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### About the Journal

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The NCERT encourages original and critical thinking in education. The JIE provides a forum for teachers, teacher educators, educational administrators and researchers through presentation of novel ideas, critical appraisals of contemporary educational problems and views and experiences on improved educational practices. Its aims include thought-provoking articles, challenging discussions, analysis, challenges of educational issues, book reviews and other related features.

The Journal reviews educational publications other than textbooks. Publishers are invited to send two copies of their latest publications for review.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

This issue of the *Journal of Indian Education (JIE)* contains eight articles on school education, one article related with Teacher Education, two articles related with generic issues and one book review. The articles focus on various quality related themes like Education for Sustainable Development, Early Childhood Care and Education, Mid-day Meal, School Management Committee, Reflective Teaching, etc. In the article by Nikita Bose, the author draws her paper from Bourdieu's scheme of primary and secondary *habitus*. She has built her paper on the empirical studies built on Bourdieu's *habitus* categorisation to reflect on the fact that individuals are shaped not only by their *habitus* but also are agents within their institutional environments and instead of simply replicating it, individuals contest, modify and negotiate while navigating through them. Rita Chowdhury's article aims at reflecting upon the necessity to review Section 11 of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 and bring necessary amendments for the successful realisation of universalisation of elementary education by considering education of first six years of a child. The importance of Life skill education and some suggestive pedagogical strategies in the form of activities has been emphasised by Manisha Taneja Pahuja.

K.K. Tripathy dwells on the issue of quality education in India; the author informs us that the quality of education has not kept pace with the qualitative expansion of education, so there is a learning crisis in India. Effective training of both pre-service and in-service teachers is absolutely required to transform their instructional process from teacher-centred to learner-centred approaches. Also, he informs us that the age-old method of punishment and reward is obsolete and the quality of learning among the students is triggered through classroom learning environment which is full of joy and excitement. Talking about the importance of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), in the context of climate change issues, Aditya argues for the need of ESD across subjects and the school curriculum. According to the author, ESD should be given a cross curriculum priority. The author also opines that contextualisation of education, along with project-based activities are necessary for the success of ESD. Aryaman Kunzru makes an analysis of the role of educational institutes in translating the values of Indian constitution to the younger generation. He made an attempt to review the social science textbooks of the NCERT to see to what extent these textbooks help students in imbibing the values enshrined in our constitution.

Pooja Singh and Tintu Kurian analyse the effectiveness of the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)* through the establishment of Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) and Block Resource Centres (BRCs). Their paper concentrates

on the role, objectives and status of BRCs and CRCs across various States and UTs in the country. The paper also tries to explore how useful are BRCs and CRCs in delivering their academic inputs for the betterment of elementary education in India. Vikram Kumar brings forth the issues related to the functioning of the School Management Committee (SMC) in the schools, as constituted under the Right to Education Act (RTE), 2009 in Delhi. In the study, the author presents the challenges and remedies to enhance the functioning of the SMCs in the government schools of Delhi.

Dipak Bhattacharya and Gowramma I.P. in their study concentrate on the issues and the problems faced by the School Management and Development Committees (SMDC) in improving the quality of secondary school education. Their study points out that members of the SMDC opined that ineffective schooling environment and teachers' role does not help dropout students to get back to school. Their study suggests that both, the higher authorities as well as local bodies should chalk out plans for removing the challenges faced by SMDCs. Kiran N.C. and C.G.Venkatesha Murthy take up an interesting topic of studying the difference in the intelligence of the students of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas and Kendriya Vidyalayas. Their study concludes that there are significant differences between the students of JNVs and KVs on intelligence.

Ramani Atkuri and Arvind Sardana, in their paper discuss the important issue of nutrition among the school students in Chhattisgarh. Their data shows that children of Classes IX and X of the Government tribal school are significantly malnourished. The paper concludes that there is immediate need to introduce Mid-day Meal scheme in high schools of the state, as has been already done by some other states across India.

The issue ends with a book review by Neelam Dalal of *The Reflective Teacher: Case Studies of Action Research*, authored by Neeraja Raghavan.

We hope that our readers will be able to relate their personal experiences with the issues and concerns discussed by the authors of these articles. We invite our readers from different levels of school education and Teacher Education to contribute to the journal by sharing their knowledge in the form of articles, action research reports, theoretical papers, book reviews, etc. Your valuable suggestions and comments for improvement of the quality of the journal are welcome.

*Academic Editor*

# Conceptualising *Habitus* in Relation to Student's Educational Experience

## A Critical Review of Empirical Studies

NITIKA BOSE\*

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### Abstract

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*Education is a part of the larger social system, and recent researches have shown how inequalities and social stratification are replicated within schools. This critical review examines key empirical studies related to habitus, analysing the link between family, social class, teachers, schools and student's educational experience drawing from Bourdieu's Social Reproduction Theory. Bourdieu, in his argument, related scholastic development to nurture rather than nature. He stated that the ability and talent of an individual is determined by the time and cultural capital invested in them by their parents. According to Bourdieu, habitus is acquired in this way by internalising the external through primary and secondary socialisation. Bourdieu's habitus as an analytic category holds relevance in educational research, and recent empirical studies have been built on the same. The present paper draws from recent findings of empirical studies, analysing the application of Bourdieu's theorisation to highlight not only the ways in which individuals are shaped by their habitus, but also states that they are agents within their institutional environments—instead of simply replicating it, individuals contest, modify and negotiate while navigating through them.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Bourdieu's Theory of Social Reproduction has explained the ways in which one's socio-cultural background leads to prolonged inequalities in educational

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stratification, despite the State's efforts to equalise educational opportunities for all. Bourdieu argues that the differences in educational attainment and experiences depend on the nature of family-linked endowment, which is transmitted to the offspring through the process of socialisation. Bourdieu termed this family-based endowment as the primary *habitus*. As individuals move beyond one's family, to schools and colleges, and encounter other life experiences, the secondary *habitus* is constructed on the primary *habitus*. Bourdieu asserts that the middle classes are at an advantage in educational institutions as the culture of one's family replicates the expectations that schools have of them. Therefore, children from the middle and upper middle classes find the transition from home to school smooth, as the schools and teachers reward their cultural capital. Doing well academically is effortless for students from the middle classes as school standards are set in accordance with the social and familial values of the elites. This excludes other children whose culture stands in opposition to the elite culture within educational institutions. Paul Willis (1981), in his study of the British working class youth, shows the ways in which working class boys feel put down at school and are labelled as uncultured, rough and rude. In response, the boys reject school work and success as 'effeminate' and 'unmanly'. Conforming to the school rules and

doing mental work is equated with selling out their working class way of life. Working class boys deny agreeing to the school culture as inferior and deficient. Willis demonstrates the working class boys' academic resistance as a reaction against the necessity to conform to an oppressive cultural system. He portrays the working class boys as heroic and proud radicals who preserve the honour of their class. In the end, he claims that they proudly accept working class jobs. The working class boys in Willis's study do not desire an education that guarantees upward mobility. In order to retain their working class identities, they prefer not conforming to the rules.

According to Bourdieu's Theory of Cultural Reproduction, children from middle class families are at an advantage in gaining educational credentials due to their possession of cultural capital. The term cultural capital represents the collection of non-economic forces such as family background, social class, varying investments in and commitment to education, different resources, etc. which influence academic success. Unlike Willis, Bourdieu believed that people from all classes are desirous of education and upward mobility. However, the education system only rewards the cultural capital of the dominant group and thus, the non-dominant groups are disadvantaged, which creates systematic and institutional reproduction of inequalities.



The present paper tries to understand the way in which Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* is a crucial analytical category for understanding the relationship between children's social contexts and their educational experiences. Bourdieu's *habitus* is not so much a measurable thing, but a set of processes and practices that individuals embody within their social contexts that enables them to acquire qualifications, skills and group membership. The present paper critically reviews the empirical studies that use Bourdieu's conceptualisation of *habitus* to understand educational experiences of students from low socio-economic status groups. Through recent studies, the paper highlights how a mismatch between a child's familial *habitus* and institutional *habitus* of the schools and colleges can impact children's mental and emotional well-being. Bourdieu's theorisation on *habitus* further helps to analyse how individuals within one's educational *habitus*, such as teachers and school authorities are habituated towards certain practices that reproduce social inequalities. The present paper also develops further Bourdieu's analytical conceptualisation of *habitus* and points that external structures and social endowments are not simply to be replicated and reproduced but, individuals are self-reflective agents within their institutional *habitus* who contest, negotiate and modify—

external structures in their everyday practices.

### **HABITUS AND EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

In its literal sense, *habitus* is derived from Latin and means 'habitual or typical condition, state or appearance, particularly of the body' (Jenkins 1992, p. 74). *Habitus* is a concept that was first clearly defined and utilised by Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1990).

Bourdieu defines *habitus* as 'a structuring structure, which organises practices and the perception of practices' (Bourdieu 1984, p. 170). *Habitus* is the cognitive or mental system of structures ingrained within an individual (and/or a collective consciousness), which are the deep seated replicas of external structures. By *habitus*, Bourdieu understands the 'ensemble of schemata of perception, thinking, feeling, evaluating, speaking and acting that structures all expressive, verbal, and practical manifestations and utterances of a person', similar to the grammar in the language (Krais 1993). The *habitus* is acquired during primary and secondary socialisation. Primary socialisation is the one that takes place in the family during childhood. Parents' social position and context play a significant role in educating children, wherein they internalise schemas to act and perceive. Therefore, the primary *habitus* is about 'internalising the external' as the parents' modes of thinking,

feeling and behaving that are linked to their position in the social space and are internalised in the children's own *habitus*. This is what Bourdieu (1977) also calls class *habitus* that reflects the different positions people have in society, leading to different lifestyles, tastes and interests among social classes (Bourdieu 1984). The secondary *habitus* is constructed on the primary *habitus* and especially results from one's education at school and university, and also from other life experiences. The primary *habitus* is defined as 'embodied history, internalised as second nature and so forgotten as history' (Bourdieu 1990a, p. 56); it never loses its significance and always impacts the development of the secondary *habitus*. Therefore, the primary and secondary *habitus* can also be summed together into a single entity or one *habitus*, that is constantly thickened and altered by life experiences, adding dynamism and flexibility. *Habitus* consists of our thoughts, tastes, beliefs, interests and the way we comprehend the world around us and is created through primary socialisation through family, culture and the milieu of education. *Habitus* is therefore, a part of the socialisation process, where everything that we experience is understood and categorised according to what we have experienced in the past, and events that we go through in childhood are particularly important in developing a 'matrix of perceptions' that provides the know-how to interpret our surroundings

and determine one's reaction in different contexts (Swartz 1997). According to Bourdieu, *habitus* constructs one's dispositions. Dispositions include habits, beliefs, values, tastes, bodily postures, feelings, and thoughts, that Bourdieu argued were socially produced. The inculcation of dispositions happens throughout childhood, as children watch and listen; therefore, the cultural capital of those they are surrounded by (predominantly their family) becomes part of their *habitus*. The cultural capital found in the *habitus* of their family and class becomes their cultural capital also, according to Bourdieu. Bourdieu (1977) stresses the dialectic relationship between structure and agency that is manifest in the *habitus*. On the one hand, the *habitus* is the result of social structures. On the other hand, the *habitus* also structures practices and reproduces social fields (Bourdieu and Passeron 2000), since individual strategies and practices as products of positions and rules, inevitably assure the economic and social conditions for reproduction. By acting in conformity with the structure, the structure is confirmed and reproduced. The possibility of strategising, by acquiring capital by individuals, suggests that agents are not so passive that their actions be fully determined by external field forces. Fields are the contexts within which the *habitus* functions. Swartz (2013) would define these fields as 'power arenas' because for him, it is

essential to comprehend the power relations operating within these fields. These are, for example, the field of politics, education, economy and various other social institutions, where there is a habitual struggle for position and the power to maintain *status quo*. According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p. 108), agents are 'bearers of capitals and, depending on their trajectory and on the position they occupy on the field (...), they have a propensity to orient themselves actively either toward the preservation of the distribution of capital or toward the subversion of this distribution'. As a result, Bourdieu suggests that agents have a certain degree of freedom in their choice of strategies and practices, or in other words, they have a certain degree of agency in their contest for positions in the social field. However, agents always act intentionally, without intentions in accordance with the rules of the game with regard to their positioning within the field (structure). This is why Wacquant (1989, p. 45) also states that 'individuals make choices, but do not choose the principles of these choices', and are therefore strongly affected by structure (Ozbilgin and Tatli 2005). Recent research studies have confirmed the ways in which Bourdieu's theorisation of *habitus* is useful in understanding student's experiences in education. Empirical studies conducted recently show that there were more factors inhibiting progress for students from

socio-economically deprived groups in educational institutions than facilitating the same. As they compete with peers from socio-economically affluent sections, there is often a desire to match in terms of linguistic and personal abilities for meaningful participation in their educational institutions. The factors that create hindrance for students from the socio-economically deprived groups influence their life chances (Weber 1978), educational experiences being an integral part of this. DuBoes (2001) finds that academic achievement of students belonging to low socio-economic status strongly correlates to the images of themselves. Thus, a strong interrelationship between children's *habitus* and their educational trajectories were found in recent research studies. Although Bourdieu's theorisation on *habitus* has enabled an analysis of the ways in which social inequalities are reproduced through educational institutions (Bowles and Gintis 1976; Apple 1995 and Giroux 1997), one critique of Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* is that it limits an individual to only reproduce what they know—reproduction being confined to one's ability to act in the world predetermined in terms of its rules and organisation.

*Habitus* as a concept, therefore, has been critiqued as being deterministic. Reay (2004) critiqued Bourdieu's *habitus* and pointed that while *habitus* reflects the social position in which it was constructed,

it also includes within it the source of new originative responses that are capable of transforming the social conditions in which it was created (pp. 434–435). Webb et al. (2002) conceptualised agency as ‘the idea that individuals are equipped with the ability to understand and control their own actions, regardless of the circumstances of their lives’ (p. 9). This moves beyond Bourdeausian conceptualisation of *habitus*.

The present paper attempts at an in-depth and advanced understanding of the Bourdieusian conceptualisation of *habitus*. Key empirical studies are used to show how past conditions of socialisation can produce and reproduce *habitus* and how *habitus* impacts a student’s educational experience. This also helps to understand *habitus* as a relational concept; that is, it cannot be viewed in isolation but must be viewed in relation to the diverse contexts or fields in which it operates, thereby enabling an understanding of educational experiences within the larger microcosm of society. The article further critically reviews the recent researches that move beyond Bourdieusian conceptualisation of *habitus*, to theoretically explain the transitional nature of *habitus* due to encountering of experiences, specifically educational experiences that challenge an individual’s pre-conceived dispositions.

### **HABITUS AND THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF EDUCATION**

Researchers have shown that children gain awareness related to one’s socio-economic status while growing up in their families. Consciousness related to one’s socio-economic status gets ingrained in individuals at an early age through acculturation. This is what Bourdieu (1977) also calls class *habitus* that reflects the different positions people have in society, and that leads to different lifestyles, tastes and interests among the social classes (Bourdieu 1984). Most of the participants grew up under financial constraints experienced within the family. Financial struggles witnessed within their families to make ends meet on a day to day basis shaped their primary *habitus* prior to attending school and college (Luzeckyj, Graham, McCann, 2015; Chor 2014). Empirical studies have shown that financial constraints shaped the development of children wherein they internalised and became aware of their socio-economic status vis-à-vis others (Radmacher and Azmitia 2013). Also, it was found that gender, caste, class and race jointly operated to shape children’s educational experiences. Therefore, in the recent research studies, a framework of intersectionality has been used as a lens to analyse multiple dimensions of identities that affect experiences, opportunities and outcomes, wherein in the present review of literature, class, caste and gender do not operate

as distinct categories of experience but are lined conjointly (Bettie 2002, Wilkins 2014). Students' subjective experience of their social positioning was determined by their perception of their family's financial security, their access to needs and opportunities and the extent to which they lived a life of ease (Ostrove and Long 2007). Along with this, the place of residence informed individuals about their socio-economic status. As children moved across the multiple worlds of their homes, schools and colleges, they realised their socio-economic status vis-à-vis others. Researchers have shown that students constantly compared their households with the localities where residents from high socio-economic status lived. This made them feel that they were at a disadvantage in terms of amenities and social network when compared to their peers in schools and colleges. They also felt that the people belonging to higher socio-economic status lived in better localities and had lifestyles and life chances more sought after than theirs. Awareness about socio-economic status emerged as students moved through mixed class environments, including their schools and neighbourhood (Stuber 2006).

Recent research studies also show that the socio-economic status shaped parenting styles and values and played an important role in determining students' work ethic and educational orientation. The parenting style that students witnessed was what

is called strict adherence to values of hard work, pragmatism and an orientation towards what is required to be successful. Communication between parents and children was functional and direct. Mostly, parents socialised children to work hard and make use of the opportunities related to education to get secure jobs. Seeing parents struggle to make ends meet, children were motivated to work hard and improve the status of their families by attaining good jobs. Researchers have also shown that students felt that although their parents cared for them, but they experienced lesser involvement on the part of their parents in matters of day-to-day life. Students felt that they were left free to decide for themselves in the matters related to subject choice, decisions related to pursuit of higher education, choice of college and career choice. Students, therefore, felt that they were left to work out many dimensions of their social and academic development on their own in their transition from school to college. Studies show that parents with a low socio-economic status (SES) were supportive but not proactive about their education, which students felt, created an educational disadvantage for them when compared to their high SES peers (Wilkins 2014). Another disadvantage was evident in researches which stated that less affluent parents were less informed about admissions and financial aid and less actively involved in their child's navigation of these processes.

This lack of involvement on the part of their parents further intensified due to their exposure to the educational institutions as students felt that parents of students belonging to high socio-economic groups already possessed the cultural and social capital which they transmitted to their children ensuring their college success.

Research studies therefore, imply that a low socio-economic status results in instrumental views toward education. Students and their parents see the school and college as a means to get a job. All the participants and their families see education as a route to upward mobility (Luzecy, Graham and McCann 2015; Lehmann 2009; Lehmann 2007, Archer and Hutchings 2000).

The socio-economic status of students' families, therefore, links education to jobs, financial security and upward social mobility. Studies show that the choice of subjects at the senior secondary level is influenced by prospects of employability in future. Moreover, the choice of university, colleges and courses made by students is largely influenced by future prospects of a government job (Radmacher and Azmitia 2013)

### **HABITUS AND EARLY ACADEMICS**

According to Bourdieu, *habitus* is capable of securing a return to its possessors. The individual inherits *habitus* culturally which is affected by one's class and socio-economic status, perpetuating the already established

structures of dominance (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977, pp. 204–205). As family *habitus* is dependent on one's class positioning, middle class and elite cultural endowments are generally valued in society. Knowledge and possession of 'highbrow' culture, according to Bourdieu, is unequally distributed according to social class; and education is institutionalised as legitimate to provide distinction and privilege to those who possess and deploy it. Cultural capital thus reproduces class inequalities. This 'highbrow' culture is recognised and rewarded by schools unevenly (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). Children embodying elite culture through their families are likely to perform well in schools as teachers recognise their cultural capital. This pedagogic action subjects the working class or minority pupils to a form of 'symbolic violence' forcing them into a competitive mechanism that rewards only the dominant cultural capital. However, this pedagogic action is identified as meritocratic and legitimate (Bourdieu 1974, p. 32; 1977). Researchers have shown that a bias is often found in assessment processes towards the cultural endowments and competencies of students from elite backgrounds. Schools are, therefore, found to be biased towards the culture of the elites and thus, perpetuate stratification and inequality.

Evidence suggests that parental cultural capital and family *habitus* affected children's early and later

educational attainment (DiMaggio 1982, DiMaggio and Mohr 1985). Research studies have shown that the academic performance of students with a higher socio-economic status (SES) is better than the lower SES students (Müller and Karle 1993, Goldthorpe 1996). Research also points to the fact that educational attainment of children is affected by their own ability as well as the cultural endowments of their parents. However, a family's possession of cultural capital certainly has a bearing on the child's educational attainment. (Goldthorpe 2007, Sullivan 2007).

Similarly, in the case of minority ethnic groups, exclusion practices have been identified in schools. Studies reinstate the disadvantage that parents have in terms of contact with school personnel (Lamont and Lareau 1988, Levinson and Holland 1996, Stanton-Salazar 2001). Lareau (1987) argued that both working class and middle class parents promoted independence among their children. However, middle class parental involvement in family-school relationship yielded a form of profit that the working class families did not have. Lareau argues that these family-endowed inequalities based on one's class made middle class parents voice their children's concerns and mediate with school authorities in a better manner which created an advantage for them. However, no evidence exists to show that schools were discriminating against working

class parents. On the other hand, Goldthorpe (2007) advocated that due to educational expansion in Europe, upward mobility has been found among the children from working classes, and hence, the role of teachers and schools as advocated by Bourdieu stands rejected. Far from reproducing inequality, schools are argued to 'complement, compensate for or indeed counter family influences' (Goldthorpe 2007, p. 14). He points that pedagogic action does not favour the dominant group and Bourdieu's theorisation therefore should be used with caution.

### **HABITUS AND HIGHER ACADEMICS**

There are three main forms of capital—economic, cultural and social. For Bourdieu (1986, p. 242), the distribution of capitals among individuals determines the chances of success. Money, physical assets and property are the forms of economic capital. Social capital consists of the social characteristics that individuals possess and the value of their social networks. Cultural capital is the education, skills and attitudes that advantage individuals and society at large. Although cultural capital may be acquired, it flows from the *habitus* (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977, p. 94), which Bourdieu defines as a complex interplay between the past and the present. He writes that *habitus* 'refers to something historical, it is linked to individual history' (1993, p. 86).

Research studies show how the lower income students felt the

difference in economic capital on their arrival in the prestigious university. The participants in the study spoke about many structural disadvantages rooted in economic, social and cultural capital deficits (Aries and Seider 2007). A common concern in all research studies was a feeling of independency and insufficiency due to lack of cultural capital within the higher educational fields. Dress was a notable issue in this realm and research studies show how students felt that their styles of dressing prior to college were considered inappropriate by others within the college campus. Lower income students worried about their self presentation and focused on inadequacy of particular competence (Aries and Seider 2007). Also, studies reported the students with low socio-economic status witnessing negative remarks about their styles of dressing by the students belonging to higher socio-economic status groups, reinstating what was held by the dominant group as the appropriate culture and style within higher educational institutions.

Researchers reported that students from low socio-economic status groups spend less time within college engaging in co-curricular activities, student's organisations and volunteering for community; thus limiting opportunities to themselves and making them available to other students. Studies also show how most of the students lacked resources; so, they had to seek employment along with their

studies for financial support. This impacted their academic studies and social integration within the college (Lehmann 2009). Long hours of work required to support themselves along with long hours involved in travelling to college, left students with very less time for self study and participation in co-curricular activities. Although students understood the benefits of such opportunities for their self and academic development, and wanted to pursue them but were unable to manage the time to do so.

