



# Journal of Educational Research and Public Policy

(A bi-annual, blind peer-reviewed journal)

Volume - 1

Issue-1

October, 2024

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**[www.jerpp.org](http://www.jerpp.org)**

**About the journal:**

The *Journal of Educational Research and Public Policy* is committed to publishing blind, peer-reviewed research articles that address key issues in education and public policy.

Publisher details	Frequency, Format	Subject	Language	Starting Year
Mr. Nihar Ranjan Das Patnaik 207, Manorama Enclave, Gothapatana, Malipada, Bhubaneswar-751003, Odisha E-mail : nihardp@rediffmail.com	Bianual	Education and Public Policy	English	2024

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**First Edition : October-2024**

**DTP & Printing:**

**Srinandan Printers**

Unit-4, Bhubaneswar - 751001 India, Mob.-9437178424

**Annual Subscription : Rs. 400/-** (Rupees Four Hundred only)

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### *From the desk of Editor in chief.....*

Studies have consistently demonstrated a strong correlation between a country's education system and its ranking on the World Happiness Index. Nations that offer high-quality education, such as Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and the Netherlands, are consistently ranked among the top ten happiest countries globally. The reasons for this connection are both profound and multifaceted.

A robust education system serves as a foundation for societal well-being by equipping individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to secure better job opportunities, which, in turn, lead to higher income levels and improved quality of life. Beyond financial benefits, these systems foster a culture of critical thinking, creativity, and lifelong learning, which enhances personal fulfillment. Importantly, these countries emphasize balanced workloads for students and teachers, reducing stress and pressure from high-stakes exams. This approach cultivates a more enjoyable and meaningful learning experience.

Furthermore, a strong education system thrives within a supportive social framework that encourages collaboration among students, educators, and the community. The availability of resources to address mental health challenges, such as stress and anxiety, significantly contributes to overall life satisfaction. These measures ensure that the educational experience is not only academically enriching but also emotionally fulfilling.

Interestingly, countries with exemplary education systems also tend to rank highly in measures of democratic quality. This underscores the integral role of education in shaping informed, engaged, and equitable societies. In essence, nations that prioritize education create ecosystems conducive to happiness, personal growth, and collective life satisfaction. These insights highlight the transformative power of quality education in improving societal well-being, fostering democratic values, and shaping a brighter future for all.

India's education poses unique challenges. With a population of more than 1.4 billion, ensuring quality education at both the school and higher education levels is a highly difficult task. There is a significant shortage of teachers across government schools, colleges, and universities. As highlighted by the World Development Report (Learning 2018), a boy going to school in India does not necessarily equate to learning. The report emphasizes that schooling without learning is not only a missed opportunity but a profound injustice. The first aspect of this crisis is the poor learning outcomes. Many children enter schools unprepared to learn, and teachers often lack the necessary skills or motivation to teach effectively. Additionally, weak

school management and governance model further erode the quality of education. To address this, India must prioritize three key actions: assess learning to make it a serious goal, act on evidence to ensure schools are truly benefiting students, and align key stakeholders to make the system function effectively for learning.

The “Journal of Educational Research and Public Policy” is dedicated to driving transformative change in education through research and development. This will in turn equip teachers and learning community with the skills and competencies necessary for a sustainable development model in 21st century. The journal encourages researchers as well as readers to actively participate in advancing knowledge and gaining deeper insights into the dynamics of the education systems in India and worldwide. The journal is published both in print and online. This journal would not have been possible without the active participation, encouragement, and unwavering support of friends who deeply care about the state of education in India, particularly in Odisha. I am personally grateful to Dr. Manmatha Kundu, former director of ELTI, Odisha, whose passion for school education has been a driving force for me. Very few people in Odisha are as passionately involved in the field of school education as Dr. Kundu. My initial discussions with Prof. H.K. Senapaty, former director of NCERT, significantly enriched the scope and dimensions of this journal. I am, in fact, profoundly grateful to the renowned psychologist Prof. Fakir Mohan Sahoo, Research Professor at XIM University Bhubaneswar, for his constant guidance and encouragement. If anyone has consistently supported me in exploring various ideas, it is Prof. Kalpana Sahoo, and I am immensely thankful to her. I am also ever grateful to my friend and advisor, Prof. Ranjan Kumar Bal, Vice-Chancellor of ASBM University, for his invaluable support. I feel truly indebted to many friends and mentors without whom this journal would not have seen the light of day.

Last but not least I am thankful to Mr. Nitya Ranjan Nanda for his DTP and printing help.

*Manindra N. Nayak*

(Manindra N. Nayak)

*Editor-in-Chief*

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## From Learning Disability to Disability Expertise

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### Abstract

*In the post educational research was mostly geared towards the needs of mainstream population. However, recent advances in neuroscience and neuropsychology have reoriented educational efforts towards the population of learners with special needs. Especially the frontiers of research in neuroplasticity has opened immense possibilities for the mentally challenged. Drawing on the bold findings of Edward Taub in the area of neuroplasticity, the present review analyses the struggle and success of Barbara Arrowsmith born with the mental handicap of learning disability. Her journey from learning disability to learning expertise not only depicts the formidable challenges encountered by the mentally challenged it explicates the importance of educational support system and parental mentoring. More importantly the need for cerebral exercise is highlighted. It is asserted that the conventional compensatory education where deficits are identified and additional exercises are given is not just enough. The process requires vigorous mental exercises that help to rewire the brain such that some of the dysfunctional areas become vitally functional.*

**Keywords :** *Neuroplasticity, Learning disability, Cerebral exercise, Compensatory education, Localization, Equipotentiality, Competence building.*

### Introduction

Arrowsmith Rehabilitation School is a leading centre in Toronto (Canada) where children with learning disabilities correct their underlying problems. It is quite a paradox that this school is a brain-child of Barbara Arrowsmith Young who herself was a girl with severe learning disability. Generally, the scientists who make important discoveries about the brain are often

those whose own brains are extraordinary. It is rare that the person who makes an important discovery is the one with the defect. But there are exceptions. Barbara Arrowsmith Young is one of these exceptions.

Barbara was born in Toronto in 1951. Asymmetry is the word that best describes her mind when she was a school girl. Barbara had areas of brilliance as a child, her auditory and visual memory were excellent. But her brain was “asymmetrical” meaning that these exceptional abilities co-existed with areas of retardation.

Her right leg was longer than her left, causing her pelvis to shift. Her right arm never straightened, her right side was longer than her left, her left eye was less alert. Her spine was asymmetrical. She had a confusing assortment of serious learning disability. The area of her brain devoted to speech (Broca’s area) was not working properly; she had problem pronouncing words. She also lacked capacity for spatial reasoning. When we wish to move our body in space, we use spatial reasoning to construct an imaginary pathway in our heads before executing our movement. Spatial reasoning is important for baby’s crawling. Barbara had trouble in movement.

Spatial reasoning is also necessary for forming a mental map of where things are. We use this kind of reasoning to organize our desks or remember where we have left our keys. Barbara lost everything all the time. With no mental map of things in space, out of sight was literally out of mind. She became a “pile person” and had to keep everything in front of in piles.

She had a “kinesthetic” problem. Kinesthetic perception allows us to be aware of where our body or limbs area in space, enabling us to control our movement. She could not hold a cup of juice in her left hand without spilling it. She frequently stumbled.

She had a visual disability as well. Her span of vision was narrow. When she looked at a page of writing she could take in only a few letters at a time.

But these were not her most debilitating problems. The worst problem was her inability to understand the relationships between symbols. She had trouble understanding grammar, math concepts, logic and cause and effect. She could not distinguish between “the father’s brother” and “brother’s father”. The double negative was impossible for her to decipher. So she couldn’t read a clock because she couldn’t understand the relationship between the hands. She couldn’t literally tell her left hand from her right, not only because she lacked a spatial map but because she couldn’t understand the relationship between “left” and “right”.



Unable to understand cause an effect, she did odd things socially because she couldn't connect behaviours with consequences. She could memorize math procedures but couldn't understand math concepts. She could recall that five times five equal twenty-five but couldn't understand why. Her teachers responded by giving her extra drills, her father spent hours tutoring her, to no avail. Her mother held up flash cards with simple math problems. But the attempts of remediation didn't get at the root of the problem.

Wanting desperately to do well, she got through elementary school by memorizing during lunch hours and after school. She learned to use her memory to cover her deficits and with practice she could remember pages of facts.

### **A Silver Lining**

The whole Young family was high achievers. Barbara's father, Jack, was an electrical engineer and inventor with thirty-four patents for Canadian General Electric. Her mother Mary had the positive attitude; she said, 'you will succeed no doubt, solve the problem you have'. Barbara was always incredibly sensitive, warm and caring.

Barbara gravitated towards the study of child development. As an undergraduate at the University of Guelph (Canada), she had areas of problem. But her teachers fortunately saw her remarkable ability to pick up non-verbal cues in the child-observation laboratory, she was asked to lead the course. Then she was admitted into graduate school at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). Most research students read a research paper once or twice, but typically Barbara had to read twenty times as well as many of its sources to get a sense of meaning. She survived on four hours of sleep a night.

Barbara was brilliant in many ways and adept at child observation. Some of her teachers had trouble in believing that she was disabled. It was a happy coincidence that she came across Joshua Cohen another gifted but learning disabled student at OISE. Joshua was running a small-clinic for learning-disabled kids. He used standard treatment method – compensation procedure. In compensation method, attempts are first made to identify areas of deficits and additional training is given to make up the deficits. Kids with reading problems are given audio-tapes for listening. Kids who are slow are given more time for tests.

Joshua designed a compensation programme for Barbara, but found it too time-consuming. One day Joshua suggested she look into some books by Aleksander Luria. Luria born in 1907, was a master of brain physiology. He developed interest in neuroscientific basis of Freudian psychoanalysis. He corresponded with Freud and studied neural basis of Freud's

psychotherapy. A productive outcome of research interest was the evolution of neuropsychology. Since he was working during the difficult period of Stalin's era in Russia, he chose medical sector to escape political control.

