be economically independent, make them capable of contributing to the wellbeing of the family, and enhance their marriage prospects. Thus, girls are truly glad to receive the financial benefits from the Kanyashree one time grant. The effectiveness of the Kanyashree grant for dropout girls (X_{13}) thus strongly influences the perception level of respondents regarding women empowerment.

A considerable number of respondents expressed satisfaction with the role of Gram Panchayat in obtaining Kanyashree grant (X_{20}) is quite satisfying. Hence, the relationship between women empowerment (Z) and the participation of grass-roots

government agencies in acquiring the Kanyashree grant had a strong positive bearing on the perception level of the respondents.

The role of Block Development Offices in obtaining public services (X_{21}) also had a strong positive bearing on the perception level of the respondents. Here, the data reflects the respondent's opinion on how they are treated by the officials while seeking particular public services. A considerable number of respondents have stated that the officials were cooperative and helped them in obtaining the Kanyashree grant in a proper way.

The educational attainment of women in this particular rural area is increasing and number of female students pursuing higher education is growing even further. In West Bengal, some specific public services like Kanyashree, Sobuj Sathi, and Rupashree have paved the way for women to pursue graduation and post-graduation. Therefore, the effectiveness of the Kanyashree one time grant (X_{22}) had a very strong positive bearing on the level of opinion of the respondents.

The data reveals a significant variation in the perception towards women empowerment (X_{23}) among female students belonging to different financial status. This means that respondents belonging to higher economic groups are more aware and conscious of women empowerment compared to those who belong to comparatively lower economic backgrounds.

It clearly emerges from the data that there is a strong association of Kanyashree Prakash with women empowerment which exists at every step in their life. Their opinions towards this scheme appear very clear and the statistical analysis also supports the same (Ghara, & Roy, 2017). Therefore, the null Hypothesis (H_0) is accepted and the alternative Hypothesis (H_1) is rejected.

It is very interesting to note that all the independent variables show their regression effects with $\hat{a}$ and corresponding t-values, contributing to student's level of perception regarding women empowerment (Z). Here, these variables collectively explain 61.42 percent of the total aggregation effect ($R^2 = 0.61420$). Four specific variables have been identified in turn, such as, age of the respondent (X_2), electricity at home (X_8), usage of public library (X_{18}), effective schemes for women empowerment (X_{24}), and these variables are significantly expressing the whole regression effect in this matter (Biswas, S., Biswas, J., Akhter, M.Y. & Deb, P., 2020).

The Step-down regression has been set to segregate particular independent variables with the prominence of representation. In this way, it has been noticed that

after step 5, five variables: perception towards women empowerment (X_{23}), effective schemes for women empowerment (X_{24}), effectiveness of Kanyashree grant for dropout girls (x_{13}), usage of public library (X_{18}), electricity at home (X_8) have explained 48.43 per cent of the total effect. Thus, the rest of variables signify only about 21.99 percent of the overall impact on the student's view towards women empowerment.

Findings

Despite encountering several stumbling blocks, female students in this area are availing Kanyashree one time grant in order to obtain their higher studies as well as wiping the financial obstructions out of their way towards empowerment (Kanrar, 2018). The beneficiaries have been empowered in various ways through this monetary scheme. Here, we know that K2 is a conditional cash transfer scheme. While we enquired about the ground facts regarding this scheme, girls were found to be talking about the innumerable benefits they had received in order to empower themselves in different ways. While some of them have already taken admissions to technical colleges, are in nursing training schools, computer training schools, pursuing tailoring and beautician courses, as well as other vocational courses (Molla & Sarkar 2020).

A good number of female students have completed their vocational training in areas such as computer skills, nursing, beautician services, tailoring, and others, from various institutions in order to make themselves independent for the near future. However, there are still so many girls who can only dream of school, college and training institutions.

During the study, we came to know the real scenario of 'Age at marriage' in those particular regions. Basically, the rate of maternal mortality becomes higher if the girl conceives before the age of 18. As the study progressed, it was discovered that numerous instances of early marriages were prevalent throughout the study area. Shockingly, six girl students revealed that their marriages took place before they turned 18. To estimate the level of poverty among the scheme holders, we interviewed these girls and enquired about their day-to-day dietary habits, health, and hygiene. In the case of adolescent girls, their caloric needs are higher because of the biological changes in their body. Usually, it is recommended that 45-65% of daily caloric requirements come from carbohydrates, 10-35% from proteins and 20-35% from fats. In this region of Bengal, rice is a staple for energy and daily carbohydrate requirements. However, from our survey, an unexpected revelation was that the girls hardly eat rice in a day. Instead, the common diet usually consists

of puffed rice (*Muri*). For the maximum part of the month, they rely on ‘*muri*’ and ‘*chop*’ (local term of puffed rice & smashed potato snack). Although the food combination is quite tasty, it does not fulfill the nutritional requirements of the body. The nutrition value of the oil fried potato snack is practically negligible and unhygienic as well. Upon asking the girls about their food habits, the intensity of poverty becomes evident as a contributing factor.

Specific Findings

The Kanyashree girls in the Mejia block share multiple and complex realities. This entire study aimed to focus on the achievement of Kanyashree girls of this block as well as the challenges they face. During the study, it was evident that the girls have managed to create history by so many challenges in their lives. Here are a few stories highlighting the efforts of these industrious and talented girls.

Mallika Gope is presently pursuing her bachelor’s degree with utmost confidence. Moreover, she plays a vital role in her family’s cattle business. Basically, her family is associated with cattle keeping. Mallika is a Kanyashree one time grant holder. She has always been a scheme holder of various public services provided by the Government of West Bengal, such as, Kanyashree, Sobuj Sathi and so on. Upon receiving the K2 grant of Rupees 25,000, she decided to continue her studies with the help of this lump sum amount and also invested some of the money to buy a Bengal goat, contributing to her family income. She also works as a goat herder in her free time, all while pursuing her studies.

Dipika Barui, another Kanyashree girl and a resident of the Banjora gram panchayat area, has made a significant difference in her society by establishing herself as a graduate. Currently, she is in her 3rd year of BA. Besides spending the money to continuing her studies, she has also purchased a sewing machine for her mother so that they can independently keep their tailoring business up.

Sampa Praminik lives in Kansara, a small village in the Mejia Block. This brave girl has recently joined as a nursing trainee in at Anondolok hospital in Ranigunj which is almost 20 km away from her house. That’s why she has to take the bus and cover the remaining distance by bicycle, traveling miles after miles. Still, the girl is very energetic and full of confidence. According to her, the Kanyashree scheme has paved the way for her career.

Conclusion

The Kanyashree Prakalpa is a small endeavour by the State Government to provide financial support to girls students from the age of 13 years until the completion of their post graduate degrees. Besides this, every girl student receives an additional twenty-five thousand rupees after attaining 18 years of age. Our aim is to study the effectiveness of the Kanyashree one-time grant of twenty-five thousand rupees and to what extent this small amount can act as a stepping stone towards the financial empowerment of women. National data has revealed that the Kanyashree programme has played a great role in enhancing girls' enrolment and reduction in early child marriage.

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Disabled People's Organizations: Role, Functions and Effectiveness

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Abstract

Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs) are informal gatherings of disabled people who come together to reach specific goals related to their day-to-day lives. The People with Disabilities (PWDs) and their families work together in groups to address familiar challenges, develop personal strengths, and improve their quality of life. DPOs function as effective tools for poverty alleviation, human development, and social empowerment. The development and empowerment initiatives of these groups focus on ability building, education, health care, rehabilitation, livelihood, microcredit, lobbying and income generation activities.

This study aimed to understand the roles, functions and effectiveness of DPOs in Kerala, as well as the outcomes and effectiveness of these groups in achieving the sustainability and socio-economic development of PWDs. The study was explanatory in nature and used a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The samples included 641 PWDs, parents, and caregivers of PWDs from eight DPOs in Kerala. The outcomes of the study showed active participation of PWDs in all aspects of community life, such as political, social, and cultural activities and pursuits. After joining the groups, DPO members were more aware of their rights and privileges. The DPOs helped PWDs in generating income and supporting livelihood activities by developing savings and bank linkages. This study may serve as a strategy formulation for the government and other allied agencies such as NGOs and private institutions.

Keywords: *roles; functions; effectiveness; Disabled People's Organizations; people with disabilities; livelihood.*

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Introduction

People who are badly affected by one or more categories of impairments are referred to as Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). Since different local or national laws define disability differently, the definition of a person with a disability differs from place to place. But, generally speaking, a person with a handicap is someone unable to lead a social and functional life that is seen to be normal by their peers because of physical, mental, or emotional conditions. A PWD may also be denoted with terms pointing to specific disabling conditions. PWDs are those who “have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in combination with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others” (United Nations, 2006).

People with disabilities have the same rights, basic requirements, and difficulties as others when they are forcibly displaced. They do, however, encounter various extra obstacles. They are particularly vulnerable to hazards to their safety, including an increased risk of assault, exploitation, and abuse, as well as significant stigma. The group of people with disabilities is not uniform. They experience numerous and interrelated forms of discrimination, not only because of their handicap but also because of other factors, which may result in exclusions (Deepak et al., 2014).

Rehabilitation strategies for disabled people have changed over the past twenty years to include new strategies for helping people with disabilities live more independently, with their families, and in their communities. The assistance includes anything from mobility aids to adaptive equipment, inclusion in educational environments, other training facilities to self-employment and other income-generating activities (World Health Organization, 2010). An organization serves as a place for people to gather, talk, and represent their needs and interests to others. People can become visible members of the greater community with the use of the forum. Members can help one another by exchanging knowledge about referral services and other resources, and assisting in the decision-making process for families and individuals.

The desire of disabled persons to become their best selves has also greatly impacted this. Being self-reliant is insufficient for PWDs and many other people; they also require a community that supports them and promotes empathy. Community-Based Organizations (CBO) such as Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs) or SHGs give members a place to congregate, communicate, and advocate for their needs and interests. These organizations were created to allow impaired persons to

engage as a peer group, share ideas, and gain confidence that will improve their life (Young, R, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

Critical Disability Theory (CDT) is an emerging theoretical framework for the study and analysis of disability issues. CDT is derived from the critical social theory drawn by Max Horkheimer (1937). The CDT appears to be a notion that opens up new avenues for describing the patterns that characterise the socioeconomic circumstances of PWDs and how they function in various spheres of social life (Hosking, 2008). According to the Frankfurt School, the fundamental goal of CDT has always been to reform society's economic, political, and social structures to liberate humankind. The theory aims to promote empowerment and genuine equality rather than merely formal equality (Sztobryn-giercuszkiwicz, 2020). The purpose of CDT is to serve as an explanation, a tool, and a standard.

Research on disability directly results from social movements of PWDs, like DPOs. The CDT views the rights-based approach as an essential tool for promoting the equality claims of people with disabilities and for supporting their full integration into society in all aspects while bringing into society the value of diversity understood (Deepak et al., 2013). To change the conditions in which PWDs live, CDT must inevitably refer to lived experiences. The CDT is dedicated to practising and inquiry that involves a thorough examination of the roles and functions of DPOs, which are still not fully understood.

Need for the Study

Kerala has a significant proportion of disabled persons as a result of socio-economic problems, poverty, and lack of education. Due to neglect, discrimination, and exclusion from mainstream development initiatives, they frequently lack access to health care, education, housing, and opportunities for a livelihood. DPO members face even greater challenges because of poverty, mobility problems brought on by the state's hilly nature, a lack of awareness, and a lack of service providers.

The DPOs in Kerala take larger initiatives to address the needs of PWDs and enhance their quality of life through various intervention measures. In these circumstances, this study focuses on analysing the activities, programmes and strategies used by DPOs for PWDs, as well as the effects of those interventions in the life of PWDs.

Objectives of the Study

- i. To study the development and services rendered by Disabled People's Organisations in Kerala.
- ii. To examine the impact of income-generating programmes and, livelihood, activities, on the lives of PWDs.
- iii. To study the socio-economic improvements achieved by people with disabilities as members of Disabled People's Organisations.
- iv. To measure the functions and effectiveness of Disabled People's Organizations in the lives of people with disabilities, based on various socio-demographic variables.

Research Design

The present study has used a Mixed Research Method that involved the collection of quantitative data, followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data through the sequential explanatory strategy of mixed research method. An explanatory research design was employed for the investigation.

Universe

The persons with disabilities, parents and caregivers of the PWDs who are part of the District level Disabled Persons Organisations (DDPOs) in Kerala comprised the universe of this study. It included eight DPOs of differently-abled persons functioning effectively in Kerala.

Sample and Sampling

The study's samples were chosen using multi-stage random sampling techniques. The process was divided into three parts, starting with the selection of district-level organizations for disabled people using a systematic random sampling procedure. In the second step, organizations for disabled people that have been operating at full capacity for at least the past years were chosen through a systematic random sampling procedure. Eight districts were selected for the study out of a total of fourteen districts in Kerala. Lastly, 641 samples were selected using the stratified random sampling method, including parents and caregivers of people with disabilities between the ages of 18 and 65 and above, who were associated with eight District Level Disabled People's Organizations.

Tools of Data Collection

The data collection tool involved a semi-structured interview schedule, the Effectiveness of DPO in the life of PWDs Scale and focus group discussion.

Feasibility and Validity of the Scale: The pilot implementation of the scale was tested on 120 participants to test its validity and feasibility. The scale included 38 statements to evaluate the role and responsibilities of DPOs and 28 statements for PWDs. The statements covered a broad spectrum and allowed for selection based on the unique objectives of the DPOs and their programmes. The indicators and statements were appropriate for evaluating changes in the health, education, social lives, and economic empowerment of people with disabilities, as well as the contribution of DPOs to their lives and those of other community members. The supplementary questions provided more specific coverage of DPO elements and were selected depending on the specific goals and strategies of the programmes implemented.

Major Findings

Roles of DPOs

Development of DPOs: The DPOs adopted the traits of self-help, self-administration, self-responsibility, and group dynamism along with mutual support. The groups were owned and controlled by their members. 72.3 per cent of the respondents stated that the activities were dedicated to the community members without any external influence. The DPOs organised themselves into a bottom-up and multilevel federation system. Structures at the village-level (Cluster), block level and district-level federations were formed to provide support services to their members. Among the 83 respondents in the FGD, 73.5 per cent of them stated that these structures helped the poor and marginalised PWDs in overcoming their vulnerability and resource shortages.

Capacity Building of the Communities: Capacity-building activities like advocacy and lobbying training, leadership training, skill development initiatives and documentation had positive dimensions in the lives of PWDs. 86.7 per cent of the leaders described that the DPOs, as empowering agents, went beyond financial issues faced by beneficiaries and were deeply committed to resolving the problems and discriminations faced by them. Apart from achieving financial independence, the capacity-building measures of DPOs, also addressed independence within the

social sphere. 79.1 per cent of the members reported that they enjoyed an equal share in decision-making and access to resources within the family and community.

Quality and Sustainability of DPOs: The DPOs were active in the area and provided managerial and technical support to the people's organisations established under DPO initiatives. Community-based organisations like SHGs, clusters, and federations were formed and strengthened to ensure the continuity of the development process initiated by the DPOs. The clusters and federations were given continuous support from other humanitarian organisations to coordinate and monitor the effective functioning of the groups. 80.5 per cent of these groups were linked to government institutions or programmes to avail the schemes and services and this connection is still in effect.

Community-based Rehabilitation Strategies: The Community-based Rehabilitation activities were carried out by the DPOs to improve the quality of life and address the basic needs of people with disabilities.

Health: It was one of the main and most important aspects of the CBR matrix, to helping people with disabilities achieve their highest attainable standard of health. CBR personnel worked with family members to provide them with proper access to health services and ensure all aspects of their health needs were addressed.

Education: This has led to the fulfilment of potential, a sense of dignity, self-worth, and effective participation in society. 80.2 per cent of schools have trained teachers, a supportive environment, strong linkages with families and communities as well as resources to maintain proper hygiene and create a welcoming environment for children with disabilities.

Livelihood: 76.3 per cent of PWDs gained a livelihood and had easy access to social protection measures, enabling them to contribute economically to their families and communities. Additionally, 80.6 per cent of PWDs and their family members were provided with skill development opportunities, and various forms of support were given to participating in poverty reduction strategies and programmes of DPOs.

Social: 80.5 per cent of PWDs held meaningful social roles and responsibilities within their communities and families, and were viewed as equal members of society. The skills and resources provided through DPOs helped them in community development, and they were supported and encouraged to excel. 85.4 per cent of them replied that PWDs were recognised as valued members of society.

Empowerment: PWDs were enabled to come together and form SHGs and organisations to collectively address their common problems. Through proper training in advocacy and communication strategies 74.2 per cent of PWDs were enabled to speak up for themselves, make decisions, and effectively express their needs and desires.

The Functions of DPOs

The DPOs through their activities strive to promote an inclusive society without any discrimination, where every PWD exercises their right to a life of dignity on an equal basis with others. They work to end injustice towards PWDs by promoting equal opportunities and effective participation in all spheres of society.

Capacity Building: The capacity-building activities carried out by the eight DPOs in Kerala include the formation of SHGs for disabled people; creation of village-level clusters and panchayat-level federations; leadership training; classes on accounting, bookkeeping, advocacy and lobbying; interface meetings; programmes to raise awareness among the general public, schools, and all communities; and initiatives to inform people about social security programmes. It is evident that the DPOs conducted similar activities across all eight districts. Notably, the DPO in the Idukki district was more successful at carrying out member capacity-building activities, followed by DPOs in Kottayam, Trivandrum, and Ernakulam.

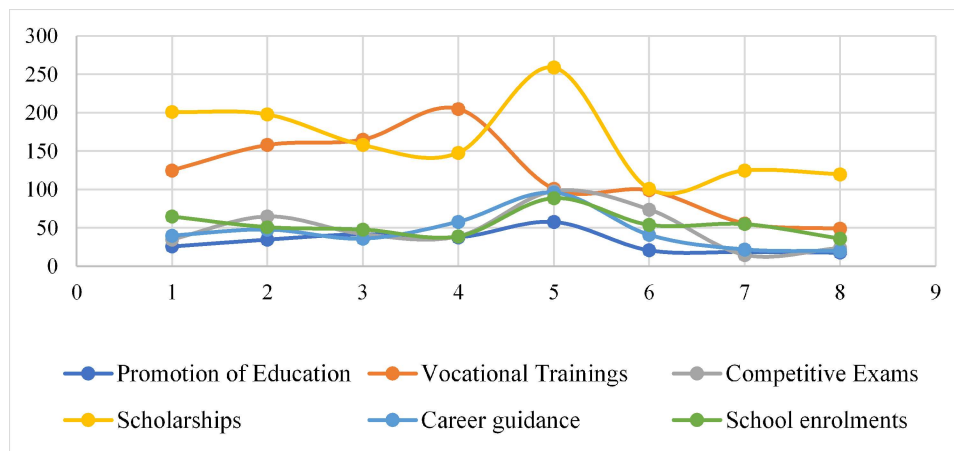
Income Generation and Livelihood: Income generation is considered an activity that helps individuals earn money and become financially sound. The activities carried out by DPOs generate income and support members' livelihoods to help them become financially independent. Principal tasks under the category of economic strengthening included distributing units of cows, goats, chicken, and rabbits, offering support for small businesses and cottage industries, and establishing tailoring. Through these endeavours, PWDs were able to increase their earnings and provide for their family's basic needs, and improve their standard of living.

Promotion of Healthy Living Conditions: Health promotion focuses on promoting life through various life-saving measures, healthy preventions and healthy preventive practices, and nutritious dietary intake. The eight districts carried out common activities, such as providing caregiving training to parents and caregivers of PWDs, raising awareness of good health practises, distributing assistive devices and appliances for PWDs, supporting PWDs with their medication and surgeries, conducting medical and screening camps in various districts, and placing more

emphasis on promoting nutrition supplements and giving home-based functional therapy to PWDs. Idukki and Kottayam, followed by Kollam and Trivandrum, dominated in most of the eight districts. The dominance might have been the result of DPOs' health accessibility initiatives, which varied depending on the socio-demography of the districts.

Education Promotion Activities: The figure below indicates the education promotion activities carried out by the DPOs for its members.

Figure 1: Education Promotion Activities



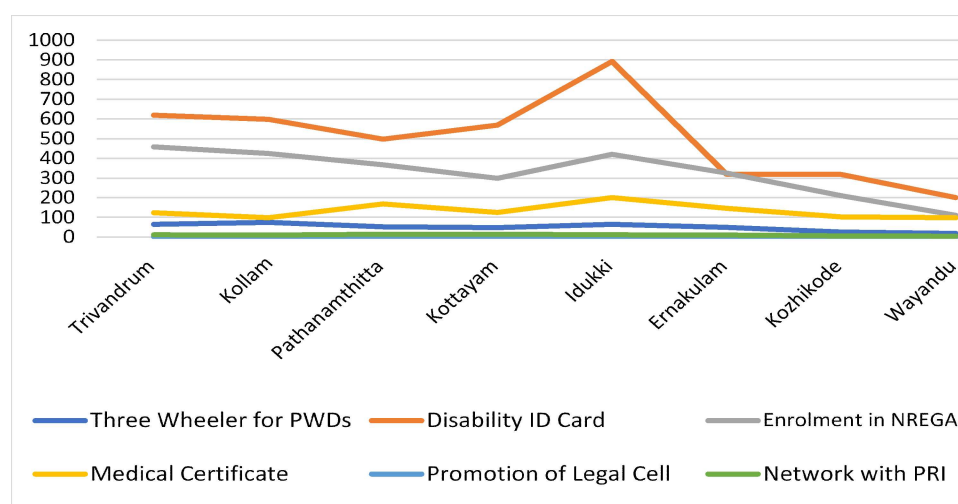
X - Axis: 1. Trivandrum, 2. Kollam, 3. Pathanamitta, 4. Kottayam, 5. Idukki, 6. Ernakulam, 7. Kozhikode, 8. Wayanad.

The DPOs carried out tasks such as promoting inclusive education, vocational training, competitive exam preparation, various scholarship programmes, career counselling, and school enrolment campaigns. The DPOs shared many of the same activities and placed more emphasis on the availability of scholarship programmes for children with disabilities as well as the development of vocational training or skill promotion for PWDs. Kottayam was the leader in offering PWDs several vocational and skill training programmes. All DPOs were able to dominate in this area, although DPOs from the Idukki district stood out for their success in promoting the most scholarship programmes. On the other hand, DPOs from Kottayam stood out for their success in offering the most vocational and skill training opportunities for PWDs. Due to its economic and social disadvantages, Idukki may provide students with

greater educational support than other districts. The accessibility and availability of educational possibilities are other issues for the children of Idukki.

Advocacy and Lobbying: The advocacy and lobbying efforts made by the DPOs in Kerala are shown in the graph. The DPOs engaged in activities such as advocating for the availability of a three-wheeled scooter for PWDs, obtaining disability cards for PWDs, enrolling PWDs and their caregivers in MNREGA, pursuing medical certificates, promoting a free legal cell where PWDs can obtain legal assistance, and establishing connections with Panchayat Raj Institutions.

Figure 2: Advocacy and Lobbying



It was observed that, among all other actions, concerted efforts for obtaining ID cards, enrolling in MNREGA, and obtaining medical certifications predominated. The DPOs in Idukki and Kottayam were distinct for conducting more activities and maintaining their lead. This can be because individuals in the hilly or isolated Idukki districts are unable to travel outside for work. Due to ill family members and lack of funds, the PWDs and their families were denied employment opportunities or were unable to go to work. As a result, they were enrolled in MNREGA to assist them in earning a living.

Effectiveness of DPOs in the Life of PWDs

The DPOs seem to be effective in poverty alleviation, and socio-economic empowerment, as they improve social participation and social inclusion of PWDs.

The empowerment of PWDs through SHGs makes them effective members of their families, and their voices are often recognized and heard within both the family and the community.

Effectiveness of DPOs and Duration of Membership

The analysis reflects the fact that the effectiveness of DPOs differs significantly based on the duration of membership of PWDs in their respective DPOs.

Table 1: Effectiveness of DPOs on Duration of Membership

Duration of Membership	N	Mean	SD	Df	F	Sig.
0 to 3 years	184	2.83	.390	638	34.004	.001
4 to 5 years	146	2.38	.623			
6 and above	311	2.55	.517			

The test revealed that the DPOs positively affect the life of PWDs based on the duration of their membership. The difference is significant at the 0.01 level. The mean score of the equal subsets of variables based on the length of membership in the DPOs is shown in the table above. The DPOs who had been members for four to five years continued to differ from those who had been members for two to three years.

The new members in the DPOs were identified as people with two to three years of membership duration. The causes of these variations in the efficacy of the DPOs in the life of the members may be related to challenging strength and the capacity for balanced-focused tasks. The newer DPOs members may also be in better physical and mental condition than the elderly DPOs members (Giraldo-Rodriguez et al., 2019). The members' capacity and participation might have increased because of their engagement in the DPOs' initiatives. Changes in the efficacy of DPOs' activities in members' lives could be brought on by their greater participation and knowledge of their rights (Grills et al., 2016).

Effectiveness of DPOs and Area of Living

The respondents were divided into four groups: urban, semi-urban, rural, and other areas of living. The variance analysis shown below illustrates the effects of DPOs on the area of living.

Table 2: Effectiveness of DPO on Area of Living

Area of living	N	Mean	SD	df	F	Sig.
Urban	89	2.69	.535	637	1.964	.118
Semi-urban	211	2.61	.535			
Rural	296	2.57	.542			
Other areas	45	2.47	.505			

Based on the areas of living of PWDs, there were no statistically significant differences in the effectiveness of DPOs and areas of living of PWDs. The calculated F- value is 1.964, which is lower than the table value and has not been considered significant. The people, especially those with disabilities, are often regarded as miserable in Kerala's hilly regions. The disabled are disadvantaged in many facets of social life and live in hilly terrain (Kleintjes et al., 2013). PWDs are prevented from receiving appropriate schooling, timely medical care, and socialisation because of the poor geography of the state (Visagie et al., 2017). This leads to a lack of knowledge about government programmes for PWDs, their rights and chances, lack of accessibility to public places and transportation, unhealthy physical appearance, and poor economic conditions, which worsens the situation for the unfortunate population (Armstrong, 1993).

Effectiveness of DPO and Employment of the Respondents

The respondent's employment was divided into four groups: unemployed, self-employed (a person who owns and operates the business and earns profit), wage labourers (a person employed for a small period on farms), and regular salaried employees (a person working regularly in some enterprise). A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the effectiveness of DPOs on the employment of the respondents.

Table 3: Effectiveness of DPO on the Employment of the Respondents

Employment	N	Mean	SD	Df	F	Sig.
Unemployed	98	2.70	.541	637	20.297	.001
Wage/Salaried	321	2.58	.525			
Regular Employed	68	2.18	.517			
Self Employed	154	2.73	.472			

The employment position of DPOs revealed that there were statistically significant differences between these four groups for each variable at the $p < 0.05$ level for all

four conditions. Thus it can be concluded that DPOs have a significant effect on the life of PWDs based on the duration of their employment of the PWDs. Armstrong et al. (1993) reported that the Ability Bhutan Society (ABS is a public benefit organisation established to understand that people with moderate to severe different abilities, particularly children and their families, have special needs) contributed to the employment opportunities of people with disabilities. This is done by encouraging those with skills (e.g., tailoring, radio or TV repair skills) in the group to train other members as their apprentices, provide job placement for them after their training was completed and ensure they earned sufficient income. Several studies suggested that forming disability SHGs or group savings and lending groups could be a way for persons with disabilities to generate income and support livelihood activities by developing savings, increasing confidence and facilitating access to microfinance and mainstream bank loans (Dhungana and Kusakabe, 2010; Kumaran, 2011; Miles et al., 2012; Cobley, 2013; Kleintjes et al., 2013).