Recent studies also reported how students from a low SES experience a lower sense of belonging, perceive a less welcoming campus climate, and pursue fewer social engagements than their peers from high SES status (Soria and Bultman 2014; Granfield, 1991). According to the recent research studies, students experienced being looked down upon through interactional cues such as not engaging in conversation or offering only the shortest of replies (Stuber 2006) and low SES students had few non-academic conversations with others. Studies further reinstate the ambivalence to cultured *habitus* of an elite college and the students' out of place experience wherein they felt lost, confused, traumatised and alienated (Chor 2014, Lehmann 2007, Archer and Hutchings 2000). Research studies also report students experiencing financial challenges, feel being discriminated and voiced dissatisfaction regarding campus



climate (Salas, Aragon, Alandejani and Timpson 2014).

Studies further report that students felt that more than them, it was their socio-economic background that stopped them from doing well (Tat-Heung Chor 2014, Granfield 1991). Students with a low SES noted that they felt invisible to their peers and university personnel. On one hand middle class respondents entered college with an ease and engaged with adults within college environments; the low SES and doubly disadvantaged students felt uneasy at the prospect of engaging with authority figures (Soria and Bultman 2014, Jack 2015). Students experienced difficulty in following classroom instructions as the medium of instruction was predominantly English. All researches stated that classroom notes, readings and lectures being delivered in English placed low SES students at a disadvantage in terms of understanding and scoring in comparison to students belonging to a higher SES background. Also students were silent due to the fear of speaking wrong and had difficulties and embarrassment using elaborate speech codes (Granfield 1991, Ovichegan 2015, Loveday 2015). Research studies reinstate how low SES students are forced into positions of cultural outsiders with problems in connecting to their well-off peers and integrating into university culture academically and socially, which ultimately leads to self-doubt related to one's competency, belongingness

and fear of not doing well academically (Lehmann 2007, Reay, Crozier, Clayton 2009; Wentworth and Peterson 2001).

### **HABITUS TRANSFORMATION AND STUDENTS AS AGENTS**

Studies, therefore, argued that students' agency could transform the social reproduction process by impacting their school-based cultural capital (Olneck 2000) and that teachers could promote both dominant and minority cultural capital in a non-conflictual manner (Monkman et al., 2005). Further research studies conducted on similar lines show how working class students in elite institutions not only face academic challenges but also considerable identity work is undertaken and discomfort gets generated when *habitus* confronts a starkly unfamiliar field. Studies show how respondents worked on their own selves that helped them to act as agents in trying to become a part of the college (Reay, Crozier and Clayton 2009). A crisis of *habitus* disruption becomes a necessary occasion for self-reflexive adjustments in behaviour and self-identity (Tat-Heung Chor 2014). Studies show how students found ways to manage the dislocation and disjuncture in their identity, circumstances, and social relations. They expressed a strong desire to work hard and become self-disciplined in order to perform well. Students, therefore, spoke about working hard to achieve success and

motivating their own selves in times of doubts (Luzeckyj, Graham and McCann 2015, Reay, Crozier, Clayton 2009) and expressed an inner drive to succeed (Gardner and Holley 2001). Current research studies reveal the ways in which students are able to resolve the differences that marks university life with harmonisation between *habitus* and field to become independent, critical and cultural individuals through creative empowerment. Research studies point that reflexivity forms the basis of resilience. The learner's identity becomes negotiable, improved and self sustained by determination to succeed through self regulation and reflexivity (Tat-Heung Chor 2014). Research studies related to this point towards students experiencing many changes in themselves due to college exposure (Luzeckyj, Graham and McCann 2015, Aries and Seider 2007). Students claim that they value the challenges that an elite higher education institution has to offer even if they have to face the social bias that exists; as on one hand they felt that they should avoid being out of place in elite universities, but on the other hand see this decision impinging on their future prospects (Reay, Davies, David and Ball 2001). College experiences expose students to a wide array of cultural diversity which fosters eye opening interactions which transform 'felt identities' in college. Research studies in this realm show how students had started feeling that college experience

had impacted them positively and if they did not get the opportunity they would miss out on charting a better future for themselves (Kaufman and Feldman 2004). Although students' families had less means, they aspired to hold professional and managerial jobs such as physician, lawyer, etc. Therefore, students felt that the changes they experienced due to college exposure are integral to their identity. Although college experience initially felt daunting, students felt that it taught them to face real life (Carter 2003).

## DISCUSSION

Research studies in recent times have shown how educational experiences of students are shaped by the world in which they live. Social, political and economic factors determine a student's chances of success. Teaching practice that delinks learner's behaviour from the milieu in which they grow up will give rise to pedagogic practices that are devoid of the complex relationship between schools and larger social order. For instance, a student not paying adequate attention in class may be interpreted as having a problem related to classroom discipline and management. However, this could also result from the students economic or social condition at home wherein they might have to do household chores or work on part time jobs in addition to attending school or college.

Therefore, there is a need to define teaching through a vision,

interlinking educational experience to social and economic conditions outside of schools. Not doing so, may give rise to a situation wherein schools and colleges become a means to provide jobs, and attending to diversity, equity, community and social justice remains outside the purview of school curriculum. Problems related to schooling and curriculum must therefore be placed along with the problems of the larger society.

Bourdieu's conceptualisation of *habitus* provides an analytical lens to link school processes to the larger society. Students' lives are intricately linked to their family, social class, schools, teachers and peers. As children inhabit their multiple worlds, they are socialised in each one separately. Primary socialisation followed by secondary socialisation constitutes individual *habitus*. According to Bourdieu's conceptualisation, *habitus* provides an individual the disposition to think and act; therefore, it is integral to one's educational experience.

The present review argues for the development of *habitus* as an analytically useful concept that goes beyond the confines of social class. In the present review, *habitus* constructed through caste, class, race, gender and ethnicity have been identified. The study reveals that students are constrained within their institutional environment in case of a mismatch between primary and secondary *habitus*. However, the

review reveals that individuals are not passively internalising the external structures. Rather, individuals are agents who reconstruct their pasts in order to negotiate, contest and modify their external structures. Persistent inequalities in educational attainment can be understood through these struggles and negotiations. A new theorisation is, therefore, needed to accommodate and broaden Bourdieu's theorisation of *habitus* to enable research that will provide a nuanced understanding of students' educational experiences as a part of their lived realities.

This paper critically reviews empirical studies that link Bourdieu's conceptualisation of *habitus* to study students' educational experiences as they navigate through the worlds of their homes, schools and colleges. Research studies reveal that students' experiences are largely influenced by their social backgrounds. This prevents the isolated ways in which school experiences have been studied by researchers in the past. Bourdieu's conceptualisation of *habitus* informs that individual biographies are not the products of their making. Theoretically, the concept of *habitus* in the context of education related research has the potential to be useful because it links micro social behaviour of individuals to macro social structural factors and analyses these within social relationships, social interactions at one's home, neighbourhood, schools and colleges.

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# The Unsung Saga of ECCE in RTE 2009

RITA CHOWDHURY\*

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## Abstract

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*Education is neither a need nor a privilege but a necessity for the exercise of all other human rights. It brings about a blossoming of mental faculties and transforms a raw, unlettered human being into an accountable member of the society. Children are the essence of any educational system and reforms. A child's mind grows at an extraordinary pace during the initial six years of one's life and lays the foundation for lifelong development. This important aspect of education has faced negligence by the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, which was otherwise a revolutionary step taken by the Government of India (GoI). The present article aims at reflecting the necessity to review Section 11 of Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 and bring necessary amendments for the successful realisation of universalisation of elementary education.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The Parliament of India passed the historic RTE, Act, 2009 formally implemented from April 2010. It entitled education based on equity and non discrimination to all children between the age of 6–14 years. This step was historical as it was the first time that an Act on school education was passed by a central legislation.

Despite the remarkable step of introducing the Right to Free and Compulsory Education, 2009, the statistics of the Ministry of Human Resource Development state that 39 per cent boys and 33 per cent girls dropped out before completing elementary education in 2013. The data clearly depicts that there is some missing link. The missing link could

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be affixed by the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) which would increase enrolment and retention of children in the primary schools. Although the government is trying to frame regulations through the National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) policy (which enunciates the commitment of the GoI to provide integrated services for holistic development of all children from prenatal to six years of age), but the negligence of Early Childhood Care and Education in RTE, 2009 is evident from the statement—‘with a view to prepare children above the age of 3 years for elementary education and to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of 6 years, the appropriate government may make necessary arrangements for providing free pre-school education for such children’ (RTE, 2009).

### **WHY BRING ECCE UNDER RTE, 2009**

Early childhood care and education refers to early childhood as the first six years of life. This is acknowledged as the most crucial period when the rate of development is very high and foundation is laid for the formation of attitudes and values. ECCE provides experience for all round development and building school readiness among children. It is a necessary component of education, as learning at this stage is directed by the child’s interest and contextualised by one’s experiences. Even the Charter of Integrated

Child Development Services (ICDS) describes pre-schooling not only as a significant input for providing sound foundation for a child’s development but also as a contributing role in the universalisation of primary education. So in order to achieve the goals of RTE, 2009, universalisation of ECCE should be a prerequisite. This will ensure that states have a constitutional obligation to provide ECCE to all the children, so that responsibility cannot be overlooked as per convenience.

RTE, 2009 aims at ensuring education with quality. High quality of education can be ensured and fostered by providing quality ECCE. A child who undergoes ECCE not only develops better cognitive competencies but also inculcates positive attitude towards learning. Moreover, ECCE prepares a child for better social interaction. Hence, children who are provided with ECCE are more confident and prepared to face the actual ‘school’ environment. This ultimately results in the retention of students in school. There are various reasons due to which students drop out from school. Some of these are listed below.

#### ***Trouble in adjusting with the school curriculum***

Some students find school education uninteresting due to gaps in what they actually know and what the primary school curriculum expects them to know. Lack of clarity in understanding basic concepts may

result in demotivation to continue school education.

***Unpreparedness to face the socio-economic mix of the school environment***

Understanding and accepting the heterogeneous characteristics of the society is very crucial for retention of children in school. Lack of attitudinal competency to understand the actual environment may cause unsatisfactory performance or even dropout.

***Difficulty in social interaction***

Communication is an art. A child should be given opportunities to hone one's communication skill as early as possible. The more a child is comfortable in interacting socially, the less difficult it is in school. Often, we find new entrants to be uncomfortable in talking to their teachers or even their peer group. This may cause loss of confidence and result in dropouts.

Therefore, all the above-mentioned hurdles can be overcome through ECCE as it creates a positive association with students' ability to understand basic concepts of numeracy or language, the ability of problem-solving and the skill of social interaction.

The cardinal reason behind drop out of children at the primary level is 'lack of school readiness'. School readiness can be attained if good quality of pre-school education is received by the children. There is a

huge learning gap among students who entered Class I without pre-schooling. It got reflected in Pratham's ASER 2014 Survey. Around 50 per cent of Class V children cannot even read Class II text. Without mandatory linking of curriculum of ECCE with the students enrolled under RTE, it is already assumed that children have some basic knowledge of alphabet and numbers. The first chapter of NCERT Class I Hindi textbook expects children to write small words and names. It is already assumed that children have knowledge of the alphabet. Similarly, the first chapter of mathematics textbook assumes that children already have knowledge of. Hence the gap created in the learning experiences of those children who did not undergo pre-school programme face difficulty at the primary level and may end up either being a slow learner or dropping out of school education programme. Mandatory linking will not allow gap in learning experiences, hence everyone will be on the same platform at various stages of schooling. There is no denying the fact that much has been already done with respect to framing the curriculum of pre-schooling and marking regulations. But the agenda is that when we are talking about 'Right to education', it cannot and should not be age restricted. Right to Education must be imposed from the very beginning when the foundation for future learning is laid. In order to overcome this issue, ECCE has to be covered under

the umbrella of the RTE, 2009 Act as mandatory.

### **EXISTING SCENARIO OF ECCE**

In our country, where the Right to Education has been declared a fundamental right, the paradox is that there is no uniformity regarding the minimum age for admission to Class I. The minimum age for admission is 5 and 5+ years in twenty states (viz. Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal) and in 6 Union territories (viz. Andaman and Nicobar, Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Delhi and Puducherry); whereas the minimum age for admission to Class I is 6 and 6+ years in Bihar, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab, Sikkim, Tripura, and UT of Lakshadweep. Another noteworthy fact is that age is not prescribed for pre-primary level of education in most of the states except for Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Kerala, Meghalaya, Tripura, Chandigarh, Daman and Diu, Lakshadweep and Puducherry (Selected information on school education 2011–12) Government of India, MHRD, Bureau of Planning, Monitoring and Statistics, Statistics Division). Variation in admission age at various entry levels of schooling may lead to creation of various sections of

educated mass with different levels of learning experiences, irrespective of the fact that they belong to the same age group within the same country. This variation may cause a learning gap which will result in dropout or unsatisfactory performance of students in the class.

When we are talking about education as a 'right' in a democratic country like ours, then it becomes indispensable to have same criteria to be followed in all the states. Uniformity in the admission age will bring uniformity in overall structure of RTE, 2009 throughout the country.

The *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* was implemented as India's main programme for the universalisation of elementary education. The uniform structure of school education throughout the country should have been an important agenda before the declaration of Right to Education as a fundamental right. There is a strong and necessary need to make amendments in Article 21A on the Right to Free and Compulsory Education for 6–14 year old children and Article 45 to urge states to provide ECCE to all children until they complete the age of 6 years. The government of India approved the National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy in 2013. The policy framework also includes the National Curriculum Framework and quality standards for ECCE. But, it is still not recognised as a compulsory provision under the RTE, 2009. In the context of the present policy, the ECCE is not seen as a right of

the child. Unless the GoI makes constitutional mandate for the states for the execution and implementation of policies and schemes, it could be overlooked any time as per convenience. A constitutional mandate will ensure that states have constitutional obligation to provide ECCE to all the children, so that responsibility cannot be overlooked.

Though the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) is responsible for the ICDS (Integrated Child Development Service), which is a centrally sponsored and state administered ECCE programme, covering around 38 million children, still the huge dropout rate is a matter to ponder. The Ministry of Human Resource and Development also took notice of the importance of ECCE as an important factor in promoting retention of children in pre-primary schooling, which is evident from District Primary Education Programme. It aims at strengthening the existing provisions for ECCE through the ICDS by strengthening their linkage with primary schools. In addition to this, the Law Commission of India on 27 August 2015 submitted Report No. 259 titled 'Early Childhood Development and Legal Entitlement' to the Union Minister of Law and Justice. As per the Commission, 'during a time when the world is debating the post 2015 sustainable development goals, which include the guarantee of early childhood development, the time is ripe to position the rights of young

children within the development agenda and create appropriate entitlement with respect to ECD.'

ECCE is wholly a matter of 'schemes', as yet it is not considered the legal entitlement of children. Through schemes and policies children may avail the benefits but it is not binding on the government to enforce them. The ECCE is perceived from the humanitarian perspective. But the dream of universal access and retention can only be fulfilled if it is passed as a legal entitlement. Under such circumstances, any infringement can be challenged by the citizens. More concrete steps need to be implemented to achieve long term effect on the future social adjustment and economic success of children.

### **CONCLUSION**

As an integral part of the Indian Education System, it should be made a compulsion for the states of India to provide free and compulsory ECCE and bring uniformity regarding the age of admission in pre-school and grade 1 throughout the country. In order to achieve this agenda, Section 11 of the Right to Education Act, 2009 should be made mandatory and may be as— 'With a view to prepare children above the age of three years for elementary education and to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years, the appropriate government shall make necessary arrangement for providing free pre-school education for such children'.

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# Introducing Life Skills through Activities

MANISHA TANEJA PAHUJA\*

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## Abstract

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*Life skills are essentially those skills that help promote the overall well-being and competence in young people as they face the realities of life. We all use life skills in different situations, such as to negotiate effectively at home, school or workplace. When faced with difficult situations, we tend to think critically, analyse all the pros and cons of the situation, think out of the box to find a solution to seemingly difficult problems. Children learn their life skills from parents, teachers and significant others who act as their role model. That is why, the Life Skills Programme—a school-based programme, is imparted in different schools. This paper highlights the various classroom activities that must be practised and encouraged for understanding life skills better.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Life skills are the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.

–World Health Organization

Life skills are a group of psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and develop

coping and self-management skills to lead a healthy and productive life.

## NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF LIFE SKILLS

Life skills are needed for the following reasons.

- To develop a dynamic self-image and great self-esteem
- To make relationships and handling interpersonal problems, better

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- To help one in dealing with the challenges of the everyday life
- To reduce vulnerability and improve utilisation of protective factors
- To enable the youth to adapt to situations and people

Life skills can be understood to include the following.

- L** — Learning
- I** — Identity and self-awareness
- F** — Fitness and health
- E** — Emotional development
- S** — Solving problems
- K** — Kindness
- I** — Intimacy
- L** — Living in balance
- L** — Letting go and holding on
- S** — Social skills

**LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION IN THE CLASSROOMS**

The Life Skills Programme is a school-based programme where life skills are imparted in a supportive learning environment. The programme is for the promotion of health and well-being among all the children. The Life

Skills-based Education refers to an interactive process of teaching and learning which enables the learners to acquire knowledge and to develop attitudes and support the adoption of healthy behaviour. Life skills are not a substitute to any type of education, training or organisational system but are complementary. These skills can be inculcated among students. Here, the author has suggested some of the activities for the development of life skills in students.

The World Health Organization has laid down 10 core life skills (Table 1).

**Cognitive Domain**

***Creative thinking***

It implies not just being artistic and innovative. It is a state of mind which could be applied to any situation. It is the ability to accept change and newness, a willingness to play with ideas and possibilities, a flexibility of outlook, the habit of enjoying the good, while looking for ways to improve it. Creative thinking when applied to one’s life, would involve looking for novel ways to resolve the

**Table 1  
Life Skills Identified by WHO**

<b>Cognitive Domain</b>	<b>Affective Domain</b>	<b>Psychological Domain</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative thinking</li> <li>• Critical thinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-awareness</li> <li>• Empathy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective communication</li> <li>• Interpersonal relationship</li> <li>• Decision making</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> <li>• Coping with emotions</li> <li>• Coping with stress</li> </ul>

conflicts and challenges that one may be faced with.

### **Activity**

*Situation*—Winters are over and you want to pack your woollen clothes in a bag. Now, as there are too many clothes, you are unable to close the bag and you do not want to remove anything due to some reasons. How would you close the bag and pack all the clothes?

### **Activity**

*Looking at problems and situations differently—Step 1.* Tell the participant that it is time for another interesting exercise. Make nine dots on the flipchart as shown in the figure below. Ask the participants to draw four straight lines through the nine dots without retracing and without lifting their pen from the paper.

*Step 2.* Give five minutes to the participants to do this exercise, and then ask them to share their drawings. Applaud those participants who could make the drawing as per the stated instructions above.

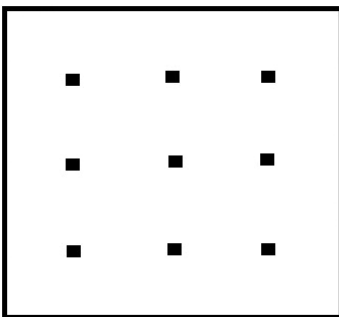


Figure 1

(*Hint*—Tell the participants that the key to the solution is that the imaginary boundaries formed by the dots need not to be observed. Once freed from this restriction, it is easy to find a solution.)

### **Critical thinking**

It is the art of analysing and evaluating thinking with a view to improving it. It is learning to think without a bias. It is a logically-reasoned judgment, where one thinks in the light of knowing. A critical thinker makes use of information to solve problems and arrive at meaningful conclusions. Critical thinking promotes creativity and is crucial for self-reflection. A critical thinker raises pertinent questions which are clear and precise, identifies the relevance and importance of ideas, understands the logical connections between ideas, examines beliefs, assumptions and options and weighs them against facts. It is a novel way of seeing or doing things and addressing issues.

### **Activity**

We can motivate the students to think critically by asking the question ‘why’? Suppose if they are reading a chapter, then they should be motivated to think critically about the importance of reading that particular chapter. What is the relevance of that chapter? How can it help us in transformative learning? All of this is critical thinking which should be used to introspect and transform oneself.



*Situation*—Neha walks to her school daily. One day, a stranger woman offers to drop her by her car. Neha suspects her and thinks critically why the woman is interested in dropping her. She refuses to go with her. Later, she hears in the news that the same lady was arrested as she was running a brothel house.

This situation shows that we should critically analyse the strange things happening in our life.

### *Storytelling*

*Step 1.* Ask one participant to read aloud the story—The Cap Seller and the Monkeys, to all the students. Tell the participants that the objective of this exercise is to learn more about life skills from the story of a man. Applaud the participant who narrates the story.

### *The Cap Seller and the Monkeys*

Once there was a cap seller in a town. On one day, after he sold a few caps, he became very tired. He decided to take rest for a while under a big tree. Soon, he dozed off.

There were many monkeys on the big tree. They saw that the cap seller was sleeping under the tree. The monkeys were sitting on the top of the tree. They came down, took the caps from the cap seller's bag and wore them. Then they climbed the tree again.

When the cap seller woke up, he was shocked to see his basket empty. He searched for his caps. To his surprise, he saw that the monkeys

were wearing them. He asked them to give the caps back. But the monkeys ignored him. He grew angry and picked up some stones and threw at them. In return, the monkeys also plucked fruits and bombarded on him. Suddenly, an idea struck him. He found that the monkeys were imitating him. So, he started throwing his cap down and the monkeys also did so. The cap seller collected all the caps, put them back in his basket and went away happily.

*Step 2.* Ask the participants the following questions and initiate a discussion.

- What problems did the cap seller face while trying to get back the caps from the monkeys?
- What were the thoughts and feelings of the cap seller?
- What did the cap seller do to find a solution?

*Step 3.* Explain to the participants that critical thinking helps us to make important decisions. It helps us to ask important questions such as—what options do I have, what can each option lead to, is this really what I want, etc.

*Step 4.* End the session by emphasising on the key message—critical thinking helps us to analyse what is at stake. It draws us towards the wishes and motives of ourselves and others and why we react the way we do.

## **Affective Domain**

### **Self-awareness**

It includes our recognition of ourselves, our character, strengths, weaknesses, desires and dislikes. It can help us to recognise when we are stressed or feel under pressure. It is often a pre-requisite for effective communication, interpersonal relationship and developing empathy for others'.

–World Health Organization

### **Activity**

*Write about 'Myself'*

In this activity, a person can write about one's strengths and weaknesses. In doing so, one will have to introspect oneself. The students can be given some questions to encourage them to introspect about themselves.

- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- How do your friends describe you? Do you agree with their description? Why or why not?
- What are your dreams and fears in your life? Why?
- What type of activities did you enjoy doing when you were a child? What about now?
- When you disagree with someone's viewpoint, what would you do?

An interesting way to become self-aware is to use the Strength-Weakness-Opportunity-Threat (SWOT) analysis which actively promotes the identified strengths,

minimises weaknesses by presenting them in a planned way, exploit the opportunities before the window closes and have contingency plans in place to minimise threats before they materialise.

### **Empathy**

It is the experience of understanding another person's condition from their perspective. When we understand ourselves as well as others, we are better prepared to communicate our needs and desires. It is the skill that plays a role in building relationships, creating love, strengthening bonds, promoting peace and making communication effective.