There was another coincidence that worked in her favour. While reading Luria, Barbara knew about a typical disabled person, Zazetsky whose problems were similar to Barbara's. Zazetsky was a Russian military officer who was injured by the invading Nazi war machine. The medical examination revealed that the damage in his brain involved the joining area of three lobes – occipital, parietal and temporal. It may be indicated here that temporal lobe is linked with thought and language while occipital is associated with visual experience. The parietal lobe is linked with spatial relation and integration of sensory experiences. Thus, the resulting outcome is self-explanatory.

Over thirty years Luria observed Zazetsky and predicted that Zazetsky's relentless fight would help him "to live, not merely exist".

Barbara read Zazetsky's diary and realized how Zazetsky's life mirrors Barbara's.

### **Dogma of Fixed Entity**

For quite some time, human brain was considered as a fixed entity. The main reason that contributed towards this persistence of this belief was the **principle of localization**. Localization denotes a rigid connectivity between structure and function. It implies that a specific neural centre in the brain is responsible for particular behaviour or function. Brodmann, a German neuroscientist, prepared a brain map where different centres, were numerically indicated. For example, backside of our brain was known as Brodmann's Area Number 17 and it was responsible for visual experience. Similarly, a point in our frontal brain (behind our forehead) was known as the Area Number 10 and it was considered responsible for multi-tasking. The neural link that runs from the left ear to right ear (or right ear to left ear) was designated as sensori-motor cortex. It is comparable to GPS provided by google engineers. The sensori-motor cortex provided the map of the body. The level of its sophistication is so high that the very thought of this cerebral apparatus drives google engineer crazy.

However, different parts of the body have representation in sensori-somato cortex in terms of its sensitivity. For example, lip has a greater representation for its touch sensation compared to other body parts. Similarly finger tips have greater representation for touch sensitivity than other parts of hands and arms. Brodmann provided a brain map indicating 1 to 52 numbers with specification of corresponding functions.

This structure-function relationship was further strengthened by Penfield. Penfield the famous neuroscientist from Canada electrically stimulated different parts of the brain as provided by Brodmann's list. It was shown that the specific brain stimulation produced feelings in corresponding organs. For example, individuals reported visual experiences when Area No 17 (occipital lobes) was electrically simulated. Similar findings were obtained for other brain stimulation.

Both Brodmann's work and Penfield's research were reported during the nineties of the twentieth century. People as well as specialists believed that there is a rigid relationship between structure and function. A specific centre of the brain controls the specific behaviour.

### **Hearing Lightening and Seeing Thunder**

It is a common experience that we see lightening and hear thunder. In other words, the visual cortex (occipital lobe, the brain part just behind our head) sees and the auditory cortex (the brain part temporal lobe, the upper part of our head) hears. This view is in consistence with localization principle.

However, Taub's innovative experiments with monkeys and other follow-up studies indicated an unbelievable possibility. William James, the renowned psychologist, also made such a miraculous prediction. It is important to recognize that William James was as famous as Sigmund Freud was. In, 1892, his book *Psychology: A Briefer Course* was approved as the first text-book of psychology at University level. James made a prophetic statement about the nature of human brain. He made a statement that humans could *see thunder and hear lightening*. He suggested that a day may come when auditory cortex could see and visual cortex could hear. People as well as specialists laughed at this statement.

Ironically James made this prophetic statement 100 years prior to the growth of neuroscience. It may be indicated that neuroscience received great acclaim when the California doctor Roger Sperry got Noble Prize for his split-brain research in 1982. He showed that the two sides of the brain have different functions. While it is one structurally, the left brain is linked with language and logic while right-brain is associated with emotion and pattern recognition. William James' prediction came true with experiments of Edward Taub and other neuroscientists in the nineties of twentieth century.

### Edward Taub and Neuroplasticity

Taub was born in Brooklyn (New York) in 1931. He went to the public school and graduated from high school when he was only fifteen. At Columbia University he studied “behaviourism”. He was fortunate to work with his mentor Fred Keller, the close associate of B.F. Skinner (Harvard University) the most noted psychologist of his time. While Taub was interested to study mind and brain, both Keller and Skinner were indifferent to the concept of brain. Since all behaviourists are interested only in things observable and measurable, Keller and Skinner did not encourage Taub to pursue the study of mind and brain. At Columbia University experimental studies mostly dealt with rats and researchers were interested to study external and visible forms of behaviour. This did not satisfy Taub’s research interest; he left Columbia University and came to Research Institute at Silver Spring in Maryland (USA).

In Silver Spring, Taub carried out bold experiments. His main interest was to help stroke patients whose one side of the brain gets paralyzed because of some reason or the other. It has been indicated earlier that the *brain has contra-lateral connection*. This implies that right side of the brain is neurally linked with left side of the body’s limbs and vice versa. It means the right side of the body would be paralysed if left brain is injured because of stroke. Similarly, there may be problem in the left side of the body. Taub’s primary interest was to find out whether the paralyzed side of the brain could be revived by some mechanisms. Since he could not make intervention at the level of human brain, he chose monkey’s brain to find an answer.

Taub initiated finger-cutting experiments in monkeys. Technically this is known as **deafferentation experiments**. This is so called because afferent nerves which carry nerve impulses from limbs to the brain are cut. In Taub’s experiment, afferent nerves which carry impulses from fingers to the brain were cut.

When Taub’s bold experiments were going on, a big happening put a stumbling block. The animal protection group in America staged protests and Taub was dragged to the court of law. Although he wished to defend himself saying that his experiments were meant for human welfare in general and stroke patients in particular, he was not protected. The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) stopped its research grant and took custody of monkeys. A group of scientist made collective representation to NIMH not to stop research grant, but nothing positive happened.

The legal controversy dragged on and on. Gradually the legal battle lost its intensity. Taub was struggling with no job no-money situation. Suddenly he got a Faculty position at the University Birmingham (USA). The Head of the Department of Psychology asked him to continue

his past experiments. The animal protection groups threatened protests and gave a warning that they would stall all animal research if Taub is allowed to continue. But the Head of the Department ignored all threats and permitted the scientific spirit of research to flourish. Fortunately, Taub also got back his old monkeys whose fingers were cut.

The long time-gap between the loss of monkeys and regain of monkeys (a number of years) offered an unique opportunity to Taub to look at the cerebral change. It is obvious that the sensori cortex of the monkeys whose fingers were cut did not receive touch sensation from fingers. Yet, it was found that the sensori cortex has not stayed idle. Without receiving touch inputs from fingers, the sensori cortex has changed its job; it has started processing touch sensation from the face. This gave clearer indication of the plasticity and reorganization of brain.

Encouraged by this novel experiments, more and more neuroscientist carried out studies to move forward. A researcher at the University of San Francisco trained monkeys to do a skillful job. The monkeys were trained for long hours to brush a highly moving disc. They had to do this work for quite some time. It was found that there were visible significant tinges in their somato-sensori cortex.

The discovery of brain plasticity gave impetus to human experiments. Researchers found it convenient to study the deaf and the visually impaired. It is obvious that the visual cortex of the visually handicapped does not receive visual inputs through the eyes. Similarly, the auditory cortex of the deaf does not receive auditory signals though ears. When the sophisticated imaging techniques of studying brain functions were used, it was found that *the auditory cortex can partly see and the visual cortex can partly hear*. It sounded as if James prediction that we can hear the lightening and we can see the thunder has come true. It was a major breakthrough in neuroscientific research. The finding when submitted for publication to the high states journal **Science**, it did not secure acceptance. However, its arch rival Journal Nature got it published in their April (1996) Issue.

The evidence was further strengthened when human volunteers were blind-folded and were asked to stay with visual deprivation for some days. Of-course they were provided with some daily necessities so that they won't die. When brain was examined after prolonged sensori deprivation changes and reorganization was noticed.

The immense possibility of changing brain is vividly manifest in an experiment of PascualLeone. The researcher asked 200 professional violinists and asked them each to *think*

*playing violin* for two hours every day in his laboratory. This continued for a couple of months. Following such contemplation their brain mappings were done. Surprisingly there were visible and significant changes in their somato-sensori cortex. It is obvious that changes are expected when violinists actually play violin. Their consistent movement of fingers, hands and arms are likely to bring about changes. Yet Pascua Leone found that even thinking can bring out cerebral change.

### **A Turning Point**

It was at this point in her life, while she was twenty-eight and still in graduate school, she came across brilliant series of work by Mark Rosenzweig of the University of California at Berkeley. The researcher found that the brains of the stimulated rats were heavier and had more blood supply than those from the non-stimulated environments. Rosenzweig was one of the first scientists to demonstrate neuroplasticity by showing that activity could produce changes in the structure of the brain. For Barbara, lightning struck. Barbara now realized that the brain could be modified. Though many doubted it, Rosenzweig's and Luria's research convinced her the possibility of change.

### **Building a Better Brain**

She isolated herself and began toiling to the point of exhaustion, week after week. She designed mental exercises and worked on them. Instead of practicing compensation, she exercised; Joshua Cohen helped her.

Barbara and Joshua Cohen married and in the 1980 they opened the Arrowsmith School in Toronto. They did research together, and Barbara continued to develop brain exercises and to run the school. Eventually they parted, and Joshua died in 2000.

Because few others accepted neuroplasticity it was tough job. Applicants to the Arrowsmith School — children and adults alike — undertake forty hours of assessments, designed to test which brain functions are weak. A lot of thoughtful brain exercises are given. For example, a child, like Barbara may be having problem to read a clock. Now the child works at computer exercises involving ten-handed clocks (with hands not only for minutes, hours, and seconds but for other time dimensions such as days, months, years). Children sit quietly with intense concentration, until they get correct answer.