Effectiveness of DPOs and Annual Income

The analysis of variance shown below demonstrates the effects of DPOs based on respondents' income.

Table 4: Effectiveness of DPO on Annual Income

Annual Income (Rs)	N	Mean	SD	Df	F	Sig.
Up to 25000	170	2.86	.397	637	42.455	.001
26000 to 50000	328	2.59	.511			
51000 to 75000	115	2.19	.528			
75000 & above	28	2.68	.612			

The respondent's income levels were divided into four groups: income up to 25000, 26000 – 50000, 51000 – 75000, and above 75000. The test results revealed that there were statistically significant differences between these four groups for each variable, with a 'p-value less than 0.05 making the difference significant at the 0.01 level. The reasons for these discrepancies are obvious: in comparison to lower-income earners, higher-income earners can independently fulfill their essential needs and requirements, such as their children's education, health services, and medications. Due to their constant reliance on others to achieve their fundamental necessities, those with lower income rely more on DPOs and the government than other SHG members do (Cobley et al., 2013). The variations in employment also affect the respondents' level of efficacy, where DPOs place a greater emphasis on empowering

the economically disadvantaged and more oppressed than others (Dhungana and Kusakabe, 2010).

Conclusion

The study indicated that the relentless efforts made by groups for disabled people and the different approaches they took to raise the standard of living for PWDs brought about social and economic change and promoted social inclusion. The strategies for social inclusion and empowerment, income generation activities, health-related interventions, and capacity building were the most effective in bringing about positive changes in the lives of the disabled. Social stigma and discrimination decreased, and those with disabilities were accepted as full members of society on par with those without impairments.

The majority of PWDs stated that the DPOs played a dynamic role in improving their living status. The majority agreed that awareness about financial independence and job opportunities provided by the DPOs, along with an increased quality of life, motivated the disabled to join the DPOs and develop their skills to become integral parts of society. The provided educational assistance, basic knowledge of rights, and communication skills helped PWDs find suitable jobs and become self-sufficient.

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Competency and Training Needs for Academic Counselors of IGNOU: Study of Science Discipline

• Vinita Katiyar¹ • Rita Chauhan²

Abstract

Academic counselors in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) play a vital role in supporting and empowering distance learners. It is indeed important for distance education institutions like IGNOU to maintain an appropriate student-counselor (SC) ratio to ensure effective support and guidance to its students, fostering a positive learning environment by continually assessing the SC ratio and engaging more academic counselors whenever required. Involving new academic counselors allows for diversity in expertise and perspectives, which can enrich the support services offered by the institution. This study examines the demographic and academic profile of newly empaneled academic counselors for science courses under the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) through an online questionnaire-based survey. It reveals a great range in the demographic and academic profiles of academic counselors. The study emphasizes the significance of training and orientation for capacity building, which is imperative for fulfilling the needs of students and facilitating their academic journey and learning. The article recommends the need for comprehensive training programmes and resources to develop the competency of academic counselors in ODL. Similar surveys for academic counselors in all other subject disciplines will put forward the key elements of training required for quality student support services.

Keywords: *Academic Counselors, Choice Based Credit System, Indira Gandhi National Open University, Training and Orientation.*

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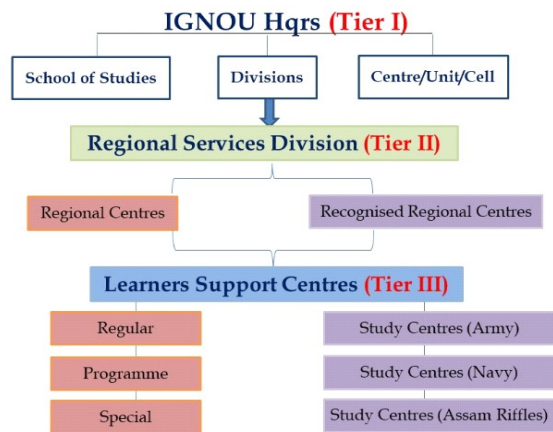
Introduction

Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) provides an excellent education via Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system. The University offers a range of high-quality, cutting-edge, and need-based programmes. An academic counselor is one of the most important links between IGNOU, its learners and the resources of learning. The academic counselors are the medium through which academic and non-academic needs of learners can be perceived and resolved accordingly (Reddy *et al.*, 2005).

In the context of ODL components, the gamut of student support services falls into two broad categories: academic or tutorial support and non-academic support (Reddy *et al.*, 2005).

Academic support	Non-academic support
Deals with supporting distance learners with cognitive, intellectual and knowledge issues pertaining to specific courses chosen by the learners. This is done by tutorials, practicals, feedback on assignments, assessments, etc.	Support of learners in the affective and organizational aspects of their studies, such as informing, advising and counselling them on personal matters that are hindering their study

IGNOU provides this support through its three-tier level of infrastructure:



All three components of student support services structure work in coordination and collaboration with each other to extend various types of academic and administrative support to the distance learners. IGNOU provides student support at *pre-admission or pre-entry level, during the academic programme support, and post programme stage.*

Role of academic counselors

Academic counselors play a crucial role in providing academic counselling to distance learners. According to Reddy et al. (2005), academic counselors perform three major roles, as:

- A tutor – To promote intellectual or academic support;
- A mentor – To provide guidance and skill development to reach the stated level; and
- A counselor–To provide organizational and emotional support.

Academic counselling

Academic counselling is a crucial part of student support, involving the provision of guidance, assistance, and encouragement to distance learners, facilitating their comfortable and productive academic journey. It covers information, advice, and discussion on all programme-related matters. This includes *tutoring* or course-centered problems. Academic counselling also addresses non-academic areas, such as personal difficulties or problems. This deals with personal specific problem and is referred to as *counselling*. The combination of tutoring and counselling is known as Academic Counselling (Reddy *et al.*, 2005). As per data obtained through the Monthly Monitoring Report (MMR) of the regional centres, a total of 73,726 and 55,268 academic counselling sessions (tutoring) were conducted during years 2020 and 2021³. The data depicts that despite the strict lockdown, the university continued its teaching-learning process at regional centres and maintained connection with its students.

Empanelment of Academic Counselors in IGNOU at a Glance

The Programme Coordinator, School of Study at IGNOU Hq. formulates course-wise eligibility criteria for different programmes to empanel academic counselors. Accordingly, approval or disapproval of subject experts are recommended by the

³<http://www.ignou.ac.in/ignou/aboutignou/division/rsd/monthlymonitoringreport>

School of Studies. Initially, the biodata of subject experts was accepted through offline mode. Starting from the year 2019, a dedicated online portal is operational, allowing prospective academic counselors to apply for empanelment under different programmes. Since the launch of the online portal, a total of 21,500 academic counselors have been empaneled through online portal (as of 22.07.2022). Cumulatively, there are nearly 52,000 approved and active academic counselors across all academic programmes at IGNOU, offering their services at different learner support centres.

Academic Counselors under CBCS Programme

The UGC has initiated several measures to bring equity, efficiency, and excellence within the Higher Education system. This was conceptualized in order to provide the learners with flexibility to study subjects and courses at their own pace, with a broad choice of interdisciplinary and intra-disciplinary, subjects, skill-based courses, and further mobility to move between different institutions for studies. At IGNOU, the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) has been adopted since the July 2019 sessions, and under this scheme, the BAG, BCOMG, and BSCG programmes were initially introduced. The CBCS programme offers a wide range of courses, leading to an increased demand for the empanelment of academic counselors. Since the launch of the programme in July 2019, the number of academic counselors empaneled under these three programmes across regional centres is as follows:

BSCG (Bachelor of Sciences General)	BAG (Bachelor of Arts General)	BCOMG (Bachelor of Commerce General)
1354	2807	688

Source: Online Academic Counselor Empanelment Portal (<https://eportal.ignou.ac.in/oace/EmployeeLogin.aspx>)

Orientation/Training Programme (OP/TP)

Online learning has long been on the periphery. The COVID-19 epidemic brought it to the forefront. Students believed that online learning has been a good choice in the light of the circumstances which have arisen in the recent past. However, there is a lot of space for improvement by adding components like active role teaching, flipped classroom techniques, case studies, and gamification to make it more effective and pertinent in meeting the demands of any future exigency (Chakraborty et al., 2021).

Like other ODL institutions, orientation and capacity building for study centre functionaries and academic counselors are integral parts of the functioning at IGNOU.

When need arises, regional centres of the university organize such training programmes in coordination with the school of studies concerned throughout the year. According to available data, the regional centres organized 132 and 75 orientation programmes for academic counselors in 2020 and 2021, respectively. Teleconferencing on Gyan Darshan TV Channel at Headquarters was also used as a mode for orientation programme for academic counselors.

It is clear from the data that a total of 4849 academic counselors, who are empaneled for courses, are under the CBCS programme. Since they are new in the system, there is a need to orient them for the CBCS system. A programme specific research study was carried out at IGNOU Hqrs. The research showed that lack of counselling, guidance and field work by academic counselors would be the reason for the learners' dissatisfaction and demotivation (Saumya and Tushar, 2020).

Shrivastava *et al.* (2020) suggested for redefining and redesigning the role of the learner support system and regional centres. Their study proposed that the role of existing academic counselors will need to be recast.

As mentioned above, academic counselors are drawn from the conventional system of higher education. Although periodical training is given to them by IGNOU, it is a difficult task to train such a massive number of counselors across the country. In fact, the role of an academic counselor is multifarious and requires both tutoring and counselling. For maintaining quality in academic counselling, the accumulation of multi-dimensional skills, attributes, and information is essential on the part of the counselor in ODL. Among these, possessing information at various levels about the ODL system is an enabling factor to effectively support isolated distance learners. Therefore, a comprehensive Information System is crucial for the capacity building of academic counselors in supporting distance learners and quality assurance process. This work explores and builds a comprehensive information system for the academic counselors in an ODL system, keeping IGNOU as the context.

Given the current online educational activities, it becomes necessary for academic counselors to receive training in educational utilities of ICT. There may be a possibility that the majority of teachers won't be ready to teach online courses (Totaro *et al.*, 2005).

A well-designed information system for the academic counselors in an ODL system is required to be in place in the context of IGNOU (Kishore, 2014). Keeping this in view, training of academic counselors is a routine process of academic

counselors in IGNOU. According to Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the former President of India, the concept of innovation centres around five key areas, viz., inquiry, creativity, technological capabilities, entrepreneurial skills, and moral leadership. These five key attributes need to be built into the education process so that learners can develop their inherent innovativeness and excel in their future endeavors (Das and Ghosh, 2011).

Rationale of the Study

Any organization must prioritize capacity development and personnel growth because these are essential tactics for advancing the organization (Asgar and Mythili, 2020). Operating in distance education is both challenging and demanding. In this context, academic counselors hold a very inimitable place in distance education. They serve as the bridge between institution and its students. To cater to the unique needs of distance education students, academic counselors from conventional systems need to be familiar with the distance education structure, its skeleton, as well as its functioning. Moreover, the pandemic has brought about a paradigm shift in the process of teaching-learning over the last two years.

Consequently, the majority of face-to-face educational activities been replaced by eLearning methods for the benefit of individuals and society as a whole. IGNOU has also adopted various web-enabled online tools and techniques to continue the range of teaching-learning activities for its students. It was an abrupt change, from face-to-face teaching-learning process to the ODL. This shift from traditional learning to completely online learning happened without any preparation and planning. Besides, IGNOU has offered many courses in the online mode as well. Thus, there is a pressing need and demand to train academic counselors to meet these new challenges, in addition to their ongoing role as academic counselors in the ODL mode.

In this regard, the feedback of academic counselors on the necessity and importance of orientation and training programme becomes essential. Keeping in view the aforesaid facts, it is proposed to explore the perception and attitude of academic counselors regarding the conduct of orientation programmes in the field of ODL and discipline-specific areas.

The study has been conducted as a survey research method through a semi-structured questionnaire. The findings of the study will undoubtedly help the trainers and organizers in designing and developing capacity-building activities for IGNOU's academic counselors.

Objectives of the Study

The main aim of the study is to assess the feedback of academic counselors on the “Need for Orientation Programme for Academic Counselors in ODL System”.

The specific objectives are:

1. To study the academic profile of the academic counselors; and
2. To assess the understanding of an academic counselor about the ODL system.

Review of Literature

Counselling and tutoring services are crucial in academic services of learning in ODL to ensure that the counselling needs of its distance learners are satisfied (Mehran, 2010). Due to this, the system of distance education greatly benefits from academic counselling (Mishra 2014). Despite lockdown due to COVID 19 pandemic, the engagement of students on online activities increased manyfold. There was a felt need for the teachers to interact with the students, work together and learn the behavior of students for different courses for engineering students (Jamalpur *et al.*, 2021; Katiyar, 2022).

New technological innovations may be very useful in planning and organizing training programmes for academic counselors (Snow and Coker, 2020). The authors also elucidated the elements of online counselor education programmes, which have been shown to be effective and provide knowledge useful to all counselor training programmes, regardless of the delivery method. Training and orientation programmes are not only vital for academic counselors, but are also useful for those who are involved in non-teaching staff roles (Asgar and Mythili, 2020).

Kishore (2014) has emphasized that comprehensive information system for academic counselors in an ODL system, with a focus on IGNOU, is a crucial requirement for ensuring quality assurance and for the capacity building of academic counselors in helping distance learners.

The high learner attrition rate is a significant issue for ODL institutions. There are certain factors which cause dropouts in ODL. Mohamed and Zainal (2013) identified some factors, namely, learners not being academically prepared, dissatisfaction with the online format, and lack of engagement in their learning. Mohamed and Zainal also suggested three ways to prevent attrition among learners, enhancing learners’ communication, providing learners’ mentoring, and increasing

learners' awareness. Counselors can address these issues with learners as they enter ODL institutions. The majority of ODL institutions undertake innovations to minimize student dropout rates.

Academic advising is a significant predictor of student retention in distance learning. A study's findings advocated providing practical academic advisory services to cater to the unique needs of students at the University of Cape Coast's College of Distance Education (Arhin *et al.*, 2017). It suggested that efficient academic advising must be conducted at the College of Distance Education (CoDE) to improve student retention. To raise awareness among students, student advising personnel should promote their services using a range of media (brochures, advising awareness days, video presentations, in-person class, phone calls, and personal emails). A flexible structure will make communication between students and advisors crucial to the growth of learner autonomy at CoDE.

Another study, which has significant implications for academic counselling, also recommended pre-examination group counselling for students before taking exams to make sure they approach exams at CoDE sensibly and with proper abilities and mindset (Ukwueze, 2012). This study was carried out in 2012, and provided two important recommendations: (i) "Counselors should always engage students in pre-examination group counselling to sensitize them (students) to reading and writing examinations and introduce them to appropriate study skills", and (ii) "More qualified counselors should be recruited and placed in study centres in a ratio of one counselor to 2,500 students to adequately cater to the needs of the ever increasing population of students in open and distance education who seek to improve academically and vocationally to live happy lives".

According to Das and Ghosh (2011), in the ODL system, academic counselling plays the most important role, creating a learning environment where learners interact with academic counselors to develop their knowledge and skills. In their study, the authors presented the perspective of academic counselors and learners. In continuation of the same study, this paper provides a learners' perspective on five competencies among academic counselors, viz., inquiry, creativity, technological capabilities, entrepreneurial skill and moral leadership.

Tutor Counselors conduct face-to-face counseling sessions for "at risk" learners (Latif *et al.*, 2006). Their study elucidated that advising and counselling are components of academic counseling at Open University Malaysia (OUM) for academic and non-academic matters. The effectiveness of academic counselling improves the academic performance of learners and the level of their persistence.

A study has reported that counselling is required due to competing work and family obligations. Financial stress, communication and approachability of academic staff, accessibility and user-friendliness of administrative systems, and assistance were other major issues. Potential remedies for these issues included time management, self-study techniques, stress management, and wealth creation (Maunganidze *et al.*, 2010).

Methodology

In this study, academic counselors empaneled under various Programmes of the School of Sciences (SOS) were included, with a total of 600 selected to ensure their significant representation. An electronic form Questionnaire titled “Need assessment on importance of Orientation/Training Programme for Academic Counselors” was used.

The face of the questionnaire elucidated the purpose of the survey in brief. The fully developed questionnaire (Google form) was emailed to the selected group of academic counselors for collecting the information.

Questionnaire designing

The open and distance learning system offers great flexibility in terms of access to education. In this survey-based study, academic counselors, who have been empaneled for various courses in the science discipline under the BSCG Programme of IGNOU, were invited to provide input on selected attributes related to demographic and academic profiles. They were also asked to share their feedback on various parameters indicating the significance of training and orientation programmes for academic counselors. The objectives of this research are:

1. To study the demographic profile of academic counselors;
2. To study the academic profile of academic counselors; and
3. To assess the role of academic counselors.

In this study, a total of 600 academic counselors who were experts in various courses, including, Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, Geology, and Geography of Science discipline provided with the Questionnaire via email. Out of 600 counselors, 86 completed the questionnaire and submitted their feedback through the Google form, which amounts to 14.35% participations. In the analysis presented below, techniques such as t-test, standard deviation and analysis of variance (ANOVA) are applied.

Result and Discussion

Demographic profile of academic counselors: The Demographic features of the participants included their social category, gender, area of residence, and age. The responses showed that the majority of the 86 total respondents (75%) belonged to the general category. Other social categories, such as OBC, SC, and ST, accounted for 25% of the total respondents.

Gender profile: The gender-wise participation of academic counselors indicates that the majority (67.44%) are males and 32.56% are females.

Locality of residence of academic counselors: The respondents were asked to provide information about the locality of where they reside, either urban or rural area. Among the 86 participants, 84.88% were from urban localities, whereas 15.12% resided in rural or remote areas.

Age profile of academic counselors: Another demographic characteristic considered was the age of participants. The age of participants was divided into five age brackets at ten-year intervals. This grouping was based on the minimum and maximum ages of participants. As shown in Table 1, the maximum of 76.74% of participants belong to the age bracket of 26–45 years. The remaining participants were in the age brackets from 46 to 66 years. The highest percentage, 64.3%, of respondents belong to the age bracket of 20–30 years, followed by 16.27% between 46–55 years, 5.81% in the age bracket of 56–65 years, and only 1.16% of respondents are above 65 years of age.

Table 1: Age brackets of academic counselors

Age group	No. of person	% Of total
26-35	34	39.53
36-45	32	37.20
46-55	14	16.27
56-65	5	5.81
66-75	1	1.16
Total	86	100.00

Academic profile of academic counselors: The academic counselors included their qualifications, discipline, employment status, type of institutions of their affiliation (where they work), and length of professional experiences. Out of the total participants, 69.77% of the respondents (60) held a Doctorate in their respective areas, and mere 6 (6.97%) academic counselors had experience in post-doctoral

study. However, 23.26% of academic counselors held a Master's Degree (Table 2).

Table 2. Level of qualification of academic counselors

Qualification	Number	% Of total
Masters	20	23.26
Doctorate	60	69.77
Post-doctorate	6	6.97
Total	86	100.00

Academic specialisation of academic counselors: Responses of subject specialization showed that 30.23% of academic counselors who responded to the survey belonged to Chemistry courses, followed by 24.42% from Zoology courses. Respondents from Geology, Geography, Physics, and Botany constitute only 2.33%, 9.30% and 12.79% respectively. 11.63% of academic counselors did not report their subject.

Table 3. Specialization of academic counselors

Area of expertise	Number	% Of total
Geography	8	9.30
Zoology	21	24.42
Chemistry	26	30.23
Botany	11	12.79
Physics	8	9.30
Geology	2	2.33
Any other	10	11.63
Total	86	100

As far as status of employment of academic counselors is concerned, most of them held permanent positions in various colleges and institutions. Out of the total 86 participants, 54 (72.4%) were working as permanent faculty, and 31.40% were holding temporary positions at different institutions, while 5 academic counselors were not working anywhere.

Institutional affiliation: It is a privilege for an ODL institution to empanel its academic counselors from reputable institutions and colleges. The type of institutions where the academic counselors were employed has been one of the parameters taken into consideration in this study. Out of the total, 66.28% of the academic counselors were working in Government institutions, while 22.58% were employed in private institutions.

Length of experience: The length of professional experience in terms of years has been obtained from the participants. It is observed that the majority of participants

had working experience ranging from 1 to 10 years (54.65%), while 27 had experience of 11 to 20 years.

Role as academic counselors: The work experience of academic counselors in student support-related activities of ODL IGNOU, prior experience of attending orientation and training programmes, and perception towards the need for orientation and training programmes as academic counselors were examined. Under this item, nearly half of the academic counselors were found to be engaged in the academic counselling activities in an open and distance learning system while 42 (48.84%) academic counselors have been involved in student support or academic counselling of an open and distance learning system.

Training/orientation programme need perceptions of academic counselors: Although more than 50% of academic counselors had the experience of working an open and distance education system, 91.86% felt the need for orientation and training programmes. The percentage of those who did not want to attend any training/orientation programme for academic counselors was minimal.

Academic Counselors' Perception on Experience of Training: Given its importance, IGNOU organizes training and orientation programmes for newly empaneled counselors. However, the survey shows that 65.12% of the counselors never got the opportunity to participate in any such training/orientation programme organized in the context of ODL training. Nevertheless, 34.88% of the participants attended training programmes.

Conclusion

Our study revealed that the feedback provided by the academic counselors is very useful and significant. Their responses indicated that an effective orientation programme provides numerous benefits, not just for the academic counselors, but also strengthens the entire student support services and ultimately improves the ODL system. The orientation and training of newly appointed academic counselors ensure they will settle into their roles smoothly and yield good results in terms of student satisfaction at IGNOU. In the ODL system, frequent training and orientation programmes, not only for academic counselors but also for other associated staff, have been considered very important for their professional development and effective role performance (Asgar and Mythili, 2020).

Demographic profile: Demographic features of the academic counselors were obtained with respect to Age, Locality of residence, gender and social category of

the academic counselors. As far as the social category of participants is concerned, the majority of academic counselors belonged to the general category, followed by Other Backward Castes. A very small number of counselors were from the Schedule Tribe category. Male participants of academic counselors responded on higher side compared to female ones. Similarly, empanelment of counselors residing in urban areas is on the higher side. According to the analysis, the mean age of respondents was 40.10 (± 8.76) years.

Academic profile of academic counselors: On analysis of the level of qualification of academic counselors, it was noticed that the majority of them were Ph.D. holders, followed by Master's Degree holders. The minimum basic qualification required to be a faculty member in a higher education institution is a Master's Degree. Only 6.97 academic counselors had postdoctoral level experiences. Empanelment of academic counselors was particularly high in the discipline of Zoology and Chemistry.

The employment status of academic counselors shows that the maximum number of participants were holding permanent positions in their respective institutions. They appear to be aware of it and acquainted with the role of subject experts/faculties as academic counselors at IGNOU. The inputs regarding the status of employment have been found to be in line with the type of institution where they work. The majority of the academic counselors were affiliated with institutions run by the government. Regarding the length of working experience of academic counselors, the mean value of work experience of academic counselors was 11.30 (± 8.85) years. The mean value of the experience of academic counselors matches with the average age of participants, which is 40 years. Generally, the age of the faculty joining the college is between 26 to 30 years.

The items included under this category are: (i) experience of working as an academic counselor for IGNOU students at the study center (Yes/NO); (ii) whether they attended any orientation or training programme organized for the capacity building of academic counselors (Yes/No); and (iii) the perception of participants on the use and need of organizing orientation and training for newly joined academic counselors in the context of IGNOU (Yes/No). In terms of the academic counselors' working experience, nearly half of them were involved in IGNOU's student support activities as academic counselors (51.16%). It also became evident that the majority of academic counselors (91.86%), irrespective of their age, experience, nature of the job, or type of institution, firmly emphasized the need for an orientation programme for academic counselors. Less than 35% of all respondents had no prior experience with training for the capacity building of academic counselors.

Suggestions and implications: The survey-based study provides important insights into the involvement of subject experts who are empaneled in various courses of the BSCG programme at IGNOU. The analysis of academic profile sheds light on the academic background of the academic counselors. In IGNOU, there is a practice of obtaining feedback from the academic counselor. However, not many studies specifically on the need assessment of training have been reported. The findings of this study may serve as a primary data source to design further research for a more in-depth study in this field. The findings of this study may also provided a wide spectrum for others to undertake research for other ODL institutions.

Future Implications

In light of the findings of this study, the following lines for future research could be suggested: (i) A comparative study of academic counselors from different programme and newly empaneled academic counselors may be conducted to find out significant trends and pattern in the area; (ii) A comparative study could also be conducted between academic counselors empaneled at different Regional Centres and intra-region, focusing on academic counselors from a specific regional centre; (iii) In the context of IGNOU, further research could be carried out in respect of academic counselors of other programmes like BAG, BCOM, Honors Programme, etc., where the CBCS has been introduced; (iv) IGNOU has launched several new interdisciplinary programmes leading to the empanelment of new academic counselors. Their feedback could also be obtained on the functioning of IGNOU; (v) Many of the IGNOU programmes now offer online modes of learning. In view of this, academic counselors need to be efficiently oriented to handle online components; and (vi) A Need assessment study could be conducted, taking into account the various operational and functional issues of Online programmes.

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Teacher's Interventions in Creating Barrier Free Environment under SSA's Inclusive Education: Study of Parents' Awareness

• D. Uma Devi¹

Abstract

Family is the first institution where children learn the process of socialization. Parents play a determining role in shaping the overall personality of the children in the family, as children acquire numerous valuable lessons from their elders. Hence, the role of parents in the upbringing of their children is vital, demanding utmost care throughout the process. While this is applicable to children in general, the role of parents with Children with Special Needs is doubly more crucial, requiring exceptional attention in dealing with them. They are tasked with taking care of both mental and physical growth of the CWSN children. Further, the Government has implemented the Right to Education Act, aiming to facilitate the enrollment of all school-aged children into the educational institutions without considering their caste, creed, race, gender, or disability. However, within this atmosphere, the CWSN children may hesitate to join their typically developing peers in school. Hence, parents must be aware of all the measures that are being taken in schools for making inclusive education more effective and ensuring active participation of all categories of children in the learning process. During this process, teachers take several steps/measures to facilitate the integration of typical and CWSN children in the teaching-learning journey. During such phases, parents, particularly those parents of CWSN children, should take note of all the interventions taken by teachers in the schools that are helpful for the overall development of the students. Therefore, this study has been undertaken to find out the level of awareness among parents regarding teachers' interventions in creating a barrier free environment within the schools, as part of the under inclusive education initiative of the SSA.

Keywords: *CWSN children, teachers, parents, teaching learning interventions.*

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Introduction

Family serves as the first social institution that provides the necessary physical facilities, leading to all-round psycho-physiological development in individuals. Parents as the first teachers, introduce their child to the world outside and make them familiar with the process of socialisation. The role of the parents and the family is crucial in the upbringing of the child. The child is like a clean slate on which parents seek to imbue values and morals, while also aiding the child's participation in social activities as members of the society. Further, being members of the family, children learn how to promote cooperation, coordination, and a competitive spirit through interactions at various levels. In the context of the CWSN, the role of parents is even more pronounced in the process of socialization. Usually, parents of CWSN, are restricted to provide maximum support to their child in terms of meeting physiological and psychological needs, facilitating their integration into the mainstream society. In the light of the above, an attempt has been made to study the profile of the parents of CWSN, status of disability in the family, discrimination directed towards CWSN from various sources, parents' awareness regarding the facilities offered by schools for CWSN, provisions for mainstreaming CWSN, impact of physiotherapy provision on them, the role of special teachers in the integration of CWSN into mainstreaming education, and suggestions from parents on creating a barrier free environment in the schools. In this context, a review of the related research and writings becomes very relevant and crucial.