### **Activity**

Choose 10 participants and distribute them 10 chits with different emotions written on each. This could include happiness, frustration, sadness, anger, shock, shyness, jealousy, guilt, irritation and fear. Ask them to enact their emotion one by one. Instruct others to identify the emotions by their facial expressions. The basic idea is that by looking at the facial expressions or body movements of another, or by hearing their tone of voice, one may get an immediate sense of how they feel. It is necessary to understand others' feelings and emotions and to empathise with them. The ability to be empathetic conveys that we are understanding, responsive, concerned, respectful and trustworthy.

**Activity**

Bring sufficient number of newspapers or magazines for the class and distribute among the students along with a sheet of paper, glue stick and scissors. Instruct the students to cut pictures of people expressing any kind of feeling, and to use these images to build a Collage of Feelings. Ask them to label each picture in their collage with a term that represents a feeling and then invite the students to explain their collages and the particular term that they have given to the images. Encourage the students to elaborate on the details of what they have noted regarding the person's facial expression, their body language, or the context of the photo or illustration.

**Psychological Domain****Effective communication**

It means that we are able to express ourselves, both verbally and non-verbally, in ways that are suitable to our cultures, societies and situations. This means being able to express ideas, opinions, feelings, needs or fears appropriately. Always communicate tactfully.

**T**—Think before you speak

**A**—Assertive communication

**C**—Clarity of Thought and Content

**T**—Tone and Pitch of voice

**F**—Focus on interests, needs of the listener

**U**—Uncover hidden feelings

**L**—Listen for feedback

**Activity**

Role play can be used to understand effective communication. It can be better understood by this example.

*Scene*—Mayank's House

A friend of Mayank's mother enters Mayank's house.

Mrs. Sharma—Mayank, is your mother at home?

Mayank—No aunty, she has gone to school. She will come in the evening.

Mrs. Sharma—Inform your mother that there is a party tomorrow.

Questions to be asked and discussed are as follows.

- What message is given in the above conversation?
- Is the message meaningful?
- What are the drawbacks in the message?
- What is the correct way of giving the message?
- What should have Mrs. Sharma confirmed?

By discussing these questions, one can draw conclusion about the importance of effective communication.

**Interpersonal relationship**

Interpersonal skills help us to interact and relate effectively with others in our society. This enables us to build and maintain friendly relationships which can be of great importance to our mental and social well-being. Respect, responsibility, understanding, co-operation, caring and effective communication are the

factors which contribute to building healthy relationships.

### **Activity**

The following activity can help in understanding and developing interpersonal relationships.

*Step 1.* Ask the participants to name different relationships (child-parent, teacher-student, employer-employee, father-mother, brother-sister, grandparent-grandchild, friends, etc.)

*Step 2.* Discuss what makes a relationship successful. Write down their responses on the flipchart (respect, dependability, honesty, caring, understanding, etc.).

*Step 3.* Divide the participants into pairs and assign them each a relationship as named above in step 1. Ask them to prepare a role play that will demonstrate the qualities of the relationship assigned. Have each pair act out their role play for the whole group, and then discuss the following.

- What are some of the actions and words in the role play that illustrated various elements of respect, understanding, care and responsibility?
- What other actions or words could be added to this role play to show this quality?

*Step 4.* Facilitate a discussion using the following questions.

- Which of the qualities discussed are the most important to us?
- How do we put these qualities into our relationships?

- How would we feel about a friend, who did not respect us, who did not put much effort into the relationship? What could we do?
- How would we feel if a parent or guardian did not understand us? What would we do to improve the relationship?

*Step 5.* Ask the participants to describe and give examples of unhealthy or bad relationships. Write their responses on a flipchart. Explain that these are the opposite of what makes a fulfilling relationship—disrespect, fear, lack of understanding, lack of care, irresponsibility, dishonesty, lack of proper communication, etc.

*Step 6.* Discuss the importance of respect, responsibility, trust, understanding and care in making a relationship.

### **Decision making**

It is the ability of assessing an issue or situation by considering all the possible and available options, and the effects those different decisions might have on them. It helps us to deal constructively with issues and decisions about our lives. It can be regarded as an outcome of the mental processes leading to the selection of a course of action among several alternatives.

### **Activity**

*Situation* — Pooja is a student of Class X. She wants to continue her Class XI with physics, chemistry, biology and mathematics as her subjects. But her present school is

offering her only computer science. The school which offers her the needed subjects is around 15 km away but with a direct bus service. Her friends plan to continue in the same school. Now, help Pooja in making a decision.

Providing students with similar situations can help them to act wisely and make the right decision.

### **Problem solving**

It is the ability to understand what the goal of the problem is and what rules could be applied to represent the key for solving that problem. This means being able to deal with problems constructively in our lives. This skill not only empowers a person to control and solve one's problems, but can also turn them into opportunities.

### **Activity**

*Situation*—Fourteen-year-old Neha shared her laptop with her close friend without taking permission from her parents. Now, her friend is not returning it. When Neha asks for her laptop, her friend repeatedly refuses to return, by giving various reasons. What should Neha do?

Various situations can be given to students and they can be motivated to solve their problems by thinking critically.

### **Coping with emotions**

It means the ability to recognise emotions within ourselves and others, being aware of how emotions influence our behaviour and being able to respond to the emotions appropriately. Intense emotions like

anger or grief can have negative effects on one's well-being if we do not respond appropriately. Coping with our emotions helps us to express our feelings productively, express difficult feelings without attacking the self-esteem of the person, prevent feelings from building up and fostering into a bigger problem and communicate difficult feelings in a manner that minimises the other person's need to become defensive, and increase the likelihood that the person will listen.

### **Activity**

*Step 1.* Discuss what it means to be disappointed and ask the participants to state at least three disappointing events they have experienced recently. For example,

- getting rejected by someone you really like
- not getting the expected results after putting in one's best efforts in that task
- having to go somewhere you do not want to go

*Step 2.* Ask the participants to explain how they responded to the disappointment. Did they yell, cry, argue, blame someone else, or made some other responses?

*Step 3.* Ask them to identify who they think is to be blamed for their unhappiness or their disappointment—themselves or someone else. Ask them to share some examples of situations, reactions, and who they think is to be blamed.

*Step 4.* Explain the unhappy feelings that come from our thoughts by taking

one situation as an example and identifying the thoughts surrounding it. For example, if a youth is upset about being rejected by a girl or boy one really likes, one would likely be saying or thinking something like the following.

- How can one be so mean, so cruel?
- This is unfair.
- Am I that bad that I cannot attract and sustain a relationship?

*Step 5.* Discuss whether or not the person really has to think and feel this way. Show that the same person may feel entirely different if the person thought the following.

- The other person was not really mean; instead the person just said that they were not interested.
- Perhaps the person loves someone else.
- I deserve someone better.

*Step 6.* Initiate a discussion on the following questions.

- Is it really possible for someone else to be responsible for your unhappiness or happiness?
- Where do happy or unhappy feelings come from?

*Step 7.* Sum up the activity by explaining that happiness or unhappiness is a state of mind. Therefore, the real source of these lies in the mind, not in external circumstances. It is the way we think about the circumstances that make us feel happy or unhappy.

### ***Coping with stress***

It means recognising the sources of stress in our lives, how this stress affects us, and trying to find ways that help us control our levels of stress, by changing our lifestyles and the environment around us. Some sources of stress are related to self-esteem, employment, financial independence, educational and career decisions, etc. Also, some sources come from family environment like inadequate family relationships, lack of communication, parental criticism, authoritarian parental style, family disruption, loneliness, etc.

### ***Activity***

#### ***Group discussion***

Make five groups and ask them to do the following.

- Make a list of things which cause stress.
- As an individual, what will help you to reduce stress? Make a list.
- Each group leader will give a presentation of the list of things which cause stress, and suggestions to reduce stress.
- Write down the alternatives suggested by the teacher to reduce stress.

### **SOME MORE TECHNIQUES TO ENHANCE LIFE SKILLS IN STUDENTS**

#### ***Class Discussion***

It is a participatory learning technique in which the class examines a

problem of interest with the goal of understanding an issue or skill better, reaching the best solution, or developing new ideas and directions for the group.

### **Brainstorming**

It is a technique for generating new ideas and suggestions on a particular topic. The main objective of brainstorming is to generate multiple ideas. Evaluating or debating the ideas occurs later.

### **Role Plays**

It is an informal dramatisation in which people act out a suggested situation.

### **Small or Buzz Group**

For small group work, a large class is divided into smaller groups of six or less students and given a short period of time to accomplish a task, carry out an action, or discuss a specific topic, problem or question.

### **Games and Simulations**

Educational games can be used for teaching content, critical thinking, problem solving and decision making and for review and reinforcement. Simulations are activities structured to feel like the real experience.

### **Situation Analysis and Case Studies**

Situation analysis activities allow the students to think about, analyse,

and discuss situations they might encounter. Case studies are real life stories that describe in detail what happened to a community, family, school, or individual.

### **Debate**

In a debate, a particular problem or issue is presented to the class, and students must take a position on resolving the problem or issue.

### **Storytelling**

The students tell or read a story to a group. Pictures, comics and photo novels, filmstrips and slides can supplement. Students are encouraged to think about and discuss important points or methods raised by the story after it is told.

Life skills education is a value-based programme which aims to provide students with strategies to make rational decisions that contribute to a meaningful life. In order to ensure quality education, there is a need to include parents, teachers and children in the life skills education, because it can help to improve the well-being of individuals. The daily activities in our life can provide a better understanding of life skills education, which in turn would make people more responsible and cooperative. Thus, providing life skills education contributes to the development of the nation and its social well-being.

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# Need for Activating the Desire to Learn among Learners to Raise the Quality of Education

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## Abstract

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*After the implementation of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), India has witnessed increased access to education at the elementary level. As a consequence, the Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) of children above the age of six years has risen to 87 per cent. But unfortunately, the quality of education has not kept pace with the quantitative expansion of education. At present, there is a learning crisis in India. Therefore, there is an urgent need of the country to end this crisis through a number of interventions. Effective training of both pre-service and in-service teachers is crucial to transform the instructional process from teacher-centred to learner-centred approach. Poor student achievement is often attributed to a lack of motivation. For more than a century, a reward and punishment model has been used in all the classrooms of the world to increase student motivation. Now, there is a lot of empirical evidence that external motivation in the form of reward is less effective than intrinsic motivation to improve the quality of education. Rewards do not activate desire for learning. The desire for learning is activated in the classroom learning environment if it is full of joy and excitement.*

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## INTRODUCTION

### **Low Quality of Education— Need to Address the Issue**

After the implementation of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), India

has achieved incredible success in increasing the access to education at, elementary level. There is a primary and an upper primary school within the radii of one kilometre

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and three kilometres respectively from the residence of a child. This has facilitated an increase in the Net Enrolment Ratio to 87 per cent (NEUPA 2014–15). Only 10 per cent of children above the age of six years are still unreached.

On the other hand, the quality of education has not kept pace with quantitative expansion of education. The UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report (2014) highlights that 90 per cent of children belonging to the disadvantaged sections of society remain illiterate even after four years of schooling. This holds good for 30 per cent students even after five to six years of schooling. The report concluded that there is a learning crisis in India. The children from the disadvantaged sections of society are the worst hit in this regard. The situation is resulting in the wastage of enormous human and material resources. Therefore, there is an urgent need to determine an approach through which the issue of low quality of education can be addressed appropriately.

### **Need to End Learning Crisis**

Despite increased accessibility, many children are leaving schools unequipped with skills they need for life and work. One of the intervention is quality pre-service and in-service education of teachers to transform their instructional strategies from teacher-centred to learner-centred for transacting the curriculum. Teachers

need to be equipped with instructional strategies such as concept attainment, inquiry training, engaging learners in activities, collaborative learning and cooperative learning. They should also be trained in reflective teaching. They need to be urged to imbibe the values of professionalism, and must adhere to the code of professional ethics developed by their teachers' organisation. They need to be equipped with skills to generate joy in the classroom learning environment.

Teachers need to be provided effective training in theory of multiple intelligence. This is because students do not learn in one way. They learn in eight ways. An understanding of the theory of multiple intelligence would help teachers to understand the differential learning styles of students.

Appropriate infrastructure facilities and the adequacy of teaching workforce in a school also contribute to effective classroom learning. The state governments should address the said requirement in their schools.

### **DETERMINANTS OF QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The following are the main factors which determine the quality of education.

- Quality teachers
- Quality tools
- Appropriate nourishment of children, particularly during the first five years of their life

- Quality of classroom learning environment

### **Quality Teachers**

It depends upon the quality of pre-service Teacher Education and professional development of in-service teachers on a continuing basis. At present, the quality of pre-service Teacher Education is low. Teachers being trained by colleges of education, both at the elementary and secondary education are by and large ill-equipped in terms of knowledge and skills to be effective performers at their workplace. The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009) also highlights that 'most products of teacher education programmes are neither proficient in general pedagogical skills nor they are adept at reflecting on the subject content of school texts'.

The report of the Justice Verma Commission also highlights this fact. Based on this, the Commission recommended an increase in the duration of secondary Teacher Education programme and M.Ed. course from one to two years, each with a view to improving the quality of these programmes. Similarly, the quality of professional development programme is low. This was revealed in a study conducted by the All India Primary Teachers' Federation (AIPTF) in 2008 in the States of Tamil Nadu and Bihar. By and large, teachers reported that the training curriculum

did not meet their learning needs. Besides, transactional approaches followed by resource persons to transact the training curriculum were not based on the learning style of adults.

### **Quality Tools**

This stands for the curricula of school education and Teacher Education. As the global economy and the nature and demands of jobs change due to global integration, the growth of digital economy and education system needs to adapt too. The type of skills imparted at various levels of education need to change to ensure that the range of skills acquired by the learners are relevant. Similarly, the curriculum of pre-service Teacher Education programme needs to change in order to equip student teachers with requisite skills in the light of changes in school curriculum.

### **Appropriate Nourishment of Children, particularly during the First Five Years**

The brain of a human being weighs about three pounds at the time of birth. The development of the brain depends upon the nourishment of the child, particularly during the first five years. The brain of a six-month-old is one-half and that of a three-year-old is three-fourth of its potential size. The brain of a five-year-old child is nine-tenth of its potential size (L.R. Allen 2015). Since the development of the brain of children depends

upon the level of their nourishment, the development of the brain of a malnourished children does not take place properly. As a consequence, their learning capacity is damaged. In India, about 40 per cent of children are malnourished due to poverty of their parents. This issue needs to be addressed on a priority basis.

### **Quality of Classroom Learning Environment**

This is the most significant determinant of the quality of education. The learning environment in the classroom needs to be full of joy, laughter and excitement. Such an environment fosters intrinsic motivation and thereby improves the academic achievement of students. Teachers need to make education a joyful enterprise. Providing opportunities to the learners to meet their basic needs also contributes to quality learning environment.

Due to advances in pedagogical science, the role of teachers has undergone a substantial change. A teacher is no longer expected to dispense knowledge to one's students. Students are expected to create knowledge on their own. The teacher is required to create conditions in the classroom facilitating the creation of knowledge by students themselves. In such a situation, the learning climate in the classroom becomes lively. Learning is deeper and more sustainable. Teachers may also use problem solving approach for promoting learning. A classroom environment with joyful

activities creates desire for learning among learners.

### **EFFICACY OF REWARD AND PUNISHMENT MODEL FOR IMPROVING LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS**

Most schools and classrooms operate on the reward and punishment model for improving the academic achievement of learners. This model has been followed all over the world for more than a century or so. Rooted in nineteenth-century wisdom, this model is based on the belief that human behaviour is the result of environmental factors. Teacher Education programmes typically require the student teachers to learn how to systematically reward and punish students. After having lived with this model for more than a century, educationists, and social and biological scientists now find a number of shortcomings in this model and reject it as incomplete. This is because the model does not activate desire for learning. It only makes students complain more. They hardly develop any desire for learning and liking for school.

Educationists now hold the view that the system of rewarding students for academic achievement devalues the very thing we want, which is learning. A system of education based on rewards and punishment is fundamentally anti-educational. As a result of the operation of this model, 'some students do well, most

comply, but seldom do their best' (Sullo 2007). It hardly fosters or activates the desire to learn, which is highly essential for students to put in their best for improving their learning achievement.

There is substantial empirical evidence that demonstrates that the reward and punishment model is less effective than intrinsic motivation in improving the learning achievement of students. Some of these studies are reported below. These have been highlighted in a review of research conducted by Baranek (1996).

Amabile and Gitomer (1984) reported that the 'students approach and complete task differently than when rewards are not given, and their work is judged as less creative'.

Rewards can undermine intrinsic interest in an activity, and even deter a person from returning to an activity later on. External rewards, however, tend to have negative effects in school. Different forms of extrinsic motivation tend to take attention away from the most important aspect of school—a child's learning. In addition, rewards have been shown to have detrimental effects on the process of learning (Deci 1972; Festinger and Carlsmith 1959).

Masters and Janice (1973) found that rewards resulted in more errors in learning.

In the research conducted during the last 50 years, it has been found that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation have different effects on education. The presence of intrinsic motivation

produces many behaviours that result in success at school. These behaviours could include sustained interest in tasks, risk taking and conquering the new challenges (Amabile and Gitomer 1984).

Eric Jensen (1995), a noted author and educational consultant in the area of brain-based learning, writes—'if the learner is doing the task to get the reward, it will be understood, on some level that the task is inherently undesirable. Forget the use of rewards. Make school meaningful, relevant, and fun. Then you won't have to bribe students'.

Renowned author, consultant and speaker Alfie Kohn (1993) notes—'Fact 1: Young children don't need to be rewarded to learn... Fact 2: At any age rewards are less effective than intrinsic motivation for promoting effective learning... Fact 3: Rewards for learning undermine intrinsic motivation'.

Lori Kay Baranek (1996) conducted a review of research on the 'effectiveness of rewards on intrinsic motivation and learning for children in general education and special education'. On the basis of review of research, Lori reported that 'when rewards are given, they often have the opposite effect of what was intended. High achievement is seen among students who are motivated from inside. Therefore, instead of giving rewards, teachers need to consistently teach students to become intrinsically motivated'. He further reported that 'the use of rewards

undermines intrinsic motivation and results in the slower acquisition of skills and more errors in the learning process'.

On the basis of the review of research, Baranek concluded that 'rewards, then should be replaced with teaching that is focused on the intrinsic motivation of the student. There is a need to train teachers in how to teach students so that they become intrinsically motivated, instead of just propelled along by the vision of the next external rewards'.

Finding ways to develop intrinsic motivation in students should be an important duty of every teacher's planning on a daily basis. The behaviours associated with intrinsic motivation are crucial to developing lifelong learners.

### **BASIC NEEDS OF HUMAN BEINGS**

Willam Glasser's Choice Theory (1998) suggests that human beings are born with specific needs and they are genetically instructed to satisfy them. These are five basic needs. One of these is the physical need for survival and the rest four are basic psychological needs. These must be satisfied to be emotionally healthy. The other four needs are:

- Belonging or connecting
- Power or competence
- Freedom
- Fun

No human being wants to live in isolation. Every human being wants to connect oneself to others. This

drive (need) propels them to develop a relationship and to cooperate with others. The environment in the school should provide ample opportunities to students and the staff to satisfy the need to connect and feel a sense of belonging.

The second need is to gain power. Power is gained through competence. Each human being is genetically instructed to master new skills and gain competence. There is a need to create an environment in the school which fosters acquisition of competence on the part of students. The third need is that every human being is motivated to be free. The school should foster such an environment which provides adequate freedom to students within certain parameters. One of these parameters is that the satisfaction of the need for freedom of students does not infringe the freedom of other students. The second parameter is that the satisfaction of this need should be supportive of learning.

The fourth need of students is that they should have fun in the learning process. A joyless classroom never inspires students to do high quality academic work on a regular basis.

### **ACTIVATING THE DESIRE FOR LEARNING**

Extrinsic rewards do not result in high student achievement.

The desire for learning is fostered in a classroom learning environment where a positive relationship exists between the teacher and the taught.

This dispels fear from the minds of learners. They feel encouraged to participate in the classroom talk. They do not hesitate in asking questions from the teacher and in responding to teachers' question(s). This learning environment in the classroom also fosters among students liking for the teachers and school, and their desire for learning. Students experience pleasure in the process of learning. Their interest in learning shoots up.

The desire for learning on the part of students is also activated when the teacher engages them in activities and they follow a child-centred approach in transacting the curriculum. The desire for learning

among students is activated when the teacher engages them in collaborative learning. In collaborative learning, students experience pleasure in completing the activity. They discuss, listen to others, learn from each other and the learning climate becomes lively. In such a situation, students are happy. These happy students are likely to do higher quality of academic work. Therefore, it can be concluded that the desire for learning is activated in a classroom learning environment which satisfies the basic needs of students, engages them in collaborative learning and fosters intrinsic motivation.

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# Introducing Education for Sustainable Development in Emerging Economies

ADITYA\*

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## Abstract

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*The vulnerable population in emerging economies is more prone to the adverse impacts of climate change. Urgent need is felt for sensitising people towards the effects of climate change, its mitigation and ways to become resilient. This paper argues for introducing Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in emerging economies as a potent action. The paper has argued for embedding ESD across subjects and school curricula. It should be given a cross-curricula priority. Secondly, as a teacher plays a crucial role in the above process, there is a need to ensure that teachers have proper knowledge of the subject and are aware of the different pedagogies to transact and equip with required competencies. Thirdly, contextualisation of education can help students to relate to sustainable practices. Last but not the least, activity and project-based approach could be used to motivate students to adopt a sustainable lifestyle.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Climate change has manifested itself as a cause of major concern for the existence of humankind. Its adverse impact on the life of people is a known fact. Droughts have killed crops and animals alike; the rising sea level rise has destroyed homes. Extreme

and abrupt variation in temperature range that resulted in climate shocks is affecting most of those people who are least responsible for causing climate change. Thus, the need for mitigation of climate change has been recognised by the world leaders and the ratification of the Paris

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Agreement on October 2 2016 by India and other countries shows the primacy that it is being given. It is time to urge the global community to adopt the 'Gandhian way of life' (shun extravagant lifestyles) for addressing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets built on the Millennium Development Goals to take care of the three dimensions of sustainable development—economic, social and environmental.

The idea of sustainable development was first floated by the Brundtland Commission Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987), 'Our Common Future'. It was the World Conference on Environment and Development (WCED) in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro and the World Summit on Sustainable Development at Johannesburg in 2002, which attracted the world's attention towards sustainable development. The concept of sustainable development is a result of the growing awareness about the inversing environmental issues at a global level (Hopwood, Mellor, and O'Brien 2005).

Agenda 21, which was published at WCED specifically, stated that there is a need of addressing the needs of both, the environment and humankind simultaneously. Agenda 21 played a crucial role in stressing the need for including sustainable development as part of the school curricula throughout the world (Kopnina 2012). In December 2002, the United Nations passed

Resolution 57/254 that declared a Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) beginning in 2005. Thereafter, various committees of the UN and other multilateral organisations have stressed on the importance of sustainable development and ESD.