Similarly, children learn Urdu and Persian letters to strengthen their visual memories. The shapes of these letters are unfamiliar and the brain exercise requires students to learn to recognize these alien shapes quickly.

We all have some weak brain functions and such neuroplasticity based techniques have great potential to help almost everyone.

Many students have to systematically exercise the brain function that gives us fluency and grace with symbols. In the Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858 the debaters comfortably spoke for hours without notes. Today many of us raised in most elite schools, prefer the Omnipresent Power Point Presentations – the ultimate compensation for a weak premature cortex.

Barbara's work compels us to imagine how much good might be accomplished if every child had a brain-based assessment and if problem were found, a tailor-made programme is created to strengthen the essential areas in the early years, when neuroplasticity is greatest. It is better to meet brain problems in the bud.

Acetylcholine, a brain chemical essential for learning, is higher in rats trained on difficult spatial problems than in rats trained in simpler problems. Mental training or life in enriched environment increases brain weight by 5 percent in the cerebral cortex of animals and up to 9 percent in areas that the training directly stimulates. Trained or stimulated neurons develop 25 percent more branches and increase their size, the number of connections per neuron, and their blood supply.

These changes can occur late in life, though they do not develop as rapidly in older animals as in younger ones. Similar effects of training and enrichment on brain anatomy have been seen in all types of animals tested to date. Enrichment increases the number of branches among neurons. An increased number of branches drives the neurons farther apart, leading to an increase in the volume and thickness of the brain. The idea that brain is like a muscle that grows with exercise is not just a metaphor.

Today Barbara Arrowsmith is sharp and funny, with no mental blockages. She has shown the children with learning disability can go beyond compensation and correct their underlying problems. She has documented the success of brain exercise programmes. Her work has paved the way for building a better brain.

### **Policy Implications**

- i. Cognitive style (the style of processing information) of learners must find a righteous place in educational goals and objectives.
- ii. Teachers, planners and educators need to abandon levelling students (learners) such as 'dull and backward'.

- iii. Education process must be geared to divergent thinking process.
- iv. The process of brain change (neuroplasticity) offers opportunities for the cognitive growth of learners

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## Transformation through Higher Education : The Road Ahead

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### Abstract

*Higher education provides us advanced academic and professional knowledge. It aims at developing higher order thinking and nurturing various skills. It is the gateway to numerous opportunities, such as jobs, entrepreneurship and research works. The higher education suffered adversely during colonial era. In 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the western education models were introduced by establishing three universities in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras which offered arts, science and professional courses with focus on English education. The traditional Indian knowledge system was marginalized. After independence, a lot of significant changes came in higher education.*

*The quality of higher education varies widely across HEIs in India. Many HEIs, no doubt, are offering world-class education. Other HEIs are facing many challenges, like inadequate physical, digital, intellectual, emotional and collaborative infrastructure, outdated curricula and pedagogy, shortage of qualified faculty and staff, etc. Other issues like mushrooming of coaching institutions, rampant cheating, bureaucratization of higher education, etc have adverse impact on higher education. There is urgent need to transform our higher education by undertaking a lot of interventions recommended in this article and implementing fully the National Education Policy (NEP)-2020. As we are marching towards Viksit Bharat@2047, we need political will power to implement the recommendations of NEP to make our nation a global knowledge power and regain our past glory.*

**Keywords:** Transformation, Higher Education, Perspective, Intervention, Knowledge and Skill

## Introduction

In the words of Swamy Vivekananda, “Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas.” Education is essential for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development (NEP-2020). Education brings transformation. Quality education can fulfill our dream of ‘*Viksit Bharat*’ with inclusive growth and sustainable development.

Higher education provides us advanced academic and professional knowledge and skill. It includes undergraduate programmes, postgraduate programmes and research degrees. It aims at developing higher order thinking and nurturing various skills. It is the gateway to numerous opportunities, such as jobs, entrepreneurship and research works.

We feel very proud of our ancient times and our rich traditions of higher education. Our universities like Nalanda, Takshashila and Vikramashila earned reputation and attracted scholars from all over the world in mathematics, philosophy, medicine, astronomy, etc. The focus was on holistic education. But the higher education suffered adversely during colonial era. In 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the western education models were introduced by establishing three universities in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. These universities offered arts, science and professional courses with focus on English education. The traditional Indian knowledge system was marginalized. After independence, a lot of significant changes were undertaken in higher education.

## Literature review

The following review of literature throws light on the research works undertaken by various research scholars in the area of higher education.

Cortese (2003) examined the critical role of Higher Education in creating a sustainable future of our planet. He inferred that the Higher Education has to play leadership role to literate people on social and biological sustainability. It can change the mindset of people and develop a new human perspective for the well-being of the earth and its inhabitants.

Gopalkrishnan (2024) analysed the higher education in India and highlighted its major problems. To derive the advantages of the demographic dividend, there is need for development of 4.4 crore students of higher education for the economic growth in India. He also concluded that the HEIs should invest in quality infrastructure and research.

Bindu (2024) studied the importance of foreign universities to empower the Indian higher education. The foreign HEIs can help the domestic institutions to achieve global standards in curriculum, pedagogy and research. The paper suggested diverse ways in which the international universities contribute to the upliftment of Indian higher education so that it can compete internationally.

Barucha (2024) analysed the most sweeping transformation in the ecosystem of higher education in the nation's modern history, i.e., the National Education Policy-2020 which aims to bring sweeping changes in education. With half of the world's university-age population residing in India, our students are bursting with aspiration but frustrated by limited access to quality institutions. He inferred that many new HEIs are emerging with quality infrastructure and students support system to achieve excellence in higher education.

Suganya, et.al., (2024) examined the interplay among employee retention, academic performance, and employability in higher education. They found significant and positive relationships, indicating that retention has a substantial impact on both attainment and employability. Attainment also positively influences both retention and employability, and that attainment partially mediates the relationship between retention and employability.

Reddy and Babu (2024) studied the transformative impact of ICT in HEIs. They evaluated the ICT skills of HEIs. They recommended the need for targeted interventions to bridge existing skill gaps. The study proposed for fostering 21st-century teaching strategies, advocating for a nuanced approach to faculty development that considers both attitudes and skills.

Bhesera and Bika (2024) explained how online platform like SWAYAM is serving the three cardinal principles, i.e., access, equity, and quality with special reference to higher education in the present context. The paper focuses on the milestone of Indian higher education with the dynamic role of SWAYAM initiative to develop the knowledge and skill of the students and teachers.

Khanna, et.al., (2024) identified the various problems faced by the higher education institutions and also proposed the strategies to overcome the challenges. They also provided the suggestions for achieving global standards of higher education excellence. They focused on research and development, empowering faculties, investing in online learning, etc. From the review of literature, it is observed that India has the potential to achieve excellence in higher education. But the HEIs of our country face many challenges. We need a long-term strategy to achieve quality and excellence in higher education.

### **Objective**

The main objective of this article is to present a brief overview of our higher education ecosystem and suggest the road ahead for achieving excellence.

### **Discussion**

Research findings tell us that education adds 6 to 12% to a person's income. But the social return of education is very high, i.e., 25 to 30%. After our independence, many higher education institutions (HEIs) were established with the University Grant Commission (UGC) as the apex regulator. Our Government also established many centres of excellence, like IITs and IIMs for technical and managerial expertise. Now our country has one of the largest ecosystem of HEIs in the world with over 1100 universities and 51000 colleges. The State, Odisha has over 37 universities and 1300 colleges. The Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) has increased significantly. There is now greater access and equity. In some disciplines, the girls outnumber boys. Private HEIs have also increased manifold to meet the demand for higher education.

“India is the future talent factory for the world” Bob Sternfels, CEO, McKinsey & Co, said. But the quality of higher education varies widely across HEIs. Many HEIs, no doubt, are offering world-class education. Other HEIs are facing many challenges, like inadequate physical and digital infrastructure, outdated curricula and pedagogy, shortage of qualified faculty and staff, etc. Other issues like mushrooming of coaching institutions, lack of trust in regulators controlling examinations due to rampant cheating, bureaucratization of higher education, etc have adverse impact on higher education. These issues have direct effect on quality of output of students and their employability. The percentage of unemployed and underemployed youth is increasing every year.

Many research findings focus on the need for huge investment in higher education. There is need for a strong, vibrant public and private education system with industry participation. We need universal access to quality education and outcome-based education. But many HEIs are struggling with various problems like inadequate infrastructure and lack of trained faculty. Another big challenge is the mismatch of skills imparted by HEIs and the skills needed by the job market. The HEIs are required to follow ‘Learning Outcome-based Curriculum Framework’ (LOCF) and ‘Choice-based Credit System’ (CBCS) for achieving quality higher education. We need not only core courses, but also generic electives, skill-enhancement courses,

ability enhancement courses, and many discipline-specific electives. We have to revamp our curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and student support system with the appointment of motivated and capable faculty, principals and vice-chancellors (leaders), and non-teaching staff.

We are fortunate to learn from great teachers who were life-long learners. The great teachers constantly reinvent themselves. They mentor, support, encourage and inspire. Therefore, they need autonomy and independence. There is paradigm shift from teaching to learning by the intervention of good teachers. All HEIs need learner-centric approach to achieve good outcomes and make our students future ready.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a landmark education policy of our country. It aims at making India a global knowledge power. It is a great vision document for establishing an education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India. It has recommended one regulator for higher education, the Higher Education Commission of India with four verticals, namely, National Higher Education Regulatory Council, National Accreditation Council, Higher Education Grant Council, and General Education Council. It has a strategy for institutional restructuring and consolidation and moving towards multidisciplinary universities and colleges with autonomy.

NEP aims towards more flexible and interdisciplinary curricula (no hard separation between arts and sciences) and skill-based courses for employability and holistic development of our youth. It is also aiming to bring out the unique capabilities and skills of each student, aligned to the demands of 21<sup>st</sup> century to enable them to earn their livelihood and also contribute to our society. In the words of Mr. A.K. Tiwary, Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, “With two way integration between education and skilling through NEP, we are all ready, and it is time for us to take off.”