Review of Literature

Banerjee N. (1988) investigated the adjustment of blind students in secondary schools. Khan, A. H. (1988) found that blind children were less achievement-oriented, self-reliant, and attributed failure to themselves. They were found to be more self-centred, neurotic and withdrawn. Sahoo, J. (1991) reported lower self-concept but better adjustment of deaf children compared to blind children. On the other hand, Lal, A. (1992) reported differences between blind and sighted students on acceptance worthiness, anxiety, and participation scales. Mandravalli M.R. (1991) discovered developmental lag in VH children on cognitive development tasks. Kapoor (1990) studied the cognitive functioning and perspective taking ability of hearing-impaired children. Sharma, P. (1989) reported lower linguistic competence in hearing-impaired children as compared to children with normal hearing.

In the evaluative study of Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC), Verma, J. (2002), found that 83% of the teachers were familiar with the concept of

IEDC. Julka, A. (2003) conducted a study on strengthening the teacher education curriculum of DIETs from the perspective of Special Needs Education and advocated the revision of the existing teacher education course contents to prepare teachers to respond to diversities in the classroom. Soni, R.B.L. (2003), while studying the perceptions of parents, teachers, and students about education for disabled children, found no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female respondents from different age groups. Verma, J. (2004) studied the role of Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) and found several areas in which PTAs helped promote inclusive education. Singh, V.K. (2004) conducted a comparative study on visually impaired boys and girls from western Madhya Pradesh regarding the level of aspiration under the Integrated Education for the disabled scheme at the middle school level and found significant differences between the visually impaired and sighted children.

Seetharam, R. (2005) conducted a study on the social integration of children with mild and moderate disabilities in mainstream classrooms under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). He found that the disabled students at the primary level scored higher in peer group affiliation and academic performance than disabled students at the middle school level. Psycho-physical developmental stages were significantly related to peer group affiliation and academic performance. Julka, A. (2005) found that there were a number of diverse but effective practices in the states for the education of children with disabilities. However, nearly half of the disabled population was still not in any school. In a study on the Review of instructional adaptations Julka, A. (2005) found that the majority of teachers in integrated/inclusive schools did not adapt instructions frequently in the classroom to meet the special needs of the children. Most teachers preferred the use of lecture method for teaching. The lack of knowledge of the teachers and lack of empowerment among them was the reason for not making any adaptations. Soni, R.B.L. (2005) conducted a study on interventions for the education of children with disabilities. The major findings include: the facilities for education of children with disabilities were in the initial stages in HP and MP and non-existent in Meghalaya and Mizoram; and no special teachers to help children with disabilities were appointed in any of the states. While studying the problems of retention of learners as perceived by teachers and community with reference to classroom process in Northeastern states, he found that, in Meghalaya, factors within school and classroom processes were not conducive for the retention of children, the average quality of classroom processes was very low, including the use of corporal punishment to discipline students.

Verma, J. (2005) investigated Innovative teaching strategies for promoting Inclusive Education. The findings of the study show that the teachers in the

experimental group initial had reservations about the use of cooperative teaching strategies. Chudasama, G., Jadeja, Y. & Maheta, D. (2006) studied the impact of the IEDC scheme under SSA. Venkatesh, M.N. (2006) studied the schemes and programmes of Inclusive education for disabled children in Karnataka. The study on the Impact of Residential Bridge courses under IED, conducted by Rastogi & Batra (2008), found that out of 19,386 disabled from sampled districts, 16,830 (86.8%) were enrolled and attending schools in nearby Parishadiya schools (schools in Panchayatiraj system at block [mandal] and village panchayats). Out of the remaining 2556 children who were out of regular schooling system, 490 (19.2%) attended residential bridge courses and got integrated in nearby Parishadiya schools.

The review of literature above clearly shows that CWSNs still face problems accessing education. For making education more accessible to them, the parents need to have awareness about the provisions being implemented for the benefit of CWSN and to retain them in the schools. This study has been undertaken with these considerations in minds.

Objectives of the study

- To study the profile of parents of CWSN;
- To identify the practices of discrimination if any towards the CWSN from various sources;
- To assess the parent's awareness about facilities provided by the schools for CWSN;
- To assess the impact of physiotherapy, role of special teachers in mainstreaming the CWSN as perceived by the parents; and
- To enlist suggestions of parents for creating barrier free environment in the schools for promotion of education among CWSN children.

Research Questions

In the light of the above, the following research questions were framed:

- What is the profile of the parents of CWSN?
- Are there any practices of discrimination shown towards the CWSN from various sources?
- Whether the parents possess awareness about the facilities provided by schools for the CWSN;
- What is the impact of physiotherapy, and role of special teachers in mainstreaming the CWSN as perceived by the parents? and

- What are the parents' suggestions for creating barrier free environment in the schools for promotion of education among CWSN children?

In order to provide answers to these research questions, there is a need to collect primary and secondary information from different sources. To collect primary data, the following methodology was adopted: developing the tools, selecting sample, collection of the data, and analysis to draw the inferences.

Methodology

The study was conducted in the state of Andhra Pradesh. It has two clear-cut geographical regions viz., Rayalaseema and Coastal Andhra. There are nine districts in Coastal Andhra and four in Rayalaseema. As the study covered both the regions, two districts having highest number of CWSNs from Coastal Andhra viz., East Godavari and Visakhapatnam, and one district from Rayalaseema viz., Kurnool having highest number of CWSN in the schools were chosen in the first stage of sample selection. In the later stage, three divisions in each district having the highest number of CWSNs were chosen. From each division, ten mandals having the highest number of CWSN were selected. From among the CWSN in the selected mandals, five parents of the Children with Special Needs enrolled and attending the schools were selected randomly as sample of the study. Thus, the total sample comprises one hundred fifty parents of the CWSN.

Data gathering devices

The study is intended to identify the awareness of parents of CWSN about the measures taken for creation of barrier free environment in the schools. In light of the study's objectives, we devised a schedule comprising two sections to gather information from the parents. Section I contains socio-economic profile of the parents and section II contains their opinions towards school, education of their children, support extended by the teachers, their knowledge about the interventions of the Government, their suggestions for creating barrier free environment in the schools for promotion of education among CWSN children, etc.

Data collection and analysis

The schedule developed by us was administered to the parents of CWSN. Before administering the schedules, we consulted the Inclusive Education Coordinators of the selected districts for their cooperation in getting the primary data. We also established a good rapport with the parents in our sample, explaining the objectives of the study and the methods of responding to the schedules. The data collected was

both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Hence, we analyzed the data by using descriptive analysis techniques. The secondary data relating to the CWSN, measures taken to enroll the children, creation of barrier free environment, etc., were collected from SSA officials.

Findings of the study

1. Profile of parents

The parents play an important role in mainstreaming CWSN. The care provided by them largely depends upon their socio-economic background. Keeping this in view, an attempt has been made in this section to study the personal characteristics of parents of CWSN.

Table 1: Personal Characteristics of Parents of CWSN

S. No.	Group	Character	N (150)	%
1.	Sex	Male	127	84.67
		Female	23	15.33
2.	Age	<30 years	15	10.00
		31-45 years	95	63.33
		46 years and above	40	26.67
3.	Education	Illiterates	46	30.67
		Literate with 5 th class	28	18.67
		High school	37	24.67
		Intermediate	14	9.33
		Graduation and above	25	16.67
4.	Occupation	Casual labour	29	13.33
		Agriculturists	47	31.33
		Employment	26	17.33
		Service sector	23	15.33
		Business	25	16.67
5.	Monthly income	Up to Rs.2000/-	16	10.67
		Rs.2001/- to 5000/-	63	42.00
		Rs.5001/-to 10000/-	46	24.00
		Rs.10001/- and above	25	16.67
6.	Other income	Nil income	82	54.67
		Up to Rs.2000/-	37	24.67
		Rs.2001/- to 5000/-	18	12.00
		Rs.5001/-to 10000/-	8	5.33
		Rs.10001/- and above	6	4.00
7.	No. of family members	3 members	14	9.33
		4 members	64	42.67
		5 members	41	27.33
		6 members	17	11.33
		7 members and above	14	9.33

The classification of the sample shows that the majority of the parents are men, constituting 84.67% only 15.33% are females. The age-wise classification shows that nearly two thirds of them fall within the 31-45 years bracket, followed by 40 individuals (26.67%) who are in the 46 years and above age group. The representation of parents aged below 30 years is only 10%. In respect of education, it is evident that 30.67% are illiterate. Those with educational levels of High School and Pre-university constitute approximately 40%, while graduates and those with higher education account only 16.67%.

The occupational profile of the sample reveals that the majority of them are agriculturists (31.33%), followed by the employed (17.33%), involved in business (16.67%) and working in the service sector (15.33%). On the other hand, only 13.33% of the parents belong to casual labour group. The income of the parents shows that 52% of parents earn below Rs. 5,000/- per month. About one-fourth (24%) have a monthly income between 5000-10,000, while 16% have an income above Rs.10,000/-. Nearly 55% of the sample respondents do not have any other source of income, and one-third of those with additional income earn up to Rs. 5,000 per month. The family size reveals that nearly 50% of families comprise 3-4 members, while 5-6 members account for nearly 40%. Larger families, with 7 members and above, constitute 9.33% of the sample.

In short, from the personal profile of parents of CWSN we learn that the majority are men, have attained a high school education, are agriculturists, and belong to lower income groups. More than 52% earn a monthly income of Rs. 5,000 and below. On an average, families consist of 4-5 members.

2. Status of Disability

To determine the status of disability within the family, parents were asked to provide information concerning the number of their CWSN, the nature of their disability, the extent (percentage) of the disability, whether any support is required, and the person in the family responsible for assisting the CWSN child.

The responses of the parents show that in the majority of the cases, there is only one CWSN/person in the family. The nature of the disability shows that more than one fourth of them are blind followed by those with retardation and orthopaedic disabilities. The sample also includes persons with low vision, speech and hearing impairments, and multiple disabilities. It shows that the sample contains a wide range of disability forms, characteristic of the CWSN groups.

Table 2: Status of Disability in the Family

S. No.	Item	Response	N	%
1	No. of children with disability	1 member	130	86.67
		2 members	20	13.33
2	Nature of disability	Low vision	12	8.00
		Blind	40	26.67
		Deaf and Dumb	12	8.00
		Mentally Retarded	10	6.67
		Mentally disabled	34	22.67
		Locomotors	30	20.00
		Multiple Disability	12	8.00
3	Percentage of Disability	< 50%	19	12.67
		51-60%	30	20.00
		61-70%	20	13.33
		71-80%	19	12.67
		81% above	62	41.33
4	Support required	Yes	88	58.67
		No	62	41.33
5	Persons assisting the CWSN	Mother	33	22.00
		Father	25	16.67
		Siblings	30	20.00

3. Discrimination of the CWSN

CWSN are a marginalized group in society. Undoubtedly, there exists a sympathetic feeling towards them from all corners of society. However, they continue to be discriminated at various levels and from multiple sources, including household, teachers, peer groups, etc. The information collected from parents in this context reveals that their children have not faced discrimination either from family members or from various school related sources. Further, the majority of parents (80%) revealed that they faced no difficulties in enrolling their children in schools. Conversely, only 20% of them reported facing challenges during the enrollment process. However, even those who experienced difficulties ultimately succeeded in enrolling their children.

4. Facilities for CWSN in the Schools

Information was collected from the parents to assess their knowledge about the facilities available in schools. Their response revealed that the facilities available in schools include Braille books, physical facilities such as wheel chairs, walking sticks and hearing aids. Further, the parents were asked to list out the additional facilities

required in the schools. It emerged that 73.33% of the parents indicated that additional facilities are required in the schools. For Braille books, 35.33% of parents confirmed that the schools possessed them, while one fourth of the parents indicated that the schools provide facilities such as wheel chairs, hearing aids, walking sticks, etc.

Out of the 41 regular facilities that should be available in the school, and are listed to assess parents' awareness, only for 11 facilities did at least 10 per cent of the parents seem to know about their availability in the school. These facilities include the library/books, beds & bed sheets, toilets, physiotherapy, AV aids, hostel facility, braille books, play-grounds, playing kits, Audio aids/sets, and class rooms. In respect of nearly 30 of the remaining facilities on the list, not even 10 per cent of the parents are aware of their availability in the school. These include audio cassettes, ramps, medical facilities, separate toilets for girls, computers, chess, meal facilities, VET, radios/tape recorders, Braille slates, walking sticks, sliding rocks, slates/slate pencils, gyms, desks, computer labs, Abacuses, wheel-chairs, teaching aids, ipads, bicycles, electrical stimulators, pearled bars, standing frames, quarter-step steaming tables, C.P. chairs, balance board, games, tricycles, and internet access. This indicates a serious shortage in the availability of these facilities in regular schools, despite being mandated.

5. Mainstreaming of the CWSN

The teachers play a pivotal role in mainstreaming the CWSN through creating disabled-friendly environment for their interaction with typically developing children, promoting aptitude for studies, and keeping harmony in the school. The care provided by teachers to CWSN helps the children overcome the inferiority complex and instills a sense of self-confidence in them. Keeping this view, information was collected from parents regarding the role played by teachers in ensuring their wards' comfort in school and the type of support they expect from the teachers.

It is evident that all parents feel that their children are able to understand the teachers' instruction and the support provided to them for their studies. Parental response is also very high (above 80%) regarding teachers' utilisation of teaching aids during curriculum delivery to facilitate learning, as well as encouraging students to mingle with their peers from other sections without any reservations. In addition, parents were of the opinion (between 30-50%) that teachers are taking special initiatives for CWSN, including using innovative teaching methods through special classes and the use of special teaching aids.

6. Support Extended by Teachers

The support extended by teachers to CWSN has received positive ratings from parents, with over 10% to 100% agreement on variables like: the teachers' dedication in teaching CWSN, use of visual aids, focus on special students, preparation and procurement of Braille books suitable for the blind and low vision, utilisation of audio-visual aids in the curriculum transactions, assigning copy writing tasks, preparing model papers, providing notes to students, conducting examinations, participating in training to teach CWSN, and creating a friendly atmosphere. On the contrary, less than 10% parents answered in the affirmative in respect of teachers' encouragement and coaching for competitive examinations, scheduling extra classes, use of teaching-learning materials and computers, arranging home tuitions, and offering vocational education and training to promote skill development.

7. Physiotherapy

The majority of CWSN in schools fall under the multiple disabilities category, with some being orthopedically related and, others mentally retarded to some extent. Physiotherapy helps these categories in overcoming their disabilities and leading more comfortable lives. Recognising the importance of physiotherapy, schools meant for inclusive education appointed physiotherapists to serve CWSN. The Physiotherapist is hired on either a part-time or full-time, depending on the needs and strength of CWSN. The physiotherapist is to provide the services not only to the CWSN students within the school premises but is also expected to conduct visits to the students' residence for physiotherapy sessions.

Feedback from parents regarding this aspect revealed that 26.67% of them affirmed that the physiotherapist shows special interest in their wards visits their residences. They believe that this has led to improvement in their children's health status, self-confidence, regular attendance at schools, etc. This is an indication that physiotherapy plays an important role in elevating the health status and raising the confidence level among these children which has promoted regular school attendance as well.

8. Role of Teachers

All schools embracing inclusive education have appointed teachers equipped with special qualifications or those who have received training in special education. To assess the parents' awareness regarding the role of teachers in curriculum

transaction and mainstreaming the CWSN, they were asked to indicate the impact generated by teachers in creating a conducive environment for CWSN, facilitating curriculum implementation, offering specialised facilities, and motivating other stakeholders to take measures for the betterment of CWSN.

Based on responses of the parents, as indicated by percentage, the children are: able to understand the lessons taught by the special teachers, attend school regularly (95%), experience an engaging teaching-learning process through the use of using teaching aids (95%), and receive increased attention from teachers (78%). The schools organize parental awareness programmes fostering greater parental responsibility towards CWSN. Additionally, a friendly environment is cultivated in schools, aiding CWSN in overcoming the disabilities. Peer groups also contribute to the children's progress, along with family members actively encouraging their wards to mingle with the their typically developing peers.

In addition, the parents took deliberate steps to reveal the strategies adopted by the school and teachers to help the children overcome their disabilities. Over 90% of parents were aware of the teachers' dedicated and special efforts to increase the learning capacity of the children. Nearly all parents were aware that the schools provide resources such as Braille books, wheel chairs, walking sticks, hearing aids, etc. and encourage their children to interact with their typically developing peers, facilitating the process of overcoming disabilities. At the same time, parents also suggested the need for peer group support for their children's education, the inculcation of self confidence among CWSNs, and other measures aimed at their seamless integration into regular schools.

Conclusion

On the whole, based on the profile of the sample parents, it can be summarised that majority of them are males, middle aged, high school educated, agriculturists, belonging to low-income groups with four or more members in the family. The majority of households have a disabled family member, falling under the visibility or mentally disabled category. The parents were of the opinion that CWSN do not face discrimination at the school, and that the institution provides adequate facilities. But, in respect of other facilities, there is a desire among parents for additional amenities like A-V aids, medical facilities, necessary appliances, etc. In context of CSWN in schools, parents are forthright that the teachers have played an important role in mainstreaming their children and also supported them in their academic endeavours. It emerges from the study that physiotherapy stands out as a particularly beneficial

facility contributing to increased self-confidence, regularity, and overall health status among CWSN. From the responses it becomes clear that parents are well-informed about their children's progress, actively attending the parental awareness programmes, parent-teacher interaction meetings, and similar events. The study shows that overall, the parents are satisfied with the facilities offered by the schools and the teachers' treatment of their children.

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Relevance of Indian Educational Thoughts as per National Education Policy 2020

• Saru Joshi¹

Abstract

The saying “The present is embedded in the past” is a well-worn truism. The glory of ancient India, while illuminating the present, makes her future fascinating. Ancient Indian education evolved on the foundations of its philosophical traditions. This article seeks to present the relevance of the philosophical perspectives of education in light of NEP 2020’s views and recommendations. The NEP declares that the rich heritage of ancient Indian knowledge has been a guiding spirit in its policy perspective. It shows how the western concept of “learning by doing and experiential learning” was already practiced during the ancient Indian system. Thus, NEP’s emphasis on the Indian knowledge system and the various educational philosophies and thinkers has been set up as the backdrop to examine the educational thoughts and philosophies of some leading thinkers and leaders. Consequently, this article sheds new light on the vision indicated in NEP that the education system from now on will be permeated by the educational philosophies and thinkers of India through the ages, transforming India and its education system. A few leading educational thinkers taken up here to illustrate the interface with NEP 2020’s vision include Swami Vivekananda, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Mahatma Gandhi, and Rabindranath Tagore.

Keywords: *Ancient education, Indian knowledge system, Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda, Raja Ram Roy, NEP 2020, Yoga.*

Introduction

After India gained Independence in 1947, there were three sets of guidelines and statements for the National Education Policy: the first in 1968, known as the Resolution on National Policy on Education; the second in 1986, referred to as the

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National Policy on Education, 1986; and the third, National Policy on Education, 1992 (Revised). The fourth attempt, made in 2016 under T.S.R. Subramanian, remained a draft and was rejected by the government in 2016-17. The current National Education Policy, 2020, was initially presented as a draft in 2019, formulated under the chairmanship of K. Kasturirangan. It was finally adopted by the Parliament in July 2020. Unlike its predecessors, NEP 2020 takes a clear stance that its Policy perspective has been guided by the knowledge system and educational philosophies of ancient India, along with its eternal knowledge that evolved over the millennia. This policy asserts that the ancient Indian knowledge system, perfected through the centuries holds value comparable to any modern knowledge system and educational system. It declared that the knowledge system and the educational philosophies that evolved from ancient times will be fostered and nurtured through further studies and research in HE institutions, alongside the inclusion of related courses in the school education system. The relevance of the Indian knowledge and education system, which has evolved over millennia, gains significance in the context of NEP 2020. This article seeks to present how the education system has implemented the NEP recommendations which would be of enormous interest to the academic community and public at large.

Promotion of Rich Indian Knowledge Systems in Education: NEP Vision

The NEP 2020 is forthright in its vision and advocacy. It says, “the rich heritage of ancient and eternal Indian knowledge and thought has been a guiding light for this Policy. The pursuit of knowledge (*Jnan*), wisdom (*Pragyaa*), and truth (*Satya*) was always considered in Indian thought and philosophy as the highest human goal. The aim of education in ancient India was not merely the acquisition of knowledge as preparation for life in this world or beyond schooling, but for the complete realization and liberation of the self” (MHRD, 2020: 4).

NEP 2020 goes on to declare that world-class institutions of ancient India such as Takshashila, Nalanda, Vikramshila, and Vallabhi, set the highest standards of multidisciplinary teaching and research. These institutions welcomed scholars and students from diverse backgrounds and countries. The Indian education system produced great scholars such as Charaka, Susruta, Aryabhata, Varahamihira, Bhaskaracharya, Brahmagupta, Chanakya, Chakrapani Datta, Madhava, Panini, Patanjali, Nagarjuna, Gautama, Pingala, Sankardev, Maitreyi, Gargi and Thiruvalluvar, among numerous others. These luminaries made seminal contributions to world knowledge across diverse fields such as mathematics, astronomy, metallurgy, medical science and surgery, civil engineering, architecture, shipbuilding and navigation, yoga, fine arts, chess, and more. Indian culture and philosophy have had a strong influence

on the world. These rich legacies as part of world heritage must not only be nurtured and preserved for posterity but also be subject to research, enhancement, and innovative applications through our education system (MHRD, 2020).

NEP 2020 explains that “Knowledge of India” will include knowledge from ancient India as well as its contributions to modern India, alongside a clear understanding of India’s future aspirations in domains such as education, health, environment, etc. It declares that these elements will be incorporated in an accurate and scientific manner throughout the school curriculum wherever relevant; in particular, Indian Knowledge Systems, including tribal knowledge and indigenous and traditional ways of learning, will be covered and included in subjects like mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, yoga, architecture, medicine, agriculture, engineering, linguistics, literature, sports, games, governance, polity, as well as in conservation. Specific courses in tribal ethno-medicinal practices, forest management, traditional (organic) crop cultivation, natural farming, etc., will also be made available. An engaging elective course on Indian Knowledge Systems will also be available to students in secondary schools. Competitions may be held in schools for learning various topics and subjects through enjoyable and indigenous games. Video documentaries featuring inspirational luminaries of India, both ancient and modern, especially in the realm of science and beyond, will be presented at appropriate intervals within the school curriculum. Students will be encouraged to visit different States as part of cultural exchange programmes (MHRD, 2020: 16).

Internationalization of Indian Knowledge: NEP 2020 declares that the Indian knowledge system would be promoted as part of the education system in India through the implementation of a new curriculum and pedagogy. This effort aims to attract a larger number of international students to study in India and provide greater mobility for Indian students who wish to visit, study, transfer credits, or carry out research at institutions abroad, and vice versa. Courses and programmes in subjects, such as Indology, Indian languages, AYUSH systems of medicine, yoga, arts, music, history, culture, and modern India would be offered. Internationally relevant curricula in the sciences, social sciences, and other fields; meaningful opportunities for social engagement; ensuring quality residential facilities; and offering on-campus support, etc., will be fostered to attain global quality standards, attracting greater numbers of international students, and achieving the goal of ‘internationalization at home’ (MHRD, 2020: 39).

In respect of yoga in health education, NEP says that our healthcare education system should integrate various disciplines, meaning that all students of allopathic medical education should have a basic understanding of Ayurveda, Yoga and

Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy (AYUSH), and vice versa. There shall also be a much greater emphasis on preventive healthcare and community medicine across all forms of healthcare education (MHRD, 2020: 50).

Some Leading Educational Thinkers and their Educational Vision

Swami Vivekananda's Education Philosophy

Vivekananda believed that education is the manifestation of perfection already within individuals. He thought it was a pity that the existing system of education did not enable a person to stand on his own feet, nor did it teach him self-confidence and self-respect. To Vivekananda, education was not merely the collection of information, but something more meaningful; he felt that education should be man-making, life giving and character-building. To him, education was a process of assimilation of noble ideas.

He emphasised that education is not the amount of information that you put into your brain to run riot there, remaining undigested all your life. Instead, he advocated for an education that helps in the building of a meaningful life, contributes to person grow, and character development through the assimilation of ideas.

Swami Vivekananda felt that the education that young boys and girls received was very negative. He observed that they lacked confidence and self-respect due to this kind of education, so, he argued that only positive education should be given to children. Swami Vivekananda believed if young boys and girls are encouraged and are not unnecessarily criticized all the time, they would naturally improve over time. He also urged the youth to take on responsibility of spreading education among the masses. "Tell them and make them understand, You are our brothers—a part and parcel of our bodies, and we love you and never hate you" he encouraged.¹

Raja Ram Mohan Roy as an Educational and Social Reformer

Raja Ram Mohan Roy is considered as one of the pivotal leaders of modern India, who has he led one of the greatest socio-religious movements. He founded the Brahmo Samaj in 1898 and championed the movement for abolition of social evils like Sati, and spearheaded popularizing the study of English, modern medicine, technology, and science. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, an Indian religious, social, educational reformer and humanitarian, who challenged traditional Hindu culture and indicated the lines of progress for Indian societies under British rule. The Brahmo Samaj was an influential Indian socio-religious reform movement during the Bengal Renaissance.

His influence was visible in the fields of politics, public administration, society, religion, as well as education. Raja Ram Mohan Roy may rightly be called the precursor to the modern system of education in India (Mandal and Behera, 2015: 91).

Educational Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore

The principles of Tagore's philosophy of education can be outlined as follows: The child should be educated through his mother tongue; while learning, the child should get freedom; to develop the child's creative instincts, an opportunity should be given for self-expression; the child should be educated in and around nature, away from the city; education should bring about a harmonious development of all the powers of the child; and lastly, the child should have the opportunity to learn freely in the environment of nature.

According to Rabindranath Tagore, *the concept of education* is that of the body and the soul, which, in the lap of nature, develops in a healthy and peaceful state of happiness.

The Meaning of Education: Gurudev wanted an education in India that could be intimately connected with the environment. He believed that the aim of education was to instill a sense of oneness with all nature and life within each individual. For a well rounded individual, he considered the spirit of oneness to be the most important. His vision was for students to develop the ability to harmonize with nature and engage as responsible members of society².

He envisioned an education that was deep-rooted in one's immediate surroundings but connected to the cultures of the wider world, predicted upon pleasurable learning, and individualized to the personality of the child. He advocated for a curriculum that organically integrated nature with classes held in the open air, under the trees, to provide for a spontaneous appreciation of the fluidity of the plant and animal kingdoms and seasonal changes. He was one of the first in India to argue for a humane educational system that was in touch with the environment and aimed at overall development of the personality (Bhattacharjee, 2014).

Gandhi's View on Education and NEP's Resonance in Vision

Learning Transcends Education: Puja Pandey very beautifully presented Gandhiji's vision and philosophy of education along with its modalities of implementation. She points out that, for Gandhi, education was incomplete without the element of learning. For him, a person was made of three constituents, *the*

body, the mind, and the spirit. However, the education system gave primacy to the mind and kept the body & spirit somewhere on the backburner. NEP 2020 exhibited a similar shift in philosophy by giving prominence to the idea of learning that is *holistic, integrated, inclusive, enjoyable, and engaging* (Pandey, 2020; MHRD, 2020:11).

Gandhi's education approach and philosophy can be seen in his *Nayi Talim* which advocates for *Education for life, through life and throughout life*. It is built on a synthesis between vocation and education, a feature which has come out very prominently in the NEP 2020. A clear and explicit emphasis has been given to making vocational crafts, arts, physical education, etc., an intimate component of regular classroom teaching. According to Gandhi, skill training and vocational education are important as it makes a student self-reliant and capable of leading her life independently (Pandey, 2020).