Sustainable development is most commonly defined as 'satisfying the needs of current generations without putting at risk the ability of coming generations to do the same' (Friman and Hansson 2008). But it became really difficult for the world leaders (of both the developed and the developing countries) to arrive at a consensus about what exactly these 'fundamental needs' are? The United Nations Millennium Declaration has been able to shed some light over it. It suggests that the fundamental human needs such as sufficient water and food, shelter, access to education, health, employment, justice, etc. should be met for all, without harming the earth's life support systems, such as the atmosphere, the water cycle, earth and biological diversity (Annan 2000).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development underlines the global commitment of 'achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions—economic, social and environmental—in a balanced and integrated manner' (Nilsson, Griggs, Visbeck 2016). In order to propagate the idea of sustainable development, there is an urgent need for education for sustainable

development. Venkatraman (2009) has argued that the school education system of any country should present sustainable development in such a way as to modify individual and societal lifestyles towards protecting the environment. Achieving social equity can help to understand the challenges that the educational community faces and the progress it has made to overcome them.

### **EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ESD)**

Unlike most of the education movements, ESD was initiated by people outside the education community. As discussed earlier, it was the UN resolution 57/254 which first advocated for the education for sustainable development at a global level. Subsequently, the need for education for sustainable development was pushed by many multilateral economic bodies.

The difference between environmental education and ESD was also highlighted at various forums. ESD is different from environmental education as it not only focuses on humankind's relationship with the natural environment and the ways to preserve it, but it also stresses on the socio-cultural and socio-political aspects. ESD also entails the discussion on poverty, democracy, way of life and most importantly, equity (Venkataraman 2009).

Another unique point of ESD is that it focuses on solving two major issues in the dialogue for sustainability,

that is population and resource consumption. Given the limited natural resources, the exponential increase in global population and rapid urbanisation will surely take a toll on the natural resources and subsequently on the environment (Holdren and Ehrlich 1974). There is an immediate need for low and middle-income countries to reduce risks with a particular attention on the vulnerable population. Education has been seen as impacting fertility rates in a country negatively (Kravdal and Rindfuss 2008; Monstad, Propper, and Salvanes 2008). In the Indian scenario, Dreze and Murthi (2001) have empirically established that the female literacy rate has a negative and highly significant effect on the fertility rate. Conversely, some studies have also indicated that increased literacy also results in increased resource use. It is evident from the fact that the per capita energy consumption is much more than the developing world. Despite this, a literate population is vital for sustainable development.

ESD is a vision of education that seeks to balance human and economic well-being with cultural traditions and respect for the Earth's natural resources. It emphasises aspects of learning that enhance the transition towards sustainability including future education, citizenship education, education for a culture of peace, gender equality and respect for human rights, health education, population education, education for

protecting and managing natural resources, and education for sustainable consumption.

The importance of education has been recognised by governments and international agencies. In the last two decades, several programmes and schemes have been launched which ensure that development and education go hand in hand. Some of these initiatives are as follows.

- The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
- Education for All (EFA)
- The United Nations Literacy Decade (2003–2012)
- The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014)
- The Education 2030 Agenda which is encapsulated in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4) 2015

Apart from the Millennium Development Goals which were conceptualised and coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme, all the other four initiatives were coordinated by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization. These initiatives aim to improve the quality of life, promote human rights, have a commitment to education and increase participation of everyone in development and education. The Sustainable Development Goals consist of the 17 goals and 169 targets, which have been built on the Millennium Development Goals. Most

of these goals are related to Education for Sustainable Development.

### **EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN SCHOOL CURRICULA**

Introducing ESD in school education will ensure that youth is not only well informed, but they also participate in and contribute to addressing global challenges. Moreover, owing to its interdisciplinary nature and its relevance in the present and future, ESD offers a starting point for innovation to school education (Rauch 2002). Despite the importance it holds, ESD still has to acquire a prominent place in the school curriculum (Wals and Kieft 2010). The situation is even worse in some of the low and middle-income countries where early childhood education and care is either missing or poor. Also, the absence of adequate nutrition, proper healthcare and physical environment, and most importantly, emotional support hinders effective learning (Kaga 2008). Further, the priority of most of the low and middle-income countries being economic growth, sustainable development often takes a back seat. Therefore, in these countries, ESD is not given its due in the curriculum. Consequently, it has been suggested that the vulnerable population in these countries will be worst affected from the effects of climate change. Embedding ESD in school curricula is not enough in such cases. For effective learning, supportive health, social, economic and labour policies

and concerned services for young children and their families are also necessary (Kaga 2008).

Irrespective of these challenges, the author proposes some cost-effective measures and means which could integrate ESD across the stages and subjects of schooling. Any emerging model should essentially incorporate the following elements.

### **Cross Curriculum Priority**

In order to include ESD in school curriculum, first, we need to focus on the framework highlighted by UNESCO which advocates for integrating the following three dimensions (Wals, Hoeven, and Blanken 2009).

#### ***Socio-cultural dimension***

This dimension deals with the issues related to social equity. Some of the components within this dimension are as follows.

- Human rights
- Peace and human security
- Gender equality
- Cultural diversity
- Health, HIV and AIDS
- New forms of governance

#### ***Environmental dimension***

It refers to the issues related to natural resources (water, energy, agriculture, and biodiversity), climate change, rural development, sustainable urbanisation, disaster prevention and mitigation.

#### ***Economic dimension***

This dimension focuses on the issues related to poverty reduction, corporate responsibility and accountability and re-orienting the market economy.

One of the challenges which the advocates of ESD have highlighted is that sustainable development has been confined to the boundaries of a particular subject or a particular chapter in one of the subjects. If the aim is to embed ESD in school curriculum, merely including a chapter will not suffice. Rather, these dimensions should permeate the entire school curriculum, with every subject area, in every class, dealing with the aspects of sustainability in some way. For instance, following are the ways in which different subjects could be used to impart the knowledge on sustainable development.

*First Language subjects (Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, etc.)*—All the aspects of language and art offer the ways in which they can contribute to the sustainable development. The wealth of local literature, folklore, etc., can be used to highlight people's relationship with nature.

*Mathematics* — Mathematical concepts can be illustrated by experiences and examples from the natural, social, economic and political environments. The course curriculum should also include additional activities which require quantitative measurement of environmental and human activities. Students can

also be encouraged to compare the per capita energy consumption, waterfootprint and carbonfootprint of various economies in the world.

*Social Sciences* — Since policy decisions at the local, state, national, and global levels are made within the context of social institutions and human values, various social studies or social sciences (such as geography, history, political science, anthropology, sociology, psychology, etc.) can contribute greatly to the study of how alternative plans and actions can affect a sustainable future.

These issues constitute the core of the BLK (Bund-Länder Commission for Education Planning and Research Promotion Programme '21' in Germany. The programme stresses on interdisciplinary approach towards ESD. The programme advocates for participative learning and encourages all the stakeholders including the community, its residents, companies and local organisations to coordinate with schools to promote sustainable development. Furthermore, the programme has been integrated in everyday school routine (Haan 2006). Through his empirical study involving around 1,500 students who went through the programme, Haan (2006) established that more than 75 per cent have learnt what they themselves can do to promote sustainable development. Also, more than two-third pupils could convince

others towards the necessity of sustainable development.

In order to implement programmes such as BLK '21', countries need to first focus on training the teachers as teachers play a crucial role in shaping how students think.

### **Training the Teachers**

The first step in promoting sustainable development among the students is to sensitise the teachers towards the issue. Once the teachers are oriented enough and understand the importance of the need of ESD, it would reflect in day-to-day interactions with the students and in the classroom transactions too. The educational system should also support the issue and its implementation at all levels. A two-pronged approach, that is, top-bottom and bottom-top is necessary in this regard. It should not remain as a cosmetic effort; rather it should be deeply embedded in the psyche of the teacher, students, parents and ably supported by the administration and the system.

The environmental educator cannot simply pass on knowledge and contents, but has to constantly contextualise locally, look for doable activities and practical examples. Capturing the interest of the students in the process would help them attain a better understanding, participation and widen their horizons.

With regard to teacher training, the pre-service teacher courses should have sufficient space for sustainable

development across the subjects. As mentioned in the previous section, sustainable development cannot be studied in isolation. Also, in-service teacher training programmes can be effectively moulded to propagate concept. Periodic refresher courses will add to the newer knowledge emerging in the area and enable its wider dissemination for further emulation.

Edman (2004) has argued that active learning, critical sensitivity and critical evaluation of values should be the parts of ESD pedagogy. Similarly, Björneloo (2004) also advocates for independence, critical thinking, participation and evaluation of results as central concepts of ESD. The modules on ESD in Teacher Education should encourage teachers towards reflective practice, reflexivity and critical thinking. The author agrees with Badjanova et al. (2014) when they argue that in order to promote sustainability, there is a need to move from transmissive form of teaching to transformative and experiential form of learning. Therefore, the Teacher Education institutions are not only supposed to make teachers well versed in a subject, but they also have to develop competencies which ensure that there is transformative teaching. Instead of confining themselves to just the content delivery, teachers are supposed to ensure activity-based learning.

### **Contextualising Education for Sustainable Development**

Contextualisation of instruction on sustainable development to the local issues and things which pupils could relate to, will make ESD more effective. Rivet and Krajcik (2008) refer to contextualising of instruction as presentation of concepts and ideas based on the events and situations which occur outside the class or relating these concepts and ideas to the particular interests of the students. Using the real world examples or problems to which students relate, can help in connecting with the concept and ensure better understanding. National Curriculum Framework (2005), the guiding document for curriculum in school education of India aptly highlights the importance of contextualisation of education— ‘...of situating learning in the context of the child’s world, and of making the boundary between the school and its natural and social environment porous. This is not only because the local environment and the child’s own experiences are the best entry points, into the study of disciplines of knowledge, but more so because the aim of knowledge is to connect with the world’ (NCERT 2005).

Contextualising instructions takes an important role in activity and project-based learning. The next section will explain how both these modes of instruction can be beneficial in ESD.

### **Focus on Activity- and Project-based Learning**

Leu and Price-Rom (2006) define activity-based learning as 'minimal teacher lecturing or direct transmission of factual knowledge, multiple small group activities that engage students in discovery learning or problem solving, and frequent student questions and discussion'. Activity-based learning has been seen to have encouraged the learners to interact with their surroundings and environment (Biazaka, Marleya and Levinb 2010). It has been observed that cognitive growth can be facilitated through activity-based learning during the pre-school years (Tomlinson and Hyson 2009). This finding is very significant as it has resulted in the use of activity-based instructional techniques in school education too, in order to capitalise on its cognitive benefits (Guthrie et al. 2006, Sherman and Bisanz 2009). The argument is also supported by several theories of cognition, and Piaget (1962) has argued that providing representation to the children enhances their learning.

As the benefits of activity-based instructions are well documented, sustainable development can be taught in schools through this method. As sustainability is a multifaceted and interdisciplinary topic, activity-based learning will help the students in creating meaning through interacting with their environment. This process will ensure that knowledge is not

simply acquired but it is used and implemented in day-to-day affairs (Hedden et al. 2017).

On the similar lines, project-based learning can be a tool for the learners to not only interact with their environment, but also to help in constructing knowledge by solving complex problems. In this process, the learner uses different sets of cognitive tools and relies on multiple sources and individuals for information (Resnick 1987). Blumenfeld et al. (1991) define project-based learning as a comprehensive mode of teaching which involves teaching through engaging students in investigation. Within project-based learning, students are supposed to find solutions to non-trivial problems by asking questions, debating ideas, making plans, collecting and analysing data, communicating the finding to others, discussing the findings, asking the questions again (if any) and coming up with multiple solutions. Through project-based instruction, the student is motivated to test what they have learnt when confronted with similar problems in real life. This also helps in deepening their knowledge in that particular subject.

The role of teachers occupies place of eminence in such instruction. Although the project components and its orientation are student-centered, but the exercises in project-based learning are usually teacher-centered project pedagogy (Helle, Tynjälä and Olkinuora 2006). The exercises are



to be designed by the teachers in a way that integrates the subject material. The first step for the teacher is to introduce students to the fundamentals. They have to constantly support learning through instruction, guide the students and make tasks more manageable. At the same time, the focus should also be on making classroom environment conducive for enabling constructive inquiry and managing the classroom to ensure that work is completed in an efficient and orderly fashion. By focusing on learning, rather than focusing on performance, teachers can promote motivation to learn, encourage risk taking and most importantly encourage a habit of enquiry among the pupils (Blumenfeld, et al. 1991). The teacher has to play the role of the coach or facilitator in the process. Therefore, teacher training should build in competencies among the teachers that ensure that the teachers not only possess sufficient understanding of the subject, but they also have pedagogical content knowledge of probable alternative queries of the students.

As climate change is a complex societal problem, the sustainable development programmes must not only equip the students with just the content knowledge, but they should also develop analytical skills and interpersonal competencies (Arnim Wiek, et al. 2014). Project-based learning can help the teachers and students in this regard. It can help the students in engaging with the real

life sustainability issues. At the same time, it can also help in developing analytical skills and interpersonal competencies.

### **CONCLUSION**

In the quest to accelerate economic growth, environmental considerations have taken a back seat. Despite the adverse impact of climate change on the humankind, the world as a single entity has not been able to resolve the conflict among people, planet and profit. The people in emerging and low-income countries are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change due to the financial constraints. Therefore, sensitisation of all the stakeholders towards sustainable development practices becomes all the more important. At the level of school education, informed parents, aware, oriented and sensitised teachers along with the systems supporting ESD can contribute towards becoming more resilient towards the effects of climate change.

Despite this, education for sustainable development has not attained the place it deserves in the school curriculum globally (barring few exceptions). It has been superficially touched upon in a few textbooks to some extent (Venkataraman 2009). The paper has proposed four necessary points which could ensure proper dissemination of ESD at school level.

Firstly, the paper has argued for embedding ESD across the subjects and the school curriculum. It should

be given a cross curricula priority. Secondly, as a teacher plays a crucial role in this process, there is a need to ensure that teachers have proper knowledge of the subject, are aware of the different pedagogies to transact, and are equipped with required competencies. Thirdly, contextualisation of education can help students to relate to sustainable practices. Last but not the least, activity and project-based approach could be used to motivate students to adopt a sustainable lifestyle.

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# The Role of Educational Institutions in Enhancing India's Pluralistic Identity

ARYAMAN KUNZRU\*

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## Abstract

*The purpose of this paper is to analyse the effectiveness of educational institutions such as the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), when it comes to translating the values of India's Constitution to younger generations—preserving the values of religious harmony, equality, and pluralism as enshrined in our Constitution. India's educational institutions have a very important role to play in inculcating the right values among its young citizens, and they are a key player in driving India's ability to nurture and strengthen religious harmony among the multitude of faith that call India home.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The Constitution of India, enacted on 26 January, 1950, was one of the most forward looking and progressive constitutions of its time. India's Constitution borrowed the best ideas from all corners of the world and applied them to an Indian context, enshrining the values of dignity, equality, and pluralism that

continue to give shape to India's kaleidoscopic identity.

The longest Constitution in the world — with 1,17,369 words, 123 amendments, and 444 Articles — not only served as an affirmation of India's then-value system, but also, as a bold declaration of the nation India wanted to be— a sovereign, socialist secular democratic republic that

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secures all citizens core vital rights, as seen starting from the Preamble.

Yet, just as there are forces that drive plurality and promote diversity within India, there are forces—exclusivist and monolithic in nature—that seek to suppress the true Indian identity, reducing it to a series of straightforward binaries. Religious tolerance and secularism, in particular, are key aspects of the Indian identity that suffer at the hands of such forces—that politicise religion in order to drive their agenda. In the process, they are able to erect high walls between different segments of the Indian society.

Education, across the world, is recognised as a fundamental pillar of any democratic state. According to Villegas-Reimers (2002), although ‘education by itself cannot directly change the political, or social structures of a country, education can contribute to democracy and democratic citizenship in two specific ways’. The first relates to providing equal opportunities to all—regardless of caste, socio-economic status, ethnicity, or heritage. The second, is to prepare a generation of democratic citizens, by imparting them with the values, knowledge and skill set necessary for functioning as active, contributing members of their democratic society.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This investigation began with an in-depth analysis of the National Curriculum Frameworks of 1975,

1988, 2000 and 2005, and other relevant documents such as the National Policy on Education 1986. These documents were analysed with the purpose of understanding the varying pedagogical styles and priorities in each iteration of different educational policies, the values and skills each policy sought to develop through education, and the increasingly important relationship between a student, one’s teacher, one’s community, and the school.

After that, a study was conducted involving all of the NCERT social science textbooks from Classes VI to XII. I concentrated on identifying both explicit and implicit instances where the values of human dignity, equality, and pluralism in an Indian context were reinforced. The motive behind this component of the methodology was to develop an understanding of the manner in which the NCERT currently translates the aforementioned values through textbooks and to identify the kind of messages being articulated to students in secondary schools.

Additionally, 47 interviews—with individuals who were educational administrators (9), social activists (5), university professors (9), educationists (4), principals (8), teachers (7) and students (5)—were conducted. These interviews gave vital insights on how effectively is the policy vision translated to the on-ground execution, and the role of influences outside of the classroom, that shape the thinking of young Indians today.

## **INDIAN EDUCATION POLICY DOCUMENTS**

Prior to the British rule, education in India had elitist tendencies—serving the needs of the wealthy, or high-caste families of India. It was only in the 1900s, that the National Congress pushed for nationwide education for all, albeit with limited success. Post-independence (that is, after 1947), the idea of nationwide education for all began gathering momentum. In 1964, the Kothari Commission was established to ‘evolve a general pattern of education and to advise guidelines and policies for the development of education in India’ (Nourbaksh, Hasan).

The Kothari Commission drew on Nehruvianism—an ideology built on secular and pluralist values—to develop a thorough education policy for India. The Commission discovered that education was intended to increase productivity, develop social and national unity, consolidate democracy, modernize the country and develop social, moral and spiritual values (Nourbaksh 2017).

The Kothari Commission’s work played a vital role in shaping the first National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1968 (NPE-1968). The NPE of 1968, prioritised science and technology over the humanities, for the Kothari Commission believed that engineers and scientists were better suited to guide India towards her needs. This is evinced by the fact that in the third clause of the NPE, it is stated that the Indian education system must have ‘an emphasis on Science

and Technology’, and the seventh clause states ‘science education and research should receive high priority’ (Puri, Mohit). Clearly, the human and social sciences were seen as inferior to, and less important than the traditional STEM subjects. This is an important consideration going forward in the investigation.

In 1986, Rajiv Gandhi (the then Prime Minister of India) announced a new education policy, based on the belief that the 1968 policy had been successfully implemented. However, it was believed at the time that ‘India’s political and social life is passing through a phase which poses the danger of erosion to long accepted values. The goals of secularism, socialism, democracy and professional ethics are coming under increasing strain’ (Puri, Mohit).

Such sentiments were echoed across the nation as a result of events such as the anti-Sikh riots of 1984. As such, one of the many core principles of NPE 1986 was to emphasise, within the educational system, the values of secularism, socialism and democracy for a modern Indian state, as a response to incidents such as the anti-Sikh riots. However, protests arose when in 2001, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) announced its new National Curriculum Framework (NCF). This framework operated under the slogan of ‘Indianise, nationalise and spiritualise’, as evinced by the discussion of India’s socio-cultural context, in section 1.1 of the

National Curriculum Framework. It oversaw massive revisions made to textbooks—especially in the field of Indian history (Ewing 2005). The new textbooks were accused of being anti-minority, and required the involvement of the Supreme Court to end a petition that argued that the new Framework promoted religious education.

After this, in 2005, yet another National Curriculum Framework was introduced—a framework that enshrines the values of the Indian Constitution and promotes open-minded and progressive values. The NCF of 2005 is built upon five basic principles.

- Connecting knowledge to life outside the school;
- Ensuring that learning shifts away from rote methods;
- Enriching the curriculum so that it goes beyond textbooks;
- Making examinations more flexible and integrating them with classroom life; and
- Nurturing an overriding identity informed by caring concerns within the democratic polity of the country.

The National Curriculum Framework 2005 recognised the importance of diversity, and introduced the concept of ‘Peace Education’. ‘The potential of peace education for socializing children into a democratic and just culture can be actualized through appropriate activities and a judicious choice of

topics in all subjects and at all stages. Peace education as an area of study is recommended for inclusion in the curriculum for teacher education’. Furthermore, it recognises India’s pluralistic roots in history, calling India ‘a free nation with a rich variegated history, an extraordinarily complex cultural diversity and a commitment to democratic values and well-being for all’ (*National Curriculum Framework 2005*). Clearly, The National Curriculum Framework 2005 demonstrates a clear intent to recognise and respect India’s diversity. Moreover, it pledges to promote a spirit of inquiry, equality, and in no way prioritises sciences over the humanities, or vice versa.

### **CONTENT OF TEXTBOOKS AND SYLLABUS**

On reading all 18 books that form the NCERT syllabus for social sciences from Classes VI to XII, it has become clear to me that the progressive and pluralistic values promoted by the National Curriculum Framework 2005 have been successfully translated into the NCERT textbooks.

As a measure to assess the importance placed on building values of secularism and harmony into the syllabi, the specific references made to the themes driving secularism and harmony, across all the books studied, have been tabulated. Table 1 shows the number of chapters which include ‘a discussion directed at plurality or equality’, in every social science book from Class VI onwards. As is obvious from the data, the

syllabus designed by the NCERT values of secularism and respect for places a strong emphasis on building India's plural identity.

**Table 1**  
**NCERT Textbooks (Classes VI–XII) and a Chapter-wise Discussion Directed at Plurality or Equality**

<b>Class</b>	<b>Book Title</b>	<b>Total Number of Chapters/ Sections</b>	<b>Chapters which Include a Discussion Directed at Plurality or Equality</b>
VI	<i>Our Pasts – I</i> (2017), Textbook in History	12	2
VII	<i>Social and Political Life – II</i> (2017)	10	5
VII	<i>Our Pasts – II</i> (2017), Textbook in History	10	2
VIII	<i>Our Pasts – III</i> (2017), Textbook in History	6	0
VIII	<i>Social and Political Life – III</i> (2017)	10	6
VIII	<i>Our Environment</i> (2017), Textbook in Geography	10	4
IX	<i>Contemporary India – I</i> (2017), Textbook in Geography	6	1
IX	<i>Democratic Politics – I</i> (2017), Textbook in Political Science	6	6
IX	<i>India and the Contemporary World – I</i> (2017), Textbook in History	8	1
X	<i>Contemporary India II</i> (2017), Textbook in Geography	7	0
X	<i>India and the Contemporary World – II</i> (2017), Textbook in History	8	2



X	<i>Democratic Politics – II</i> (2017), Textbook in Political Science	8	6
XI	<i>Indian Constitution at Work</i> (2017), Textbook in Political Science	10	6
XI	<i>Understanding Society</i> (2017), Textbook in Sociology	5	2
XI	<i>Political Theory</i> (2017), Textbook in Political Science	10	4
XII	<i>Understanding Society – II</i> (2017)	7	5
XII	<i>Social Change and Development in India</i> (2017), Textbook in Sociology	8	3
XII	<i>Themes in Indian History – I</i> (2017), Textbook in History	15	3
XII	<i>Themes in Indian History – II</i> (2017), Textbook in History	15	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>62</b>

Roughly, an impressive 36 per cent of all chapters in the social sciences curriculum contains a discussion revolving around plurality or equality. The social sciences textbooks above are also especially direct and honest in addressing issues regarding caste, oppression of minorities, secularism, and human rights. Some examples are given below.