The importance of research and innovation has increased manifold. But it is found out that less than 1% of HEIs are engaged in quality research activities. The research outcomes have also witnessed significant growth during last one decade. The Prime Minister recently chaired the first Governing Body Meeting of Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF), the apex research funding institution of the Government of India, which has been established recently by an Act of Parliament. According to the Education Minister of India, it will fund research projects of Rs. 50,000 crore during coming five years.

We are living in a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) world. Global collaborations and MOUs will help Indian HEIs in multidisciplinary research projects. There is need for student and faculty exchange for better teaching-learning process and producing good human capital. The international collaborations can also help us to address global challenges like pandemics and climate issues. Our country can become a global educational hub by attracting foreign students and faculty for a more diverse academic environment. We have the potential to become the future talent factory of the world to exploit the global opportunities.

“Higher Education ecosystem is evolving and growing at an unmatched speed. Academic leadership is the key driver an HEI to deliver on its mandate and ensure the achievement of successful outcomes for the students preparing them for the modern work place.” (Prof. M. Jagdaesh Kumar, Chairman, UGC) The HEIs have embarked on the journey of fostering leadership excellence within academics which will serve as a catalyst for transformative leadership. The target is to increase the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) from 26.3% to 50%. We demand dedicated interventions from academic leaders of HEIs and also from the regulating agencies. The academic leaders need to be recognized at an early stage and nurtured through the institutional leadership development programmes for HEIs.

### **The road ahead**

The digital era has brought digital revolution in higher education. The technological integration in higher education is the need of the hour. Our country has developed numerous digital platforms for learning, research and academic administration. This would help our motherland in making higher education more flexible, accessible and effective. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) offer a wide range of courses for promotion of lifelong learning. In higher education, the platforms like SWAYAM, NPTEL etc. offer a variety of courses for the students of HEIs. The artificial intelligence, machine learning and other new technologies are expected to bring transformation in the teaching-learning process. The big data analytics and other software can bring revolution in the efficient management of resources of HEIs. The ‘Institutional Development Plan’ of each HEIs, which is a long-term action plan, would help them to realise their goals. We have to balance quality and quantity, and address the skill gaps. We have to meet the needs of 44 million Indian youth who are now admitted every year in the HEIs.

The favourable demographic dividends can be realized by having five types of infrastructure in HEIs, viz., physical, digital, intellectual, emotional and collaborative infrastructure. Learning from Bhagavad Gita and from our ancient scriptures can add value in the holistic development of students. The chalk and board should be given priority to digital learning. Building excellent institutions of learning and research should be given priority to establish India as a knowledge super power and to realise the benefits of a knowledge economy. Our country has to establish many MERUs (Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities) like JNU. We have to observe World/National Book Day to promote the reading of books and journals.

Quality assessment and accreditation of HEIs is a big challenge for any regulating agency in a vast country like India. The help of technology for evaluation and monitoring of HEIs is very essential. We should not replicate the western model. Our country has to design and strengthen its accreditation process and bridge the loopholes. The HEIs should be made accountable for their actions and inactions, and their overall performance. The grants to HEIs can be outcome-linked and performance-based. Yes, quality matters a lot in a knowledge factory, i.e., HEI.

Our HEIs need good teachers, who are lifelong learners. They revitalize themselves every day so that they remain vibrant, relevant and effective. Our HEIs also need a strong culture of research and innovation. The universities are known for their innovative research, patent and research publications. The collaboration among HEIs will help in creating a research environment. The incubation of innovative ideas leads to many startups. There is need for 'Entrepreneurship and Incubation Cell' in all HEIs which would justify the need for outcome-based higher education as we desire to become a nation of job creators rather than job seekers. The position of India in research as compared to other countries is only satisfactory. We have to build a strong collaboration for research among our Colleges/Universities by the help of technology. There should not be many duplications and malpractices in research projects. The HEIs and its faculty members should avail benefits from Government research funding agencies, Partnership for Accelerated Innovation and Research Programmes (PAIR), and Programmes on "Solution-focused Research in Selected Priority Areas" under ANRF, such as Electric Vehicles Mobility, Advanced Materials, Solar Cells, Smart Infrastructure, Health and Medical Technology, Sustainable Agriculture and Photonics, Lab Grown Diamonds, etc.

We need innovative funding models and efficient financial management for sustainability of HEIs. There is need for increased investment by the Government and also the private sector.



The CSR funds of large companies can be tapped for the development of higher education. The HEIs should follow prudent financial management policies to achieve long-term financial goals. All our States need a programme like ‘Odisha Higher Education Programme for Excellence and Equity’ funded by World Bank for the development of higher education in Odisha.

We need leaders in HEIs. The UGC has issued guidelines for Institutional Leadership Development Programme for HEIs, which aims to be a guiding compass for empowering faculty members to adeptly assume leadership responsibilities. These guidelines provide a strategic pathway to nurture a fresh group of future leaders of HEIs. It will guide the leaders “to navigate administrative complexities, fostering inclusivity, driving innovative ventures, or cultivating collaborative cultures.” (Prof. M. Jagdaesh Kumar, Chairman, UGC) We hope that these guidelines will be effectively implemented.

We need many academic leaders who can act as change agents to bring transformation and good governance in HEIs. This would help us in achieving our goal of ‘Vasudheiva Kutumbakam’ and delight the stakeholders of higher education. Mental and emotional wellbeing of our students, teachers and staff can be achieved by establishing ‘Wellness Centres’ in HEIs. Happiness of our students, teachers and staff is the new wealth of HEIs.

### **Policy implications**

The major policy implications found from this paper can be summarized as the following:

**Focus on Holistic and Inclusive Education:** Policies must emphasize life-building and character-making education, aligning with NEP-2020 to foster full human potential and equitable national development through inclusive and transformative quality education.

**Investment in Higher Education Infrastructure:** A robust framework is needed to attract private investment and corporate participation, ensuring sustainable funding for physical, digital, and intellectual development of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), while addressing regulatory and implementation challenges.

**Adaptation to Global Trends and Digital Revolution:** Policy measures should integrate evolving technologies like Artificial Intelligence and promote continuous learning systems to prepare students for the dynamic knowledge economy, supporting the vision of *Viksit Bharat@2047*.



## Conclusion

The educated citizens of India know their duties and responsibilities. They also know their rights. We have our expectations from Government and regulators. Our motherland needs a lot of interventions for quality higher education which is more inclusive. There is need for huge investment to develop the physical, digital and intellectual infrastructure of HEIs. NEP-2020 has the potential to bring transformation. But its implementation is a big challenge. India is yet to get its apex regulator and four councils in higher education. For the success of HEIs, we need effective implementation of NEP-2020, sustainable funding and strong regulatory system. We need reforms in higher education to attract private investors and corporate sector to provide the huge investments required in this sector. All the citizens of India should participate in this process to make our motherland great again.

Change is the only constant in today's world. The world is undergoing rapid changes in the knowledge landscape and ecosystem. The Sustainable Development Goal – 4 of UN on education to be achieved in 2030 also focuses on quality education for transforming our society. We are living in a knowledge economy and a rapidly evolving world. Digital revolution has taken place. Artificial intelligence has already entered the classroom of a teacher. Learning how to learn, unlearn and relearn in this dynamic and evolving world will help our students. “Sa Vidya Yaa Vimuktaye”, i.e., Education liberates you. We believe in the words of our Father of Nation, Gandhiji, who said, “By education, I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in the child and man; body, mind, and spirit.” This is the need of the hour for our country. Our children and grandchildren will get quality education by the help of continuous reforms and innovations. We have no choice, but to transform our higher education by undertaking a lot of interventions. As we are marching towards Viksit Bharat@2047, we need political will power to make our nation a global knowledge power and regain our past glory.

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## Perception of Post Graduate Students towards Open Educational Resources: A Case Study

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### Abstract

*The present study is an attempt to know the perception of Post Graduate students towards open educational resources. The sample was comprised of 150 Post Graduate students of Rama Devi Women's University, Bhubaneswar by using simple random sampling technique. A Perception Scale was employed to know the perception of Post Graduate students towards Open Educational Resources with regard to the sharing of knowledge and learning resources, as well as adaptation and use of Open Educational Resources(OER). Results state a very positive and encouraging attitude of students towards the use and sharing of OERs. It also reveals the frequent use of Google, facebook and emails as platforms for sharing OERs. However, there is a need to motivate students to access more other OER enriched platforms for learning.*

**Keywords:** *Open Educational Resources, Post Graduate students, sharing knowledge*

### Introduction

Open educational resources (OERs) are freely accessible and openly licensed digital assets such as text and media which are used for the purpose of teaching, learning and assessment. These resources are also useful for doing research. The main features of those open materials states that anyone can legally and freely duplicate, utilize, adapt and re-share them. The term OER describes publicly accessible materials and resources for any user to use, re-mix, improve and redistribute under some licenses (Bell, 2021). The development and promotion of open educational resources is often motivated by a desire to provide an alternate or enhanced educational paradigm (Sanchez, 2021).

The OER movement originated from developments in open and distance learning (ODL) and in the wider context of a culture of open knowledge, open source, free sharing and peer collaboration, which emerged in the late 20th century (David, 2006). The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Open CourseWare project is credited with a global Open Educational Resources Movement after announcing in 2001 that it was going to put MIT's entire course catalogue online and launching this project in 2002 (Guttenplan, 2010). For students and educators OER give access to worldwide substance that can be limited without limitations, give them progressively decision about learning assets and make comprehensive learning networks (Butcher, 2011).