Inclusion Equity and Gandhi, and Reflection in NEP 2020: The prevailing inequity and discrimination in knowledge, as the objective of education stood in stark contrast to Gandhi's ideals. He advocated for knowledge to be accessible, perceived and disseminated by everybody. This idea of knowledge equity has slowly and steadily taken shape in different National Education Policies in India and finds itself somewhere in the bigger vocabulary of *the Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs)* in the present NEP.

Gandhi's advocacy for equity and inclusion in education was also directed at marginalized communities including people with no literacy, women, untouchables, caste minorities as well as other disadvantaged groups. The NEP declares: To facilitate learning for all students, with special emphasis on Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs), the scope of school education will be broadened to facilitate multiple pathways to learning involving both formal and non-formal education modes (MHRD, 2020). Data shows that certain geographical areas contain significantly larger proportions of SEDGs. Hence, it is recommended that regions of the country with large populations of SEDG be declared as Special Education Zones (SEZs), where all schemes and policies are implemented to the maximum through additional concerted efforts, in order to truly change their educational landscape (MHRD, 2020: 26). NEP said that women cut across all underrepresented groups, constituting about half of all SEDGs. Unfortunately, the exclusion and inequity that SEDGs face are only amplified for the women in these SEDGs.

The policy additionally recognizes the special and critical role that women play in society and in shaping social mores; therefore, providing quality education to girls

emerges as the best way to increase the education levels not just for the current generation of SEDGs but also for future generations.

The policy thus recommends that the policies and schemes designed to include students from SEDGs should be especially targeted towards girls within these groups (MHRD, 2020).

Medium of Instruction: Gandhi vehemently opposed the idea of English as the medium of instruction. The NEP 2020 dwells elaborately on multilingualism, emphasizing the significance of inclusion of mother tongue into the process of learning. The policy believes that the earlier a child is exposed to their native languages, the better they become at relating their experiences to their culture and the world around them (MHRD, 2020:13).

Some Educational Philosophies

Promotion of Yoga

It is the oldest Hindu text which speaks about yoking our mind and insight to the Light of Truth or Reality. Additionally, incorporating yoga into a school's curriculum can enhance the quality of physical education programmes. Modification of traditional physical education to include yoga is as important as other sport as it helps in different ways and at different levels in a sportsman's life. Yoga can play a key role in cultivating mind control and concentration which helps a sportsperson in their performance. It offers children and adults an opportunity to experience success in physical activity, which can help build a foundation of strength in life. However, curriculum specialists, teachers, trainers and students should seriously understand and analyse the challenges associated with yoga education in classroom settings and real life as well (Patel, 2019).

The Ministry of Education of the Central Government, in its annual reports, provides details about the promotion of Yoga as a distinct sphere of activity across all its interrelated dimensions.

Yoga in Graduate/Postgraduate Level Courses: The Central Sanskrit University offers teaching courses at Shastri (B.A.) and Acharya (M.A.) levels in various subjects viz., Navya Vyakarana, Prachina Vyakarana, Sahitya, Phalita Jyotisha, Siddhant Jyotisha, Sarva Darshana, Veda, Nyaya [Navya], Mimamsa, Advaita Vedanta, Dharma Shastra, Vedanta, Sankhya Yoga, Paurohitya, Jain Darshan, Bauddha Darshan, Puranetihasa as traditional subjects along with English, Hindi,

Computer Science and Environmental Studies. The Shiksha Shastri (B.Ed.) and Shiksha Acharya (M.Ed.) courses are also offered Campuses. The Campuses also host offer research programmes leading to the of Vidyavaridhi (Ph.D.) degree. About 12,000 students were enrolled for the present year in the University (MOE, 2022: 158). MOE provides details in great length about the integration of yoga in school education as well as the certificate and diploma-based Yoga programmes conducted by different ministries and their constituent agencies. This information is elaborately detailed in the MOE's annual report (MOE, 2022: 302).

Additionally, the International Day of Yoga is celebrated in both the school education and higher education sectors across the country under the auspices of different ministries and their frontal agencies.

Yoga in Physical, Social and Health Wellbeing: Yoga based physical and mental health programmes have also been promoted and funded by the Govt. of India. This has been done as part of social welfare and education, and are implemented through numerous activities with the support of a network of Regional Centres and Study Centres across the country. These activities include Swachhata Pledge, sanitation drives, plantation drives, health and hygiene related programmes, and Yoga based physical and mental health programmes. More than 90 villages have been adopted under the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan by various Regional Centres of IGNOU (MOE, 2022: 133). Furthermore, other ministries like the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, as well as the Ministry of Social Welfare, have integrated yoga promotion and propagation into their activities (MOE, 2022: 258).

The NIOS offers more than 100 vocational courses across six major vocational sectors which include Agriculture & Animal Husbandry, Home Science & Hospitality, Engineering & Technology, Computer & Information Technology and Health & Paramedical including Yoga (MOE, 2022: 300). From the annual report of the MOE, it becomes evident that Yoga is a flagship programme being dedicatedly propagated and promoted by different ministries and their frontal agencies. This effort includes education, health promotion, physical and social well-being as well as the dissemination of Indian knowledge systems across the world.

Conclusion

Indian knowledge system and its educational philosophy serve as guiding principles to fulfil the different aims of an individual and her/his social life. Indian philosophy of education is rooted in Indian culture, beliefs and norms which are very pertinent to NEP 2020. Indian education philosophies have given the framework along with the

methodologies and scripts. The quest of knowledge (Jnan), Wisdom (Pragyan) and truth (Satya) has been deeply ingrained in Indian thought and serve as the path and pinnacle of individual aspirations. The aim of education in India was for self-realization and emancipation and not just for the attainment of knowledge to live a life. Throughout history, India has produced great scholars who have made an immense contribution through their philosophies, educational thoughts and knowledge in diverse fields. The afore mentioned relevance of the philosophy of education aligns with the guiding principles and perspective of NEP 2020. The policy declared that these principles would form the basis of the education system envisioned and elaborated on the blueprint for its implementation. This article examines and re-affirms this connection by first surveying the Indian knowledge system and educational philosophies within NEP 2020. Additionally it delves into the educational philosophies and thoughts of some of the leading educational thinkers and leaders like Swami Vivekananda, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi. It also illustrates the evidence of how the Indian knowledge system is fostered and nurtured within the Indian education system, with focus one specific aspect: Yoga, as an educational, physical, health promotion activity.

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Accessibility of Higher Education in India

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• Smita Bhutani²

Abstract

Higher education plays a significant role in the development of any nation. It is widely recognised that economic success of a country is intricately tied to the quality of its education system. India is the third-largest system in the world in terms of higher education. However, regrettably, it is not equally accessible to all. The main objective of this research is to find out the accessibility of higher education in India. Secondary data used for the study has been obtained from All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) Report for the year 2018-19. For examining the accessibility, indicators such as Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) and share of females enrolled in higher education at the state level have been taken into consideration. A composite index, for all the three indicators has been calculated for arriving at the broader picture of accessibility of higher education in India. It has been revealed that states and union territories in the southern part of the country predominantly exhibit high level of accessibility to higher education. In contrast, most northern states and union territories demonstrate a moderate level of accessibility. On the other hand, a low level of accessibility to higher education has been found in the eastern, north-eastern, central, and western states and union territories. Availability of higher education institutions plays an important role in determining the level of accessibility.

Keywords: *Accessibility, Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) and Higher education.*

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Introduction

Higher education system of India is both ancient and an advanced one (Rout, 2020). In a diverse country like India, characterised by variations in class, gender, caste, language, region, etc., higher education is essential for achieving inclusive development for all. In fact, inclusive development can only be achieved through an inclusive system of education, especially in the realm of higher education (Behera, 2019). On the other hand, Chanana (1993) who studied access to higher education in India, found that variables of gender, caste, class and region were important in determining access to higher education in a multicultural and multi-ethnic Indian society. Moreover, Ghosh (2006) had stated that there was a need of reservation in higher education for different groups, not because they were the perfect instruments to rectify long-standing discrimination, but for the most workable methods under the circumstances. Chauhan (2008) had made a comparative study of higher education systems of SAARC countries in terms of structure, access, equity, resources, and contribution of private enterprises. He observed low participation of women, poor quality and low expenditure on higher education in all the SAARC countries. Agarwal (2009) had discussed the issues of access and equity and suggested that the affirmative action should be based on the concept of equality and opportunity to all. Parekh (2010) had observed that to raise the current Gross Enrolment Ratio (12.4 per cent) to 30 per cent by the year 2020, enhancements in infrastructure, teaching staff, funding, access, technical support and maintenance of quality are imperative. It should be managed in such a way that quality does not go down with proliferation.

According to the All India Survey on Higher Education for the year 2018-19, GER of India was 26.3 percent. GER for countries in transition and developed countries was 57 per cent and 76 per cent respectively. On the other hand, GER for the developing countries was only 26 per cent which was below the world average of 32 per cent. Among various countries, GER was highest in South Korea at 98 per cent followed by Finland and US both at 94 per cent, Australia at 86 per cent, Russia at 76 per cent, UK at 68 per cent and France at 58 per cent. India, on the other hand, had low GER as compared to even some of its neighbouring countries (Duraismy, 2016). The Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG-4) of the 2030 Agenda, which India had adopted in 2015, called for “ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by the year 2030. By setting the goal of 50% GER in higher education by 2035, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 affirmed its commitment (GoI, 2020). With 37.4 million students currently enrolled, the GER for higher education was 26.3%. To reach a GER of 50% by 2035, it was anticipated that we would require an additional 33.7 million seats in higher education at the current rate of population growth. In the next 15

years, this would demand a significant investment in both human and financial resources (Kant and Prakash, 2021). In order to attain the SDG 4 Agenda 2030 and effective implementation of National Education Policy 2020, a detailed study of accessibility of higher education in India assumes special relevance. The present study seeks to fulfill this objective by examining the accessibility of higher education in India at the state and the union territory level.

Data Sources and Methodology

The present study is based on secondary data obtained from All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2018-19 report. The indicators selected include Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) and the proportion of females enrolled in higher education. The accessibility has been calculated with the help of the composite index of all the three indicators covering all states and union territories in the country. Three categories namely low, moderate, and high have been identified to study the level of accessibility of higher education across different region. For the purpose of data representation, appropriate tables have been made, and a map showing the level of accessibility of higher education in India has been prepared using ARC GIS software version 10.8.

Results and Discussion

Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)

Since India's independence, the country's higher education system has grown significantly, reaching the position of third largest in the world. It serves approximately 37 million students, the third largest after the US and China. The number of universities expanded by 127% and reaching 993 universities, while colleges increased by 54% resulting in 39,931 colleges. Student enrolled also rose from 20 million to 37 million (an increase of 85%) during the same period. This has been a remarkable achievement for increasing access to higher education (Kant and Prakash, 2021). Throughout the recent decade, the entire Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) rose from 15% in 2009–10 and to 26.3% in 2018–19 (AISHE, 2018-19). Fewer Institutions of Higher Education within reach, a dearth of courses that offer higher employability and better career prospects, fewer resources for research, and a lack of international recognition for Indian courses are all factors that contribute to India's low GER (Kancharla, 2019).

The GER is not that good when compared to neighbouring countries, marked by a high level of regional variations. The data has revealed that there are wide interstate variations in terms of GER. It varied from the highest of 53.9 per cent in Sikkim to

the lowest in Daman and Diu at 5.5 percent. The range of data has 48.4 per cent points between these two extreme states. It shows that the state at the top is almost ten times ahead of the state at the bottom. Among the total states and union territories, half have higher GER than the national average. This category includes the seven northern states and union territories, six southern states and union territories, three north-eastern states and two western states. The substantial presence of higher education institutions in these states primarily contributed to higher Gross Enrolment Ratio. States like Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura, Assam, and Nagaland from north-eastern region; Odisha, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar and Andaman and Nicobar from the eastern region; Gujarat, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman Diu from the western region; Lakshadweep from the southern region; Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan from north; and finally Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh from the central region had lower GER than the national average (Fig. 1). In Rajasthan, the lower level of GER was due to physiographic constraints, while poverty is the main factor affecting the eastern states of the country.

In many states and union territories, female GER is higher than male GER. The highest female GER was noted in Chandigarh (63.9 per cent) and the lowest in Daman and Diu (9.8 per cent). In terms of the male GER, Sikkim topped the rank with 54 per cent and Lakshadweep ranked at bottom with only 3.4 per cent (Table 1).

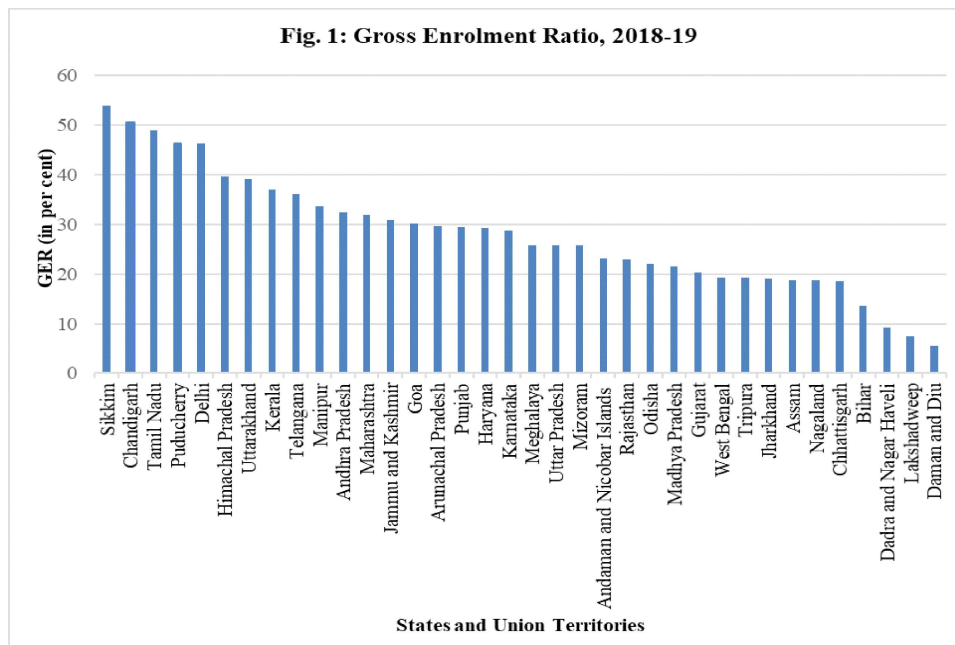


Table 1: India: GER in Higher Education (18-23 Years), 2018-19

Sr. No.	States/Union Territories	Male	Female	Total
0	India	26.3	26.4	26.3
	States			
1	Sikkim	54	53.9	53.9
2	Tamil Nadu	49.8	48.3	49
3	Himachal Pradesh	34.7	44.9	39.6
4	Uttarakhand	39.2	39.1	39.1
5	Kerala	30.8	43.2	37
6	Telangana	35.8	36.5	36.2
7	Manipur	33.6	33.8	33.7
8	Andhra Pradesh	35.8	29	32.4
9	Maharashtra	33.5	30	32
10	Jammu and Kashmir	29.6	32.2	30.9
11	Goa	26.4	35	30.1
12	Arunachal Pradesh	29.9	29.5	29.7
13	Punjab	25.5	34.3	29.5
14	Haryana	26.5	32.4	29.2
15	Karnataka	28.2	29.4	28.8
16	Meghalaya	23.8	27.7	25.8
17	Uttar Pradesh	24.2	27.5	25.8
18	Mizoram	26.5	24.8	25.7
19	Rajasthan	23.1	23	23
20	Odisha	24.2	20	22.1
21	Madhya Pradesh	21.8	21.2	21.5
22	Gujarat	22	18.7	20.4
23	West Bengal	20	18.7	19.3
24	Tripura	21.1	17.4	19.2
25	Jharkhand	19.5	18.7	19.1
26	Assam	19.1	18.3	18.7
27	Nagaland	17.8	19.7	18.7
28	Chhattisgarh	18.1	19.2	18.6
29	Bihar	15.1	12	13.6
	Union Territories			
1	Chandigarh	41.6	63.9	50.6
2	Puducherry	41.7	51.6	46.4
3	Delhi	43.2	50	46.3
4	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	20.3	26.1	23.2
5	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	7.4	12.6	9.3
6	Lakshadweep	3.4	11.6	7.4
7	Daman and Diu	4.2	9.8	5.5

Source: All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) Report, 2019.

GER= (Number of enrolments in higher education/Total population in the age group of 18-23) × 100

Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR)

In terms of pupil teacher ratio in higher education, India lags behind many countries including Brazil and China (India Today, July 14, 2019). Additionally, while examining the pupil teacher ratio variations by state, significant differences were found among the states and union territories.

Table 2: India: PTR in Higher Education, 2018-19

Sr. No.	States/Union Territories	Pupil Teacher Ratio	Teachers per 100 Students
0	India	26	4
	States		
1	Karnataka	15	7
2	Goa	16	6
3	Tamil Nadu	17	6
4	Andhra Pradesh	18	6
5	Kerala	18	6
6	Mizoram	18	6
7	Punjab	18	6
8	Telangana	18	6
9	Nagaland	19	5
10	Manipur	22	5
11	Gujarat	26	4
12	Haryana	26	4
13	Meghalaya	26	4
14	Himachal Pradesh	27	4
15	Maharashtra	27	4
16	Odisha	27	4
17	Sikkim	27	4
18	Uttar Pradesh	27	4
19	Chhattisgarh	28	4
20	Rajasthan	29	3
21	Arunachal Pradesh	31	3
22	Assam	31	3
23	Madhya Pradesh	33	3
24	Tripura	33	3
25	Jammu and Kashmir	35	3
26	West Bengal	35	3
27	Uttarakhand	46	2
28	Jharkhand	60	2
29	Bihar	61	2
	Union Territories		
1	Lakshadweep	12	8
2	Puducherry	13	8
3	Daman and Diu	14	7
4	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	25	4
5	Chandigarh	28	4
6	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	29	3
7	Delhi	52	2

Source: All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) Report, 2019.

PTR: Total number of students enrolled in higher education / Total number of teachers

At the national level, the higher education system maintained a pupil teacher ratio of one teacher per 26 students. The pupil teacher ratio exhibited variations ranging from 12 students per one teacher in Lakshadweep to 61 students per one teacher in Bihar. This discrepancy meant that burden of students on the teachers was five times more in Bihar than in Lakshadweep. This lower ratio had resulted in the overburdening of a small group of teachers, adversely affecting the quality of academic research taken up by them (India Today, July 14, 2019). One of the causes for faculty shortages is that teaching has recently become a low-demand profession. Students perceive teaching careers to be lower earning than other professions, with a lack of research opportunities and career advancement chances (Kapoor, 2019). More than half (19) of the states and union territories had a pupil-teacher ratio lower than the national average, and most of these states belonged to the northern, eastern and north-eastern regions. The ever-increasing number of student enrollments and low teacher recruitment rates have resulted in a declining pupil-teacher ratio. In comparison, Gujarat, Haryana, and Meghalaya shared an equal pupil teacher ratio with the national average. Conversely, the remaining 14 states and union territories had a better pupil-teacher ratio than the national average. These better performing states in the context of the pupil teacher ratio were mostly from the southern region, with some representation from the north-eastern part of the country. Most of the northern states lagged in the context of pupil-teacher ratio even though they had higher GER and share of female enrolment than the national average. The only state from the northern region with better pupil teacher ratio than the national average was Punjab (Table 2).

Share of Female Enrolment in Higher Education

Mahatma Gandhi emphasized the value of education for women, but it did little to change long-standing social norms. The persistent idea that women should not aspire to paid employment, but rather find acceptability in voluntary work, acted as a barrier to education for women in India. To improve the lives of widows and other disadvantaged women, social reformers worked to increase women's access to higher education and workforce participation, particularly through caring professions like nursing and teaching. Economic factors have recently reduced the stigma associated with women contributing to family income, and as a result, women are now well represented in a variety of occupations. Nevertheless, girls residing rural areas or in cities lacking colleges or universities often have limited access to higher education. In some countries, such as the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, Finland, and France, women have equalled or even exceeded men in terms of their proportion in gross enrollment, indicating that women are benefiting from the growth of educational opportunities. Globally, women remain an underutilized resource, with

an immense potential to add to the skill base of their nations. To encourage a cultural shift in mindset and ultimately improve overall access to higher education, legislative support is undeniably needed (Ghara, 2016).

Table 3: India: Share of Male and Female Enrolment in Higher Education, 2018-19

Sr. No.	States/Union Territories	Male (%)	Female (%)
0	India	51.65	48.35
	States		
1	Kerala	41.66	58.34
2	Meghalaya	44.12	55.88
3	Himachal Pradesh	45.58	54.42
4	Chhattisgarh	48.20	51.80
5	Nagaland	48.36	51.64
6	Goa	49.32	50.68
7	Haryana	49.41	50.59
8	Telangana	49.47	50.53
9	Manipur	49.54	50.46
10	Assam	49.58	50.42
11	Jammu and Kashmir	49.59	50.41
12	Karnataka	49.95	50.05
13	Uttar Pradesh	50.08	49.92
14	Punjab	50.14	49.86
15	West Bengal	50.37	49.63
16	Tamil Nadu	50.84	49.16
17	Arunachal Pradesh	50.96	49.04
18	Jharkhand	51.02	48.98
19	Mizoram	51.32	48.68
20	Uttarakhand	51.35	48.65
21	Sikkim	51.71	48.29
22	Rajasthan	52.44	47.56
23	Madhya Pradesh	53.16	46.84
24	Tripura	53.76	46.24
25	Andhra Pradesh	54.73	45.27
26	Odisha	54.73	45.27
27	Maharashtra	54.93	45.07
28	Gujarat	56.29	43.71
29	Bihar	57.28	42.72
	Union Territories		
1	Lakshadweep	23.13	76.87
2	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	44.33	55.67
3	Puducherry	48.64	51.36
4	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	48.98	51.02
5	Chandigarh	49.05	50.95
6	Delhi	50.98	49.02
7	Daman and Diu	57.66	42.34

Source: All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) Report, 2019.

The advancement of the socio-economic and health status of a society as a whole is directly impacted by women's education (Bhagavatheeswaran et al., 2016; UNESCO, 2013).

Most state governments in India have taken steps to promote the enrolment of women in education, starting at the elementary school level and continuing through secondary and higher education. Given that the percentage of the enrolled women had continuously increased over the past few years, these initiatives have mostly been successful (Anita and Ravindran, 2020). Over the past 20 years, Indian women's Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) has steadily increased. In the 2018–2019 academic year, women's GER in the 18–23 age group outpaced men's (MHRD, 2019 [AISHE Report, 2019]).

The proportion of female enrolment in higher education for the entire country 48.35 per cent during 2018-19. Lakshadweep with the highest share of females enrolled in higher education was at the top of the list while Daman and Diu occupied the lowest position.

Nearly one third of states and union territories had higher share of female enrolment than the national average. Out of these, the largest number of states and union territories belonged to the southern region, followed by the northern region and the north-eastern region, respectively (Table 3).

With the help of a composite index of these three indicators (Gross Enrolment Ratio, Pupil Teacher Ratio and share of female enrolled in higher education) of accessibility, an overall picture was drawn. A weighted index has been computed for all the states and union territories.

The highest score was assigned a value of 100 and the other values were calculated proportionately to 100. To standardize PTR equivalent to GER and share of female enrolment, the PTR was converted to teachers per 100 students.

The score of all the indicators were summed up for each state and union territory, followed by division of the sum by the number of indicators (i.e., three). In this way, the composite index was calculated for all the states and union territories. Puducherry with a composite index of 84.30 secured the top rank and Bihar with 35.27 occupied the bottom position (Table 4).

Table 4: India: Composite Index of Accessibility of Higher Education

Sr. No.	State/Union Territory	GER	PTR (Teachers per 100 Students)	Share of Female Enrolment	Total	Composite Index
1	Puducherry	86.09	100	66.81	252.9	84.30
2	Tamil Nadu	90.91	75	63.95	229.86	76.62
3	Kerala	68.65	75	75.89	219.54	73.18
4	Lakshadweep	13.73	100	100	213.73	71.24
5	Sikkim	100	50	62.82	212.82	70.94
6	Chandigarh	93.88	50	66.28	210.16	70.05
7	Telangana	67.16	75	65.73	207.89	69.30
8	Karnataka	53.43	87.5	65.11	206.04	68.68
9	Goa	55.84	75	65.93	196.77	65.59
10	Punjab	54.73	75	64.86	194.59	64.86
11	Himachal Pradesh	73.47	50	70.79	194.26	64.75
12	Andhra Pradesh	60.11	75	58.89	194	64.67
13	Manipur	62.52	62.5	65.64	190.66	63.55
14	Uttarakhand	72.54	50	64.94	187.48	62.49
15	Mizoram	47.68	75	63.33	186.01	62.00
16	Delhi	85.9	25	63.77	174.67	58.22
17	Meghalaya	47.87	50	72.69	170.56	56.85
18	Haryana	54.17	50	65.81	169.98	56.66
19	Maharashtra	59.37	50	58.63	168	56.00
20	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	43.04	50	72.42	165.46	55.15
21	Nagaland	34.69	62.5	67.18	164.37	54.79
22	Jammu and Kashmir	57.33	37.5	65.58	160.41	53.47
23	Arunachal Pradesh	55.1	37.5	63.8	156.4	52.13
24	Daman and Diu	10.2	87.5	55.08	152.78	50.93
25	Chhattisgarh	34.51	50	67.39	151.9	50.63
26	Odisha	41	50	58.89	149.89	49.96
27	Gujarat	37.85	50	56.86	144.71	48.24
28	Rajasthan	42.67	37.5	61.87	142.04	47.35
29	Madhya Pradesh	39.89	37.5	60.93	138.32	46.11
30	West Bengal	35.81	37.5	64.56	137.87	45.96
31	Assam	34.69	37.5	65.59	137.78	45.93
32	Uttar Pradesh	47.87	25	63.29	136.16	45.39
33	Tripura	35.62	37.5	60.15	133.27	44.42
34	Jharkhand	35.44	25	63.72	124.16	41.39
35	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	17.25	37.5	66.37	121.12	40.37
36	Bihar	25.23	25	55.57	105.8	35.27

Source: Calculated from Tables 1-3.

Level of Accessibility of Higher Education in India

On the basis of the composite index value, the states and union territories were categorized in three different categories low, moderate and high.