‘When persons are treated unequally, their dignity is violated’ (*Social & Political Life Class VIII* 2017, p. 9).

‘Every person has a right to profess, practice and propagate

the religion he or she believes in. Every religious group or sect is free to manage its religious affairs’ (*Democratic Politics Class IX* 2017, p. 106).

‘These efforts to unify people were not without problems. When the past being glorified was Hindu, when the images celebrated were drawn from Hindu iconography, then people of other communities felt left out’ (*India & the Contemporary World Class X* 2017, p. 72).

The Constitution prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. Our Constitution also abolishes

the practice of untouchability. Most modern constitutions and democratic governments have formally accepted the principle of equality and incorporated it as identical treatment by law to all citizens without any regard to their caste, race, religion or gender' (*Political Theory Class XI* 2017, p. 9).

While the *Brahmanas* considered some people as being outside the system, they also developed a sharper social divide by classifying certain social categories as "untouchable" (*Themes in Indian History Class XII* 2017, p. 65)

Clearly, the NCF, and the NCERT promote a pluralistic Indian identity. The NCERT as an organisation has a clear vision with regard to the kind of messages it seeks to communicate to students, and NCERT textbooks effectively promote inclusivity, equality, and dignity for all. At the same time, though the NCERT recognises the importance and value of religion, yet, it is still able to have a very sensitive and carefully worded discussion on the need for secularism.

However, from the interviews conducted with students and teachers, implementation appears to be an area of concern for the NCERT. Often, students and teachers indicated that when it comes to classroom pedagogy and exam content, a student's in-class experience deviates significantly from the NCERT's intended in-class experience. While an NCERT textbook may place heavy weightage on certain concepts and question-types, the

final board exams may place heavy weightage on different concepts and question-types forcing teachers and students to prioritise their exam preparation.

At the same time, teachers were quoted mentioning that they find it difficult to teach the entire curriculum due to time constraints. Throughout the interviews conducted, a recurring sentiment was that there is a tremendous amount of content that teachers need to cover in a very short time which is compounded by the fact that students typically prioritise board and entrance exams over in-class content. This is a systemic problem which will require years of sustained effort to resolve.

Another recurring theme in the interviews conducted was that many of the influences for young students come from outside school—their home, social circle, seniors and friends. These sources frequently give shape to the manner in which a student perceives one's surroundings. Currently, the education system in India does not involve key community stakeholders as partners in the goals of the NCERT and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). It has been implied that such stakeholders—in particular, parents and other family members of the student, should be further involved in sharing responsibility for a student's holistic development.

Another significant insight from the interviews was that students in

our school systems are exposed to a culture which still does not fully allow debate, discussion and inquiry. This may be traced to cultural norms in some parts of our society where discussion and debate with seniors or respected elders could be seen as a sign of disrespect.

Finally, although there are several questions in many of the textbooks that provoke thought and discussion, there seems to be an absence of specific course(s) in senior secondary education which focuses primarily on developing critical thinking and analysis skills, allowing them to successfully navigate through the numerous sources of influence they may encounter on a daily basis, and formulate clear, coherent opinions of their own.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

***Maintain the current curriculum focus on promoting religious harmony, tolerance, and respect for the values of the institution***—This is strong in the current syllabus and should be continued.

***Make deliberate interventions to take these teachings beyond the classroom; engage parents, and the broader community in inculcating these values in children***—This can be done via workshops, seminars, and community outreach programmes. Although students are taught about various religions and

even celebrate different festivals, there is a lack of awareness about blocking the influence of divisive forces which disrupt social unity; a lack of parent and community involvement in discussing forces which disrupt social unity. The roots of communal harmony and mutual respect can be introduced through education at a young, impressionable age. However, it requires consistent enforcement from a child's immediate community—parents, friends, and seniors.

In the past, the CBSE has engaged psychologists to design, train and conduct workshops in schools for parents and students on a range of topics, such as puberty and peer pressure. It would be of benefit to students if similar community outreach programmes could be conducted—targeted at the parents and families of the young, primary school children. The objective of such programmes would be to discuss how younger generations can be protected from prejudiced depictions of other communities, and create awareness about safeguarding national unity from an early stage.

These workshops could be conducted by psychological experts capable of dealing with such sensitive matters to have the desired impact on the young minds. Some subject experts can also work along with the psychologists. Together, they can contextualise the content according to the diverse Indian mindset.

Through these workshops, we can educate about the common wisdom and universality of various religions, and also about how we can remain united despite our cultural differences. It would play a role in destroying false notions, existing stereotypes and blind perceptions—promoting social awareness, alertness, communal harmony and positive communal attitude within the family for the greater good of all communities.

***Strengthen training and monitoring framework to ensure consistent implementation across the 19,000+ NCERT/CBSE schools (CBSE):***

Although the NCERT textbooks are extremely forward-looking and address social issues directly, fairly and without hesitation, the ground realities for teachers and schools may make it extremely challenging to talk about sensitive topics such as the negatives of the caste system and communalism. Teachers in conservative or traditional regions of India may feel hesitant to address such social issues with the same degree of truthfulness as the textbooks do; instead, teachers may decide to quickly skip over such topics. Providing consistent training across the Board, especially for teachers in such settings so that they too can promote the nature of discussion that the NCERT textbooks

support, is an opportunity area that can be further explored.

***Introduce a subject at the senior secondary level which promotes deep critical thinking to enable our students' ability to take their critical thinking skills to the next level***

— Along with integrating critical thinking into every subject being taught, a special subject similar to essay, presentation and discussion-based 'Theory of Knowledge' course from the International Baccalaureate can be introduced. This would focus primarily on developing high-level critical thinking skills. In many ways, the concept of centering education around critical thinking, debate, and inquiry as key tools of learning is not alien to the Indian culture. Our ancient schools of Takshila and Nalanda are prime examples of this. In Theory of Knowledge (TOK), students are required to 'consider the role and nature of knowledge in their own culture, in the cultures of others, and the wider world'. Knowledge systems are broken down into 'areas of knowledge'—specific branches of knowledge such as human sciences, history, ethics, etc., and 'ways of knowing'—the methods in which we obtain knowledge, such as reason, language, intuition, etc. (IB Organisation). Students in TOK classes are asked questions as follows.

- How important is it to be consistent in our moral reasoning?
  - To what extent does religion shape moral beliefs?
  - In what situation may one way of knowing be more appropriate than another?
  - To what extent does emotion play a role in historical interpretation?
- Developing the high-level critical thinking required to tackle such intricate and challenging questions is of paramount importance to India's democracy. Only with such a strong skill set would an individual be capable of examining issues and evaluating another person's claims before formulating their own balanced opinion. This is yet another crucial component in building a society prepared to embrace social harmony, and defend itself from divisive forces.

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# Strengthening School Education through Block Resource Centres and Cluster Resource Centres

## An Assessment

POOJA SINGH\* AND TINTU KURIAN\*\*

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### Abstract

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*Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a centrally sponsored programme of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India for ensuring quality education in schools. It has widened the scope of school reform efforts by ensuring improved participation from parents and the community. It also envisages bridging of gender and social gaps. Since ensuring quality was the main target under SSA, many interventions were made so as to make the school system more effective. One among these interventions was the establishment of Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) and Block Resource Centres (BRCs). These academic support structures were visualised as the structures for ensuring quality in schools by providing necessary academic inputs and coordinating community mobilisation activities on a regular basis. This paper discusses the role, objectives and status of BRCs and CRCs across various States and UTs in the country. The paper also tries to explore how useful are BRCs and CRCs in delivering their academic inputs for the betterment of elementary education in India. The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) with the support of the MHRD has launched a programme for the implementation of Quality Monitoring Tools (QMTs) across various States and UTs in the country. Responses received from various States and UTs have been used as secondary data for the study.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The Block Resource Centres and Cluster Resource Centres were visualised as a series of resource support institutions from the school to the state level and vice versa, which provide necessary inputs both on academic and administrative grounds. Among the various interventions under the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)* for quality enhancement, setting up of sub-district academic support institutions bears significance. This is because it involves mutual learning from each other's experiences and expertise on a continuous basis, thereby bringing qualitative improvement of schools in its own locale. The need and importance of quality education has been emphasised from time to time in the country.

Providing universal elementary education of comparable quality to all children in the age group of 6–14 years without any discrimination on the lines of caste, creed, location and sex

– National Policy on Education (1986)

With a view to managing the quality of elementary education under SSA, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) through the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), put in place a massive programme of monitoring quality dimensions of elementary education throughout the country during 2005–2006. Quality Monitoring Tools (QMTs) consisting of a set of seven formats were developed and have been rolled

out in the entire country. Various States and UTs are in different stages of implementing these tools. Different aspects of quality dimensions covered in these formats are children's attendance, community support and participation, teacher and teacher preparation, curriculum and teaching learning material, classroom process and learners' assessment, monitoring and supervision (NCERT 2005). The process of flow of information and provision of feedback through the implementation of QMTs is two-way. Information collected at the lower level (for example, at school) flows to the next higher level (cluster) where it is consolidated and analysed to provide necessary feedback and take measures for improvement at the lower level (school). This is a process-based monitoring in which the purpose is not to document or pile up the data but to use it for improving the educational processes.

The paper is based on the responses received through Quality Monitoring Tools from 28 States and Union Territories (UTs). These include Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Daman and Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Goa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Odisha, Punjab, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telengana, Tripura, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.

An attempt has been made to explore how helpful the Block Resource Centres and Cluster Resource Centres are in fulfilling their assigned duties and responsibilities towards the betterment of academic standards in primary and upper primary schools. The paper is expected to provide insights into the various stakeholders involved in elementary education on how these centres are functioning and what further may be supplemented in enhancing their capacity for delivering the services expected from them effectively.

### **BACKGROUND OF ESTABLISHMENT OF BRCs AND CRCs**

BRCs and CRCs were originally established under the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) which was launched in a phased manner in selected districts of the country, and later extended during the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)*. They were conceptualised to substitute the existing system of school inspection for providing resource support, teachers' training and supervision. These centres explicitly work in association with other state level educational bodies so as to improvise the quality of education at the elementary level.

There are various factors like the infrastructural facilities, syllabi and curriculum, teaching-learning materials, effective monitoring and evaluation system which play a major role in shaping the quality of education. However, the crucial impact factor is the teacher and the

ability with which way they handle the classroom processes. In recognition of this and of the present challenging conditions that impact teachers' effectiveness, attention needs to be laid on how to improve the overall teacher development scenario along with offering quality training, tools, resources and infrastructure. It is in this context that the role of BRCs and CRCs find utmost importance.

### **POSITION OF BRCs AND CRCs IN STATES AND UTs**

The sub district academic support institutions play an integral role in school improvement by facilitating necessary professional services for teachers and associated functionaries. They play an integral role in teacher training and other academic inputs. Table 1 reveals the status of CRCs and BRCs in various States and UTs across the country. As per the norms of persons to manage the CRC/BRC in SSA, on an average, one CRC Coordinator may be placed in charge of 18 schools in a block and one BRC for 10–15 CRCs. Table 1 reveals that out of the total twenty eight States and UTs, CRCs of only 45 percent States and UTs were fully occupied. Likewise, for BRCs it is revealed that only half of the BRCs are in position. Efforts are needed for filling up the remaining posts so that they can provide regular academic and administrative support at the grass root level.



**Table 1**  
**Position of CRCs and BRCs (State response towards Quality Monitoring Tools)**

S. No.	Name of States/UTs	CRCs			BRCs		
		Sanctioned Posts	In Position	Average Vacancy in %	Sanctioned Posts	In Position	Average Vacancy in %
1.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	18	18	00	92	83	10
2.	Andhra Pradesh	3,714	3,714	00	666	666	00
3.	Bihar	INP*	INP*	INP*	INP*	INP*	INP*
4.	Chandigarh	20	20	00	NA	NA	NA
5.	Chhattisgarh	2,703	2,682	1	150	150	00
6.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	22	11	50	18	13	28
7.	Daman & Diu	07	00	100	02	00	100
8.	Delhi	136	64	53	11	08	27
9.	Goa	110	105	5	12	12	0
10.	Gujarat	4,268	3,458	19	239	224	06
11.	Himachal Pradesh	2,102	2,087	01	248	248	00
12.	Karnataka	4,103	3,728	9	204	185	9
13.	Kerala	1,385	1,385	00	159	159	00
14.	Madhya Pradesh	6,198	INP	INP	322	322	00
15.	Maharashtra	6,170	00	100	2,105	2,031	4
16.	Manipur	225	225	00	35	35	00
17.	Meghalaya	611	611	00	234	234	0
18.	Nagaland	134	125	7	52	46	12
19.	Odisha	INP*	INP*	INP*	INP*	INP*	INP*
20.	Puducherry	34	22	35	40	21	48

21.	Punjab	1,499	1,499	00	852	852	00
22.	Rajasthan	INP*	INP*	INP*	INP*	INP*	INP*
23.	Sikkim	111	111	00	29	29	00
24.	Tamil Nadu	4,088	3,688	10	402	402	00
25.	Telangana	1,766	1,766	00	467	467	00
26.	Tripura	332	332	00	41	41	00
27.	Uttarakhand	994	509	49	285	117	59
28.	Uttar Pradesh	8,249	8,249	00	880	880	00

\*INP – Information Not Provided

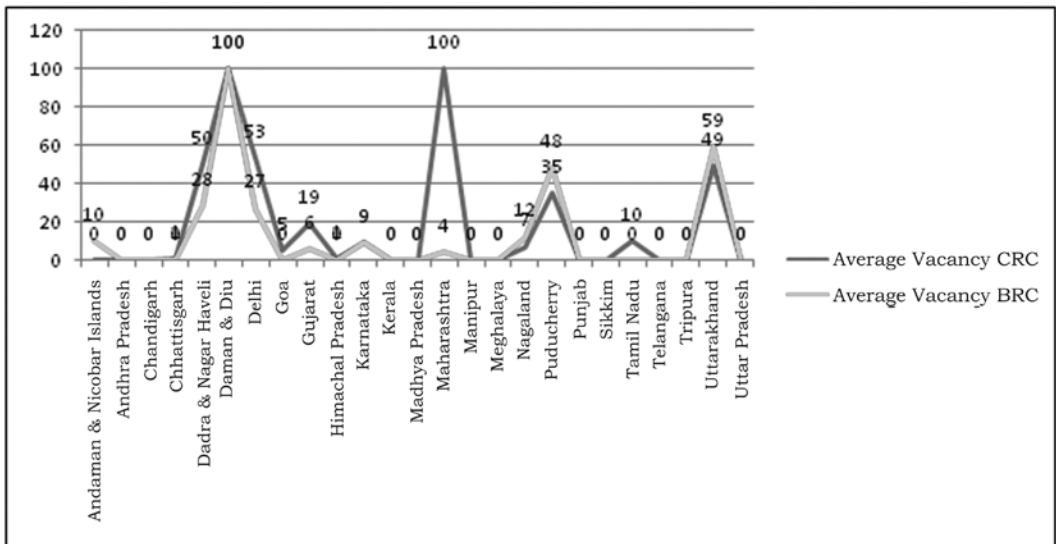


Figure 1. Average Vacancies in CRCs and BRCs

The average vacancies in CRCs and BRCs is represented in the graph below.

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF BRCs AND CRCs**

The BRCs and CRCs perform a combination of academic and

administrative activities. The extent of contact made by the BRC and CRC coordinators with the teachers, students, community, etc., gives a measure of the functioning of BRCs and CRCs. The frequency of visits made by the functionaries to schools and meetings held with the Village

Education Committee (VEC) give some indication of not only the level of academic inputs provided, but also the usefulness of the monitoring and supervision activities.

### **School Visit and Classroom Observation**

Besides normal classroom observation, the duties of BRC and CRC coordinators include regular monitoring and assistance,

supporting teachers, observing their performance, assessing their needs both in formal schools and alternative education centres, and mobilising community support for enriching school education. Monthly meetings held at the cluster level by the CRC Coordinators address these needs through mutual exchange of ideas. In this regard, the average number of visits made by BRC coordinators presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**School Visits made by BRCCs**

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>States and UTs</b>	<b>Total Number of BRCCs in the State/UT</b>	<b>Number of BRCCs who Prepared a Schedule for Visit of Schools</b>	<b>Number of Times Each School was Visited by BRCCs on an Average</b>
1.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	09	9	02-03
2.	Andhra Pradesh	1,137	785	2
3.	Bihar	INP	INP	INP
4.	Chandigarh	Nil	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
5.	Chhattisgarh	150	150	01
6.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	01	01	01
7.	Daman & Diu	02	01	01
8.	Delhi	08	08	01
9.	Goa	12	12	03
10.	Gujarat	239	224	Data Inconsistent
11.	Himachal Pradesh	248	207	01
12.	Karnataka	204	Data Inconsistent	Data Inconsistent
13.	Kerala	159	Data Inconsistent	04
14.	Madhya Pradesh	322	109	31 times
15.	Maharashtra	355	Data Inconsistent	3

16.	Manipur	210	210	Once in a month
17.	Meghalaya	39	16	8
18.	Nagaland	46	46	4
19.	Odisha	316	316	Once in three months
20.	Puducherry	06	3	5
21.	Punjab	22	22	2
22.	Rajasthan	INP	INP	INP
23.	Sikkim	29	29	05
24.	Tamil Nadu	413	413	2
25.	Telangana	467	368	2
26.	Tripura	41	41	01
27.	Uttarakhand	95	89	24
28.	Uttar Pradesh	880	315	02

The school and classroom visits made by the BRCCs are very important for providing on-site academic support to teachers. It is observed from the table that all the BRCCs in States and UTs like Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Chhattisgarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Delhi, Goa, Manipur, Nagaland, Odisha, Punjab, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu and Tripura are preparing their schedule for a school visit. However, in States and UTs like Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Puducherry, Uttar Pradesh, only less than half of the existing BRCCs are making their school visits. Also,

the average number of visits made by BRCCs to schools was less than five in majority of the States and UTs. As BRCCs are the key persons for helping teachers in improving classroom transaction and thereby the quality of education, their sincere involvement in the process becomes imperative. As Chandigarh does not have any block, so this item is not applicable for the UT.

With regard to school visits, it is noted from Table 3, that CRCCs in most of the States and UTs make a school visit either monthly or bi-monthly.

**Table 3**  
**School Visits made by CRCC**

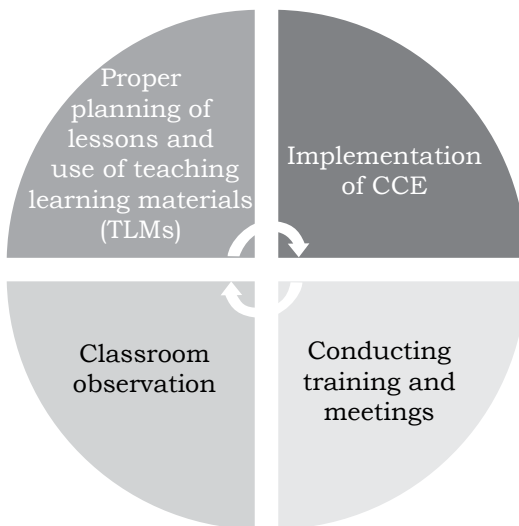
S. No.	States and UTs	Total Number of CRCCs in the State/UT	Number of Times Each School was Visited by CRCCs		
			Once in a month	Once in two Months	Once in Three Months
1.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	37	20	17	00

2.	Andhra Pradesh	6,973	3,934	2,379	660
3.	Bihar	INP*	INP*	INP*	INP*
4.	Chandigarh	20	20	00	00
5.	Chhattisgarh	2,703	2,703	00	00
6.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	11	11	00	00
7.	Daman & Diu	07	07	00	00
8.	Delhi	64	64	00	00
9.	Goa	110	110	00	00
10.	Gujarat	4,268	4,268	00	00
11.	Himachal Pradesh	2,002	389	640	973
12.	Karnataka	4,103	3,249	854	00
13.	Kerala	1,385	1,371	14	00
14.	Madhya Pradesh	6,198	3,685	2,072	441
15.	Maharashtra	6,170	1,200	1,703	3,267
16.	Manipur	225	225	00	00
17.	Meghalaya	611	466	114	31
18.	Nagaland	125	125	00	00
19.	Odisha	4,806	2,037	1,300	1,469
20.	Puducherry	34	34	00	00
21.	Punjab	1,499	1,499	00	00
22.	Rajasthan	INP*	INP*	INP*	INP*
23.	Sikkim	111	11	33	67
24.	Tamil Nadu	4,088	3,901	112	75
25.	Telangana	1,766	1,340	302	124
26.	Tripura	332	332	00	00
27.	Uttarakhand	994	847	108	39
28.	Uttar Pradesh	8,249	8,249	00	00

Frequent visits made by the CRC Coordinators to schools for monitoring teachers' performance and providing on-site support is crucial for enabling teachers to identify the gap areas with subsequent solution of problems.

### **Providing Professional and Academic Support**

Being functional for so many years, the responsibilities of the BRCs and CRCs bear significance for achieving those desired outcomes for which these academic structures were conceived. Providing academic support to schools is one among the major tasks of BRCs and CRCs. The major activities involving BRCs and CRCs as pointed out by the different BRCCs and CRCCs of the sample States and UTs are consolidated below.



*Figure 2. Academic Support to Schools by BRCs and CRCs*

### **Miscellaneous Functions Performed by BRCCs and CRCCs**

Apart from the major academic duties mentioned above, BRCCs and CRCCs also perform various other functions like monitoring of children's attendance, encouraging School Management Committee (SMC) members' participation in school improvement, organising medical camps for Children with Special Needs (CWSN), maximising the use of ICT facility in classroom, monitoring of funds provided under the SSA, activity-based learning, regular survey of the area to identify out-of-school children, distribution of resource material (books and other stationeries) to schools, monitoring civil works, streamlining admission process for ensuring admissions to disadvantaged groups, smooth conduct of Mid-day Meal (MDM) activities, etc.

### **FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

It is found that of the sample twenty eight States and UTs, CRCs of only 45 percent States and UTs had Cluster Resource Centre Coordinators. Likewise, it is revealed that only half of the BRCCs were in position. It is observed that all the BRCCs in States and UTs like Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Chhattisgarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Delhi, Goa, Manipur, Nagaland, Odisha, Punjab, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu and Tripura were preparing their schedule for school visit. However, in States and UTs like Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya,

Puducherry, Uttar Pradesh, only less than half of the existing BRCCs are making their school visits. Also, in majority of the States and UTs, the average number of visits made by BRCCs to schools was less than five. With regard to the school visits, it is noted that CRCCs in most of the States and UTs make a school visit either monthly or bimonthly.

The major activities involving BRCs and CRCs as pointed out by the different BRCCs and CRCCs of the sampled States and UTs are proper planning of lessons and use of Teaching Learning Materials (TLMs), implementation of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE), classroom observation, conducting trainings and meetings. Apart from these major duties, BRCCs and

CRCCs are also involved in several miscellaneous activities.