The term "open educational resources (OER)" was first adopted at UNESCO's 2002 Forum on the Impact of Open Courseware for Higher Education in Developing Countries (Johnstone, 2005). Accordingly, it states that OER is "teaching, learning and research materials in any medium, digital or otherwise, that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions (Chiu, 2016).

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (2013) defines OER as: teaching, learning, and research resources that lies in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and re-purposing by others. It includes full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, tests, software and any other tools, materials or techniques used to support access to knowledge. The foundation again states "Open Educational Resources are teaching, learning and research materials in any medium – digital or otherwise – that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions.

The above definition clearly indicates that OER includes both digital and non-digital resources. According to Wiley and Hilton (2018), OER involves 5R activities which include the following:

1. Retain - the right to make, own, and control copies of the content (e.g., download, duplicate, store and manage),
2. Reuse - the right to use the content in a wide range of ways (e.g., in a class, in a study group, on a website, in a video),
3. Revise - the right to adapt, adjust, modify, or alter the content itself (e.g., translate the content into another language),
4. Remix - the right to combine the original or revised content with other material to create something new (e.g., incorporate the content into a mash up), and

5. Redistribute - the right to share copies of the original content, your revisions or your remixes with others (e.g., give a copy of the content to a friend).

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines OER as: “digitized materials offered freely and openly for educators, students, and self-learners to use and reuse for teaching, learning, and research. OER includes learning content, software tools to develop, use, and distribute content, and implementation resources such as open licenses” (OECD, 2007).

These definitions have certain elements in common viz. they all cover use and reuse, repurposing, and modification of the resources; include free use for educational purposes by teachers and learners, and encompass all types of digital media (Pawlowski, Järkkäläinen, Gervacio, Nordin and Embi, 2014)

India as a creating nation appears to have a developing craving for receptiveness in instruction, including the creation and spread of OER. The nation has a National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER) for K-12 educational materials. In 2008, the Indian government’s National Knowledge Commission (NKC) required a “national e-substance and educational plan activity” to animate the creation, adjustment and use of OER by Indian foundations (Perryman and Seal, 2015).

In 2010, the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) began a Post Graduate Diploma in E-learning (PGDEL) utilizing OER. The Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) has helped a few associations to create content utilizing Wiki Educator, while IGNOU’s Staff Training and Research Institute of Distance Education (STRIDE) in 2008 utilized online wiki preparing aptitudes to create self-learning materials for distance instruction. Few other OER initiatives in India include the following:

**NMECIT:** National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology is a centrally sponsored scheme to leverage the potential of ICT, in providing high quality personalized and interactive knowledge modules over the internet/intranet for all kind of learners in higher education in anytime, anywhere mode. This project requires all the universities to be connected with National Knowledge Network (NKN) and the colleges with broadband connectivity.

**SHAKSHAT:** A landmark initiative of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), it aims at developing a One Stop Education Portal for addressing all the education

and learning related needs of students, scholars, teachers and lifelong learners. **NPTEL:** NPTEL is a joint initiative of IITs and IISc that provides e-learning through online Web and Video based courses in engineering, science and humanities streams.

**EKLAVYA:** Launched jointly by IIT, Bombay and IGNOU on 26th January, 2003, the project aims at a free exchange of knowledge and ideas by placing all the relevant academic material in the Open Source. The project has developed an Open Source Educational Resources Animation Repository (OSCAR) to create a repository of web-based, interactive animations for teaching various concepts and technologies. Its major activities include e-GURU, e-OUTREACH and e-CONTENT programmes.

**OSCAR:** OSCAR (Open Source Courseware Animations Repository) is an initiative of IIT Bombay to build a large repository of web based interactive animations for teaching and learning of scientific and technological concepts.

**E-Grid:** Launched by IIIT, Kerala and supported by the MHRD, E-Grid portal has been intended to increase and facilitate access to education resources by the educational community and to facilitate collaboration, sharing of knowledge and best practices to improve the quality of education and learning.

## Review of Literature

Various studies found a significant positive correlation between OER and student achievement (Grewe and Davis, 2017). Annand (2018), Sulisworo, Sulistiyo and Akhsan (2017), Weller and Pitt 2015). Perryman (2016) found that OER can give women a voice, access to information and education, and the opportunity to connect with peers and train others. The finding of the study by Ganapathi (2018) reveal that the use of OER allows for greater distribution of learning material across different cultural and linguistic settings, particularly in rural and remote regions, at the same time, the study warn against the adaptation and pedagogical barriers of OER into societies where traditional modes of education are established and trusted.

Studies on attitude and perception of distance teachers towards OER conducted by Venkaiha (2008), Ganapaty and Jong (2015), Grissett (2017) and Panda (2017) reveal a positive attitude towards the use and sharing of OER. However, studies by Hurt (2013) indicated that OER were not always accessible and usable. Ozdemir and Bunk (2015) reveals that teachers perceive the use of OER as a mean to bring improvement in students' learning.

Studies conducted by Jhangiani and Hendricks (2016) and Islim and Koybasi (2016) found that faculty were more likely to adopt and create OERs. Teachers were using OER for ideas, to supplement existing coursework, and to prepare for teaching. The barriers to the use of OER in Higher Education in Tanzania was found out by Mtebe and Raisamo (2014) who showed that lack of access to computers and the Internet, low Internet bandwidth, absence of policies, and lack of skills to create and/or use OER are the main barriers to the use of OER.

### **Rationale of the Study**

Open Educational Resources (OER) is considered as one of the most innovative teaching and learning practices as well as cost-effective mechanisms to improve the quality of education by optimising the use of available resources. OER can be used by any institution to improve their cost-efficiency. They have the prospective to transform teaching and learning practices in all educational settings. They can be used to reduce time to develop courses and programmes, facilitate knowledge sharing, preserve and disseminate indigenous knowledge, and improve educational quality at all levels (Kanwar, Kodhandaraman and Umar, 2010).

For teachers and students, OER (i) provide access to global content that can be localised without restrictions, (ii) give them more choice about learning resources and (iii) create inclusive learning communities (Butcher, 2011). OER also allows teachers to produce material that is adapted for their classes. Where most textbooks will have their strengths and weaknesses, OER material allows faculty member to pull only strong material into their class. Along with presenting one's own material, OER gateways also allow materials to be modified by other faculty around the world.

Open Educational Resources have become significantly important in education systems across the world. However, since the literature's lack of studies investigating students' perception towards OER in Indian set up, this study may provide useful results for the literature especially showing how students perceive OER in Indian context.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study was carried out with the following objectives

1. To find out the Open Educational Resources used by students to supplement lecture notes.
2. To explore the platforms used by students to share knowledge with peers.
3. To study the perception of Post Graduate students towards Open Educational Resources with regard to :



- a) Sharing of knowledge and learning resources,
- b) Adaptation and use of OER,

### Research Questions

- 1) What Open Educational Resources are used by students to supplement their lecture notes?
- 2) What platforms are used by students to share knowledge among peers?
- 3) What are the Perception of Post Graduate students towards Open Educational Resources with regard to knowledge sharing, adaptation and use, quality and motivation?

### Methodology

The sample constituted 150 Post Graduate Arts students of Rama Devi Women's University selected by simple random sampling technique. A Perception Scale for students was developed by the investigator. It was a five point scale consisting Strongly Agreed(SA) , Agreed(A) , Undecided(UD) , Disagreed(DA) , Strongly Disagreed(SD).

**Table 1: Number of Students Responding to the Questionnaire**

Economics	Education	Gender St.	Hindi	Home Science	English	Odia
24(96.0)	25(100)	23(92.0)	22(88.0)	14(56.0)	20(80.0)	22(88.0)

*Numbers and percentage of responses of students across Post Graduate programmes*

**Table 2: Resources Used by Students to Supplement Lecture Notes**

	Never %	Sometimes %	Often %	Very often %	Always %
Wikipedia	7(4.66)	26(17.33)	27(18)	37(24.66)	53(35.33)
YouTube	10(6.66)	17(11.33)	28(18.66)	39(26)	56(37.33)
Journal Database	40(26.67)	74(49.33)	22(14.67)	20(13.33)	16(10.66)
Others (specify)	69(46)	52(34.67)	13(8.67)	14(9.33)	2(1.33)

The two major online resources used by students are Wikipedia and YouTube with 35.33 and 37.33 percent of students respectively claiming to use it for educational purposes.



Only 13.33% and 10.66% students use Journal Database very often and always respectively. The acquaintance of students with Wikipedia and YouTube may be the cause behind the use of these platforms. Students weren't very much well conversant with various journal databases which might be the reason behind its lesser use. Very few students use other OREs such as Open Courseware and online tutorials to supplement their lecture notes.

Percentage analysis is done to find out the perception of students towards sharing of knowledge and learning resources available online and the same is depicted in Table 3 given below.

**Table 3: Perception of Students towards Sharing of Knowledge and Learning Resources**

Sl. No	Statement	SA %	A %	UD %	DA %	SD %
1.	I feel happy using Open Educational Resources developed by other Universities/ Institutions.	56(37.33)	90(60)	4(2.67)	0	0
2.	It gives me pleasure if teachers adopts/adapts open educational resources .	74(49.33)	66(44)	8(5.33)	1(0.67)	1(0.67)
3.	I believe that sharing educational materials as OER will encourage others to do so as well.	84(56)	52(34.67)	11(7.33)	1(0.67)	2(1.33)
4.	Sharing of educational resources increases my profile amongst peers and others.	63(42)	74(49.33)	6(40)	5(3.33)	2(1.33)
5.	Sharing enhances my confidence as I see myself in part of larger community.	79(52.67)	56(37.33)	12(8)	29(19.33)	1(0.67)
6.	Teachers should use OER developed by other institutions during their lectures.	98(65.33)	39(26)	9(6)	3(2)	1(0.67)
7.	My university should share Open Educational Resources for free with other institutions.	99(66)	30(20)	12(8)	4(2.67)	5(3.33)
8.	I collaborate with peers in accessing OER.	59(39.33)	68(45.33)	17(11.33)	5(3.33)	1(0.67)

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, UD=Undecided, DA=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

Majority of the students have given a very positive response towards the sharing of OER and believe that such sharing would enhance their confidence and make a space for them in their community as well as among their peers. Few students who claimed not to share learning resources might be concerned about producing a unique work that could reflect their effort and time taken to look for searching resources and preparing assignments. Students also reported that they collaborate with their peers in searching and retrieving resources online.