Table 5: India: Level of Accessibility of Higher Education

Level of Accessibility	Composite Index Value	States/Union Territories
Low	Below 50	Bihar, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Jharkhand, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Odisha
Moderate	50-70	Chhattisgarh, Daman and Diu, Arunachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Nagaland, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Maharashtra, Haryana, Meghalaya, Delhi, Mizoram, Uttarakhand, Manipur, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Goa, Karnataka and Telangana
High	Above 70	Chandigarh, Sikkim, Lakshadweep, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry

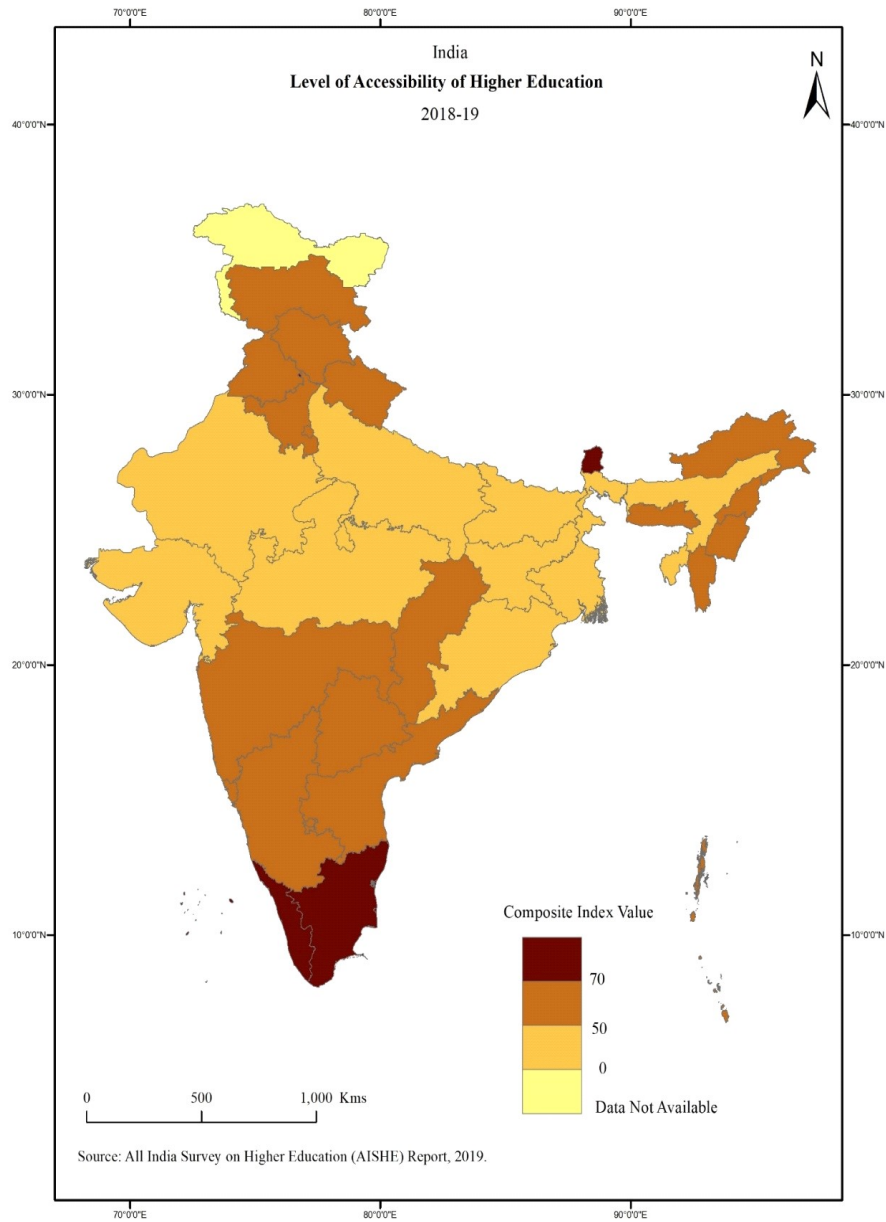
Source: Based on computation made in Table 4.

Low level of accessibility could be found in one union territory and ten states. Largest number of union territories and states were found in the moderate level of accessibility, which comprised three union territories and 16 states.

In the high-level category, there were three union territories and three states (Table 5). Nearly all northern states and union territories except Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Chandigarh had moderate level of accessibility.

The physiographic limitations brought on by the desert were to blame for Rajasthan's low level of higher education. The eastern region of India was represented by the underdeveloped states of Odisha, Bihar, and Jharkhand where poverty has been one of the major obstacles affecting the level of enrolment in higher education (Bala, 2016).

High level of accessibility of higher education was found in most of the southern states due to the high level of availability of higher education institutions in such states (Kumari and Bhutani, 2021).

Map 1: Level of Accessibility of Higher Education in India

An examination of the three indicators mentioned above reveals a very contrasting picture in several states and union territories. In Lakshadweep, the Gross

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Enrolment Ratio was remarkably low, while the pupil-teacher ratio and the share of female enrolment registered the highest figures. A similar scenario can be seen in Daman and Diu. Dadra and Nagar Haveli also lagged behind in terms of Gross Enrolment Ratio and Pupil Teacher Ratio but ranked 8th among all states and union territories concerning share of female enrollment. Andaman and Nicobar also displayed a comparatively low Gross Enrolment Ratio, even though it was performing well in terms of pupil teacher ratio and share of female enrolment. Bihar, on the other hand, lagged at the bottom across almost all three indicators. It was a thriving educational centre in the fourth and eighth century, hosting three world-class universities (Nalanda, Vikramshila and Udaypur). With political meddling, a rising role for student politics, evident caste lines in the system, and private parties funding the university system, the education system has suffered (Singh, 2017). Most of the states such as Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Jharkhand, and Bihar also had low levels of availability of higher education institutions with limited accessibility. Some states with high and moderate levels of access also showcased a high availability of higher education institutions such as Kerala, Karnataka, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Haryana (Kumari and Bhutani, 2021). It can be seen that the level of accessibility coincides with the level of availability. Hence, to improve access to higher education, the availability of higher education institutions should be improved.

Conclusion

Higher education in India is not uniformly and equally accessible across the country. There are significant disparities in GER, Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) and the share of female enrolment. The data indicated that there were significant inter-state variations in terms of GER, with Sikkim having the highest percentage (53.9) and Daman and Diu reporting the lowest percentage (5.5). The GER was higher than the national average in nearly half of the states and union territories distributed across the country. The large availability of colleges and universities provides an incentive for a high Gross Enrolment Ratio, especially for the female enrolment ratio. States with lower GER than the national average, however, included Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura, Assam, and Nagaland from the north-eastern region; Odisha, West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Bihar and Andaman and Nicobar from the eastern region; Gujarat, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and Daman Diu from the western region; and Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan from the northern region and Lakshadweep from the southern region. Notably, in many states and union territories, the GER of women was higher than that of men.

Significant variations in the country in the pupil teacher ratio were also observed in 2018-19. On an average, there was one teacher for every 26 students nationwide.

Lakshadweep exhibited a remarkable ratio of 12 students per teacher, compared to 61 students per teacher in Bihar. More than half (19) of the states and union territories had pupil-teacher ratios lower than the national average, with the majority of these states hailing from the northern, eastern, and north-eastern regions. The northern states with high GER and high share of female enrolment were found to be trailing behind in terms of pupil-teacher ratio, reflecting relatively less availability of teachers, though the number of students was found to be large. This underscores the need to explore the implications of low pupil-teacher ratio in the context of inadequate teacher recruitment across most states and union territories in the country.

In over a third of the states and UTs, the share of female enrolment was higher than the national average. The northern region with the highest number of states (6) and union territories (2) was followed by the southern region and the north-eastern region. The share of female enrolment in the country during 2018-19 was 48.35 per cent. Kerala, and Lakshadweep secured the top positions among states and union territories, respectively, for the highest female enrolment in higher education, while Daman and Diu occupied at the bottom rank.

Thus, the aforementioned discussion leads to the conclusion that most northern states exhibit recorded a moderate level to accessibility of higher education in contrast to the lower levels seen in the central, western and eastern regions. Due to geographical restrictions of the desert, the level of education in Rajasthan was low. In underdeveloped eastern states like Odisha, Bihar, and Jharkhand, poverty is one of the major barriers to enrolment in higher education. Higher education is highly accessible in the southern states due to the greater availability of higher education institutions.

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Factors Influencing Student Dropout Rates in Higher Education: An Analysis by Gender and Demographics

• Shyam R. Sihare¹

Abstract

This research paper examines the impact of student dropouts in higher education, taking into consideration gender and demographics. Data was collected from five colleges through a questionnaire, interviews, and literature analysis. Quantitative analysis methods were used to assess data accuracy and validity. The findings shed light on factors contributing to student dropouts and reveal insights into the influence of gender and demographics on dropout rates. These findings contribute to the existing body of knowledge and inform strategies to mitigate student dropouts in higher education.

Keywords: *dropout, demographic, gender, programme, higher education.*

Introduction

Addressing student dropouts is a difficult task for educational institutions. Implementing effective processes like monitoring and promptly rectifying issues can substantially increase student retention. Retaining students requires maintaining their satisfaction. Therefore, strategies that impact the institution's reputation and enhance overall awareness of its work should be prioritized (Leslie and Brinkman, 1987). The government also plays a role in combating unemployment and illiteracy by raising awareness periodically. Awareness camps are organized in towns, cities, and villages for this purpose. Strengthening early education is crucial to prevent issues in higher education (Kaplin et al., 2020). Reducing dropout rates is possible through providing affordable and attractive education. Early warning signs of dropouts should be recognized to identify students at risk. Students struggling academically should receive special attention and support (Dawson et al., 2010).

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Exploring alternative approaches to traditional education can engage students effectively. Leveraging Digital technology can make education more appealing as digital education outside the classroom allows students to pursue learning comfortably. Platforms like YouTube, Wikipedia, and social networking sites can be utilized for educational purposes (Sihare (a), 2017). Addressing underlying issues that contribute to student dropout rates is crucial. Education helps individuals overcome barriers, improve job opportunities, and foster cultural and religious ideas (Sihare (b), 2017). Overcoming the challenge of increasing student retention is imperative. Advancing education and prioritizing student satisfaction are important. Recruiting qualified teachers and enhancing student attendance can increase enrollment (Sihare, 2018). Students seek courses that enhance employability. Dropout rates in diploma and certificate programmes can have long-term consequences. Various factors contribute to student dropout, including high tuition fees, lack of readiness, dissatisfaction, negative learning environments, inappropriate course selection, academic challenges, work-family balance, and enrollment in online courses. Artificial intelligence (AI) can help universities identify and solve problems (Nagy and Roland, 2018).

The research project aims to identify the most critical reasons behind student attrition in higher education. By making teaching and learning enjoyable, student dropouts can be reduced. Data from five colleges were analyzed and categorized on the basis of gender and demographics. Software was employed to ensure transparency and accuracy in the analysis. The research study structure includes sections on women in higher education, dropout rates, methods and materials, data analysis, presentation of findings, familiarity with adult education, and the analysis and interpretation of results. The study concludes in Section 9.

The status of women in higher education

The underrepresentation of women in executive positions in higher education is a well-known issue. Numerous studies have examined the challenges faced by women managers in various socio-cultural and geographic contexts. Access to education significantly impacts the treatment of women within a culture. In India, prevailing belief have hindered women's formal education but have allowed for volunteering. In countries like the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, Finland, and France, women account for an equal or larger proportion of enrollment. Legislative support is necessary to facilitate cultural shifts and enhance access to higher education (Brett, 2016). Factors such as violence, child marriage, and a shortage of female teachers discourage female enrollment (Matonya, 2016). Despite advancements in certain fields, gender imbalance and limited opportunities persist (Fényes, Mohácsi,

and Pallay, 2021). Gender segregation remains prevalent despite the increasing involvement of women in education (Klasen and Lamanna, 2009).

Girl's education dropout rate

According to a UNICEF poll, 38% of respondents reported knowing a female student who had dropped out of education. In India, the annual dropout rate is 14.6%² (UNICEF, cited in Murthy and Ramchand, 2020). Despite an increase in girls attending educational institutions, their dropout rate remains a significant issue, although it has decreased by more than 5%³. Traditional gender norms, household responsibilities, and lack of a bridging system for further education create additional barriers. Family obligations contribute to female dropout rates so, establishing effective communication channels with parents and the community is crucial for changing cultural norms. Educational institutions must provide supportive environments, accessible facilities, and sufficient gender-sensitive resources while also engaging men in empowering women. Despite girls' success in board examinations, many still face challenges such as early marriage and employment struggles (Shankar and Kidd, 2022).

Methods and Materials

Planning of data collection

A survey was conducted to determine the dropout rate among college students in higher education. Data were collected from various colleges, excluding non-responsive or delayed institutions. The survey encompassed all faculties, ensuring equal representation of arts, commerce, sciences, medicine, engineering, and polytechnic disciplines. Both male and female students were equally involved and subjected to the same set of questions. To supplement the questionnaire, data from the previous three years were obtained from college administrations, ensuring anonymity. Follow-up questions were developed to address any missing information, and personal visits and discussions were conducted with selected managers and students familiar with the questionnaire. These verbal discussions took into account the student population of each college, considering potential variations across disciplines. Colleges were invited to participate through email, verbal communication,

²<https://www.telegraphindia.com/edugraph/news/unicef-india-report-highlights-alarms-rise-in-dropout-rates-of-female-school-students/cid/1858585>

³<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/girls-drop-out-of-schools-due-to-early-marriage-house-work/articleshow/92195487.cms>

and social networking, with ethical approval obtained before data collection. A selection of colleges including private, semi-government, and government institutions was made to ensure accurate analysis and comprehensibility of the study.

Data collection and participants

The data collection process for this study took place between August and September 2022. The chosen colleges were those previously aware of the study's objectives, ensuring valuable insights into dropout rates. Various faculties, including arts, commerce, and science, were simultaneously chosen to evaluate the dropout patterns comprehensively. Data was collected over a three-year period to achieve a robust sample size, with ten students from each group responding to research-related questions. Additionally, polytechnic and engineering institutes were also included, with five students selected from each sample group. Verbal exchanges were conducted with students and administrators to understand personal challenges and gain administrative perspectives. Gender balanced participation levels were maintained with the majority of colleges and students actively responding to the questionnaire. Categorization based on gender and demographics allowed for a nuanced analysis of societal factors influencing dropout rates. Table 1 presents the total invitation, response, and response rates of participants from different colleges, providing an overview of engagement levels. Response rates varied among colleges, with some demonstrating high levels of interest and involvement, while others faced challenges in engaging participants. Graphical representations such as bar charts or pie charts can further visualize the distribution of invitations, responses, and response rates across colleges, facilitating easy comparisons. This study employed a comprehensive approach, considering various perspectives and demographics to understand student dropout rates in higher education.

Table 1: Total invitation, response, and rate of college-wise participants in academic institutions in tabular and graphical form

School	Total students invited to respond	Total students respond	Respond %
College 1	300	211	70.33
College 2	60	24	40.00
College 3	45	40	88.89
College 4	350	303	86.57
College 5	30	14	46.67

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of Table 1

Factor	Total students invited to respond	Total students respond	Respond %
Mean	157.00	118.40	66.49
Standard Error	69.20	58.57	10.04
Median	60.00	40.00	70.33
Standard Deviation	154.74	130.97	22.44
Sample Variance	23945.00	17152.30	503.57
Kurtosis	-2.96	-1.75	-2.77
Skewness	0.65	0.86	-0.26
Range	320.00	289.00	48.89
Minimum	30.00	14.00	40.00
Maximum	350.00	303.00	88.89
Confidence Level (95.0%)	192.14	162.62	27.86

Table 2 provides descriptive statistics, including measures of central tendency, dispersion, shape, and additional information such as sample variance and confidence level. These statistics offer insights into the distribution and characteristics of the data. Table 3 presents the results of ANOVA and t-test analyses conducted to examine significant differences or associations related to dropout rates and socio-economic factors. These analyses aim to identify variations based on participants' characteristics. The significance levels and critical values in Table 3 provide valuable insights into the statistical significance of the observed results. ANOVA analysis compares means across groups, whereas the t-test evaluates differences between two groups. These tests help identify significant variations in dropout rates and socio-economic factors. However, the ANOVA and t-test results in Table 3 indicate no statistically significant differences or associations among the invited students, respondents, and their response rates regarding dropout rates and socio-economic factors. This finding suggests that no specific patterns or distinctions related to gender or socio-economic backgrounds were revealed by the data analysis.

Table 3: ANOVA and t-test results of all invited students, all respondents, and all respondents' percentages

	SD	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit	Pearson
<i>Factor</i>	136.67	3724.90	1.00	3724.90	0.18***	0.68 <i>ns</i>	5.32	0.99**

SD: standard deviation, *SS*: sum of squares, *df*: degrees of freedom, *MS*: mean square, *F-crit*: F-critical

Note: * = significant at $p < 0.05$, ** = significant at $r > 0.00$, *ns* = not significant, *** = significant at ' $F < F \text{ crit}$ ' for ANOVA and t-test analysis. * = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 provides a comprehensive overview of the gender distribution among respondents in each college, presenting the data in tabular and graphical formats. This allows for an easy comparison and understanding of female and male student participation, as well as those who preferred not to answer or fell within the “None of the above” category. Moving to Table 5, it offers a descriptive analysis of the data presented in Table 4, including various statistical measures to explore the gender composition within each college. Measures such as mean, standard error, median, standard deviation, sample variance, kurtosis, skewness, range, minimum, maximum, and confidence level are calculated and presented. The mean represents the average percentage of female and male students, while the standard error estimates variability in the gender distribution data. The median divides respondents equally into two groups, and the standard deviation measures the spread or dispersion of the gender data. The sample variance indicates variability within each gender group. Kurtosis assesses the shape of the distribution, while skewness indicates its asymmetry. The range shows the extent of variation in gender composition, while the minimum and maximum values identify the lowest and highest percentages. Lastly, the confidence level provides an estimate of precision and reliability, indicating the likely range of true population values.

Table 4: College gender surveys presented in tabular and graphical form

College Name	Total students respond			
	Female	Male	None of the above	Prefer not to answer
College 1	56%	43%	0%	1%
College 2	51%	49%	0%	0%
College 3	38%	62%	0%	0%
College 4	43%	55%	0%	2%
College 5	74%	26%	0%	0%

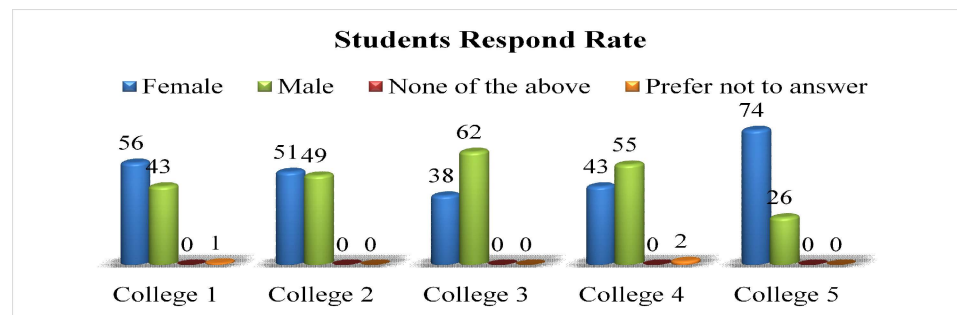


Table 5: Descriptive analysis of Table 4

Factor	Female	Male
Mean	77.68	77.32
Standard Error	33.49	35.71
Median	30.60	29.40
Standard Deviation	74.87	79.86
Sample Variance	5606.24	6377.24
Kurtosis	-3.13	-1.31
Skewness	0.62	0.90
Range	150.90	184.70
Minimum	17.10	7.80
Maximum	168.00	192.50
Confidence Level (95.0%)	92.97	99.16

Table 6 provides insights into Pearson correlation tests and ANOVA analyses, examining the relationships and differences between male and female students in terms of dropout rates and socio-economic factors. The inclusion of significance levels and critical values enhances the interpretation of the findings. Pearson correlation tests assess the strength and direction of the linear relationship between variables, aiming to identify any significant correlations between gender and dropout rates. The correlation coefficient ranges from -1 to +1, indicating the strength of the relationship. ANOVA analyses compare means across groups to investigate differences between male and female students in dropout rates and socio-economic factors. The F-statistic and p-value help determine the statistical significance of observed differences. However, the results in Table 6 reveal no significant correlations or differences between male and female students regarding dropout rates and socio-economic factors. These findings contradict the research title focused on female students and specific socio-economic backgrounds.

Table 6: Pearson correlation tests and ANOVA results between male and female students

	SD	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit	Pearson Correlation
<i>Factor</i>	72.98	0.32	1.00	0.32	0.00***	0.99 <i>ns</i>	5.32	0.93**

Factor 72.98 0.32 1.00 0.32 0.00*** 0.99 *ns* 5.32 0.93**

Note: * = significant at $p < 0.05$, ** = significant at $r > 0.00$, *ns* = not significant, *** = significant at 'F < F crit' for ANOVA and t-test analysis. * = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Materials and methods

The questionnaire design for this study was based on exploratory interviews conducted across multiple colleges, resulting in multiple versions targeting different educational levels. The dynamic nature of the questionnaire allowed for adjustments to questions based on participants' previous responses, leading to variations in participation rates. The study's questions were categorised into five primary areas, each with distinct questions, answer choices, and measurement processes:

1. *Demographic Details:* Gathering basic information such as age, gender identity, and name of the educational institution.
2. *Personal and Social Problems:* Analyzing personal and societal issues to identify reasons for college dropout. Participants were asked to anonymously rate common family issues using a scale from "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree." Those indicating such issues received unique follow-up questions.
3. *Participation:* Focusing on public-private partnerships, financially disadvantaged students were asked whether they received financial assistance from both public and private colleges to reduce dropout rates. Privacy measures were in place ensure honest responses, emphasizing that participants were not obliged to answer specific questions or share personal information.
4. *Professional Development:* This segment included questions about professional training. Many students expressed support for part-time work or entrepreneurship alongside further studies. Some felt that their higher education lacked adequate training or that their interests in professional development were insufficiently addressed.
5. *Administrative Strategy:* Insights from college administrators and professors were gathered, aligning their responses with the research objectives. Financial difficulties emerged as the primary cause of student dropout. Various opinions surfaced about female students, highlighting how social environments, especially in rural areas, hinder girls' progress in education. These comprehensive questionnaire areas aimed to collect data on dropout factors, emphasizing the need for colleges, government, and private institutions to address the needs of financially struggling students through appropriate financial support mechanisms.

Data Analysis

The study's data analysis explored higher education dropouts across five components: demographics, social/personal issues, participation, career development,

and organizational strategy. However, the questionnaire's one-dimensional responses limited the comprehensive understanding of dropout factors. Pearson correlation analysis evaluated response ambiguity, using MS-Excel for descriptive analysis, t-tests, ANOVA, and Pearson correlations. Measures like mean, median, standard deviation, sample variance, standard error, kurtosis, skewness, maximum, and minimum were computed. These provided insights into data distribution and frequencies. T-tests and ANOVA evaluated associations among datasets, enabling further exploration. Overall, the analysis aimed to uncover factors contributing to dropout rates in higher education.

Table 7: Statistical Tests Conducted in Data Analysis

Statistical Test	Purpose	Variables Compared	Significance Level	Results
Descriptive Statistics	To summarize and describe the data	Demographic information, social and personal issues, participation, career development, organizational strategy	-	Mean, median, standard deviation, etc.
Pearson Correlation	To measure the relationship between two continuous variables	Dropout rate and socio-economic background	$p < 0.05$	$r = -0.27$, $p = 0.012^*$
t-test	To compare means between two groups	Female students vs. male students	$p < 0.01$	$t(100) = -2.14$, $p = 0.035^*$
ANOVA	To compare means between multiple groups	Arts, commerce, and science students	$p < 0.05$	$F(2, 97) = 3.72$, $p = 0.026^*$

Note: * indicates statistical significance

The statistical tests cover various components such as demographic information, social and personal issues, participation, career development, and organizational strategy. These tests include descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, t-test, and ANOVA test.

Result

The questionnaire received responses from students, administration, and faculty members of the college, categorized by gender. This section focuses on analyzing the collected data through the lens of gender and demographics. Initially, a descriptive analysis was conducted to obtain conclusive insights. To ensure accuracy, transparency, and confidence in the findings, the dropout rates for both males and females were separately examined and before being compared.

Various statistical methods such as t-test, Pearson correlation, ANOVA test, and descriptive statistics were employed to examine the data. These diverse statistical approaches were utilized to verify the gathered data. Finally, to achieve reliable results, the dropout information for students in different demographic areas was collected and analyzed using various statistical techniques.

Gender-wise dropout

Table 8 presents the standard deviation values for “Male” and “Male Dropout” dimensions, indicating data dispersion. Sample variance assesses variability in the samples, aligning with the research findings. The variance is higher for the “Male” data, indicating greater dispersion. Kurtosis and skewness values suggest a non-normal distribution. Moving to Table 9, the P-values for male data significantly influence the evaluated data, whereas for female data, the impact is not noticeable. The F-values support the study hypothesis for both genders. Observations across Tables 8 and 9 show no significant difference in means. Conducting a standard deviation analysis is for “Female” and “Female Dropout” dimensions, yields similar findings. Kurtosis values align with the aggregated data, while skewness values suggest a normal distribution. P-values for female data show no significant impact. The observations across Tables 8 and 9 further support the study hypothesis. Table 9 provides information about the total male and female dropouts spanning from 2018–19 to 2020–21. All dimensions show a strong correlation between the total male and female dimensions and total dropout. Notable, there is a significant linear correlation between male and female dropouts. The null hypothesis test is rejected for the male dropout row in Table 9.