### CONCLUSION

The focus of this paper was on reviewing the existing working pattern of Block Resource Centres and Cluster Resource Centres in the sample States and UTs. A look at the different components covered reveals that BRCCs and CRCCs are not fully in position except in three States and UTs. This vacancy needs to be filled up for proper execution of the assigned roles. As far as schools and classroom observation is concerned, it is found that most of the BRCCs and CRCCs are making prior planning for school visit. However, the frequency of such visits should be increased so that they may extend academic support at different levels and bring about qualitative improvement.

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# **Delineating the Challenges and Remedies of the School Management Committees as Constituted under RTE Act 2009**

VIKRAM KUMAR\*

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## **Abstract**

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*The present article brings forth the challenges and suggestions in the context of functioning of the School Management Committee (SMC) in the schools of the Directorate of Education, Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) as constituted under the Right to Education Act (RTE), 2009. Broadly speaking, the RTE Act has recommended the major functions to be performed by the SMC in schools which include monitoring the school functioning, preparing and recommending the 'School Development Plan (SDP)', and monitoring the utilisation of grants. Although, the RTE Act, 2009 has enlisted the responsibilities of the SMC in the functioning of schools, it did not elaborate on aspects such as monitoring, ensuring, bringing to notice, etc. Hence, numerous challenges were encountered by the SMC members in schools like lack of awareness regarding the roles and responsibilities, lack of participation of the parent members in SMC, lack of clarity about funds and finances for SMC, etc. However, over the past few years, the Delhi government has initiated several reforms in the area of the school management committee to facilitate the functioning of SMCs in the schools of DoE, GNCTD. The Delhi government has worked extensively to strengthen the functioning of SMCs through many new initiatives like organising 'Capacity Building Programmes', 'Reading Mela', 'Mega PTMs', 'SMC Sabha', 'SMC App', 'Mission Buniyad', etc., to involve all stakeholders in the education of children. The present article*

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*delineates the challenges and remedies to improve the functioning of SMCs in the government schools of Delhi. The discussion is even more significant, with a need to address the challenges in SMCs to empower the functioning of SMCs as conceptualised by the RTE Act, 2009.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

An influential and perfect system of education comes through the learners' capability, transformation of their interests, attitudes and values. This is more likely to be achievable through sound educational management. The transformation in education is possible through appropriate decision making and by building up a decentralised system of education to mobilise community participation in the education of children. Governments across the globe are coming up with a range of strategies targeted at improving the financing and delivery of education services of enhanced quality and increasing enrolment in schools. Many studies conducted show that the involvement of parents in children's education is directly linked to the learning outcomes of students and as a whole, to the development of the school (Bazik 2005; Blok, Peetsma and Roede 2007; Kumar 2011; Hara, Steven and Burke 1998). Thus, the partnership between schools and homes need to be prioritised.

One such strategy is moving towards a decentralised system of education promoting increased parental and community involvement in schools through the formation of School Management Committees

as mandated by the RTE Act, 2009. The School Management Committee identifies the out-of-school children and enrolls these children in schools. It also ensures education of children with special needs and those belonging to the disadvantaged communities (Josephine 2005; Blok, Peetsma and Roede 2007).

Further, it makes sure that the school teaching-learning process remains child-centred. Moreover, the SMC monitors the school infrastructural facilities and ensures proper maintenance of the school building. The SMC bears accountability in implementing the plans of the government towards quality education, and also monitoring the overall working of schools and fund utilisation. With the formation of the SMC under the RTE Act, 2009, teachers, parents, students and educationists have started participating in the school activities for its upliftment. The members of the SMC hold the responsibility to constructively plan holistic learning and creating ideal environments for students. Hence, SMC members also possess relevant management skills to enable them to perform the role of a member effectively.

The main aim of the SMC is to focus upon the school, its quality and

students. Therefore, as prescribed under Section 21 of the RTE Act, 2009, 75 per cent of the members should be parents. In addition to the above, one-third of the remaining 25 per cent should be elected members of local authorities, one-third should be teachers and one-third should be educationists. In case of unavailability of educationists, students can replace them. Moreover, about 50 per cent of the members should comprise women, hence empowering women to get involved in their child's education.

It is not only the teaching-learning process and physical infrastructure that makes the management effective, but also the overall school environment, school ethos, the quality of participation of the students, parents, community, the local resources available, etc. (Govinda and Bandyopadhyay 2010; Kumar 2009; Waseem 2009). Hence, the community may take initiatives for the welfare of the schools by improving its facilities and school effectiveness.

This paper aims at identifying the challenges faced by SMCs in schools and also to propose the possible remedies to overcome these

challenges. The reconstitution of SMCs as per the specified norms under the RTE Act, 2009 is not an easy task. A number of problems have emerged from time to time. There were some instances where norms were not followed. For example, persons who were not eligible, attempted to become the president of SMC or the process of election was unfair and not transparent; lack of participation of all parents, etc. (Kumar 2011; Kumar 2013).

This research paper is part of a PhD thesis done on 'School Management Committee: A Study of Delhi Schools' in which the data has been collected from 20 government schools of Delhi. A parent, a head teacher, the local authority, a social worker and a teacher from each SMC were selected through random sampling technique. Hence, a total of 100 SMC members were selected as respondents. The tools comprised semi-structured interview schedule and observation schedule for gathering data along with field notes and government circulars related to SMC which were also used for data interpretation.

**Table 1**  
**Major Challenges Faced by SMC Members with Regard to its Functioning in Schools**

Functions of SMCs	Challenges
Monitoring the working of school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to lack of awareness among the SMC members regarding school activities, they could not contribute much in this process</li> </ul>

Preparation of the School Development Plan (SDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The SMC members had no clarity on the preparation and usage of the SDP.</li> </ul>
Monitor the utilisation of grants received from the appropriate government or local authority or any other source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No separate funds have been earmarked for SMCs. However, the grants under <i>Vidyalaya Kalyan Samiti (VKS)</i>/ Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE)/Parent Teacher Association (PTA) are being utilised by the SMCs to meet the expenditure incurred in respect of its functioning.</li> </ul>
Communicate in simple and creative ways to the population in the neighbourhood of the school, the right of children as enunciated in the Act, as also the duties of the government, local authority, school, parents and guardians.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMC members are not aware about the expected roles.</li> <li>No provision for funds to support such awareness programmes.</li> <li>Lack of education among parent members, who fail to understand the very purpose of organising such programmes.</li> <li>Largely, the parents belong to the daily wagers' category who hardly have any time to devote to such school activities.</li> </ul>
Hold regular meetings with parents and guardians and apprise them about the regularity in attendance, ability to learn the progress made in learning and any other relevant information about the child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is pertinent to mention that the schools do not have a provision for organising general body meetings with the SMC members.</li> <li>Only during PTMs, the issues related to a child are discussed which include areas like academics, performance of child, health and hygiene, attendance, results</li> </ul>
Monitor that the teachers are not burdened with non academic duties other than those specified in section 27 of the RTE Act.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is acute shortage of human resource in the school system; hence, the teachers are overburdened with non-academic work.</li> <li>Some of the SMC members reported that due to urgent information sought by the education department, most of the times, teachers are absent from the classes, which makes the student suffer.</li> <li>The qualified SMC members tried to volunteer to support the teachers in their non-academic work. However, the teachers denied their help on account of accountability and accuracy required in undertaking a task.</li> </ul>

<p>Ensure enrolment and continued attendance of all the children from the neighbourhood in the school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The problem of student absenteeism was resolved to a great extent by the interventions made by SMC members, by constant interaction with students and parents, home visits, etc.</li> <li>• However, the SMC members reported that the Government schools also cater to the children belonging to the migrant families. These families are away from the city for longer duration. Hence, the children are at greater loss as they are not able to attend the school regularly and perform poorly in their academics.</li> </ul>
<p>Bring to the notice of the government or local authority, as the case may be, any deviation from the rights of the child, in particular mental and physical harassment of children, denial of admission and timely provision of free entitlements as per section 3(2) of RTE Act, 2009.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SMC members reported that the cases related to child harassment, denial of admission and late arrival of free entitlements are resolved at the school's level by the Head of School (HoS) and hence, such cases were never reported to the higher authorities.</li> <li>• Majority of SMC members reported that the students were often denied admissions due to issues like missing or incomplete documents, etc.</li> <li>• For instance, most of the schools insist on submitting Aadhar card of students and parents. This is demanded due to the fact that students get enrolled in multiple schools. Hence, this step was taken by schools to curb duplicity. However, the parents who did not have Aadhar cards faced difficulties in getting their child enrolled in the school.</li> <li>• Another document required in support of admission is birth proof of the child, whereas, cases were reported wherein the parents did not possess the said document. Although the schools have a provision for accepting affidavits in this concern, but the parents belonging to the lower socio-economic strata could not bear even the expenses of the affidavits.</li> <li>• Given the lack of financial provisions for meeting such petty expenses in support of a child's education, any powers given to SMC become meaningless.</li> </ul>

<p>Identify the needs and monitor the implementation of the provisions of Section 4 of the Act which states— ‘where a child above six years of age has been admitted in any school or though admitted could not complete his or her elementary education, then, he or she shall be admitted in a class appropriate to his or her age’.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although the children were given age appropriate admissions under the said circumstances, but, their learning gaps were never addressed which ultimately created a pool of students who qualified Class VIII without any barriers but failed miserably in Class IX.</li> <li>• The RTE Act has mandated the creation of Special Training Centres for such children to bring them into the mainstream with other children. However, the SMC members are not well aware of such provisions due to lack of guidelines/awareness programmes to support the functioning of SMCs.</li> </ul>
<p>Monitor the identification of facilities for admission of children with disabilities and ensure their participation in, and completion of elementary education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a dire need for appointing special educators in each government school to identify Children with Special Needs (CWSN) and to facilitate SMC in ensuring the admission and completion of elementary education of such children in schools.</li> <li>• There are no such special provisions to support education of CWSN like availability of wheel chairs, recreational activities, etc. However, the SMC member reported that one of the MLA representatives had donated a wheelchair for ill students.</li> </ul>
<p>Monitor the implementation of Mid-day Meal in schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although the SMC members checked the food quality and proper distribution of Mid Day meals regularly, but they did not ensure whether the food provided sufficient nutrients to the child to ensure their proper growth and development.</li> </ul>

In view of all the stakeholders (SMC members), the overall intricacy of SMC is considered to be the main weakness of the model. The school heads complained about the lack of cooperation among parent members and their irregularity in attending meetings, parents not being aware of school operations, teachers being

overburdened with non-academic work, etc. Hence, it is quite evident that the overall functioning of SMCs is not going well. Even though the training programmes are being organised at a massive scale for the SMC members by the State Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi. The members feel not

much is being done specifically for the parent members to build their capacity with respect to the technical and professional know-how of the school functioning.

Furthermore, the RTE Act recommends providing a six-day training to SMC members in which three days of the training should be in residential mode. However, there is no evidence regarding the implementation of the aforesaid provision with respect to SMC trainings. The funds allotted by the government are not being utilised in the areas where they need to be used. Under such conditions prevailing at the school level, the stakeholders remark that resources are insufficient to allow schools to exercise flexibility or introduce school level initiatives that can meet the local needs.

Hence, in the above circumstances, the following remedies may prove useful to resolve the issues hindering the functioning of SMCs in the schools.

- All members of the committee should be provided adequate training regarding their expected roles and functions to build awareness.
- The SDP can be developed by assessing the current situation (financial, social or economic in nature) and looking out for solutions which best fit the ground realities.
- As per the government's circular, the format of SDP was uploaded on the website of the department which is to be filled by the Head of School with the involvement of SMC.
- It is a good way to spread awareness regarding the rights of children and delineate the roles and responsibilities of parents, local authorities and SMC members towards a child's education.
- A major emphasis of the training programmes should be on the preparation of a School Development Plan (SDP) with actionable goals which can act as a blueprint to support the activities of the SMC members.
- Adequate funds should be allotted for such training.
- Clarity with respect to fund utilisation for varied activities for school development
- All the selected companies' tender lists should be displayed on the notice board with a prominent reason and a copy of each tender should be submitted to the education department of the state government.
- Minutes of the SMC meetings should be widely circulated among community members to gather larger support for enhancing school performance.
- A copy of the minutes should be displayed on the schools' notice board for the information of all concerned the activities undertaken by the SMC should be displayed on the notice board for

motivating the passive members of the committee.

- Mobilisation is the most important aspect of the committee.
- The unspent funds should be made available to the committee for organising innovative activities in the school.
- There should be greater transparency and accountability in the functioning of SMC.
- As most of the students in government schools belong to the marginalised groups whose parents are daily wagers, the participation of such parents may be ensured by giving away some basic allowances (like allowances for travel, food, refreshments, etc.) to support the activities related to SMC.

### **CONCLUSION**

As per the RTE Act, 2009, the SMC mostly consists of parents, and they are responsible for planning and managing the school operations. The newly constituted School Management Committees are facing issues of comprehensive participation, low enrolment, clarity in the expenditure of the allotted money, teachers as well as students' absenteeism and lack of

quality interventions in schools. The challenges mentioned above have badly affected the management of SMC; therefore, some considerate suggestions have been given such as spreading awareness by displaying the activities carried out by the SMC on the notice boards, clarity with respect to fund utilisation, rewards, allowance and accountability of members as well as school authorities. The remedies outlined above are important to strengthen the overall functioning of the SMC members in schools.

Though the government is making constant efforts to support the effective functioning of the SMCs in schools, it can further be enhanced by incorporating the aforesaid remedies which will help in increasing awareness and removing confusion arising with respect to the terms that are used in the RTE Act, 2009 like monitor, ensure and bring to the notice for SMC. The suggested remedies focus on general problems obstructing the development of the school, so as to help improve the school's functioning by bridging the gap between actualities and the provisions enlisted in the RTE Act, 2009.

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# Problems Faced by the SMDC in Improvement of the Quality of Secondary Education System

DIPAK BHATTACHARYA\* AND GOWRAMMA I.P.\*\*

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## Abstract

*Secondary education is that stage of education which helps students to become full members of a complex modern society. It develops individual's abilities, aptitudes, interests and qualities of character to the highest potential. The objective of the present study was to find out the issues and problems faced by the School Management and Development Committee (SMDC) in improving the quality of secondary school education system. The study was conducted on 100 SMDC members of 20 secondary schools of the sub-division of Contai (from the Purba Medinipur district of West Bengal) by using the descriptive survey method. A self-developed questionnaire for head-teachers and teachers, and interview schedule for parents were used for collection of data. Then the data were analysed by using frequency and percentage. The findings of the study show that majority of the SMDC members have opined that ineffective schooling environment and teachers' role do not inspire dropout students to get back to schools. Close to fifty per cent of the participants viewed the lack of infrastructural facility in secondary schools as the major barrier faced by them in establishing quality education. The present study suggested that the higher authorities and local bodies should take necessary steps to remove different barriers faced by the SMDC members in improving the quality of secondary school education system.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Secondary education serves as a link between elementary and higher education in the Indian education setup. It is only through secondary education that an individual becomes capable of understanding the complexity of politics and political processes and prepares to contribute to the economic and social progress of the country (Aggarwal 2003). The Report of the Education Commission (1964–66) suggested ‘secondary education for four to five years prior to university education. The four years of secondary education are divided into two cycles—secondary corresponding to Classes IX, X and higher secondary comprising Classes XI and XII. It is clear that such usage of the term in terms of specific age range is essentially administrative’.

## CURRENT STATUS OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN INDIA AND WEST BENGAL

According to Flash Statistics (2015–16), there are about 2,39,148 secondary schools compared to 1,12,637 higher secondary schools in India. Among the total secondary schools in India, 42.26 per cent are government, 16.58 per cent are government-aided and 41.16 per cent are private. In India, the total enrolment status for secondary education is 3,91,45,052. The total number of teachers at the secondary level are 14,48,632. In India, the total Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is 80.01 per cent (girls—80.97

per cent and boys—79.16 per cent). In India, the Gender Parity Index (GPI) in enrolment at the secondary level is 1.02. 90.62 per cent students are getting promoted from Class VIII to IX, that is from the elementary to the secondary level. In India, out of those who appeared for the Class X examination, the percentage of students who passed is 79.21. The percentage of secondary schools with a drinking water facility is 98.89 and 96.53 per cent secondary schools have a toilet facility for girls.

According to Flash Statistics (2015–16), there are about 10,182 secondary schools compared to 6,898 higher secondary schools in West Bengal. Of the total secondary schools in West Bengal, 85.99 per cent are government, 0.71 per cent are government-aided and 13.3 per cent are private. In West Bengal, the total enrolment status for secondary education is 27,59,187. The total number of teachers at the secondary level is 69,952. In West Bengal, the total Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is 83.56 per cent (girls—92.65 per cent and boys—74.92 per cent). In West Bengal, the Gender Parity Index (GPI) in enrolment at the secondary level is 1.23. In West Bengal, 92.02 per cent students are transiting from Classes VIII to IX from elementary to the secondary level. In West Bengal, the percentage of students who passed Class X examination out of those appeared is 81.66. In West Bengal, 99.61 per cent secondary schools

have drinking water facility and 99.76 per cent secondary schools have a toilet facility for girls.

### **BACKGROUND OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

According to the Right to Education Act, 2009, Section 21 mentions, that every elementary school will have to construct School Management Committee (SMC) so that effective monitoring mechanism can be established at the grassroot level (Rao 2011). But, SMC is mainly concentrated on the development of elementary education. To establish access, quality and equity in secondary education, there must be a supervisory committee in every secondary school. After launching the *Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)* in 2009, the framework suggested that every secondary school must constitute a School Management Development Committee (SMDC) for effective monitoring and community participation. SMDC can help in effective planning, monitoring, evaluation and ownership of the government programmes and implementation of interventions by the community in the secondary schools (RMSA Framework Guidelines for Community Mobilisation and SMDCs 2009).

SMDC members have a significant role in the improvement of secondary school education system. There are some major responsibilities

given to the SMDC members in the improvement of secondary school system (RMSA Framework Guidelines for Community Mobilisation and SMDCs 2009). Some of them are: (i) A school management and development committee shall be constituted in every secondary school. (ii) The SMDC shall meet at least once a month, and the minutes and decisions of the meetings shall be properly recorded and made available to the public. (iii) The SMDC will be responsible for all the activities including planning, collection of data, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and taking corrective remedial actions on all the components and interventions of the scheme—infrastructural as well as academic and others at the school level. (iv) The SMDC shall prepare a school level Perspective Plan and Annual Plan. (v) The SMDC, through various stakeholders should undertake extensive community mobilisation to overcome barriers for children belonging to the SC, ST, OBC and educationally backward minorities at the secondary and higher secondary stage. (vi) The SMDC can conduct civil works including repair and maintenance for the improvement of school facilities in accordance with the laid down rules and procedures. (vii) The SMDC can certify the maintenance and repair work undertaken in a school for which technical provisions need to be followed. The community's right to know the cost parameters has to be fully respected. (viii) The SMDC

will maintain all the relevant records for recurring as well as non-recurring expenditure. These records will be updated on a regular basis and placed before the Committee in every meeting. The records and progress on each component and intervention of the scheme will also be placed in the meetings of the Panchayat or urban local bodies. (ix) The SMDCs will inspect the work sites and take stock of the progress of recurring and non-recurring expenditure under various components of the scheme, of consumables, availability of required facilities and textbooks, status of education including teachers' attendance, students' attendance, conduct of teachers and students, quality aspects, law and order situation in and around the school premises, health condition and immunisation of students, equity aspects like problems encountered by girls, SCs/STs, children belonging to Below Poverty Line (BPL) families and educationally backward minorities.

### **RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

It is evident that the SMDC members have a vital role in the improvement of quality of the secondary education system. All the SMDC members should be involved in different school activities and programmes for the implementation of a modern, advanced and effective education at the secondary level. Thus, it is the responsibility of every SMDC member to establish quality education at the secondary level. Some of the studies

relating to the problems and barriers for effective functioning towards bringing quality in secondary education are discussed in the following paragraph.

Mahiwal and Kumar (2017) in their study revealed that the major difficulties considered by teachers in SMDC were the 'shortage of funds in schools to fulfill the needs of the school', 'non-availability of guidelines regarding utilisation of school grants', 'lack of serious efforts from the Central and State Government for out of school children and drop outs' and 'no proper monitoring of in-service teacher training programmes'. Doley (2015) found that in most of the secondary schools, there was no provision of regular interaction with parents of the students; no local NGOs, social workers, experienced and skilled persons were invited to discuss the issues related to the school's progress and development. Muthoni (2015) found that the lack of funds both at the secondary school and government levels to initiate projects at schools, in addition to high poverty levels within the community make majority of the parents and community members not wanting to be involved in school management. Roul (2015) found that the total level of work motivation among secondary school teachers was moderate. Teachers were intrinsically motivated to work. Emenalo and Comillus (2013) found that the community members were not monitoring to ensure proper utilisation of funds

made available to the secondary schools. Okenwa (2013) found that the extent of community participation in the provision of the school plant in public secondary schools in Enugu state was low. Due to non-participation of community members in the functioning of the school, most of the buildings of public secondary schools are dilapidated and sagging. Ahmad and Said (2013) found that the principals of secondary schools had a very narrow understanding about the concept of parental participation in secondary education. They did not consider parents as stakeholders in the process of secondary education. Majority of principals did not know that parental participation could enhance students' academic achievements. Mupindu (2012) found that SMDC members were not aware about their roles and responsibilities. Further they did not have sufficient power to make decisions in the secondary schools. Gorret (2010) found that the lack of parental involvement in school management had been due to the parents' incapacity to play an active role in the school management. The involvement of parents in financial management was rated very low.

From the above discussion, it is clear that many researchers agreed that the lack of involvement of the community members is the major constraint in the improvement of the quality of secondary education. They also believed that poor infrastructural condition, lack of funds are the

major problems faced by the SMDC members in the improvement of the quality of secondary education. These agreements of the above discussed studies had motivated the researchers to study about the 'Problems Faced by the SMDC in the Improvement of the Quality of Secondary School Education System'. In this background, the investigators have raised the following research question for investigation—what are the issues and problems faced by the SMDC members in improvement of the quality of secondary school education system?

#### **METHODOLOGY**

The present study was a descriptive survey research. It was designed to collect appropriate information about the problems faced by the SMDC members in the improvement of the quality of secondary school education system. It was conducted in 20 secondary schools, and 100 SMDC members of the sub-division of Contai of Purba Medinipur district of West Bengal participated in this study. Out of the whole population (142 secondary schools), 20 secondary schools were selected as sample through simple random sampling technique. One head-teacher, two teachers and two parents were selected from each school. Self-developed questionnaire for head-teachers and teachers, and an interview schedule for parents were formulated and used for the collection of data. The data were analysed by using frequency and percentage.

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In order to study the objective, a questionnaire was administered for head-teachers and teachers, and an interview schedule was used for parents and the questionnaires as administered on 20 head-teachers, 40 teachers and 40 parents in 20 secondary schools. All the selected SMDC members' responses were scored on the spreadsheet (Excel) and tabulated. Frequency and percentage were calculated with the help of the SPSS software and presented in the tables.