**Table 4: Platforms used by students for sharing resources with peers**

	<b>Never %</b>	<b>Sometimes %</b>	<b>Often %</b>	<b>Very often %</b>	<b>Always %</b>
Email	3(2)	9(6)	7(4.67)	30(20)	101(67.33)
YouTube	2(1.33)	8(5.33)	21(14)	65(43.33)	54(34)
Facebook	4(2.67)	4(2.67)	8(5.33)	55(36.67)	79(52.67)
Google+	4(2.67)	9(6)	12(8)	44(29.33)	81(54)
Twitter	40(26.67)	79(52.67)	19(12.67)	9(6)	3(2)
Others (specify)	87(58)	44(29.33)	7(4.67)	7(4.67)	5(3.33)

Table 4 reveals that 67.33 percent of students use email (always) to share resources with their peers and this is the highest reported mode for sharing, followed by Google and Facebook with 54% and 52.67% students respectively reporting to use them always. This may possibly due to the wide use of these platforms by students and as such would use them more for educational purpose. The other networking site such as twitter and others did not score above 10.percent as choices for sharing resources with peers.

**Table 5: Perception towards adaptation and use of Open Educational Resources**

Sl. No.	Statement	SA %	A %	UD %	DA %	SD %
1.	I adopt OER for my learning as they fulfil my academic needs.	84(56)	43(28.67)	10(6.67)	9(6)	4(2.67)
2.	I am well versed in information and communication technologies (ICT) needed to adopt and use OER.	75(50)	63(42)	8(5.33)	4(2.67)	1(0.67)
3.	I am aware of various open licences available to allow others to reuse recourses.	69(46)	52(34.67)	13(8.67)	14(9.33)	2(1.33)
4.	OER saves time of students.	101(67.33)	30(20)	7(4.67)	9(6)	3(2)
5.	If OERs are appropriate in their content, I prefer to use them.	83(55.33)	49(32.67)	9(6)	7(4.67)	2(1.33)
6.	OERs assist the developing countries to have quality materials	.61((40.67)	65(43.33)	12(8)	7(4.67)	5(3.33)
7.	I access educational resources that have been peer-reviewed by experts.	57(38)	61(40.67)	19(12.67)	8(5.33)	5(3.33)
8.	OER gives me opportunities to learn new things.	95(63.33)	40(26.67)	7(4.67)	4(2.67)	4(2.67)
9.	OER provides access to best materials and teachers.	70(46.67)	64(42.67)	10(6.67)	4(2.67)	2(1.33)

The above table shows a consistent agreement among students towards the adaptation and use of OER with 63.33% of students strongly believing that it gives them opportunity to learn new things whereas 46.67% students strongly agree that it provides them access to best learning materials. As perceived by students, they use OERs for learning purposes because it saves their time. Students' efficiency in information and communication technologies and their awareness of various open licences may be the responsible factors behind such positive attitude of students towards the use of OER.

### **Policy Implications**

Educational policies should emphasize integrating OER into formal and informal learning environments, encouraging both students and teachers to make full use of these resources.

**Enhance ICT Skill Development :** Policymakers should prioritize the development of ICT skills among students through specialized training programs, ensuring they are capable of accessing and utilizing diverse OERs, including international platforms.

**Promote Teacher Involvement in OER Adoption :** Teachers should be encouraged and supported through policy to play an active role in motivating students to adopt and engage with OERs, ensuring they become part of the educational culture.

**Collaboration with Technology Providers :** Educational institutions and policymakers should work with technology providers to simplify access to OERs, ensuring that the platforms remain user-friendly and accessible to students with varying levels of digital proficiency.

### **Conclusion**

Findings of the study reveal that students do recognise the significance of open resources for the purpose of education and believe that its use and sharing would create a place for them among their peers. Students also believed that the technologies used for OERs are simple and easy to use and it should be made available to public free of cost. However, efforts should be made by teachers, policy makers and other stake holders of education to enhance the ICT skills of students so that they can access various OERs (least used by them) available at international level.

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## Spiritually Oriented Education for a Sustainable Development

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### Abstract

*Sustainability is characterized by its ability to foster long-term rational capability. At its core, sustainability emphasizes the positive impact of an organization on all stakeholders, with a particular focus on leveraging internal human resources. The success of any institution is primarily dependent on the strength of its workforce and the implementation of effective, sustainable HR strategies. In today's dynamic environment, employees face immense pressure to prove their value while striving to create an innovative and results-driven workforce. Adopting sustainable practices increases cost efficiency by promoting responsiveness and communication while also addressing environmental concerns. Both personal and professional commitments contribute to lasting environmental impacts. The integration of creativity with business practices can influence mindsets, leading to cost reduction. Education plays a pivotal role in transforming employees' perspectives and ways of thinking. Spirituality, whether in a tangible or intangible form, can be an asset in workforce development by nurturing a sense of interconnectedness and shared purpose. Modern organizations seek a committed workforce, as purposeful and meaningful engagement with one's role is a crucial business consideration. This study explores the potential advantages of incorporating workplace spirituality and provides recommendations for HR professionals to effectively integrate these principles within their organizations.*

**Keywords-** Sustainability, Education, Workplace spirituality, Human resource practitioners

## Introduction

The trademark of sustainability is that it brings about enduring rational capability. The fundamental principle of sustainability lies in maximizing the positive impact of an organization for all stakeholders, with a strong emphasis on leveraging internal human resources. People are at the core of any organization, playing a crucial role in coordinating with other elements of production. An institution's success is largely driven by the strength of its man power and its strategic execution. In today's globalized and highly competitive landscape, employee performance is a key factor in enhancing organizational effectiveness, enabling businesses to navigate an unpredictable and evolving work environment. Currently, the primary focus of organizations is on empowering their workforce to secure long-term benefits. The need for a dedicated and reliable workforce to achieve organizational objectives has emerged as a significant area of research within management education and behavioral sciences. Education is the most dynamic tool that can be used to ensure sustainability in organizations. Innovation coupled with corporatedevelopments can transform the mindsets of individuals thereby helping in cutting the expenses. Instruction depicts a crucial part as it alters the working class mindset and their angle of thinking. Modern establishmentsencouraging workplace spiritualitysuch as clubbing together employees' psychological needs, impetusto work and inspiring them to find meaning in work, often boosts organizational commitment(Jena & Pradhan,2014). Thus, workplace spirituality (WS) can be considered a major construct in creating sustainable business organizations.Spirituality can serve as a meaningful approach to fostering a strong connection between employees and their supervisors by establishing a positive psychological contract. This bond enhances trust, commitment, organizational loyalty, active participation, and a sense of fairness in the workplace, ultimately leading to greater overall engagement and cooperation.(Guest & Conway 1997; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). HR effectiveness can be best seen as a dependent variable linked to sustainable practice as previous models on sustainability literature focusing on development of sound strategies.In regard to this, the current paper has made an attempt to concentrate on the literature by probing the theoretical and practical functionality of WS and explicitly defining the relationships between spirituality and sustainability leading to "HR effectiveness".



### **Role of spiritual education in endorsing sustainability**

Education is not just about gaining knowledge; it's about discovering new perspectives and unlocking potential you never knew existed. Teaching is an indispensable instrument for nurturing sustainable organizations. One who has a firm hold over knowledge reins the power. Thus, it becomes a necessity to consider education as top priority while implementing sustainability programs in organizations. In this era of globalization, learning is the sole means to succeed at any workplace be it a corporate organization or an academic institution. In spite of this a major section adult learners in the emerging economies are uneducated and meagre chance of endorsing sustainability. Currently, employees are under immense strain to prove their value, encountering challenges in building an innovative, results-driven workforce. Sustainable practices help conserve financial resources by promoting awareness and effective communication while also addressing environmental concerns. Both personal and professional commitment play a crucial role in shaping long-term environmental impact. In order to face these daunting challenges quite easily, it is crucial for students of higher learning to be alert of our SDG challenges and be updated with new prospects. Across the world, the quality of life we experience is deeply influenced by our ability to make logical and well-informed decisions. Spirituality, therefore, is seen as a pathway to personal transformation, encompassing diverse faith-based traditions, rituals, beliefs, and various forms of worship. It serves as a guiding force that shapes an individual's mindset and approach to life. While often associated with inner growth and emotional well-being, spirituality has also been examined from a materialistic perspective, particularly in its role in driving economic progress. By fostering ethical decision-making, a sense of purpose, and collective responsibility, spirituality contributes to sustainable growth and social harmony. Integrating spiritual values with rational thinking can lead to balanced decision-making, benefiting both individuals and society.

Zajonc (2000) suggests a statement of authenticity where knowledge is regarded as an occurrence, not an entity. According to him, education is the only means for personal makeover. Sustainable relationships are initiated by flirting, gradually proceeding towards drawing one's attention towards oneself. Once they have achieved it, they can concentrate on things that brings happiness in people's life. When one has attained the impetus for meeting each other's needs, the bonding becomes more secure. But sometimes things may not work out as planned.