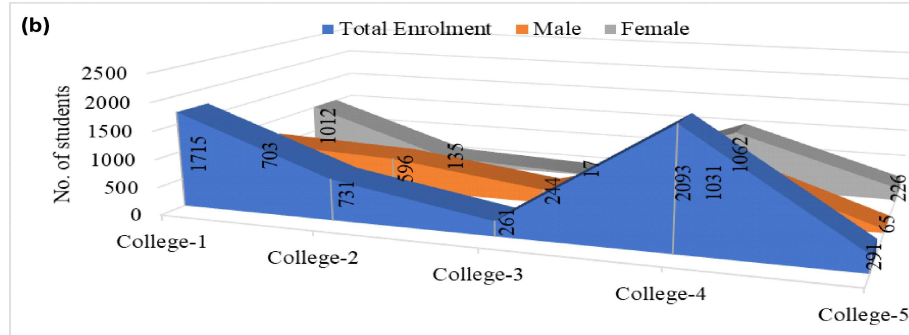
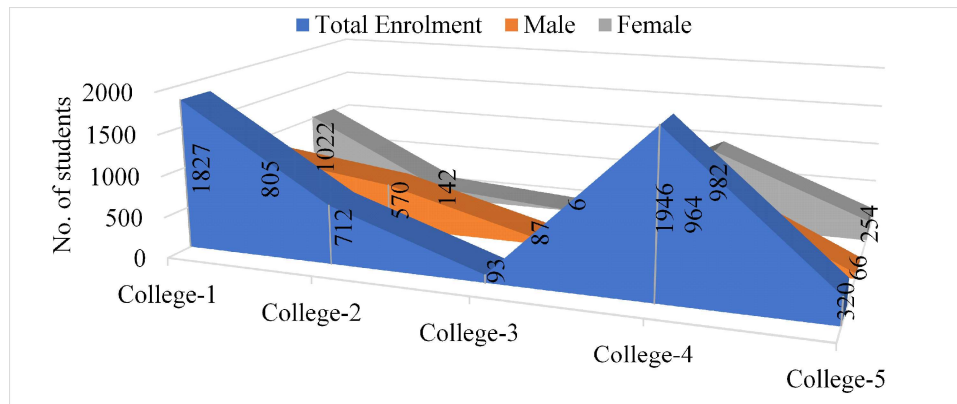
Table 8: Analyses of the dropout rates for male and female students in the academic year 2018–19

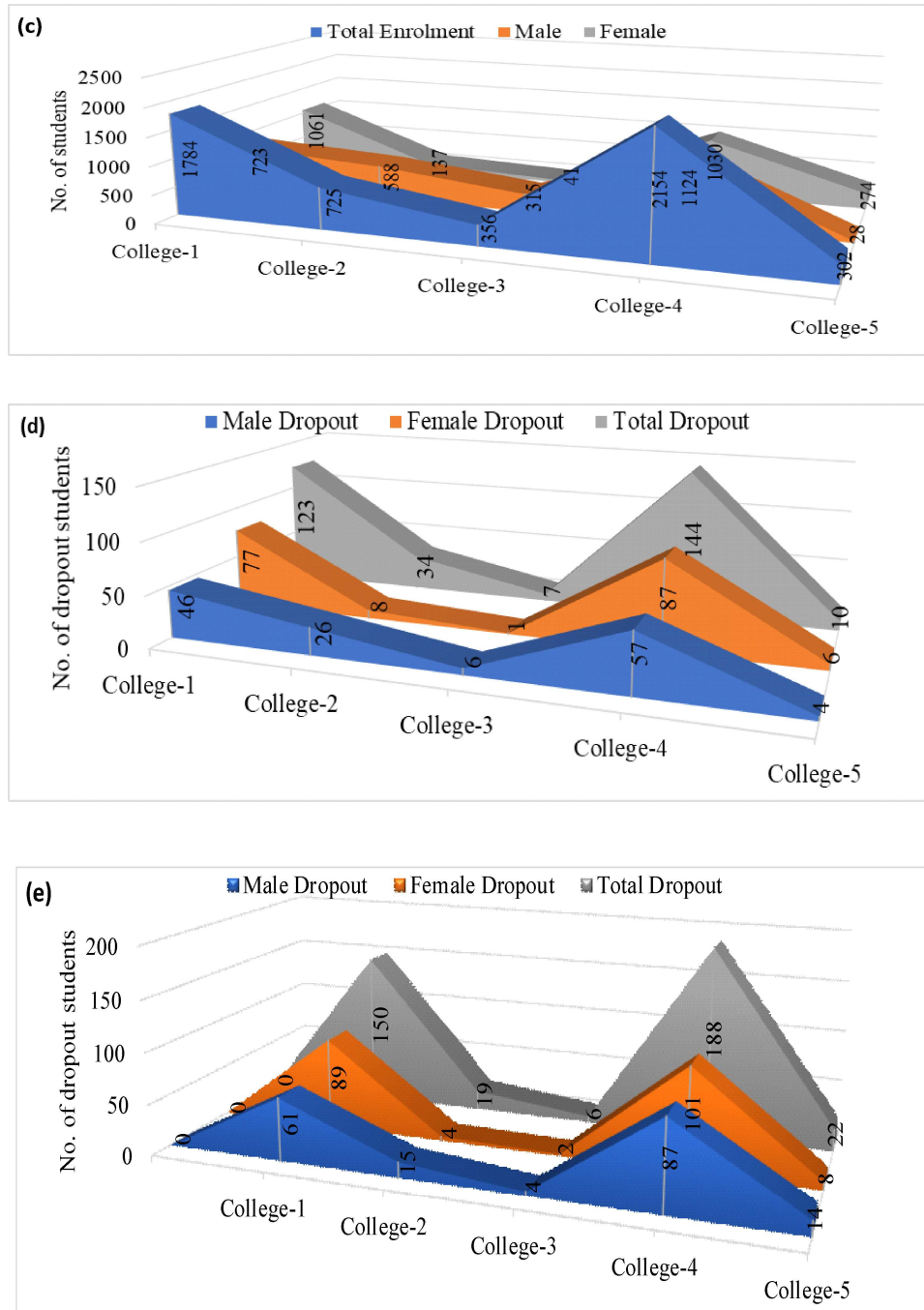
Descriptive Description	Male	Male Dropout	Male Dropout%	Female	Female Dropout	Female Dropout%
Mean	498.40	27.80	5.83	481.20	35.80	8.21
Standard Error	183.32	10.56	0.38	216.30	18.96	2.38
Median	570.00	26.00	5.91	254.00	8.00	7.53
Standard Deviation	409.92	23.61	0.84	483.67	42.40	5.32
Sample Variance	168033.30	557.20	0.71	233939.20	1797.70	28.33
Kurtosis	-2.71	-2.43	1.75	-3.08	-3.12	1.87
Skewness	-0.12	0.22	-0.56	0.46	0.62	1.07
Range	898.00	53.00	2.34	1016.00	86.00	14.31
Minimum	66.00	4.00	4.56	6.00	1.00	2.36
Maximum	964.00	57.00	6.90	1022.00	87.00	16.67
Confidence Level (95.0%)	508.98	29.31	1.04	600.56	52.65	6.61

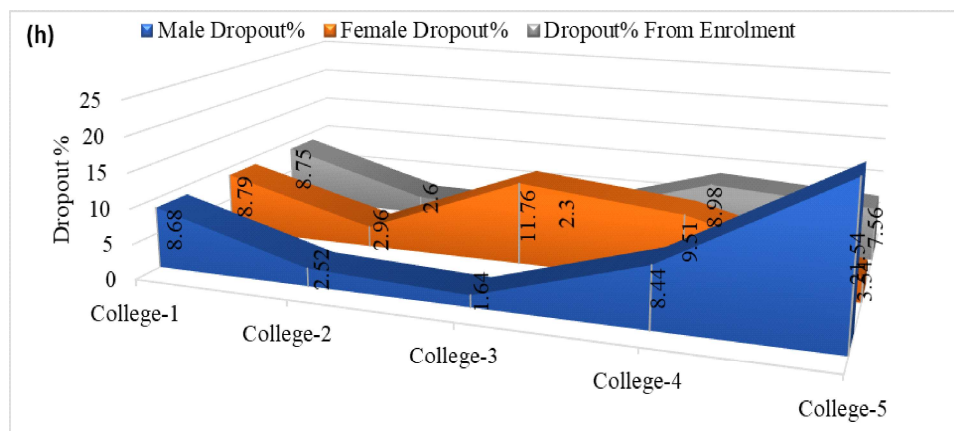
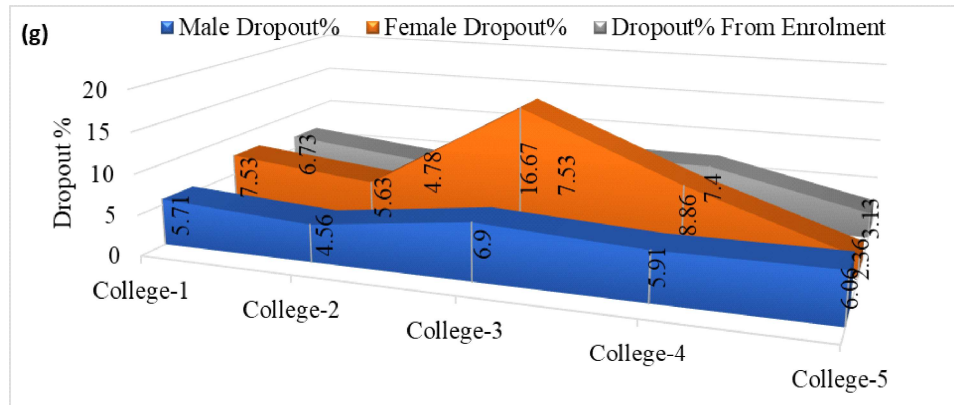
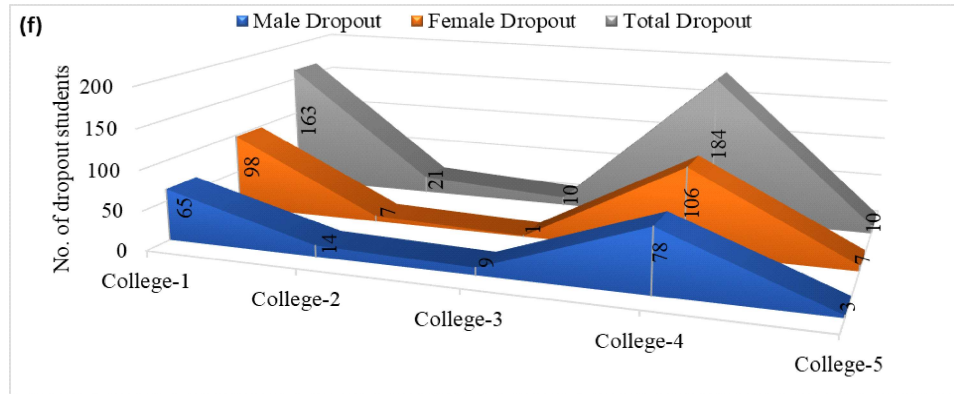
Table 9: Male and female student dropout rates from the academic years of 2018–19 to 2020–21: ANOVA and T-test

	Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit	Pearson Correlation
2018-19		553660.9	1.0	553660.9				
	Male Dropout	0	0	0	6.57 <i>ns</i>	0.03*	5.32	0.99**
	Female Dropout	495952.9	1.0	495952.9	4.21**	*	0.07 <i>ns</i>	5.32
2019-20		604176.4	1.0	604176.4				
	Male Dropout	0	0	0	8.21 <i>ns</i>	0.02*	5.32	0.87**
	Female Dropout	505350.4	1.0	505350.4	3.93**	*	0.08 <i>ns</i>	5.32
2020-21		680688.1	1.0	680688.1				
	Male Dropout	0	0	0	7.85 <i>ns</i>	0.02*	5.32	0.90**
	Female Dropout	540097.6	1.0	540097.6	4.32**	*	0.07 <i>ns</i>	5.32

Note: * = significant at $p < 0.05$, ** = significant at $r > 0.00$, *ns* = not significant, *** = significant at 'F < F crit' for ANOVA and t-test analysis. * = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).







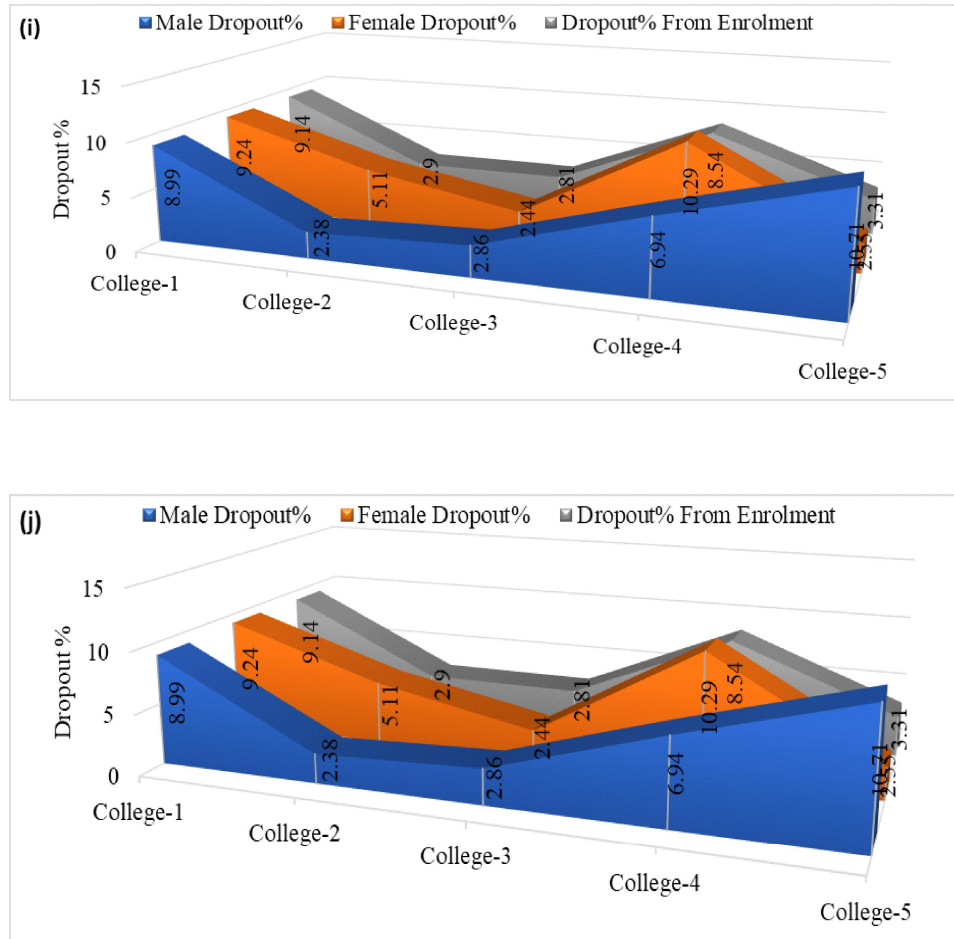


Figure 1: Examination of the statistics for the years 2018–19, 2019–20, and 2020–21 by gender. Figs. 1(a), (b), and (c) show the overall enrollment as well as the gender enrollments for the academic years 2018–19, 2019–20, and 2020–21, respectively. Figs. 1(d), (e), and (g), for the academic years 2018–19, 2019–20, and 2020–21, respectively, indicate the gender breakdown and the overall dropout rate. The percentages of male, female, and overall dropouts for the academic years 2018–19, 2019–20, and 2020–21 are shown in Figs. 1(h), (i) and (j), respectively.

Figs. 1(a), (d), and (g) present total enrollment, dropout, and dropout rates for 2018–19. Colleges 1 and 4 have high enrollment, but also high dropout rates, while Colleges 3 and 5 have lower rates. Figs. 1(b), (e), and (h) show data for 2019–20, and Figs. 1(c), (f), and (i) for 2020–21. Female enrollment has surpassed male enrollment, primarily due to awareness programmes. Government arts, commerce, and science colleges attract more female students. Fewer females enroll in polytechnics and engineering. Male and female enrollment in private colleges is similar, suggesting declining female participation in technical fields. Dental colleges have more females. Figure 1(b) shows dropout rates for 2018–19. Females exhibit higher dropout rates due to poverty, tribal regions, early marriage, expensive private college tuition, parental indifference, discouragement, and societal norms. In contrast, male dropout rates in private institutions exceed female rates, driven by higher costs. Meanwhile, male and female dropout rates remain similar in private institutions due to high tuition fees. Moving to Figure 1(c), total dropout rates are displayed, aligning with the trends in Figs. 1(a) and 1(b). Government polytechnic and engineering institutions have lower dropout rates, while private institutions have higher rates, especially in subjects with limited job opportunities. Further, specific colleges are highlighted: College-1 has similar overall enrollment, with higher female enrollment. In contrast, College-2 has more male students. College-3 shows varied enrollment patterns, with more males. Lastly, College-4 has a balanced enrollment of male and female students.

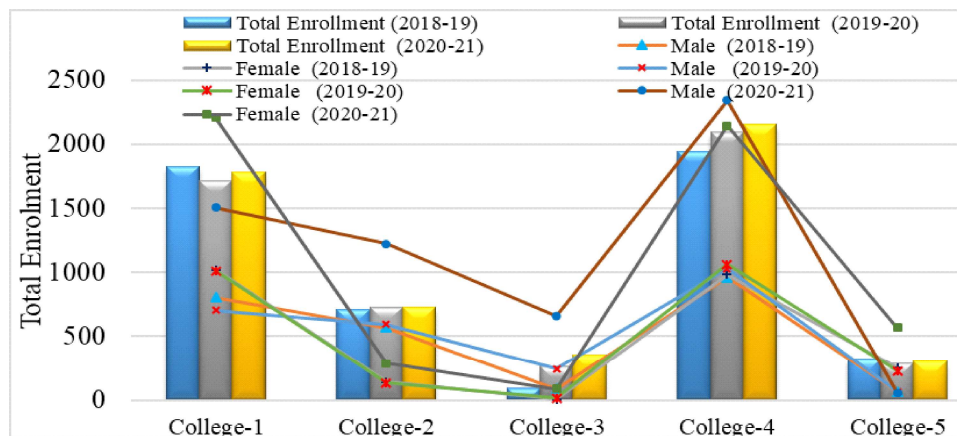


Figure 2: Comparative analysis of total student enrollment and gender-based enrollment from the years 2018-2019 to 2020-21

College-5 is a dental college where a significant enrollment disparity between males and females exist, with a higher number of female students. Figure 2 compares

male, female, and overall enrollment across the five colleges from 2018–19 to 2020–21, offering insights into enrollment trends and gender distribution. Figure 3 displays college dropouts for the same period. In College-1, dropout rates are similar for both males and females. College-2 and College-3 show equal dropout rates, proportional to overall enrollment, with a higher male enrollment. College-4 has similar dropout rates for males and females, but higher than other government institutions due to higher tuition fees. College-5 exhibits high female enrollment and dropout rates. These figures provide an overview of gender enrollment and dropout percentages within the college landscape.

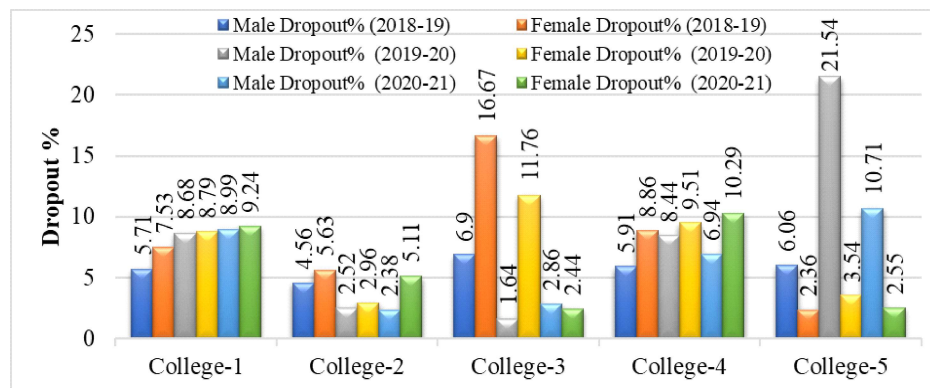


Figure 3: Male and female dropout rate from the years 2018-19 to 2020-21

Demographic-wise dropout

Table 10 presents the analysis of demographic dimensions for the year 2018-19, including “Male,” “Male Dropout%,” “Female,” and “Female Dropout%.” The standard deviation indicates data dispersion, revealing a strong association between the standard deviations of urban male and male dropout data. Specifically, the variance for urban males is 90880.80, whereas for male dropouts, it is 0.37, indicating scattered data points. The Kurtosis and skewness values confirm normal distribution.

Similarly, there is a strong association between the standard deviations of urban females and female dropout data. The variance for urban females is 42613.50, while for female dropouts, it is 11.94, indicating a higher level of data scattering. The Kurtosis and skewness values suggest normal distribution. In rural areas, the variance for males is 44391.70, and for male dropouts, it increases to 14.30, indicating higher data scattering. The Kurtosis and skewness values further affirm normal distribution. The same patterns also apply to females.

Table 11 shows the P-values for urban male and female dropouts in 2018-19, validating the null hypothesis. The F-value indicates no significant variance alignment, indicating that the data observations are not interrelated. P-values for rural male and female dropouts are 0.09 and 0.15 respectively, validating the alternative hypothesis. The F-value suggests partial variance alignment, and the data observations exhibit partial interrelatedness.

Similar patterns emerge in 2019-20 and 2020-21. The Pearson correlation coefficients reveal weak or lack of positive correlation between urban males and females, and their dropout variables. Likewise, rural males and females exhibit weak or lack of positive correlation, except for 2019-20, where a strong correlation is observed.

The analysis of demographic dimensions and statistical tests reveals patterns of dispersion, variance, distribution, and correlation between genders and dropout rates within both urban and rural areas. The findings indicate interrelatedness in some cases and independence in others, providing valuable into the dynamics of dropout trends.

Table 10. Descriptive statistics of demographic-wise student's dropout% of year 2018-19

	M MD%		F FD%		M MD%		F FD%	
	Urban		Urban		Rural		Rural	
Mean	305.60	5.35	241.00	4.29	192.80	8.23	240.20	29.12
Standard Error	134.82	0.27	92.32	1.55	94.22	1.69	131.41	17.97
Median	278.00	5.36	245.00	4.61	166.00	9.52	75.00	9.88
Standard Deviation	301.46	0.61	206.43	3.45	210.69	3.78	293.84	40.18
Sample Variance	90880.80	0.37	42613.50	11.94	44391.70	14.30	86340.70	1614.33
Kurtosis	1.98	-0.76	-2.55	-2.41	1.18	-0.59	-2.87	4.43
Skewness	1.37	-0.33	-0.02	-0.25	1.17	-0.51	0.64	2.09
Range	742.00	1.55	471.00	7.77	517.00	9.73	609.00	96.00
Minimum	56.00	4.51	5.00	0.00	10.00	2.92	1.00	4.00
Maximum	798.00	6.06	476.00	7.77	527.00	12.65	610.00	100.00
Confidence Level (95.0%)	374.32	0.75	256.32	4.29	261.61	4.70	364.85	49.89

Table 11. ANOVA and t-test analysis of category-wise student's dropout% from the year 2018-19 to 2020-21

		Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit	Pearson Correlation	
2018-19	Urban	Male Dropout	249118.87	1.00	249118.87	6.77	ns	0.03*	5.32	-0.43 <i>ns</i>
		Female Dropout	140074.33	1.00	140074.33	6.57	ns	0.03*	5.32	0.46**
	Rural	Male Dropout	85163.37	1.00	85163.37	3.84***	0.09 <i>ns</i>	5.32	-0.51 <i>ns</i>	
		Female Dropout	111384.81	1.00	111384.81	2.53***	0.15 <i>ns</i>	5.32	-0.50 <i>ns</i>	
2019-20	Urban	Male Dropout	249118.87	1.00	249118.87	6.77	ns	0.03*	5.32	-0.43 <i>ns</i>
		Female Dropout	120231.23	1.00	120231.23	6.49	ns	0.03*	5.32	-0.34 <i>ns</i>
	Rural	Male Dropout	95316.17	1.00	95316.17	9.11	ns	0.02*	5.32	0.10**
		Female Dropout	165199.61	1.00	165199.61	3.21***	0.11 <i>ns</i>	5.32	0.80**	
2020-21	Urban	Male Dropout	205962.68	1.00	205962.68	7.50	ns	0.03*	5.32	-0.52 <i>ns</i>
		Female Dropout	151863.72	1.00	151863.72	6.03	ns	0.04*	5.32	0.37**
	Rural	Male Dropout	162455.42	1.00	162455.42	6.78	ns	0.03*	5.32	0.01**
		Female Dropout	151285.08	1.00	151285.08	2.53***	0.15 <i>ns</i>	5.32	-0.05 <i>ns</i>	

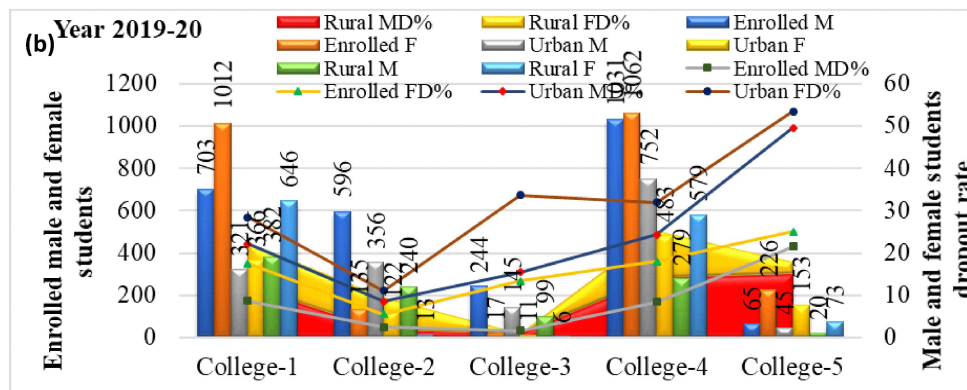
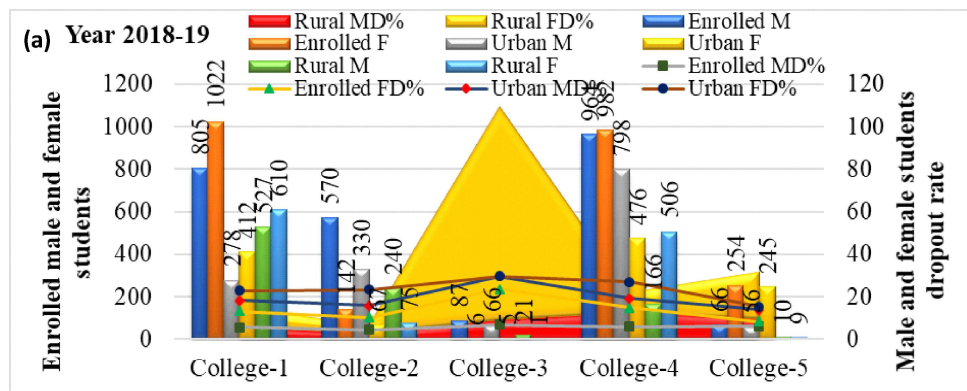
Note: * = significant at $p < 0.05$, ** = significant at $r > 0.00$, ns = not significant, *** = significant at ' $F < F_{crit}$ ' for ANOVA and t-test analysis. * = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Figure 4 displays the division of students into rural and urban areas, categorized by gender. Dropout percentages of male and female students from both rural and urban areas are calculated. The x-axis represents the five colleges, while the y-axes show the enrollment of male and female students and the dropout rates of urban and rural students. The column chart illustrates the total enrollment of urban and rural students, along with the enrollment of male and female students. The line chart presents the dropout percentages of urban and rural males and females. Stacked charts visualize the dropout percentages of male and female students from rural and urban areas.

In the year 2018-19, College-3 had the highest dropout rate among female students, reaching 16.67% in the overall student dropout category. Similarly, Colleges-2 and -4 had the highest dropout rates for female students in urban areas, at 7.46% and 7.77% respectively. In rural areas, the highest dropout percentages for female students were observed in Colleges-1, -2, -3, and -5, at 9.51%, 4.00%, 100.00%, and 22.22% respectively. College-4 had the highest dropout rate among male students at 12.65%. This represented the highest dropout rate among rural and urban students in the 2018-19 college year.

In the year 2019-20, College-5 recorded the highest dropout rate of 21.54% for female students in the overall student dropout category. Similarly, Colleges-3 and -5 had the highest dropout rates for female and male students in urban areas reaching 14.14% and 26.4% respectively. Additionally, the highest dropout percentages for students in rural areas were observed in Colleges -1, -2, -4, and -5, at 12.04% (male), 6.9% (female), 13.9% (male), and 15.00% (male) respectively. Finally, College-4 had the lowest student dropout percentage among all colleges in the rural area.

In the year 2020-21, College-5 had the highest male student dropout rate of 10.71% in the overall student dropout category. Similarly, College-1 in urban areas had the highest dropout rates for male and female students at 12.11% and 12.41% respectively. Moreover, Colleges-4 and -5 had the highest dropout percentages for males and females in rural areas, while College-2 had the lowest dropout percentage among males and females, as compared to other colleges. The college-level analysis revealed that female students in rural areas had a higher dropout rate than male students.