The researchers enquired from the SMDC members about their opinions regarding nine issues and problems faced by the SMDC in the improvement of the quality of secondary school education system. These included—(i) constraints in increasing enrolment at the secondary level; (ii) constraints in identifying, admitting and training the dropout students; (iii) barriers in establishing

quality secondary education; (iv) constraints in developing a 'School Development Plan' at the secondary level; (v) constraints in preparing the curriculum and textbook as per the NCF 2005 norms; (vi) constraints in the implementation of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation; (vii) problems of participation in SMDC meetings faced by the SMDC members; (viii) problems in providing Teaching Learning Materials (TLMs) and basic infrastructure in the secondary schools; and (ix) problems in maintaining proper student-teacher ratio.

The responses given by all the 100 SMDC members with regard to the different challenges faced by them in their working are analysed. Similar concerns brought out by the participants in the open-ended response are grouped together and presented in the tables below. With regard to each of the problems, the reasons are identified and the numbers of participants bringing out the same concerns are presented.

**Table 1**  
**Problems Faced by SMDC Members during Enrolment of All Students**  
**between 14–16 Years of Age**

Reasons	Percentage
Low economic status of family does not inspire their children to study in secondary schools	43
Uneducated parents do not motivate their children to study in secondary schools	38
Ineffective teaching-learning process does not inspire adolescents to study in secondary schools	19

Majority of the SMDC members have viewed that the low economic status of families and illiteracy of parents discourage their children to study.

Majority of the SMDC members have opined that ineffective schooling environment and teachers' role do

not inspire dropout students to get back to schools.

Close to 50 per cent of the SMDC members have indicated that the lack of infrastructure in schools is the main reason that hinders the process of providing quality education.

**Table 2**  
**Constraints in Identifying, Admitting and Providing Training to Dropout Students in the Secondary School**

<b>Problems</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Lack of interest among dropout adolescents to get admission in secondary schools	30
Ineffective teaching-learning process does not motivate the dropout students to admit in secondary schools	23
Teachers are playing an ineffective role to identify the dropout adolescents	21
Parents are not showing interest to admit their dropout children in secondary schools	16
Lack of awareness among the administrators in providing training facility to the dropout secondary school students	10

**Table 3**  
**Barriers in Offering Quality Secondary Education**

<b>Problems</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Lack of infrastructural facility in secondary schools	47
Lack of skilled, professional teachers	22
Lack of community participation	15
Lack of awareness about government initiatives	16

**Table 4**  
**Constraints in Developing of 'School Development Plan' (SDP)**

<b>Problems</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Lack of awareness among SMDC members to prepare SDP	32

Lack of government (administrative) support to prepare SDP	20
Lack of funds to execute SDP	20
Lack of participation by parents to prepare SDP	14
Lack of participation by teachers to prepare SDP	14

One-third of the SMDC members believed that the lack of awareness among the SMDC members is the main constraint in preparing a School Development Plan. Lack of funds, administrative support and poor participation by the members are considered as other reasons.

Majority of the SMDC members have opined that as per the NCF 2005, since the government is taking full responsibility in curriculum and

textbook preparation, the SMDC members do not participate in it.

One-third of the SMDC members have viewed that the lack of skilled teachers is the major constraint in implementing CCE.

Table 7 shows that 32 per cent SMDC members have opined that 'lack of interest among parents to participate in SMDC meetings' is the major problem of participation in SMDC meetings. 30 per cent SMDC

**Table 5**  
**Problems Faced by SMDC Members during Preparation of Curriculum and Textbook as per the NCF 2005 Norms**

Problems	Percentage
Curriculum and textbook does not reflect local needs	15
Government takes full responsibility to prepare curriculum and textbook at the secondary level	85

**Table 6**  
**Constraints in Implementation of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE)**

Problems	Percentage
Infusing skill and competency among teachers during in-service and pre-service training is not sufficient	34
Lack of seriousness among teachers to implement CCE	27
Government does not enforce implementation of CCE	22
SMDC does not show responsible behaviour to implement CCE	17



**Table 7**  
**Problems of Participation in SMDC Meetings**

<b>Problems</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Lack of interest among parents to participate in SMDC meetings	32
SMDC meetings are being dominated by the teachers	30
During SMDC meetings, parents' views have not been taken seriously	26
The SMDC meeting schedule is not prepared according to parents' work schedule	12

members have viewed that 'SMDC meetings have been dominated by the teachers due to which the parent SMDC members do not want to participate in SMDC meetings.

51 per cent SMDC members believed that the 'lack of funds provided by the government' is the major problem faced by the SMDC members in providing teaching-learning materials and basic infrastructure

in secondary schools (Table 8). Rest of the SMDC members viewed that secondary schools are unable to utilise funds properly for teaching-learning and infrastructural development.

Around 50 per cent SMDC members have opined that secondary schools are unable to maintain the required student-teacher ratio due to governmental unawareness in teachers' recruitment process.

**Table 8**  
**Problems in Providing Teaching-learning Materials and Basic Infrastructure**

<b>Problems</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Lack of funds provided by the government	51
Lack of proper utilisation of funds provided by the government	49

**Table 9**  
**Constraints in Maintaining Student-teacher Ratio in Secondary Schools**

<b>Problems</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Lack of awareness and action at the administrative level regarding recruitment of teachers at the secondary level	48
Lack of trained teachers (particularly in science subjects) in the state	10
West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) does not play active role in the recruitment of teachers at the secondary level	42

## **RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND THEIR EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

In the present study, majority of the SMDC members have opined that the 'low economic status of the family does not inspire their children to study in secondary schools', which is the major problem faced by the SMDC members in increasing enrolment of all students between the age-group of 14–16 years in their locality. Similar findings have been reported by investigators in the past too (Muthoni 2015; Mcdougall, Mensah, and Dippe 2012; Gorret 2010). They also revealed that the poor economic condition of a family is one of the important reasons for unsuccessful community participation in secondary education. In the present study, one-third of the SMDC members have viewed that the 'lack of interest among dropout adolescents to admit in secondary schools' is the major problem faced by SMDC members in admitting drop out secondary school students. There are researches (Das and Deb 2015; Shivam and Dkhar, 2012) in the past that have shown similar findings. They have reported that SMDC members are unable to admit dropout students in schools because they intrinsically are not encouraged to study and get admitted in schools.

In the present study, close to 50 per cent SMDC members have indicated that the 'lack of infrastructural facility in secondary schools' is the major barrier faced by SMDC members in establishing

quality secondary education. Some investigators (Okenwa 2013; Mupindu 2012) have envisaged similar situation in their studies. They revealed that due to the absence of good infrastructure, quality education cannot be established in secondary schools. In the present study, one-third of the SMDC members have agreed that the 'lack of awareness among SMDC members to prepare SDP' is the main constraint faced by SMDC members in developing of 'School Development Plan'. Although some researchers (Nana Adu Pipim Boaduo, Milondzo and Adjei 2009) found contrary results revealing the SMDC members' conscious involvement in the preparation of the school development plan and its execution. In the present study, one-fourth of the SMDC members believed that the 'non-involvement of local head-teachers, teachers and parents in the preparation of curriculum and textbook' is the main problem faced by the SMDC members during the preparation of curriculum and textbook as per the NCF-2005 norms. But Ahmed et al. (2013) found that some representatives from their management committee had participated in the curriculum preparation and got scope to express their views. In the present study, majority of the SMDC members have opined that the 'lack of funds provided by the government' is the major problem faced by the SMDC members in providing teaching-learning materials and basic infrastructure in

secondary schools. Some researchers (Okenwa 2013; Gorret 2010) agreed with this result expressing a similar situation in the context of their study also. In the present study, around 50 per cent SMDC members have viewed that the 'lack of awareness at the administrative level regarding the recruitment of teachers at the secondary level' is the main problem faced by SMDC members in maintaining student-teacher ratio in secondary schools. Certain studies (Project 2013; Mupindu 2012) in the past have found the same problem in the context they studied. They revealed that shortage of teachers seemed to be a major factor hindering the implementation of curriculum, and the administration is unaware about this.

In the present study, one-third of the SMDC members have opined that the 'lack of skilled teachers to implement CCE' is the major constraint in implementing CCE at secondary level and that the 'lack of interest among parents to participate in SMDC meetings' is the major problem of participation in SMDC meetings. Few researchers (Bhutia 2013; Gorret 2010) in the past have found similar findings in their study. They found that the rate of participation of community members in the activities for school effectiveness is very low. The present study also

found that 'insufficient infusing of skill and competency among teachers during in-service and pre-service training' is the major constraint in implementing continuous evaluation in the secondary schools. So, educational administration and government have to organise continued teachers' professional development programmes in such a way that teachers can gain clarity and can develop themselves professionally.

### **CONCLUSION**

From the opinion of the SMDC members, it can be concluded that there are many problems faced by them in the improvement of the quality of secondary education. Low economic status of family, illiterate parents, lack of infrastructure, lack of funds, lack of skilled teachers, ineffective teaching-learning process, lack of community involvement are the major barriers in improvement of the quality of the secondary education. Necessary steps at the administrative level may be essential to reform present condition of the secondary level educational system. To eradicate the different barriers in the secondary education, all members of our society must take responsibility without any social, economic, political or regional discrimination.

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# Intelligence among the Students of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas and Kendriya Vidyalayas

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## Abstract

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*In the present study, the researchers have attempted to assess the intelligence among 770 Class VIII students in all. Of these, 320 are from Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) and 450 from Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs). There was a significant difference between the students of JNVs and KVs on intelligence in favour of JNV students. Among the students of JNVs and KVs, the boys and girls do not differ significantly on intelligence.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas and Kendriya Vidyalayas are managed by the Government of India. The former is a residential school while the latter is a non-residential setup. The Navodaya Vidyalayas were started during the year 1985–1986 and it is managed by the Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti which is fully financed by the Government of India. These schools were started to identify and nurture the rural talent of the

country. The Kendriya Vidyalayas, which are predominantly located in urban centres, aim to cater to the educational needs of the children of central government employees.

There are 596 Navodaya Vidyalayas and 978 Kendriya Vidyalayas all over the country. The admission process for JNV is through a selection test at the district level, where only 80 students are selected for Class VI. However, in Kendriya Vidyalayas,

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only the children of Central Government employees are given admission. Students are selected based on the computerised lottery system. Getting admission to either a JNV or KV is a matter of prestige for children as is generally considered by the public. Both institutions are affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). The teachers in both the schools undergo a rigorous selection process and they are transferable throughout the country. The teacher training programmes are also given a lot of importance and they both get quality facilities and they are paid as per the norms of the Government of India. The students in these institutions are thus expected to be much better than those in other schools. Within these two systems, it is interesting to see whether students vary in terms of their abilities, with specific reference to intelligence. Thus, an attempt was made to compare the students of JNVs and KVs in the above backdrop.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The nature of intelligence and contributing factors has been long discussed in the research literature of psychology, education and child development. Nevertheless, there is ongoing dispute about how intelligence develops and what affects this phenomenon. Intelligence is a concept related to the behaviours that are valued in a social and cultural context. Since the establishment of

formalised education for a Westernised industrial society, education has focused on the development of literacy and numeracy skills and has acknowledged these areas as important in formal education. Thus, intelligence has been valued in those who are highly literate and numerate.

Intelligence has been defined in many ways. According to David Wechsler (1958, p. 3): 'Intelligence is the aggregate global capacity of an individual to act purposefully, to think rationally and to deal effectively with his environment'. Our active engagement in learning, understanding, planning, communication, problem solving and thinking are possible through intelligence.

Stern (1914, p. 3) defined intelligence as 'the general capacity of an individual consciously to adjust his thinking to new requirements. It is the general mental adaptability to new problems and conditions of life'. According to Piaget (1963, pp. 6-7), 'Intelligence is assimilation to the extent that it incorporates all the given data of experience within its framework. There can be no doubt either, that mental life is also accommodation to the environment. Assimilation can never be complete because by incorporating new elements into its earlier schemata, the intelligence constantly modifies the latter in order to adjust them to new elements'.

According to Robert Sternberg's Triarchic Model on Intelligence (1997) 'intelligent behavior results from a balance among analytical, creative and practical abilities. Therefore, it is a collective function of these abilities that allows an individual to achieve success within a particular socio-cultural context' (Kiran and Murthy 2016). With a changing scenario and thrust on a modern materialistic society, education has undergone a drastic change. A person's education has become an indicator of his status in the society. According to Hunt (1995), 'Individual's intelligence is a matter of the degree to which he or she is educable. If a person is able to learn something readily and quickly, he is said to be an intelligent person'.

According to Thurstone (1963), 'Intelligence, considered as a mental trait, is the capacity to make impulses focal at their early, unfinished stage of formation. Intelligence is, therefore, the capacity for abstraction, which is an inhibitory process'. Individuals differ from one another in their ability to understand complex ideas, to adapt effectively to the environment, to learn from experience, to engage in various forms of reasoning, and to overcome obstacles by taking thought. Although these individual differences can be substantial, they are never entirely consistent; a given person's intellectual performance will vary on different occasions, and in different domains, as judged by different criteria. Concepts of 'intelligence' are

attempts to clarify and organise this complex set of phenomena.

Intelligence has been a concept that thinkers have grappled with since antiquity. Generally viewed, it represents some cognitive attribute associated with the capability to learn. Intelligence enables people to operate on environmental cues to build understanding and respond to their situations. It is the power, speed and capacity to overcome ignorance and be 'goal responsive' (Goldman 1986).

In another popular theory called the 'Theory of Multiple Intelligence' Gardner (1983) suggests that 'our instructional methods must undergo a revolution if we are to reach all students who have at least eight ways of knowing. This revolution must start with awareness of both learners and practitioners on the issues'. Even Samad (2012, pp. 608–617) argued that there is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to learn and there is no 'good or bad' learning style. What matters most is what works for an individual learner. A student who has found his own learning styles that best fit his or her own intelligences has found the 'right' way to learn. This is an argument that both practitioners and learners should agree on. Most often in traditional schools, the opportunity to use these multiple intelligences effectively is lacking.

Therefore, the measurement of intelligence is one of psychology's greatest achievements and one of its most controversial agendas.



Critics complain that no single test can capture the complexity of human intelligence; all measurement is imperfect, and no single measure is completely free from cultural bias. In the present study, intelligence is studied as one of the variables.

Therefore, in the present context, after carefully considering different researches through the review, the researcher has found that it is worthwhile to understand intelligence among the students of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (which are basically meant for catering to the requirements of the talented rural children), and Kendriya Vidyalayas (which are centrally-funded institutions where children of different levels of Central Government officers study). Therefore, in this context, the researcher feels the need to compare whether Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas and Kendriya Vidyalayas are at par with each other or not. From this viewpoint, there is a need to understand children who are 'above average' especially in these two systems, that is, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas and Kendriya Vidyalayas.

## **METHODS**

In the present study, the researchers have raised the following research questions and also answered them through the present study.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. Do students of JNVs and KVs differ on intelligence?

2. Do boys and girls differ significantly on intelligence?

In order to answer the above research questions, the following objectives have been developed and achieved in the present study.

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. To study whether the students of JNVs and KVs differ significantly on intelligence
2. To study whether boys and girls differ significantly on intelligence

In order to achieve the above objectives, the following hypotheses have been generated and tested in the study.

## **HYPOTHESES**

**H1:** There is no significant difference between the students of JNVs and KVs on intelligence.

**H2:** Boys and girls do not differ significantly on intelligence.

## **DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

The present study is a descriptive survey aiming to find out whether the students of JNVs and KVs differ on intelligence.

## **SAMPLE**

The sample of the study comprised 770 students, including boys and girls studying in Class VIII in Navodaya Vidyalayas and Kendriya Vidyalayas in Karnataka. The sample was selected using stratified random sampling technique.

## Sampling Framework

JNV and KV Students of Class VIII				
	KV Schools - 9		JNVs Schools 8	
	North Karnataka	South Karnataka	North Karnataka	South Karnataka
Schools	4	5	5	3
Students	200	250	200	120
	450		320	
Total	770			

## Tools and Technique

Variables	Tool	Author
Intelligence	Raven's Progressive Matrices	John C. Raven (1936)

Following tools were used in the study.

### Data Collection Procedure

The selected students of the sample from the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas and Kendriya Vidyalayas were administered the Raven's Progressive Matrices.

### Raven's Progressive Matrices (RPM)

This scale is constructed by John C. Raven (1936). The Raven's Progressive Matrices is a non-verbal standardised intelligence test. It consists of 60 diagrammatic puzzles, each with a missing part that the test taker attempts to identify from several options. The 60 puzzles are divided into five sets (A, B, C, D and E) having 12 items each. It is usually

regarded as a good measure of the non-verbal component of general intelligence rather than of culturally-specific information. It has been found to demonstrate reliability and validity across a wide range of populations, with retest reliabilities of .83-.93 over a one-year interval. Internal consistency coefficients of .80 have been found across many cultural groups.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The collected data were scored, tabulated and their descriptive statistics were calculated. Further, hypothesis-wise the results were treated with inferential statistics. The hypothesis-wise obtained results are presented and discussed as follows.

**Table 1**  
**Significance of the Difference Between the Students of**  
**JNV and KV on Intelligence**

Independent Sample Test								
<i>Schools</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>Significant</i>	<i>Inference</i>
KV	450	66.35	26.02	1.22	768	9.88	.01	Significant
JNV	320	92.62	16.29	.91				

***Hypothesis 1. There is no significant difference between the students of JNVs and KVs on intelligence.***

In order to test the above hypothesis, the mean scores obtained by the students of JNV and KV on intelligence test were computed, apart from the computation of standard deviation (SD) and standard error (SE). Further, the significance of the difference between the mean scores of the two schools was also computed using 't' test which yielded the following results.

An analysis of the above table indicates that there were 450 students of KVs and 320 students of JNVs. The mean score of the students of KVs is 66.35, while that of JNVs is 92.62. In terms of the standard deviation, KVs have 26.02, while that of JNVs have 16.29. It means that the spread of scores away from the mean is apparently more among KV students, suggesting that the variation is more among the KV students as compared to the students of JNVs. In order to see whether the obtained mean difference is true of the population also, the scores were subjected

to 't' test, which was 9.88, which is statistically significant at 0.01 levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It means the students of JNVs and KVs have differed significantly on intelligence in favour of JNV students as their mean scores are higher than the students of KVs. It means the students of JNVs are significantly more intelligent than the students of KVs. This could be because the students selected for the JNVs are selected at the district level on merit and are provided education in a residential setup, while it is not so with KV students.

There are studies conducted where there is a significant difference in the intelligence of students from different ability groups. These include Preckel, F. et al. (2016) Intellectual self-concept in gifted students, Song, et al. (2010) differential effects of general mental ability and emotional intelligence, Kim (2016) intelligence among high school students, Punia and Sangwan (2011), Rohde and Thompson (2007) intelligence predicts SES factors, Tamannaifar et al., (2010) intelligence on pre-university girls. The above-mentioned

studies support the findings of the present study.

On the other hand, there are some studies which contradict the present findings. Freeman (1934) cultural factors, Husen (1951) higher primary students, Jensen (1977) East Asian students, Koke and Vernon (2003) practical intelligence among high school students, Lawrence and Deepa (2013) emotional intelligence between urban and rural schools, Girija (1980) intellectual and non-intellectual factors in advantaged and disadvantaged students, Varte, Zokaitluangi and Lalhunlawma (2006) secondary school students of Arunachal Pradesh also found similar results on intelligence.

***Hypothesis 2. Boys and girls do not differ significantly on intelligence.***

In order to test the above hypothesis, the mean scores obtained by boys and girls on the intelligence test were computed apart from the computation of SD and SE. Further, the significance of the difference between mean scores of the two groups were computed using 't' test which yielded the following results.

An analysis of the above table indicates that in total, there were 770 students in the study, of which 402 were boys and 368 were girls. The mean score of boys is 74.14 while the girls have 71.99, which leaves a small difference. The standard deviation for boys was 22.84, while that of the girls was 24.93, suggesting that the spread of scores away from the mean is more among the girls in comparison to the boys. The obtained 't' value is 1.24, which is statistically not significant. So, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, it can be concluded that there is no difference in the intelligence of boys and girls studying in KV and JNV.

**CONCLUSIONS**

1. The students of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas are more intelligent than the students of Kendriya Vidyalayas.
2. The boys and girls of JNVs and KVs are same on their intelligence.

Further, within the JNVs and KVs, boys and girls do not differ on intelligence, indicating that gender has no particular role in terms of intelligence among the learners.

**Table 2**  
**Significance of the Difference between Boys and Girls on Intelligence**

Independent Sample Test									
		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>Significant</i>	<i>Inference</i>
Intelligence	Boys	402	74.14	22.84	1.13	768	1.24	.19	Not Significant
	Girls	368	71.99	24.93	1.29				

Thus, all learners can be encouraged alike to develop intelligence to their best. On the whole, it was found that, irrespective of learners belonging to JNVs or KVs, gender differences in intelligence do not exist. This implies and reinforces that gender has nothing to do with intelligence.

### **IMPLICATIONS**

Intelligence is a great asset and a virtue among children which needs to be assessed and nurtured by schools and the community. Teachers in

schools are to be aware of these potentialities and must work towards nurturing the same. The students of JNVs are found to be more intelligent and on the whole there exists no gender difference between boys and girls among JNVs and KVs. In either case, the role of a teacher becomes seminal in understanding the intelligence potentials of their students and nurturing them. In the interest of the students, it is desirable that the takeaway of these studies reach the attention of teachers

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# Malnutrition among High School Tribal Children in Selected Blocks of Chhattisgarh

RAMANI ATKURI\* AND ARVIND SARDANA\*\*

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## Abstract

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*This study grew out of new curricular exercises for social science in Chhattisgarh. At a workshop for tribal schools, the teachers were introduced to the idea of nutrition, measurement of Body Mass Index (BMI) and how it is linked to understanding food security. The training emphasised how this could be used in their own schools. The collation and analysis of data from these sample schools located across tribal blocks led to surprising results. What is clearly evident from the data about the children's heights and weights is that the students of the government tribal schools in Classes IX and X are significantly malnourished. While overall one in four (27 per cent) students is undernourished, boys are more undernourished as compared to girls. Among boys, 39 per cent are undernourished, as compared to 15.7 per cent among girls. Further investigations indicate the evidence of skipping meals and hidden hunger at home. While evidence should be collected on a larger scale, there is an urgent need to introduce Midday Meal (MDM) for high schools in Chhattisgarh, similar to the efforts in some other states.*

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## INTRODUCTION

India has the dubious distinction of being home to one of the largest number of malnourished people in the world. The Global Hunger Index (GHI) uses four indicators to describe the state of a country's hunger situation. These are—proportion of overall population that is

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undernourished (including adults and children), under-five wasting, under-five stunting, and under-five mortality rate. According to the GHI 2016, India is ranked 97 among 118 countries, better only than Pakistan (rank 107) in the South Asian region. The hunger situation is classified as 'serious', marginally better than 'alarming'. In the 2018 report, India has slipped to the rank 103 from among 119 countries, with Pakistan at 106.