These relationships at times may be superficial. Attraction is imperative, but it must be supported by one's capacity to unswervingly keep another individual person's best curiosity in their soul. Therefore many questions remain unanswered to building a strong rapport within a relationship. The 3R are the pillars of spiritualism that is REFLECTION->REALIZATION->RECOGNITION

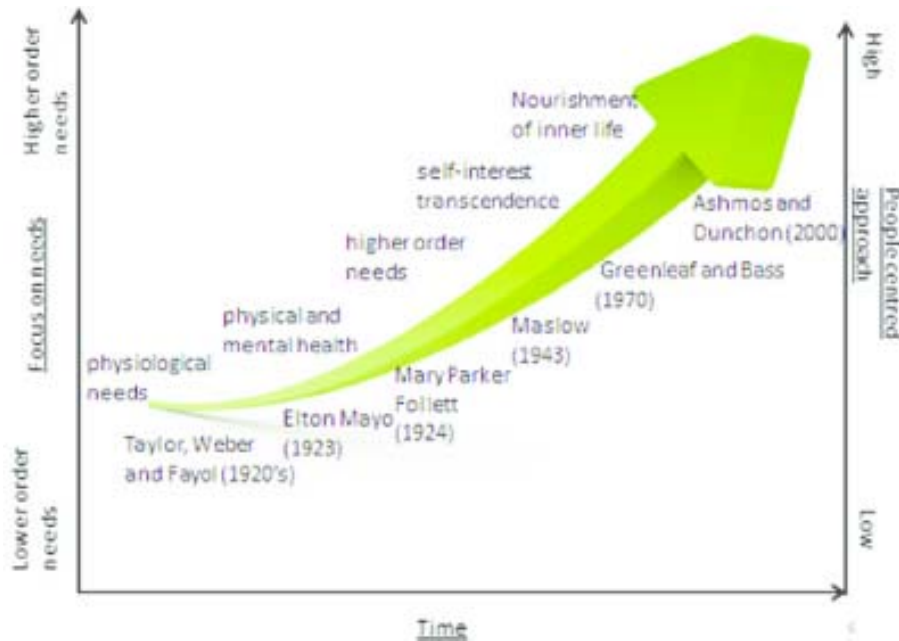
### **Human Resources and Sustainability: An Integrated Approach**

Today, organizations increasingly prioritize sustainability initiatives, prompting a critical inquiry into their motives and exploring the essential role human resource professionals play in this evolving context. The growing emphasis on sustainability reflects an organization's desire to align internal objectives with broader social responsibilities, actively engaging various stakeholders in collaborative decision-making processes. Incorporating sustainability into organizational practices involves balancing diverse stakeholder values and interests while maintaining strategic clarity.

Effective stakeholder engagement, whether internal or external, demands advanced capabilities including reflective thinking, strategic negotiation, critical evaluation, conflict resolution, and cooperative communication. These skills are integral for HR professionals, positioning human resources as a vital component in driving sustainable organizational practices.

In recent years, management theory has experienced significant transformations, notably through the integration of holistic and spiritual perspectives. This shift includes moving from predictable and controlled management styles to more flexible, trust-based, and empowering approaches. Management practices have evolved from simplistic views to embracing complexity, transitioning from conventional relationships to new age leadership, and shifting from isolated, self-focused attitudes toward collective responsibility and interconnectedness. Modern management increasingly prioritizes a balance between financial performance, employee well-being, ethical considerations, and social responsibilities. This shift also reflects a broader philosophical movement from ego-driven leadership toward stewardship, emphasizing a deeper sense of purpose and spiritual awareness in organizational life.

This emerging paradigm shift has been termed as "the spirituality movement". Ashmos and Duchon (2000) have laid emphasis on this spirituality movement by giving importance to the spiritual dimension in organizations. It symbolizes employees' meaningful enquiry and objective in work, an inner self and also arousing the sense of community which has been illustrated in **Fig.1** below:



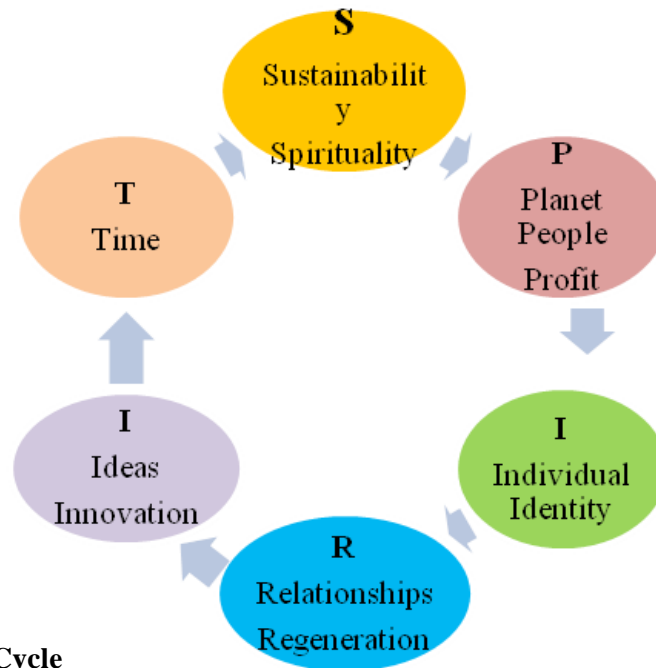
From a broader viewpoint, effective HR practices—such as leveraging employees’ skills, creative potential, and willingness to embrace challenges—are essential drivers of sustainable development, linking organizational sustainability goals directly to improved business outcomes. These HR strategies enhance organizational effectiveness by increasing employee retention, strengthening commitment, and positively influencing employees’ experience of the work culture. Despite widespread recognition of these benefits, there is limited research simultaneously exploring the intersection of sustainable HR trends highlighting the importance of viewing them as interconnected components of a unified framework. Thus, organizations increasingly regard human capital as central to achieving sustainability goals. Additionally, many businesses now actively integrate spiritual values into workplace practices, acknowledging its positive impact on employee morale, authenticity, and overall productivity. Encouraging workplace spirituality allows employees to connect deeply with their inner selves, fostering genuine satisfaction, increased engagement, and stronger organizational commitment.

### **Spirituality—at the heart of Sustainability**

Spirituality plays a vital role in changing our lives and helping us to achieve in every sphere of our lives. Our lives have been fragmented in pieces due to the challenges we face in our everyday life. Spirituality helps us to integrate life as a whole and the resolution to face every hurdle with ease. Modern organizations are facing troubles like stress, absenteeism and workplace bullying due to lack of spirituality at workplace. According to Ashmos & Duchon (2000) spirituality is basically comprised of: inner Life, meaningful work, sense of community, and orientation with organizational values. In the context of modern progress, the term 'development' refers to initiatives led by influential individuals aimed at promoting growth and empowerment among marginalized or less privileged groups. If individuals lack spiritual maturity, their self-centred mindset often leads them to question what strategies can be developed for their own benefit rather than for the collective good. This mindset fosters exploitation and the accumulation of wealth, ultimately resulting in inequality. It prioritizes material possessions over meaningful relationships, whereas spirituality emphasizes sharing wisdom, knowledge, and inner growth, which hold far greater value than material wealth. This, in turn, paves the way for equality and sustainable development.

Sustainability is the ability to overcome challenges and continue progressing. In ecological terms, sustainability refers to how biological systems maintain their diversity and fertility over time. For humanity, it represents the capacity to sustain long-term relationships that contribute to psychological and spiritual well-being. The SPIRIT Cycle explains this concept in detail, highlighting how spiritual growth fosters resilience and interconnectedness. When individuals embrace spiritual values, they develop a sense of collective responsibility, leading to a more harmonious society. Ultimately, a sustainable future is one where emotional, ethical, and environmental well-being coexist, creating a balanced and equitable world. The SPIRIT Cycle given in

**Fig.2**



**Fig.2 SPIRIT Cycle**

**Source:** Spirituality: At the heart of Sustainability, Julian Crawford, Director ECO STEPS, ISSP Conference, Chicago, 10 May, 2013

Technology dominates modern workplaces to upsurge the incomes of the investors without any chief control disturbing the incomes, generating a loss of spirituality in work scenario (Khan, Khan, & Chaudhry, 2015).

Spirituality can help in sustainable development. Spirituality is that mental condition of mind that realizes the fact that truth is beyond the boundaries of materialistic world, status, doctrine, race or geographical margins. It is prevalent across the globe, and embracing positive spiritual thoughts is a significant aspect of human well-being. Spirituality plays an important role in achieving sustainable development by helping individuals recognize that ultimate truths transcend material possessions, social status, beliefs, race, and geographic boundaries. It is globally relevant, and cultivating positive spiritual attitudes greatly contributes to human well-being. Additionally, spirituality promotes collective awareness, influencing the way individuals perceive life and

interact with their surroundings. By moderating the pursuit of material wealth, it encourages a balanced lifestyle, essential for genuine sustainable advancement.

Spirituality emphasizes self-awareness as a foundation from which meaningful relationships and personal growth emerge. Mahatma Gandhi aptly captured this principle, stating, “Be the change you want to see in the world.” Embracing spirituality fosters compassion, transforming attitudes toward nature, discouraging exploitation, and inspiring appreciation and protection of the environment. Consequently, spirituality serves as an initial step toward sustainable living. Various religions globally advocate respect for nature, reinforcing the ancient wisdom of prioritizing simplicity over material extravagance.

As individuals advance on their spiritual journey, they often shift their focus away from materialistic pursuits and instead prioritize inner peace and contentment. This transformation fosters a deeper appreciation for life’s intangible aspects, such as mindfulness, gratitude, and emotional well-being. Engaging in spiritual practices like meditation cultivates mental clarity and tranquility, paving the way for a lifestyle centered around sustainability. By developing a mindful approach to consumption and personal fulfillment, individuals contribute to a more balanced and sustainable way of living.

Throughout history, renowned figures such as Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, and Albert Einstein have embodied these ideals. Their philosophies emphasized simplicity, introspection, and a commitment to ethical living. Swami Vivekananda promoted self-discipline and the pursuit of higher knowledge, while Mahatma Gandhi advocated for minimalism, self-sufficiency, and non-violence. Similarly, Albert Einstein, despite being a scientist, valued introspection and the pursuit of wisdom beyond material achievements. Their lives demonstrate that true fulfillment is not found in excessive material wealth but rather in wisdom, inner peace, and meaningful contributions to society.