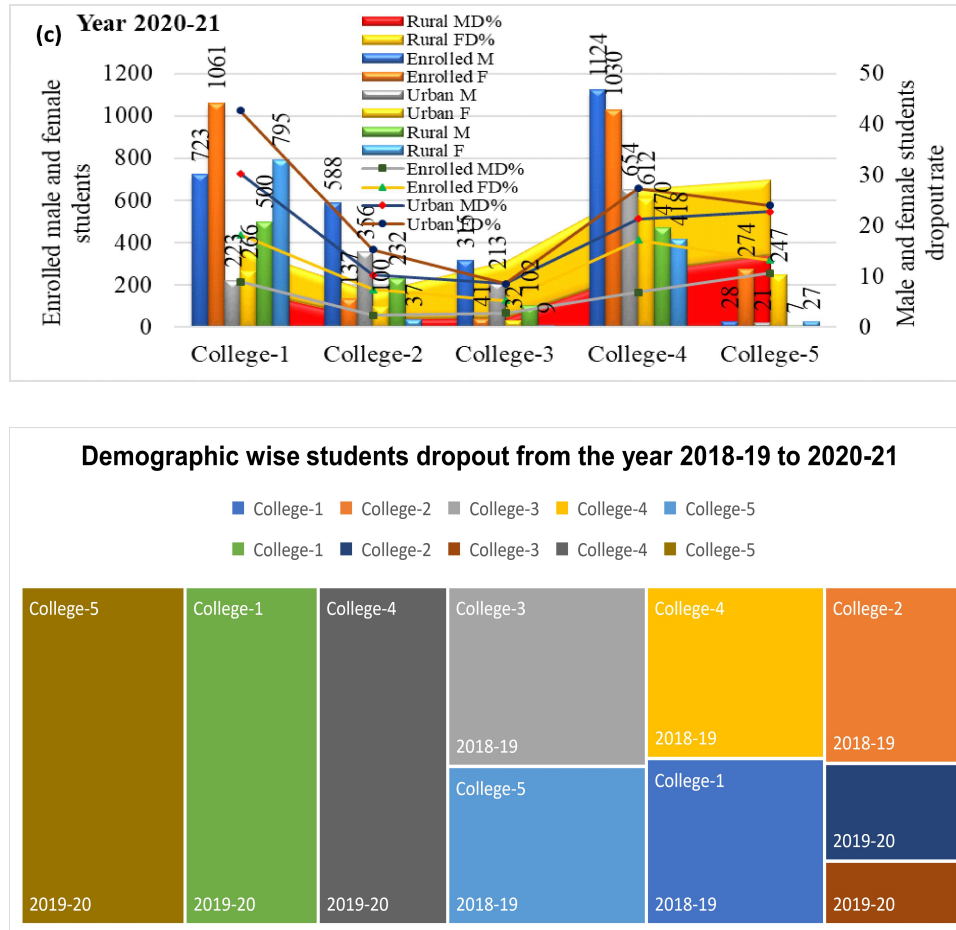


Figure 4: (a) Total enrolled students and its corresponding dropout urban and rural students in year 2018-19 (b) Total enrolled students and its corresponding dropout urban and rural students in year 2019-20 (c) Total enrolled students and its corresponding dropout urban and rural students in year 2020-21 (d) Treemap chart of demographic-wise student's dropout from the years 2018-19 to 2020-21

Familiarity with Adult Education

In adult education, recognizing the unique characteristics and needs of adult learners is crucial. Understanding the principles of adult learning theory and applying them to analyze higher education dropouts through the lens of gender and

demographics can provide insights into factors like learner autonomy and self-directed learning. Adult education emphasizes lifelong learning and duly acknowledges the challenges faced by adult learners, such as work and family responsibilities. The analysis of dropout rates concerning gender and demographics aligns with the quantitative research approach in adult education. This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of challenges and disparities among adult learners. Incorporating the field of adult education into the analysis provides a contextualized perspective and contributes to the formulation of focused interventions aimed at addressing dropout rates.

Delimitations

The data collection occurred within a specific period between August and September 2022. The selected colleges were already aware of the study's objectives, potentially introducing bias into the findings. The study focused on disciplines such as arts, commerce, sciences, medicine, engineering, and polytechnic; however, this selection might not fully represent all fields of study. Although the three-year data collection aimed for a robust sample size, there remains the possibility of limitations. While verbal exchanges captured personal challenges and administrative perspectives, it is important to note that self-reported data has inherent limitations. Response rates varied among colleges, thus affecting the extent to which findings can be generalized. Categorization based on gender and demographics, although providing valuable insights, oversimplifies the complex individual experiences that contribute to dropout rates. Future research should address these limitations and include a broader range of faculties and institutions.

Results and Conclusions

Extensive research publications reveal that technological advancements, particularly the widespread use of computers and electronic devices, have reshaped society and significantly impacted mental health. This has resulted in a rise in mental disorders and affected academic performance, further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic which triggered a shift to online education. Multiple factors contribute to the surge in education dropouts, including conservative beliefs, high tuition costs, early marriage, family conflicts, financial constraints, health issues, and employment. To investigate these causes, a questionnaire was distributed among professors, students, and colleges, supplemented by personal interviews and analysis of official data.

The compiled information showed a significant correlation with the questionnaire responses. The analysis uncovered gender and demographic disparities, indicating that rural girls experience higher dropout rates due to factors such as poverty, stereotypical thinking, early marriage, and gender inequality. Moreover, rural areas exhibited higher dropout rates due to economic and social backwardness. Factors such as the social environment, poverty, family illiteracy, social inequality, and subject complexity were identified as contributors to dropout rates.

Private colleges enrolled more students from metropolitan areas, whereas government colleges had a higher representation of rural students, driven by academic fees and access to job-oriented courses. These findings highlight the complex interplay of factors that influence higher education dropouts, emphasizing the significance of gender and demographic disparities. Understanding these factors is crucial in developing targeted interventions aimed at addressing dropout rates and enhancing educational outcomes for all students.

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Psychological, Educational, Home Environmental and Economic Problems of First Generation Learners in Higher Education: A Study

• Sima Kalita¹

• Hiranmayee Kalita²

Abstract

The present study analyzes the challenges faced by the First Generation Learners (FGLs) in higher education. The individuals whose parents have not attended an educational institution are called First Generation Learners (FGLs). Learners whose siblings have received education, but their parents have not, are still considered First Generation Learners. This study tries to address a research gap by investigating the issues encountered by FGLs pursuing higher education, specially within the context of gender (male and female) and academic streams (arts and science). The study area was Darrang district (Assam). Descriptive survey method was adopted in the study and the sample consisted of 150 FGLs. The researchers have used primary data to meet the objectives of the study. The problems have been categorized into four dimensions: psychological, educational, home environmental and economic challenges. It was found that the problems of the home environment are more severe, followed by psychological, economic and educational challenges. The difficulties faced by the arts students were more than those faced by science students across all dimensions. Further, female students faced more hurdles as compared to their male counterparts. The approach to addressing these problems, as emphasized and elaborated by the National Education Policy 2020 as well as some major studies carried out on the subject have also been underlined. These insights could serve as a blueprint for Institutional Action Plan to address the problems highlighted in this study.

Keywords: *First-Generation Learners (FGLs), higher education, gender, streams.*

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Introduction

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world” (Nelson Mandela, 2006). Both the dimensions of ‘Equality’ and ‘Inclusivity’ are important in an education system. Education helps people improve their socio-economic conditions. The GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio) for Indian higher education was 27.1% in the year of 2019-20 academic year, according to the AISHE report. However, certain sections have been overlooked until now, which may be a cause for the less GER in higher education. These mainly include categories like SC, ST, OBC, minorities, marginalized groups, and more. The FGLs, who in most cases, come from these segments of the population, face significant challenges in their lives. Unfortunately, the challenges faced by the FGLs are largely ignored. Learners whose parents or guardians have not attended an educational institution are called the FGLs. This definition also holds true for higher education. An FGL in HE is someone whose parents/guardians have not attended college making them the first in their family to pursue a bachelor’s degree in any college or university. Challenges such as demotivation, poverty, lack of understanding within family, and other problems are commonly faced by FGLs.

Review of Literature

Studies found that there are relationships between the problems faced by FGLs with respect to gender and the locality of high school students in the Palani district of Tamil Nadu. FGLs from nuclear and joint families exhibit similar psychological personal and social problems. However, there is a difference in the dimension of economic problems (Kiran, 2017).

The first-generation learners of primary school in Delhi face more problems pertaining to economic status, parental involvement, availability of study facilities at home, utilization of reading room facilities in school, problems regarding participation in co-curricular activities, etc. also receiving less encouragement to engage compare to their non-first-generation counterparts (Lal, 2017).

FGLs enrolled in research universities have had to face many challenges. When compared to non-first-generation learners, FGLs face many obstacles in academic achievements due to job and family responsibilities, weak English, language skills, deficient mathematical and logical aptitude, and inadequate study skills. Balancing all such responsibilities can lead to feeling of depression, sadness, and frustration. Studies have found that FGLs who study in large research universities, have experienced several academic obstacles (Stebbleton & Krista, 2017).

Studies were also conducted regarding the educational problems of FGLs. Comparative studies between the problems of FGLs and Non-FGLs, revealed that First-generation learners do not get all kinds of educational facilities and support at home. It was found that FGLs and Non-FGLs have the same level of achievement motivation. The teachers expect parental involvement as well for providing children with an optimal study environment at home (Antil, 2021).

Studies have also found that the expectation of First-Generation women learners in urban areas are slightly higher than their counterparts in rural areas. The urban and rural backgrounds make a definite difference among the first-generation woman learners. It may be due to societal exposure, awareness and availability of educational loans, etc. Women learners from rural areas tend to be less aware of all the possibilities and societal stigmatization due to factors like poor motivation, guidance and financial assistance from their families.

The psychological needs of first generation women learners at the Under Graduate (UG) level is lower than Those at the Post-Graduate (PG) level. This may be because of the difference in maturity levels. Psychologically, women learners at the PG level expect a lot of motivational support from their teachers. The women FGLs from rural areas faced more problems in the educational and psychological dimensions than the learners from urban areas. In rural areas, generally, women learners are not allowed to pursue education at distant locations and they do not find any kind of guidance from others (Prabha, 2020).

In an earlier study, an investigator compared the academic achievements between FGLs and Non-FGLs at the school level. Academic achievement of non-FGLs turned out to be better than the FGLs in both economically advantaged and the disadvantaged sections of the population. The Gross Wastage rate for male and female FGLs was higher than that for non-FGLs among economically better off and poorer sections.

The parents of the FGLs cannot guide their children well at home regarding studies as they themselves have not been educated. They are not aware of the education of their children and they do not tend to encourage them for the same. Such children are often compelled to contribute to the family's income because of their poor economic conditions. They also encounter difficulties in finding necessary educational materials in time. The FGL generation children are involved in both household and non-domestic works, further impacting their ability to focus on their studies. As a result, their home environment is not suitable for studying, and they often have responsibilities to look after their younger siblings as well (Borbora, 1997).

Based on a nationwide student satisfaction survey, Bhushan's study shows that 44 percent of students are first generation learners. Infact, the 71st National Sample in 2014, estimates show that 46% students in higher education are first generation learners (Bhushan, 2020:1). He provides a stunning picture: Mani Madhavan conducted a survey in his college [in Govt. Arts College, Namakal, Tamil Nadu] and informed the following features of first generation learners:

1. The first-generation students are from BPL category.
2. Don't have proper guidance.
3. The problem of expressing ideas.
4. Hesitate to ask questions.
5. Most of them don't have appropriate parental care.
6. Poor basic knowledge.
7. Poor self-image.
8. Lack of hygiene practices.
9. Non-availability of nutritious food.
10. Don't have a focus on their plans.
11. Poor communication skills in English as well as in the local language.
12. Lack of awareness about the available options.
13. Poor self-discipline.
14. Not sincere in studies.
15. Good at their heart.
16. Want to grow in life but not interested in taking initiatives.
17. Fear of failure and unwillingness to take challenges.
18. Not willing to travel.
19. Not ready to work in faraway places (Bhushan, 2020: 11).

Statement of the Problem

FGLs face many difficulties and hurdles in their educational and personal life. However, not much investigation and analysis of such dimensions have been done especially in Assam.

The present study attempts to find out the problems and hurdles faced by the FGLs in the field of higher education and seeks to underline the institutional interventions that could effectively address those hurdles and ensure a smooth academic journey of the FGLs just like the non-FGLs. It draws from other field level studies relating to these groups, and the institutional interventions pointed out, besides, of course, drawing from the vision of NEP, 2020.

Delimitations of the Problem

- The study is limited to only Darrang district of Assam.
- It is limited to only 2 colleges of Darrang district, viz., Sipajhar college and Mangaldai college.
- This study is limited to only govt colleges at district and lower levels, affiliated to Gauhati University.
- It is limited only to the arts and science streams.
- This study is limited only to the FGLs of higher education.
- Higher education refers to collegiate education only (Under-Graduate level).

Need and Significance of the Study

The difficulties and vulnerabilities of First Generation Learners demand an in-depth study. It is very important to find out the root cause of their difficulties, so that we are able to create awareness about the problems and difficulties of FGLs among the educated people, parents, teachers and the society. This awareness will help to mitigate the hurdles which FGLs have been facing. NEP 2020 highlights the importance of full equity, inclusion and equality in higher education. Hence, this study is instrumental in helping the development of higher education in India.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this research are:

1. To study the psychological, educational, home environmental and economic problems of FGLs in higher education studying in the colleges of Darrang district.
2. To study the problems of male and female FGLs in higher education.
3. To study the problems of FGLs in higher education belonging to arts and science stream.
4. To draw attention to the institutional interventions to tackle the hurdles and difficulties faced by the FGLs and ensure their smooth academic journey with learning outcomes.

Method

Descriptive survey method was used in the present study.

Population

FGLs of higher education studying in the Provincialized colleges in district and lower levels, like Sipajhar and Mangaldai area (Sipajhar college and Mangaldai college) located at Darrang District of Assam, were considered as the population of the study.

Sample

150 FGLs have been taken as sample for the present study. Random sampling technique has been used at the time of data collection.

Tool for the Data Collection

A self-prepared closed-ended questionnaire was used on the problems of FGLs.

Standardization of Tool

The questionnaire was prepared related to the problems of the FGLs. Suggestions and opinions of experts have been taken to validate the questionnaire.

Analysis and Interpretation of data

Table 1. Different Problems of FGLs

Dimensions of Problems	Count	Percentage
Psychological	69	46%
Educational	56	37.33%
Home environmental	74	49.33%
Economic	60	40%

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Source: Primary data generated through the questionnaire.

From Table 1, it is evident that out of 150 FGLs, 69(46%) have psychological problems, and 56 (37.33%) have educational problems. While 74 (49.33%) have problems regarding their home environment, 60(40%) have economic problems. It

is clear from the observation that psychological problems and the problems of home environment were, higher as compared to the other problems.

Table 2. The Problems of Male and Female FGLs

Dimensions of Problems	Male		Female	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Psychological	32	46.38%	37	53.62%
Educational	27	48.21%	29	51.79%
Home environmental	35	47.30%	39	52.70%
Economic	29	48.33%	31	51.67%

Source: Primary data generated through the questionnaire.

From Table 2, it is evident that in all the dimensions of the problems, the problems of females were more than that of the problems of males. Again, in case of females, the psychological problems were more, followed by home environmental problems, educational and economic problems. In case of male students, educational and economic problems were more severe as compared to psychological and home environment problems which seemed to stifle females more severely in attending colleges.

Table 3. The Problems of FGLs Pursuing Arts and Science Streams

Dimensions of Problems	Arts		Science	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Psychological	35	38.89%	21	35%
Educational	30	33.33%	16	26.67%
Home environment	38	42.22%	22	36.67%
Economic	47	52.22%	28	46.67%

Source: Primary data generated through the questionnaire.

From Table 3, it was found that, out of 150 FGLs, students belonging to the Arts stream were 90 and science stream students were 60. 35 (38.89%) out of 90 arts FGLs and 21(35%) out of 60 science FGLs have psychological problems. It is, perhaps, not surprising that FGLs in the Arts courses face more problems than those pursuing Science streams. Poverty seems to be a major deterrent for pursuing higher education, both in Arts and Science streams as compared to other problems, accounting for 52.22% in Arts and 46.67% in Science streams.

Suggestions for future study

Some of the suggestions for undertaking future research can be considered:

- The present study was conducted with the help of students of Darrang district. It can be replicated in other regions of Assam or India as well.
- The present study has focused on college students only. Similar study may be conducted at the school level also.
- The present study may be further extended over the limited sample size of 150 FGLs. To make more valid generalizations, it can be replicated on a large sample.

Institutional Plans to Address Problems of FGL: (i) Pioneer Advocacy Studies

The problems faced by the FGLs and the institutional efforts and strategies needed to address them have also been underlined by a major study, that has taken up higher education institutions located in six states including Bihar, Delhi, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh. It noted that “the other set of vulnerabilities faced by students from socially excluded groups pertains to their pre-college academic credentials. In comparison to the non-SC/ST/OBC students, SC and ST students are more likely to be the first in their family or first generation learners pursuing higher education. They often hail from government schools with regional language as the medium of instruction and are academically under-prepared for college course work” (Nidhi and Malish, 2018: 13). The study also asserts that “the existing literature establishes that institutional strategies such as college orientation, participation in extracurricular activities and remedial programmes play an important role in successfully integrating the non-traditional and first-generation students into the social and academic mainstream of the institutions” (Nidhi and Malish, 2018: 87).

Based on his nationwide study, Prof. Bhushan also suggests similar plans in respect of FGLs: “There is an urgent need to identify the first generation learners

and to incorporate the issues and challenges they face into institutional goals and missions. Their varying problems of learning difficulty, language deficiency, low motivation, resource deficits, etc. should be explicitly pointed out along with the strategies of the institution to address them” (Bhushan, 2020: 96). With respect to language: “Students demanded that for every institution where language is a barrier for students, there should be a well-equipped language lab. Preparatory language classes should be held and Teachers should engage with the students to promote English proficiency”. “Emotional support: It was found that a majority of the students were shy, and experiencing complexity and a fear of talking to the teachers. It was suggested that teachers should establish closer relationship with students, understand them better and be empathetic” (Bhushan, 2020).

Institutional Plans to Address Problems of FGL: (ii) The NEP Vision

The National Education Policy 2020 adopts a different nomenclature, viz., Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs), which also includes the FGLs, although not explicitly named as such, as no FGL learner falls outside the scope of SEDGs. Most of the groups covered under the SEDGs as outlined by NEP, comprise a large number of the FGLs. These include Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, minorities, as well as students from geographically specific identities such as villages, small towns, and aspirational districts, along with low-income households in both rural and urban areas (MHRD, 2020: 26).

The NEP underlined that “women cut across all underrepresented groups, making up about half of all SEDGs. Unfortunately, the exclusion and inequity that SEDGs face is only amplified for the women within these SEDGs.” Therefore, it suggests that the “policies and schemes designed to include students from SEDGs should be especially targeted towards girls within these SEDGs” (MHRD, 2020).

The plans at the institutional levels to mitigate the problems faced by FGLs emphasized by the NEP, include the following among others: Developing bridge courses for students that come from disadvantaged educational backgrounds; Providing socio-emotional and academic support and mentoring for all such students through suitable counselling and mentoring programmes, ensuring the sensitization of faculty, counsellors, and students to gender-identity issues and their inclusion in all aspects of the HEI, including curricula; Strictly enforcing non-discrimination and anti-harassment regulations; and Developing Institutional Development Plans that contain specific plans for action on increasing participation from SEDGs, including but not limited to the above measures (MHRD, 2020: 42).

Conclusions

Our study clearly established that FGLs are not free from encountering problems in the various dimensions like psychological, educational, economic and home environmental. Many previous studies, as mentioned above, alongwith Antil (2021) and NEP 2020, bring to our attention the institutional efforts needed to address their problems and ensure their academic engagement and learning outcomes. Though FGLs have many weaknesses, previous studies have identified strengths in them, like enthusiasm, self-control, curiosity, optimism, gratitude, etc. (Havlik, 2020). Hence, there is a strong need for the college authorities to devise an institutional plan to caters to the emotional and academic support for the FGLs and their parents, ensuring a fulfilling academic journey for the FGLs.

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Continuous Learning is a Way to Empowering Teachers and Leaders

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to raise awareness about the importance of continuous learning, especially for the teaching community and leaders. Before Covid-19, many members of the teaching community didn't understand the importance of continuous and technology-based learning. However, the Covid-19 period compelled, every teacher to embrace technology-based learning tools such as Google Meet, Zoom, MS Teams, Google Forms, etc. This paper attempts to describe the facility and procedure for creation of the autocrat certificate method [the term autocrat is used in google to imply generating certificates automatically], and the creation of automatic result analysis. The proposed method aims to save faculty time, and reduce manual error. In the existing approach, faculty members write hundreds of certificates by hand and manually perform result analysis using Excel spread sheets, and most of the time errors occur, taking up more time for doing the clerical work. The proposed autocrat and flubaroo techniques [the term flubaroo is used in google to imply generating result analysis] can be used to generate the certificate and micro result analysis with single click. The output is error free and offers higher clarity, compared to the existing methodology.

Keywords: *Autocrat certificate generation, flubaroo based micro analysis, mind map, google form.*

Introduction

Lifelong learning is one of the prime keys for the teaching community and academic leaders. Learning takes place daily in various forms with technology and

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policies continually advancing. Thus, it becomes the prime responsibility of everyone to stay updated with current trends. If we fail to stay updated, we will quickly become outdated, and as the saying goes “update or become outdated”. Significant changes took place during the Covid-19 period. Prior to the pandemic, faculty members were habituated to the conventional teaching method that is the chalk and board methodology. No one in the faculty had utilized an online platform before to conduct remedial classes, extended content beyond the classroom or implemented flipped class activities, etc. (Govil, Anushalini and Sridhar, 2005; Mihardi, Harahap, and Saini, 2013). However, the Covid-19 forced the faculties to move to the online classroom method. Numerous free sources emerged and started to offer free online classroom tools such as Google meet, Zoom, MS team, etc. Each tool came with the prime motto of conducting online classes with distinct features (Reddy, 2023). Throughout the Covid-19 period, the whole teaching community was obliged to operate the online classroom tools. Those who failed to keep up with the evolving technology, struggled to remain effective on field. The online tools offer various features such as recording the session and sharing the uploaded video with the students via YouTube links, and employing online chalk and board method, etc. (Kees and isabellereymen, 2004; Yadav, 2023).

Some other tools are directly helpful to the faculty. Similar to the structure of chalk and board, they are used to write mathematical derivations and store data in softcopy format. These methods are very useful for helping students understand topics step by step, particularly in mathematical and derivative teaching (Banerjee, George & Kadbane, 2023). In addition, with the introduction of online quizzes and interactive tools, they are used to conduct classes more effectively (Majumder & Sarma, 2010). These types of tools and technologies have been on trend during Covid-19. If faculty members start learning the usage of these technologies, they can better utilize them in both online and offline classrooms. This technology also helps in assessment methods with different styles.

Google provides a variety of tools to promote outcome-based education classroom activities in a user-friendly manner. For instance, Google Sheet, are used to collect data from students, allowing all members to work on a single page. This facility is utilized to improve students’ brainstorming skills. For example, when a question is asked, students are supposed to answer on the relevant row of the page. Similarly, Google Docs can also be used to execute similar types of activities. Furthermore, these documents and sheets aid in the collection of data from candidates including their mental responses, among other things.

Google Forms, as the third main tool, are used to conduct the quiz activities and collect personal data from candidates. The Google quiz form has choices for shuffled questions, time allocation, and answer displaying answers after completion of the activity, emailing solution keys and evaluation simultaneously, and so on. This type of Google form quiz method can also be utilized for pre-requisite assessments from candidates, mid-semester feedback, course-end survey activities, etc. These forms generate charts, analyses, and data in excel sheets, among other functionalities. Since some machines might not support Microsoft PowerPoint, Google Slides are used for both online and offline class activities. Google slides can produce animation, conduct user-based quiz answer activities, and so on. Google meet facilitates online sessions and enables connecting. All students on a single platform for interaction, even during holidays. Furthermore, these Google meetings provide the option to record classes as well. After finishing a session, instructors can use YouTube to upload and share the session's URL with students (Ansari & Tripathi, 2017). The automatic generation and distribution of participant certificates aid in organizing quizzes and awareness contests. These technologies also eliminate the need for manually writing a hundred or more certificates.

Methodology

Document Sharing using Google

Google offers numerous tools, including options for sharing sheets, documents, and PowerPoint presentations. These are useful for efficiently extracting data from a larger number of participants. Through this method, faculty members do not have to manually enter student information into an Excel spreadsheet. The objectives of Google spreadsheet, Microsoft Word document, and Microsoft PowerPoint presentation are the same: to work on all participants within a single window. Google Drawing can aid in mind mapping activities, serving as a useful tool to create topic maps and submit them to the tutor or instructor for review. The brainstorming session led to an enhancement in students' critical thinking skills.

Automatic Certificate Generation with Google Form

One of the most important attributes is to encourage and accredit the students by awarding certificates at the conclusion of an event. Every activity or programme (seminar, workshop, faculty development programme, inter sports, annual day, etc.) offers certificates such as "best participants", "best faculty", "best researcher" and "academic excellence", among others. Certificates motivate participants to perform better in the impending competitions. Designing, printing, and composing certificates

increases the time required for clerical work and increases the possibility of errors. Google's "Automat Certificate" tool is used to generate 100+ certificates with a single operation during the session. The specifics of the creation process are detailed below:

Step 1: Provide precise event instructions through a brochure.

Step 2: User responses to a Google form are used to extract the necessary data.

Step 3: Analyse the performance, provide the ranking list along with the corresponding answer key, and mail the participation certificate to the candidate in question.

In addition, each Google form containing responses can be used to obtain a summary of candidate responses, question-based responses, and individual responses with a single click. Fig.1 depicts the prototype of a Google form. Fig.2 depicts the response summary as reflected by the graphic method. The certificate sample generated by the automatic certificate generator is depicted in Fig.3.

Questions Responses 10 Settings

Wonder of Waste -"Contest"

Own creation only accepted. So please create by own.

Email *

Valid email

This form is collecting emails. [Change settings](#)

Name *

Short answer text

Standard / Class *

☐ <10

☐ 10

☐ 11

☐ 12

☐ Diploma

☐ UG

☐ PG

☐ Faculty

☐ others

mobile no *

Short answer text

Gender *

☐ Female

☐ Male

☐ Prefer not to say

☐ Other...

School/College *

Fig.1 creation of google form.

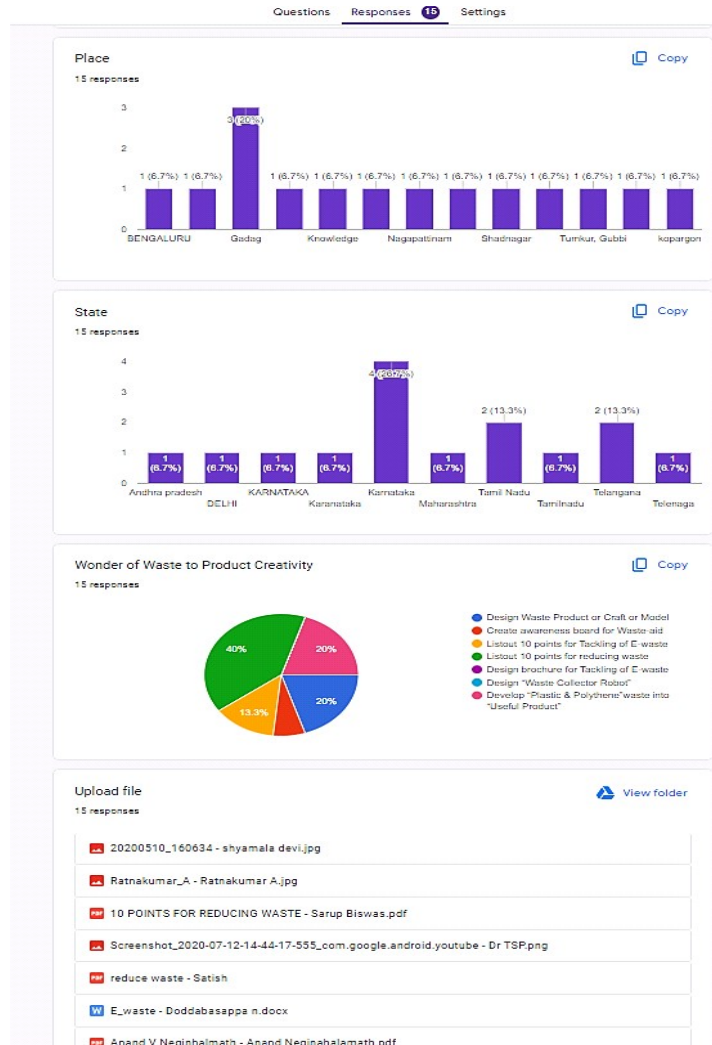


Fig. 2 Summary of the response

As an organizer, construct a Google form for the event's data collection. The entry must be error-free and clearly indicate the required information in accordance with the event's brochure. For instance, the contest for the "Wonder of Waste" has multiple categories. referred to as Design Waste Product, Craft, or Model. These categories include: Building a public awareness board for Waste-aid; Listing 10 points for addressing E-waste; 10 points for reducing refuse; creating a brochure

for the Tackling of E-waste initiative; Create a Waste Collection Robot; and Create a useful product from plastic and polythene waste. Participant candidates should choose one category, and then identify potential problems encountered during the actual event days - based on literature. List the possible remedy or idea for the problem, based on the relevant literature. Once the idea has been enumerated, priorities should be assigned and compared to existing concepts to determine novelty. As depicted in Fig. 2, ICT aids in autonomously generating fundamental analysis. Send the participation certificate to the candidate once the evaluator has concluded the evaluation, as shown in Fig.3.