Hunger leads to undernutrition. Undernutrition in children younger than five years is the underlying cause of approximately 60 per cent of deaths in this age group. Malnutrition in early childhood leads to impaired physical and mental development, with reduced capacity for learning and physical work. Malnourished adults would understandably have diminished work capacity. They are also more susceptible to more severe infections, compared with healthy adults.

In children under five, various indicators like weight-for-age (underweight); height-for-age (stunting); and weight-for-height (wasting) are used to assess acute and chronic hunger. In those over five years of age, the Body Mass Index is commonly used to estimate undernutrition or thinness, in addition to other indicators like stunting. The Body Mass Index is a ratio of the person's weight (measured in kilograms) and their height (in metres) squared. In adults, a BMI

below 18.5 signifies undernutrition. For children between 5–19 years of age, age-specific BMI curves are used to compare a child's BMI with.

While information on the prevalence of child malnutrition and adult malnutrition is available through national level surveys, there is no recent national level data on adolescent nutritional status. The most recent information available is from the National Nutritional Monitoring Board's Rural Third Repeat Survey of 2011–12 which showed that boys and girls between 13–15 years of age were consuming half or less than half of recommended daily allowance of oils and protein. 35 per cent of the boys and 20 per cent of the girls in this age group were undernourished.

While data on tribal undernutrition from National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-4 (2015–16) is not yet available, the third survey conducted in 2005–06 shows that in both children and adults, the levels of malnutrition among tribals is the highest when compared to the General Caste, Other Backward Castes and Scheduled Castes.

Tribals in India face multiple disadvantages—being poorer than other communities (and therefore, poorer purchasing power for food); living in remote areas with healthcare and other services difficult to deliver and to access; loss of access to forest foods and their traditional livelihoods of gathering and selling minor forest

produce owing to displacement, restrictions and loss of forest cover.

As per the Census 2011, the Scheduled Tribes (ST) constitute nearly one-third (31.8 per cent) of the population of Chhattisgarh.

### **HOW THE SURVEY EVOLVED**

'Food security' is one of the chapters in the new social science textbooks for Chhattisgarh for Class X. Apart from examining the macro data and other conceptual issues, this chapter deals with understanding BMI (Body Mass Index) for growing children. It also has an exercise where children find out their BMI and read the table to interpret their results. Hence, a real sense of their own nutrition status is obtained. The teacher is expected to summarise the results of the students in the class in a tactful manner and also discuss the diet pattern of the children in class.

During the course of development of this chapter, three resource teachers from different remote Blocks conducted trials in their own school situation. They took the height and weight of a sample of children from their school and worked out the BMI for each. From the collated data, using WHO guidelines, the percentage of undernourished children was arrived at. This was done under the guidance of Dr Ramani, a specialist in community medicine. The results were quite surprising to all. The range of undernourishment was 16 per cent, 24 per cent and 60 per cent

for these three schools. The teachers discussed their individual situation with Dr Ramani who suggested that they find out if children have been hungry any time in the last week, their normal diet pattern and whether any supplements of fruit, meat or egg were available. One of the teachers suggested that children bring tiffin which they would eat together. They were probably coming hungry to school and there was no mid-day meal being served to Class IX and X students.

Some months later, as part of a separate programme, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Chhattisgarh collaborated to organise a six-day Capacity Building Programme for social science teachers. This was for the teachers working in schools run by Tribe Welfare Department in Chhattisgarh during 14–19 November 2016. These schools predominantly cater to tribal children. The 'Food Security' chapter along with the exercises on BMI were done with these teachers. After the training, twelve teachers carried out this exercise with their students in their own school and sent us the data. The following analysis is based on this. The schools who responded were from the following Blocks and districts—Dharmjaigarh, Kharsiya from Raigarh; Odagi, Pratappur, Bhaiya Than and Surajpur block from Surajpur; Manendragarh and

Khadgawan from Koriya; Kusmi and Shankargarh from Balrampur; Bagicha from Jaspur; Chhuikhadan from Rajnandgoan.

### METHODOLOGY OF SURVEY

The teachers were taught how to measure weight and height. Weights were measured using a standard bathroom scale after checking for zero error before each reading. Heights were marked up to half centimetre on one of the walls of the classroom. Children had to stand against this, barefoot, with feet together and heels touching the wall. The buttocks and shoulders should also touch the wall, as well as the most prominent part on the back of the head (the occiput). The eyes should be in line with the top of the ear, that is, the child should look straight ahead, and not tilt one's head upwards. A ruler or notebook was placed on top of the head and the reading read off the height scale. It must be mentioned here that inter-observer variation among the


readings is likely but, we hope, it is not large enough to significantly alter the findings.

The Body Mass Index (BMI) is an internationally accepted and commonly used measure to estimate the nutritional status of those over five years of age. It is computed by measuring body weight in kilograms and height in metres. In adults, a standard value of 18.5 is used as the cut-off for normal nutrition—those below 18.5 are considered undernourished, or thin.

In children and adolescents (5–19 years), their body height keeps changing, so the ratio of their weight to their height keeps changing too. The World Health Organization has standard BMI for age curves showing normal, undernourished and overweight values of BMI at a particular age. These are simplified into tables for field use. This is the reference that was used by the teachers. A sample is shown below.

**Table 1**  
**Sample Field Table for Boys' BMI for age 5–19 Years.**

#### Simplified field tables

BMI-for-age BOYS 5 to 19 years (z-scores)		 <b>World Health Organization</b>						
Year: Month	Months	-3 SD	-2 SD	-1 SD	Median	1 SD	2 SD	3 SD
5: 1	61	12.1	13.0	14.1	15.3	16.6	18.3	20.2
5: 2	62	12.1	13.0	14.1	15.3	16.6	18.3	20.2
5: 3	63	12.1	13.0	14.1	15.3	16.7	18.3	20.2
5: 4	64	12.1	13.0	14.1	15.3	16.7	18.3	20.3
5: 5	65	12.1	13.0	14.1	15.3	16.7	18.3	20.3
5: 6	66	12.1	13.0	14.1	15.3	16.7	18.4	20.4

Teachers were provided with the WHO age and gender-specific BMI simplified field tables and taught how to read it. They could check their students' BMI for age to find out their nutritional status.

For the twelve schools who responded and sent us back their recordings, the data was checked for missing entries and errors, and sent back for correction. All complete entries were then entered into WHO Anthro Plus software and analysed.

## FINDINGS

Data on weight, height and date of birth were entered for 267 students—133 boys and 134 girls.

### Height-for-age

Overall, 27 per cent of students were too short for their age, that is,

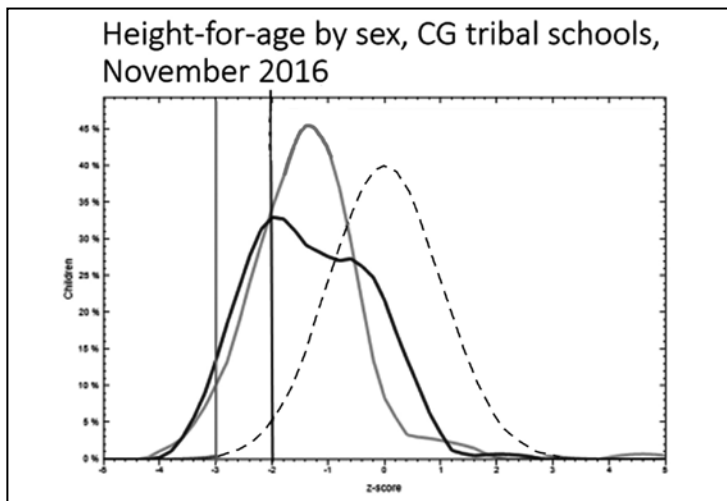
they were stunted. 3.4 per cent were severely stunted (Figure 1).

Boys showed slightly more stunting than girls—30 per cent of boys were stunted, compared to 24 per cent of girls.

### BMI-for-age

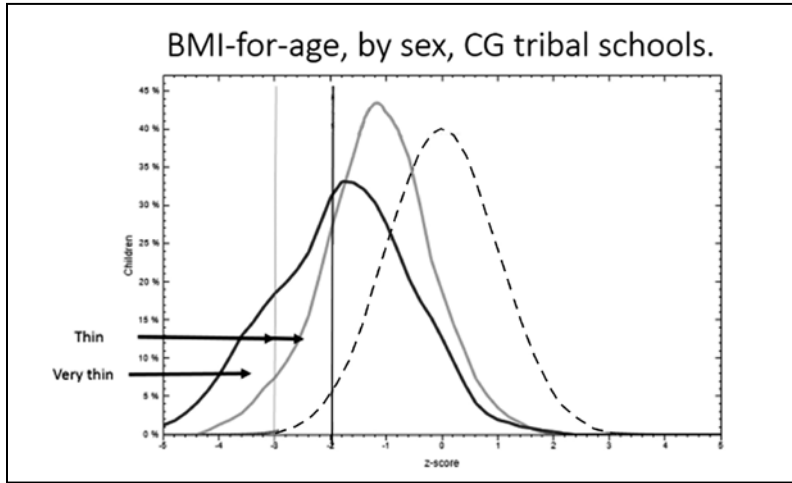
One in four students surveyed (27 per cent) were too thin for their age; that is, their BMI was less than 2 standard deviations of the median BMI for their age. 11 per cent had severe thinness (BMI less than 3 SD for age); they were extremely undernourished for their age (Figure 2).

Undernutrition and severe undernutrition was found to be more common in boys than in girls. 39 per cent of boys were found to be undernourished, while 11 per cent were severely undernourished.



- WHO child growth standards (birth to 60 months) WHO reference 2007 (61 months to 19 years)
- Female (n = 124)
- Male (n = 133)

Figure 1. Stunting among Boys and Girls among High School Children. CG Rates are Similar, with Boys Showing a Slightly Higher Percentage of Stunting.



-- WHO child growth standards (birth to 60 months) WHO reference 2007 (61 months to 19 years)  
 — Female (n = 134)  
 — Male (n = 134)

Figure 2. Boys Show a Significantly Higher Degree of Undernutrition as Compared to Girls, CG Tribal High Schools, November 2016

Among girls, 15.7 per cent were undernourished and 3.7 per cent were very severely undernourished. These rates are less than half than that found in boys (Figure 2).

In both boys and girls, the older adolescents—(14–19 years) were more undernourished than the younger adolescents (10–14 years). See Table 2.

A more accurate estimate of thinness (undernutrition) and severe thinness (severe undernutrition) can be obtained when BMI is taken for a larger number of children.

**Meals Recall Survey**

When asked to recall what the students had the previous week, it was found that several had skipped meals and eaten only twice during

**Table 2**  
**Proportion of Undernourished and Severely Undernourished among Boys and Girls, CG Tribal Schools, Nov 2016**

Age	Boys		Girls	
	<i>Undernourished</i>	<i>Severely Undernourished</i>	<i>Undernourished</i>	<i>Severely Undernourished</i>
Total	38.8	18.7	15.7	3.7
10–14 years	36.5	14.3	13.6	4.9

15-19 years	41.4	22.9	19.2	1.9
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**Table 3**  
**What have the Children Eaten the Previous Week?**

Day	Morning	Afternoon	Night
Today	Rice, chutney, pickle	Did not eat	Rice, pickle
Yesterday	Did not eat	Rice, daal	Rice, daal
2 days ago	Rice, sabji (potatoes)	Rice, chutney	Rice, potatoes, chutney
3 days ago	Rice, potatoes	Did not eat	Rice, some milk
4 days ago	Rice, daal, pickle	Did not eat	Rice, chutney
5 days ago	Rice, chutney	Rice, oil	Rice, vegetable
6 days ago	Rice, chutney	Did not eat	Rice, vegetable
7 days ago	Rice, daal, pickle	Did not eat	Rice, chutney

This child has missed six meals the previous week, with five out of eight afternoon meals not eaten.

the day (Table 3). One student had skipped an afternoon meal on five out of the past eight days. Most of the other meals consisted of rice, sometimes with daal or potatoes. Fruit, eggs, milk, meat or fish did not figure in his diet, though their diet does include non-vegetarian food.

This is probably similar for other children. In general, teachers reported that skipping meals was common. It was for this reason that one of them

had encouraged students to bring tiffin on their own and eat together at school. The results of a sample of ten tribal children at this school show the following pattern. One meal is skipped by almost all. One child had eaten fish with dinner on one day, no other animal protein. Most children had a snack like a guava or a handful of chana for lunch. Breakfast for one child (Pinki) was mainly tea (Table 4).

**Table 4**  
**Meals Recall Survey of Ten Tribal Children**

S. No.	Name of Student	Age in Years	Number of Days Meal Eaten During Past School Week (5 days)		
			Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
1.	Rajkumari	14	4.0	0.0	5.0

2.	Pramila Singh	14	5.0	0.0	4.0
3.	Pinki Singh	16	1.0	0.0	5.0
4.	Shanti Singh	16	5.0	0.0	5.0
5.	Priya Singh	16	4.0	1.0	5.0
6.	Sukhmen Singh	16	5.0	2.0	5.0
7.	Phulkunwer Singh	16	5.0	0.0	4.0
8.	Pushpa Singh	14	5.0	2.0	5.0
9.	Sunil Singh	15	5.0	0.0	5.0
10.	Suraj Patle	16	4.0	2.0	5.0
	<b>Average number of meals eaten</b>		<b>4.3</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>4.8</b>

### Daily Intake of Specific Nutrients

As part of background information, during the curricular development phase, a small exercise was done in a few schools of how families of students in rural areas access the Public Distribution System (PDS).

As an example of what families of the students get from the (PDS) and what they purchase from outside, one student had the following (Table 5).

As seen in Table 5, each family member consumes 8.3g of oil per day, 8.3g of daal and *chana* each day, as

**Table 5**

### Food Obtained from PDS and Food Purchased from Open Market in a Month

Name: Kavita. Members in family – 8			
	Item	From PDS	Buy from market
1	Rice	35 kg	30 kg
2	Wheat	0	5 kg
3	Chana	0	2 kg
4	Sugar	1 kg	0
5	Oil	0	2 kg
6	Daal	0	2 kg
7	Salt	2 kg	0

Average daily intake of oil is 8.3 gm /person /day; intake of daal is 8.3 gm / person / day; chana is 8.3 gm / person / day; cereal is 292 gm/person/day

well as 292g of cereal per day. This is grossly inadequate for Kavita, and the daily amount consumed is similarly inadequate as per Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) norms in other children as well (Table 6).

Table 6 shows that none of the children in this sample were consuming adequate proteins or fats or total calories per day. Kavita, for instance, was consuming half the calories she requires daily, a little less than half the protein she needs, and only 20 per cent of the fats she requires. These proportions are inadequate, especially in adolescents. The access to PDS for families in Chhattisgarh has greatly improved (Khera 2011); and is commendable but the overall quantity provided from the PDS per person may be much lower than the recommended daily intake, as in the above case, especially as the family is unable to purchase the balance amount from the open market.

### **WHAT DO THE FINDINGS INDICATE?**

Though there may be inter-observer variation and the findings are focused on a few districts, nevertheless, this gives an indication of the nutritional status of children in these schools.

It is clearly evident from the data about the children's heights and weights that the students in Class IX and X of the Government Tribal Schools are significantly malnourished. While overall one in four (27 per cent) students is undernourished, more

boys are undernourished compared to girls (among boys 39 per cent are undernourished, compared to 15.7 per cent among girls). This finding is consistent with the other studies (Banerjee et al, 2011; NNMB 2012) conducted amongst high school students. There too, more boys were found to be undernourished. However, another study conducted in Sagar town in Madhya Pradesh found girls to be more undernourished than boys (Thakur et al 2015). What is also a great concern is that 11 per cent (one in ten) students are severely undernourished.

Prolonged hunger, or insufficient food intake in childhood also results in bones not growing to their full potential. Hence, these students are shorter than they should be. This is called stunting, and in this current sample, 27 per cent of students (a quarter) were stunted, and 3.4 per cent are severely stunted.

When asked about the food eaten during the past week, it was found that the diet was mostly rice-based with little daal, few vegetables, with no fruit, eggs, fish, or meat. The absence of variety in their diet also leads to malnutrition. More significantly, many had skipped a meal during the day. In the example shown, this particular student had skipped five meals in seven days—morning meal once, and afternoon meal on four days. Thus, on five days of the week when he came to school, he was either hungry from the morning, or got



**Table 6**  
**Percentage of RDA of Fats, Proteins and Total Calories Consumed by Children**

<b>Girls 13-15 yrs</b>										
<b>Name</b>	<b>RDA protein (g)</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>RDA (%)</b>	<b>RDA Calories (Kcal)</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>RDA (%)</b>	<b>RDA visible fat (g)</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>RDA (%)</b>	<b>RDA (%)</b>
Punita	51.9	22.8	44	2,330	1,207	52	40	5.6	14	14
Rambai		28.5	55		1,242	53		5.6	14	14
Anita Kumari		34.3	66		1,831	79		11.1	28	28
Kavita		25	48		1,184	51		8.3	21	21
<b>Boys 13-15 yrs</b>										
<b>Name</b>	<b>RDA protein (g)</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>RDA (%)</b>	<b>RDA Calories (Kcal)</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>RDA (%)</b>	<b>RDA visible fat (g)</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>RDA (%)</b>	<b>RDA (%)</b>
Bhagwan	54.3	20.2	37	2,750	870	32	45	4.8	11	11
Santosh		41.1	76		1,910	69		4.8	11	11

hungry or remained hungry for all the afternoon sessions. Skipping meals appears to be a regular phenomenon even though the number of times this happens during the week would vary across students.

Hunger in children leads to irritability, inability to concentrate, impaired learning, depression and suicidal ideation. Since the mind is focused on food, their ability to concentrate on school work is limited. Severe hunger can also lead to chronic diseases in adulthood. Their academic achievement is worse than other students who are not hungry.

Nutritional support at home is inadequate as indicated in the case studies cited above. Children are skipping meals and the total availability of food both from the market and PDS is much lower than required.

Such a large proportion of students being chronically hungry and underweight means that their ability to focus in class and their interest in their studies as well as their academic achievement would be adversely affected.

The Government of India introduced the Mid-day Meal in primary schools initially in 1995 to improve enrolment, retention and attendance as well as to improve the nutritional status of students. In 2001, it became a cooked Mid-day Meal Scheme in which every government and government-aided primary school child would be provided a cooked meal with specified

daily protein and calorie content. Currently, it is extended all over India to cover all elementary schools (Classes I–VIII). Calorie and protein norms are currently 450 calories and 12g of protein daily for primary school students; and 700 calories and 20g of protein daily for upper primary school students. The costs are shared between the Centre and the States in a ratio of 60:40.

Though the implementation has been of variable quality, with issues of regularity, quality and quantity of food provided, leakage of funds and rations, etc., yet it does provide a much-needed meal to children during the day.

Currently, this scheme does not extend to high school students. From the above discussion, it is apparent that high school students in Chhattisgarh require this nutritional support. This is because 27 per cent of the students are undernourished; older children are more undernourished than younger ones; and overall nutritional support at home is inadequate. Some states like Telangana and Karnataka have extended it to high school students about two years ago, whereas Tamil Nadu has had this coverage for many years. It is useful to remember that we should not wait for distress to overcome us but be quick in response to a situation that can only enhance students' well-being and improve their learning.

We do require a systematic nutritional survey for Chhattisgarh

high school children repeated by National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) so that comparable data is available. The important question to examine is the indication that the current purchasing power and allocation for PDS is not sufficient to provide the food security as desired. Given the nutritional urgency of the situation,

we should move fast towards examining an increase in the quota given through the PDS, as well as the variety of food grains provided. Meanwhile, extending the Mid-day Meal scheme to high school students in Chhattisgarh will address some level of hunger and nutritional deficiency among them.

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**Book Review**

# ***The Reflective Teacher***

## ***Case Studies of Action Research***

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Recent discourse on Teacher Education in India has been greatly emphasising on developing 'reflective teachers' and observing 'reflective practice as the central aim of Teacher Education' (*National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education* 2010, p. 19). Further, recent studies on Teacher Education in India have also pointed towards what has to be done and why it has to be done. However, no study has elaborated upon how it can be attained. The book, *The Reflective Teacher: Case Studies of Action Research* written by Dr Neeraja Raghavan begins to fill this void in the Indian context.

Situating her work in the frame of action research, the author proposes

'reflective thinking' which helps teachers in reviewing and improving their practice in the light of evidence and changed values related to the practice. The book is a product of the action research undertaken by teachers at the Azim Premji School in Uttarakhand, under the guidance of facilitators from the Azim Premji Foundation.

The book is divided into three main sections—the first section discusses the broad theoretical disposition around the 'action research method' and 'reflection'. Through a detailed theoretical discussion and research-based studies, relationship between action research and reflection has been

established and rationalised in this section. It also discusses in detail the aims and setting of the study, and a 'snapshot' of the teachers involved. The second section is based on the detailed field data which includes a range of sources like the facilitators' diary, teachers' plans, field notes, learning, reflective journals, etc. The third part of the book provides an in-depth analysis of the teachers' action research documents and classroom observations with the theoretical linkages (especially with Dewey's and Schön's work). The author provides around 60 pages of analysis of the overall process of action research and its outcome, in the form of developed reflective practice in the concerned teachers.

The author has tried to develop and explore reflective thinking in teachers through 'action research', where they have to find out one problem related to their teaching method or approach and then accordingly, plan, develop strategies, take actions, assess, reflect and document the processes and critical issues. A total of seven action research problems are identified by nine teachers in the area of reading-writing, scientific observation, place value, etc. The author has provided details of the action research and discussed them at great length, emphasising the importance of understanding various practices in the field.

The teachers have recognised the importance of thinking, planning, reflecting and responding to the

problems occurred during the action research and reflection writing and documentation. It is observed that with the process of appropriate documentation of action research, the quality of reflection has increased considerably. The author discusses that '... Mohit (a teacher) acknowledged an increased sensitivity to students whose mother tongue is not Hindi and realised how he may well have assumed that their silence earlier was indicative of ignorance', and 'his action research resulted in acknowledging (and questioning) the prevalent bias towards written and spoken means of expression' (p. 213). Thus, his action research experience forced him to revisit and dismiss this belief. Discussing another example, she wrote, 'Madan's (another teacher) changed practice of using the combination of phonetic and Whole Language Approach resulted from his questioning the efficacy of a single approach to teaching language' (p. 206). The author also emphasised in the book that teachers mentioned that now the focus of their discussion, planning and reflection has changed from what the teacher is teaching to what the children are learning (p. 130).

The book emphasises that if teachers are supported and given enough confidence in carrying out research-based inquiries, they tend to express their keenness to change their beliefs and adapt to new teaching methods (irrespective of their multiple years of experience). To be a reflective practitioner, this support is essentially needed, and hence,

availability, quality, appropriateness and sufficiency of the feedback given by the facilitator or mentor are significant. However, this book does not discuss in depth what particular kind of support is required and how teachers were supported by their mentor. This book is a fundamental step towards understanding the culture of reflective practice as an essential component of professional learning and securing the future of quality education in India. The book is quite useful for Teacher Educators who are interested in assisting

and understanding the process of reflection in teachers (those who are directly engaged with teachers in becoming reflective practitioners at both pre-service and in-service level) as well as for researchers who can use it as reference in developing tools in the field of studying reflection as a practice.

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