Fig. 3 sample certificate of the event and quiz



Fig. 4 Sample snapshot for students submitted activity assignment

The response generated by ICT is summarised in Fig. 2. Through pie charts, it is simple to analyse the various categories of the students such as class, gender, etc.

40% of the entrants in the category “List of 10 points for reducing waste” were selected, 20% of the entrants participated in “Development for plastic & polythene refuse into useful products”, and 20% for “designing waste products into a craft or model”. The number of students who are interested in participating in the category is determined via computer-generated analysis. Automatic sample certification issuance is depicted in Fig.3. This method is used to generate certificates for competitions automatically. Certificates for participation in quizzes are also generated using the same method.

Fig. 4 depicts an example of a student’s content-related photograph. Students’ levels of critical thinking, writing, design, and product creation are elevated as a result of this event. This form of activity contributes to the development of students’ corporate-required skills. These kinds of activities provide students with opportunities for employability. Both students’ careers and society benefit from the event’s execution.

In the following section 2.3, detailed instructions are provided for the automated generation of certificates, linking the creation to a Google sheet, and sending certificates to candidates automatically, etc.

Steps to Generate the Automatic Certificate System

To generate the certificate automatically, participants must input their correct name and institute information. This is one of the best ways to generate multiple certificates in the simplest way possible. The following procedures are used to generate the certificates depicted in Figures 5 through 7.

Step 1: Create the form on Google. Collect the participant’s name, designation, and institution.

Step 2: Fig.6 depicts how to launch the Google form, navigate the responses and access the Google spreadsheet.

Step 3: Insert within the extensions if the “Autocrat” extension is not available, select the Google sheet and download it from the drop-down menu.

Step 4: Click autocrat under extensions tap, it starts to connect the corresponding window as shown in Fig.6

Step 5: In the Google sheets extension drop down, select Autocrat, then launch or open.

Step 6: Begin by entering the file name, then upload the certificate template, link the taps of the google form, then click finish to automatically deliver the automatic certificate to the concerned participant’s email address, as shown in Fig.7.

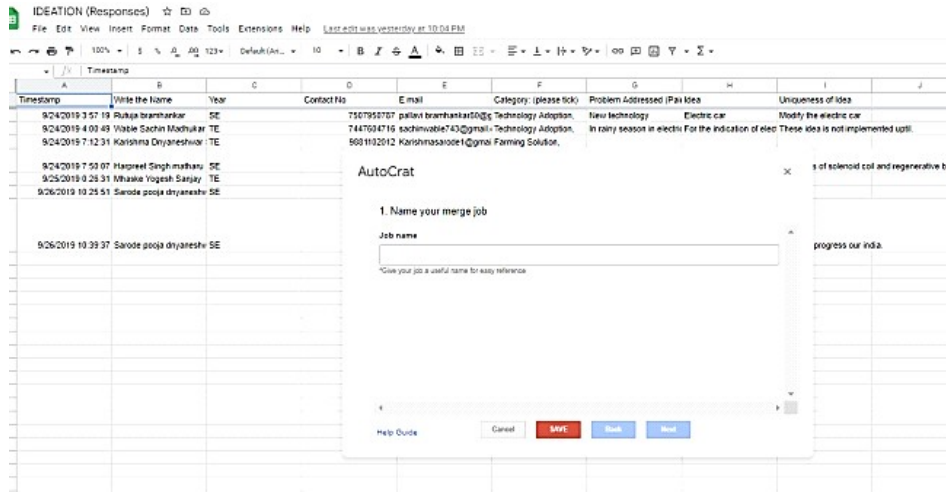


Fig. 5 initialize of auto certificate system

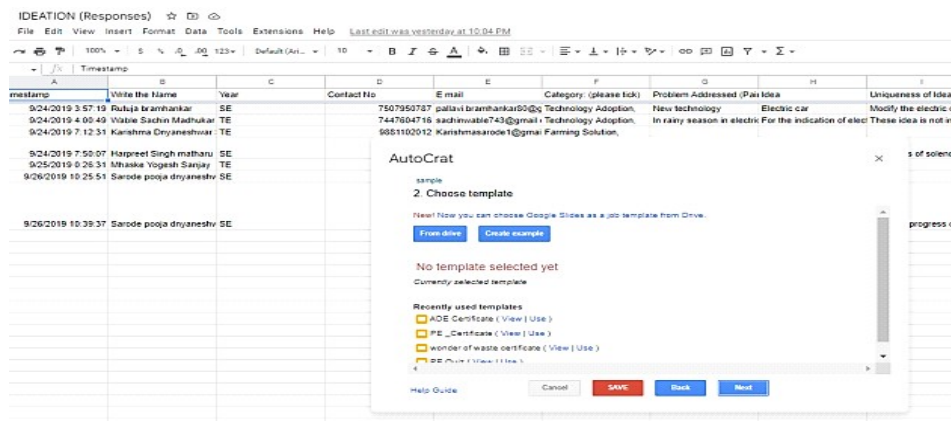


Fig. 6 Upload template of the certificate

Steps to Generate Flubaroo Result Analysis

The flubaroo notification technique is utilized to send individual participant quiz micro-analysis to concerned students. It is used to prevent self-demotivation in students. Figures 8–11 show the steps for creating the flubaroo.

Step 1: Create the quiz using Google. When students have completed the Google form entry, the micro findings will be generated automatically.

Step 2: The teacher should start the basic flubaroo notification process.

Step 3: To begin the grading process, click flubaroo under the extensions tap, as illustrated in Fig. 8-Fig. 9.

Step 4: Choose the proper answer key to check automatically, as illustrated in Fig.10.

Step 5: The automatic analysis of flubaroo notifications provides the results displayed in Fig.11 by comparing response keys and sending the results to the associated participants.

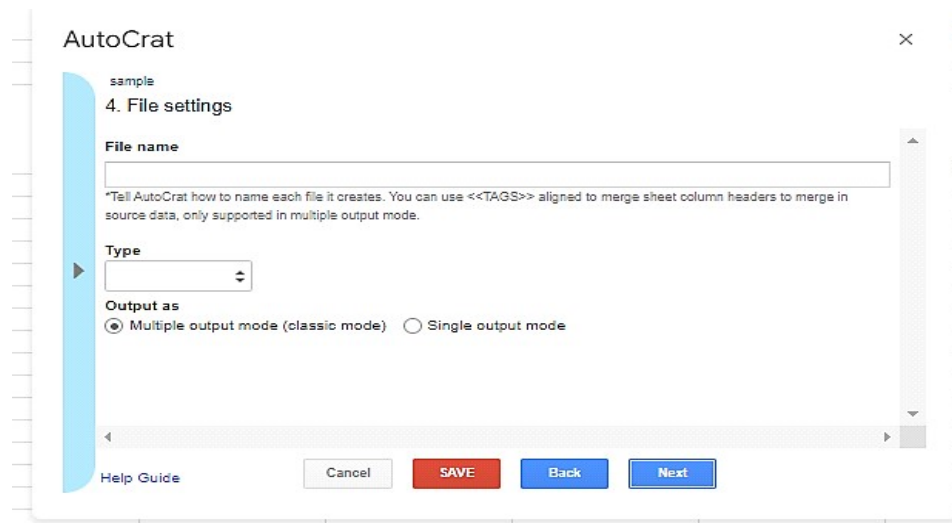


Fig.7 File name of receipt mail id

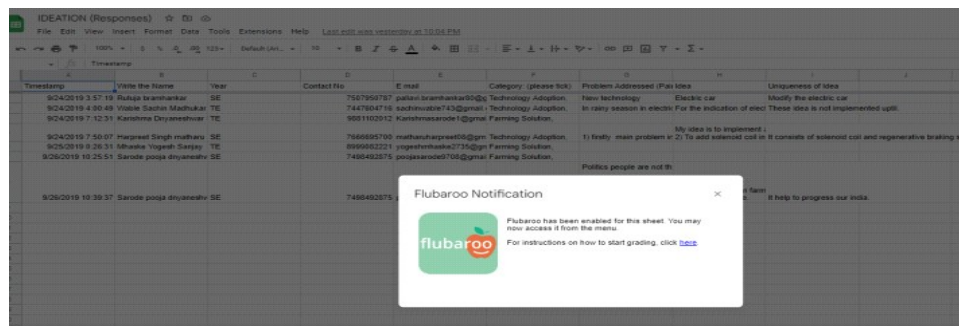


Fig.8 Flubaroo notification initialization window

Flubaroo - Grading Step 1



Please select a grading option for each of the questions in the assignment. Flubaroo has done its best to guess the best option for you, but you should check the option for each question yourself.

Grading Option	Points	Question
Identifies Student	1	Write the Name
Normal Grading	1	Year
Normal Grading	1	Contact No
Normal Grading	1	E mail

[Continue](#)

Fig. 9 Grading step sheet

Flubaroo - Grading Step 2



Please select which submission should be used as the Answer Key. Typically this will be a submission made by you. All other submissions will be graded against the Answer Key, so take care to ensure that you select the right one.

Select	Submission Time	Write the Name	Uniqueness of Idea
☐	Tue Sep 24 2019 03:57:18	Rutuja bramhankar	Modify the electri...
☐	Tue Sep 24 2019 04:00:48	Wable Sachin Madhu...	These idea is not ...
☐	Tue Sep 24 2019 07:12:31	Karishma Dnyaneshw...	
☐	Tue Sep 24 2019 07:50:07	Harpreet Singh mat...	It consists of sol...

[Continue](#)

Fig. 10 Answer key selecting options

The flubaroo method used to generate the result analysis is extremely beneficial for OBE (Outcome-Based Education). The outcome for each event, course, and programme is clearly anticipated. With the aid of Flubaroo ICT tools used for

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Exploring Work-Family Interface and Mental Ceiling among Women for Institutional Excellence in Higher Education

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Abstract

The present qualitative study aims at contributing to a precise understanding of the governance by discussing the impact of socio-cultural environment on the roles of females in leadership positions within the academic sector in India. The study explores how the work and family interface contributes or creates challenges for women leaders. Perceptions towards women governance within the academic community and how students perceive leadership are explored to understand nuances of women leadership. The paper also delves into the initiatives taken by women leaders for better learning outcome and institutional excellence. Critical narrative inquiry method was adopted for data collection, followed by coding the data and thematic content analysis. Findings suggest that women in academic governance take initiatives to encourage teamwork, professional development, innovative pedagogies and assessment and mentoring, while also highlights the significant impact of the socio-cultural environment on the quality of governance. However, to overcome the mental barriers, certain practices like continuous sensitization among the males and females must be carried out at regular intervals. Existing structures should ensure equal opportunities for building competencies and promoting a balanced work-life culture.

Keywords: *Work life balance mental ceiling, higher education, women, academic governance.*

Conceptual Framework

The governance framework of every nation impinges upon innovative practices, overall economic growth and political strategies (Maher & Anderson, 1999). It assures the relevance of working employees in the landscape of governance by providing well-managed regulations, creating conscience, opportunity to engage in

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decision-making process and meeting the expectations of all stakeholders (Nmai & Delle, 2014; Supra, 1987; Donald & Dowling, 2000-2001). As a significant contributor in building public confidence and providing excellent outcomes, governance strives at meeting the expectations of the educated societies (Badawi, 2005; Siddiquee, 2009; Rachagan, 2010). A transparent and right framework of governance enables the ease of access to strategically important intellectual decisions through collective ideology and tackle the dilemmas (Kurdi, 2016; Menon, 2016). But the impact of social and cultural practices superimposes the ability to perform up to the mark to meet the expectations (Okomojie 2013). The customs, cultures, mores, status, education, access to resources, age, responsibilities of the family and institutional patterns act as convergences of governance and are instrumental in determining the overall development of social and institutional spheres (Basiago, 1999, Kaaria et al., 2019; Robaro & Mamuzo, 2012; Miles, 2017).

The human development aspect ascertains health, educational opportunities, safety and access to political process as core areas central to the development of mankind (Nassubaum et al., 2003). The academic sector is one of the core institutions of addressing large-scale transformations from pre-modern to modern and globalized societies (Castells, 2001). This sector is exquisite and embodies new orientation, knowledge building and disseminates awareness, and instills new orientation (Block & Stumpf, 1992; Shapero, 1975). The more peripheral role in the higher education sector has undergone wider exposure to new demands and pressures from diverse environmental forces (Chou et al., 2017). The outcomes of strategic vision have injected advancements in the accumulation of knowledge, which demands stupendous competencies, skills, and efficacies on the part of dignified authorities to contribute towards increased knowledge production and overall development (Cloete et al, 2015; Rothstein & Teorell, 2015; D'Arcy & Nistotskaya, 2017). Acting as pump-priming in the academic domain, governance enhances the quality of performing leadership roles and promotes social integrity among women (Kurdi, 2016).

In order to attain development, adequate governance is recognized as a prerequisite in almost all the developing economies (Kurdi, 2016). India is one of the fastest growing and transitional nations across the globe and it is almost unthinkable to achieve development without actual engagement of women (Solomon & Memar, 2014; OECD, 2008). The dynamic and dwindling indices of socio-cultural environment along with the introduction of sprouting channels of transmission in practices, have enormously modified and aligned the trends with the West, influencing the quality of operations across almost all domains (Nestorovic, 2016). Some scholars have corroborated that the indices and conventions pertaining to governance even vary

across developed and developing nations, denying the existence of a common measuring yard to acknowledge the reasons and consequences of mechanisms (Grindle, 2017; Stedham & Yamamura, 2004).

Several studies in the context of leadership roles of females occupying higher positions in developed nations have been undertaken in the past, but no such attempt has been made in a transitional nation like India (Evans & Yen, 2005; Olaitan, 2015). There is a dearth of existing literature to studying the impact of socio-cultural environment and other variables on the Quality of Governance among female leaders (Siddiquee, 2008). The area regarding the relationship between gender and governance in the academic sector has been left untouched by the empirical and theoretical studies undertaken in the past (Menon, 2016; Nussbaum et al., 2003). Furthermore, it is essential to unravel the major predictors of quality of governance rather than focusing solely on its consequences (McLellan, 2009; Mohamad et al., 2014). Thus, this study contributes to the literature on Quality of Governance with empirical results from the Indian context. The findings of the study would be beneficial for female deans, directors, and senior faculties holding powerful positions in universities and colleges to understand the prevailing scenarios related to various variables and their corresponding influence on the quality of governance.

Review of Literature

The structural patterns, social institutions, social systems, social groups, beliefs, perceptions, ideologies, and cultural practices of the society exert a significant influence on the entangled relationships among individuals (Robaro and Mamuzo, 2012). Intangible environmental elements shape behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions turning them into tangible realities in terms of decisions, operations, and actions (Adeleke et al., 2003). Kaaria et al. (2016) observed the influence of the socio-cultural environment on women's engagement in general and leadership roles within top producer organizations. These socio-cultural environments sometimes act as glass ceiling, imposing various barriers such as male ego, religious practices, cultural indices, male restrictions prevalent in wedlock, and poor self-perception preventing the women from securing powerful positions in higher paying jobs (Okomoji, 2013).

As an imperative aspect of human resource management, it offers a boulevard to the aspired individuals to equally engage in public sphere and gratify with their work and family roles (Jeffery and Greenhaus et al., 2003; Manfredi & Holliday, 2004; Alma McCarthy et al., 2010; Dundas 2008). Watson (1975) proposed a model for analyzing and interpreting the quality of work life, including career opportunities,

fair economic benefits, appropriate work environment, development programmes to enhance employee competency, social integration in the work place, ample room to balance work and family, constitutionalism in the work organization and the social relevance of working life, which are relevant and applicable in today's work environment with slight transformations as major dimensions of work-life balance. Academic Governance is reflected in the focus of pinnacle authorities in aligning the development agendas with their strategies at all levels with parity (Hijab & Zambrano, 2007).

As a highly persistent and integrated system, it rests on the foundation of modern scientific ways having their roots in several imperative institutional domains of society (Rizq, 2008). Fukuyama (2013b) discusses the concept of Quality of Governance as fair play of autonomy and capacity. Some scholars have confirmed that it expands community participation and teaches values of affiliation, accountability and responsibility to stabilize the entire societal framework (Kurdi, 2016). Mohanty and Jena (2016) brought out the implications of Socio-Cultural environment on work-life balance in terms of imbalance in personal and professional lives of the individuals. Several studies have corroborated the challenges brought into the lives of employees due to transformation in social and cultural environment (Mittal et al., 2017).

Moreover, several studies added that support from family, attitude of spouse and family members, male dominance at workplace, hardcore cultural practices, narrow ideological perspectives, demographic variations, and strategical framework set by government influence the work and family roles of individuals (Robero & Mamuzo, 2012). Watson (1975), in his proposed model, foreground the close association between social and cultural indices, job satisfaction, work performance and the ability to make decisions. Okomojie (2013) stated that socio-cultural practices affect the quality of performance which in turn steers work satisfaction.

Lund (2003), Hewling (2005) and Lawrence et al. (2002) observed that multiculturalism, changing societal practices and ecological conditions have played a significant role in reinventing the job-related perspectives and balancing the satisfactory aspects related to employment. Okomojie (2013) reflected that a number of socio-cultural practices like the biological nature of women, their contribution in raising children and extension of cultural practices to the workplace environment affect their quality of performance. It is also observed from the past studies that cultural values navigate the potentially competing power dynamics among the governance thespians by democratizing the decision-making process for promoting sustainable strategies (Schroeder, 2014; Qaisrani et al., 2016; Kandusi & Waiganjo,

2015). Individual, contextual, and immediate factors related to job satisfaction positively point towards good governance practices (Zadeh & Mehrvuzhan, 1996; Shahin, 2016; Nasym et al., 2011).

Research Methodology

The present study is exploratory in nature, and so, has opted for a qualitative research method. Semi-structured interviews and critical narrative inquiry tools were employed for data collection. Thirty-six senior female faculty members were interviewed face-to-face, following ethical guidelines. Nine respondents from four selected universities in Haryana (One State and One central University) and Rajasthan (One State and One central University) were interviewed and their responses were recorded with permission. Based on these recordings, the researcher prepared transcripts. Field notes were also compiled from observations made by the researcher during fieldwork. Thematic content analysis was used for data analysis.

Interpretation and Discussion of Data

Dimensions with Thematic Content Analysis

The researcher conducted semi structured interviews based on the following dimensions:

1. Unique initiatives for better learning outcomes for students;
2. Effect of socio-cultural environment on women's representation in academic decision-making bodies.

Research question 1. What unique initiatives taken by women in academic governance to excel performance of institution in terms of learning outcome of students?

Initiatives by Women in Academic Governance

It is the faculty members who have direct contact with the students, and are responsible for imparting knowledge to them. The more creative ways the faculty uses, the more interesting it can make the classroom experience for the students. The learning outcomes of the students will also be improved by using creative and innovative ways of teaching. One respondent says that "*If you want to be a good leader, then you always have to be in an innovative mode*". The innovativeness and creativity of teachers are the basic requirements of the education system in the

current era, where technological advancements have overtaken the role of the teachers in classrooms (Nath, 2013). According to the changing needs of the business or corporate world, students need advanced knowledge in their subjects and in the business realm as well.

The following are the main initiatives undertaken by female teachers in selected universities to enhance the institute's performance in terms of student learning outcomes.

(i) Encouraging teamwork among students: One could easily discover the exceptional relationship among students and professors, playing a vital role to impart knowledge even in the contemporary era of technical aids, thereby making their class an interactive session. As women play a significant role in building relationships, they encourage their students to observe, learn, and, actively participate, rather than merely mugging up theoretical knowledge. They invigorate them to face every challenge of life with optimism. As nation builders, women contribute to the socialization of students, not just through book-based education, but also by authoritatively instructing them to learn from history as well as the current scenario, thus preparing them to navigate any situation confidently.

Numerous studies show that women prefer working in teams, whereas men prefer working alone, which proves that women are better at teamwork when compared to men. "*Women leaders are better teamwork promoters because this habit comes into their own when they deal with their children*". Bear & Woolley (2011) supported that team collaboration is greatly improved by the presence of women in the group. Females across the world, including the respondents, strongly believe them being better at teamwork as they are emotionally intelligent (Woolley et al., 2010). They not only focus on transforming everyone into confident beings but also have the capacity to convert overconfident personalities trust that their colleagues might also be confident (Wuchty et al., 2007). Therefore, they not only help in building team spirit among their students but also teach them to maintain a balance while working as a team.

(ii) Professional exposure for students: According to the female respondents, educational and industrial visits are crucial for explaining to their students how certain areas still rely on manpower rather than just technology. While these visits serve as a tool, their effective utilisation can only be learned through real experiences that come from the ground visits, rather than virtual ones. Additionally, these educational visits allow students to engage in discussions with professionals from specific industries, enhancing their knowledge and providing valuable insights for their future

careers. Education without practical implications holds little value, a belief shared by our respondents. They emphasize the importance of workshops for students to not only help them clear their doubts but also to provide practical experience that enhance their knowledge and foster interaction new people. Guest lectures also helps students to build a connection between classroom teachings and external insights. Hence, they retain knowledge for a longer duration and also engage in ample valuable cognitive exercise. However, a challenge faced by the faculty is finding the right resource person a concern voiced by female faculty members based on their personal experience.

(iii) Innovative pedagogies and assessment: The use of innovative methods of teaching is a crucial skill for the education staff. On one hand, it grabs student's attention and significantly enhances their learning experience; on the other hand, it presents a challenging task for the faculty to develop such methods as it requires both students as well as the education staff to step out of their comfort zones to both teach and learn in new ways. This challenge pushes the faculty, as a method that is difficult to grasp or is to appropriate may lead them to fail. Despite such challenges, experimenting with new methods and ideas enhance student engagement, motivation and achievement, which both the teacher as well as the learner. The respondents suggested that technology plays a vital role to simplify our work both at academic as well as industrial levels (Lata & Yadav. 2017). Therefore, students should be provided with the technical knowledge to make them tech-savvy so that they can adapt themselves to the age of technology. On the other hand, evaluation provides detailed insight to assess both progress and setback. According to the respondents, just as evaluation is necessary to gauge student performance at the academic level, its significance extends to monitoring organizational progress. Hence, it is essential to teach them the importance as well as the techniques of performance evaluation. Development is a dynamic process, and to maintain accurate information about the organization, continuous evaluation is necessary. An ongoing assessment offers solutions to address the hindrances that impede the growth and also ensures development of the institution.

(iv) Mentoring: In a world rife with challenges, it becomes important for professors to guide their students towards their goals. According to the respondents, when teachers are a part of the higher education institution, their role shifts from a teacher to a mentor who not only assists the students in class but also guides them to solve their issues whenever required. In this way, the role of the teachers gets widened, who have now become responsible for the students as their parents are. Such mentoring programmes offer students a friendly and experienced guide to navigate personal and professional challenges

In sum, women of today possess higher qualifications and extensive experience in academia, leading to higher expectations of achieving central leadership roles. Despite their advanced education and greater involvement as compared to their male counterparts, they become prey to the glass ceiling (Fritscher, 2017) where challenges remain the same even for the top positions and equal pay. Women are rarely found as one of the board members, instead, they often take up roles that involve disseminate ideas and assisting in plan execution. This is partly due to their skill in persuasive communication and their ability to take unique initiatives for enhancing student performance and building team spirit, reflecting their preference for team-work over working alone.

Research question 2. How socio-cultural context affects women in academic decision-making bodies of higher education institutions?

In the contemporary era, where women are highly educated and are aware of their rights, it is evident that women have significantly narrowed the gender gap breaking the glass-ceiling to attain top positions. In these roles, they not only possess the freedom to make decisions, but are also recognized as leaders, based on their innate and acquired capabilities. In a patriarchal society where women advocating for gender equality once needed to convince male allies, can now be observed at the top of the organizations and committees, actively proposing ideas and making final decisions. The increased presence of women in public life is a valid indicator of gender-equality. It attests to the equal treatment of women, where their viewpoints are acknowledged, especially among women in senior positions who hold genuine decision-making power and have driven progressive change in women's rights and gender relations. Educational institutions establish several committees to ensure their smooth functioning. These committees consist of both males and females as members, and the appropriate suggestions of both are taken into consideration irrespective of the gender (Ratcliffe, 2012). According to the respondents, females are also given opportunity to give suggestions within the committee. However, the nature of the committee significantly influences the weight given to certain decisions. Committees meant for social welfare of students consider suggestions from females, where as those dealing with research and financial matters tend to prioritize suggestions male faculty.

As committees consist of individuals acting as a team to devise the most effective strategies for enhancing work efficiency, they contribute to the smooth functioning of an individual. As per the respondents, every individual gets the opportunity to share their opinions on a particular area and the relevant suggestion is taken into

consideration irrespective of the gender. Hence, equal opportunity to share one's ideas and views is enjoyed by all in the committees at educational level. Women are also promoted based on their performance in the field and are empowered to make final decisions for the improvement of the organization. It is found that the education sector consists of a greater number of female employees as compared to any other sector because of their education qualification and better temperament to deal with students. Therefore, this sector always includes its female faculty in the committees to gather their suggestions.

Despite the Right to Equality and Freedom of expression guaranteed by the Indian Constitution, several females have admitted their experiences of falling prey to gender stereotypes and discrimination (Lahti, 2013). As per their response, the committees have declined their suggestions not because they were inappropriate, but simply because they were suggested by females. They also highlighted that despite being granted committee positions because of the rights provided by the Constitution, the need of scrutinizing the reality is still required. Even though women are an important part of the education institutions, they are still barred to provide their views and suggestions. They frequently lack the autonomy to make independent decisions in most of the cases, which brings the issue to observe the ground reality of the Right to Equality and Freedom of Speech in an institution that should be acting as a model for the community and society.

Conclusion

From the perspective of research, the findings have enlightened the core transitional perspectives and aspects of the highly educated civil society, which have greater level of expectations in terms of effective governance and service delivery, wherein the transformational leadership acts as a catalytic force creating and guiding practice by the employees to attain successful governance (Mohamad et al., 2014). On one hand, the concept of good governance has been recognized, as evident in the initiatives aimed at creating developmental opportunities, empowering citizens, bringing decisions-making institutions closer to the commoners and providing a platform for community members to engage in the decision-making process by opting for higher and dignified leading positions. On the other hand, while such global practices act as push factors, the persistence of traditional and cynical approaches serve as pull factors, compelling women to avoid assuming prominent roles. The involvement of women in vital sectors of the nation, such as education, has been perpetuating due to their elevated levels of resilience and versatility, as well as influence of global environment. Presently it is evident that a considerable number of women hold

prominent positions within the academic sector, and their quality of governance in terms of taking adequate decisions is highly influenced by the presence of transitional social, cultural and economic indices. Thus, there is a dire need to accept the promotion of women's active inclusion and gender-sensitive environment, which is pivotal to better governance.

As governance is required in all domains, the study could be used as a comprehensive mechanism to enhance the association of constructs. Based on the findings of the study, it was suggested that certain practices like continuous sensitization efforts among both males and females must be carried out at regular intervals of time to change their approach to accept the competency of women in leadership roles within decision-making process. Government must provide adequate legal and regulatory frameworks and bring reforms in the socio-cultural elements to enhance the institutional capacities and competencies of the citizens, facilitating their active engagement. Existing laws must ensure the presence of equal opportunity programmes that support sustainable work-life balance, particularly for women in the workforce.

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Chapter in a Book

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The Indian Adult Education Association founded in 1939, aims at improving the quality of life through education, which it visualizes as a continuous and lifelong process. It directs its efforts towards accelerating adult education as a process, a programme, and a movement.

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