Sustainability plays a crucial role in preserving both natural and human resources for future generations. By optimizing the use of available resources, society can maintain a harmonious balance that ensures long-term stability. Sustainability is best understood as the efficient utilization and recycling of resources in an eco-friendly manner, ensuring the protection of nature while fulfilling human needs. When people adopt sustainable practices, such as reducing waste, conserving energy, and supporting environmentally friendly innovations, they contribute to the overall health of the planet. This process is further strengthened by advancements in technology,

which allow for greater efficiency in resource management. However, technology alone is not sufficient to achieve sustainability; the active participation of individuals and communities is equally essential.

A key component of sustainability is the interconnectedness between individuals and their environment. Spirituality plays a significant role in fostering this sense of unity, helping individuals develop a deep appreciation for nature and their responsibilities toward society. When people cultivate mindfulness and a sense of collective responsibility, they are more likely to engage in sustainable practices. This mindset shift encourages ethical decision-making, fosters a greater sense of purpose, and strengthens community bonds. Through spiritual awareness, individuals learn to prioritize long-term well-being over short-term material gains, leading to a more responsible and compassionate society.

Innovation and education serve as powerful tools in driving sustainable development, particularly in rural areas. By investing in technological advancements and ensuring access to quality education, societies can empower individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to create a sustainable future. Through forward-thinking initiatives, rural communities can thrive by implementing eco-friendly agricultural practices, renewable energy solutions, and efficient resource management systems. This holistic approach fosters economic growth while maintaining ecological balance.

Ultimately, sustainability, supported by spirituality, education, and innovation, paves the way for a more fulfilling, harmonious, and content way of life. By integrating these principles into daily living, individuals and societies can work together toward a future that prioritizes well-being, environmental conservation, and ethical progress.

Learning of Spirituality must be imparted to children during school life by introducing spiritual books in their school curriculum and also by reading out ancient scriptures having spiritual relevance. Then only the seeds of this wonder ideas can blossom in their lives in the near future. Although, people have altered the drapery of natural environment through our spiritual mediation, it all depends upon us how we utilize our innate ability to take logical decisions when the sources are accessible. The growth of global movements in renewable energy and eco-friendly fields, along with the establishment of the World Forum on Sustainability, proves this point. Therefore, it is our responsibility, especially for the mass media, to raise awareness and highlight the importance of these issues.

Education is often narrowly associated with formal curricula, yet an equally crucial aspect lies in its implicit or unspoken dimensions. This underlying framework shapes the way individuals perceive knowledge, develop behavioral patterns, and engage with society, subtly reinforcing shared norms across vast populations. Whether deliberately structured by policymakers, curriculum designers, or societal influences—or emerging unintentionally—this embedded learning process plays a profound role in shaping collective thought and action.

Beyond institutionalized education, a wealth of learning experiences unfolds outside conventional systems, often operating on the periphery of formally recognized schooling. These alternative educational pathways are indispensable in unpacking the intricate relationship between learning and sustainability. Regardless of one's stance on its influence, education remains the bedrock of societal transformation, providing a platform for individuals to converge and deliberate on future trajectories. The plurality of perspectives regarding these trajectories is precisely what lends education its depth, ultimately weaving together the diverse aspirations and shared visions that shape human progress.

## **Conclusion**

Spirituality plays a vital role in molding people's personality and devising strategies to overcome stress of everyday life. Spirituality can serve as a powerful means of shaping human resources by cultivating a profound sense of interconnectedness and collective identity. This sense of belonging can manifest in tangible forms, such as community engagement, or in intangible ways, such as shared beliefs and values that influence workplace culture and social cohesion. Modern corporate organizations are embracing spirituality as they have a vision to work for the betterment of society. They display their corporate social responsibility through their establishment of many foundation that assist people in need. Nowadays organizations are pursuing a dedicated workforce that draws significant meaning from their job profile to perform well at workplace. Ethical and spiritual practices in the workplace boost productivity and profits while also strengthening the psychological connection between employees.



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## Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction: A Study on Teaching Professional Sucheta Panda

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### Abstract

*Nonetheless, while it is widely recognized that stress particularly occupational stress is detrimental to health, research confirms people still experience and accept it as part of life. There is hardly any profession that is free of stress; be it the corporate sector or as simple a field as academics. Concentrating now on academics only, it has been found through various research that the responsibilities of academicians have increased manifold, and now faculty members are supposed to play many other roles besides their traditional roles of teaching and research (Abbas et al, 2012). Traditionally university teaching has been perceived as a stress-free profession, particularly by those who are not related to this profession (Fischer, 1994). However, some recent studies suggest that university faculty is among the most stressed occupational groups (Iqbal and Kokash, 2011). Since the last two decades with the inflow of many private sector universities, higher education institutions are commonly labeled as stressful environments (Barkhuizen and Rothmann, 2008). The teaching profession was once viewed as a „low-stress occupation and they have been envied for tenure, light workloads, flexibility, and other perks such as foreign trips for study and conferences.*

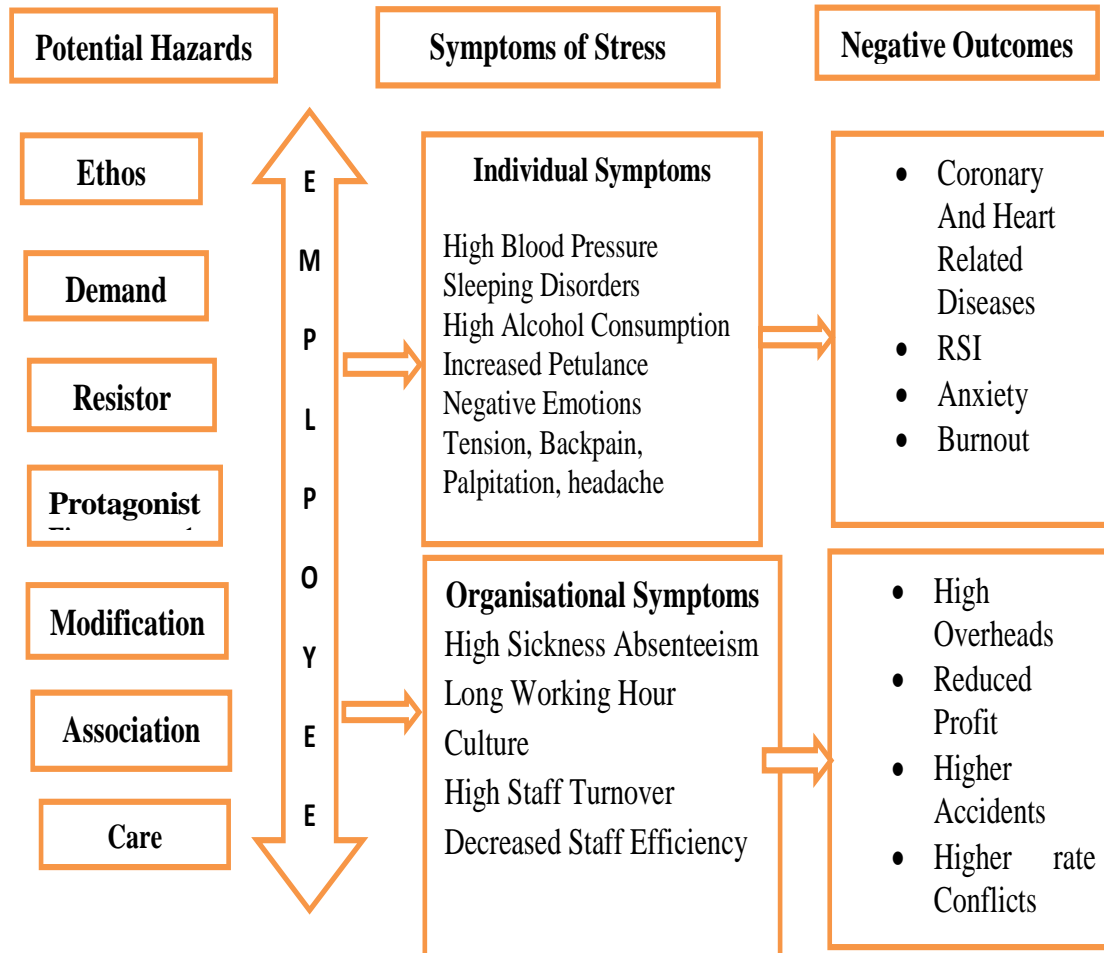
**Keywords:** *Occupational stress, Teaching Profession, Teachers, Job Satisfaction*

### Introduction

*“The harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources or needs of the worker. Job stress can lead to poor health and even injury”. (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 1999)*

“Occupational Stress” is an inevitable spectacle in individual life in today’s domain of fast industrial development and collective growth. Occupational stress is a psychological disorder that influences an individual’s professional excellence, health, efficiency, and efficacy. Academicians working in management institutions experience a peculiar variety of occupational stress. A noble profession like teaching can be labeled as a traumatic profession in this progressive society which can negatively distress the mental well-being and peace of academicians engaged in management institutions, on the other way it affects the teaching and learning environment. Occupational stress concerns a persistent form of the human being. Stress that arises in the professional sphere can be better accomplished by identifying the nerve-racking circumstances at the workplace and interpreting measures to overcome those environments (Quick, James Campbell; Henderson, Demetria F 2016). Literature was evident that occupational stress includes several features like work designing, operating hours organizational policies and procedures, professional position, environmental aspects, relationships, and personal aspects. According to the survey of Cigna International Health, 2023 “almost 12,000 workers around the world, 91% of 18-to-24-year-olds report being stressed compared to 84% on average. Research indicates Gen Z is emerging as the most stressed demographic in the workplace and struggling mightily to cope”.

Traditionally teaching profession is considered a truncated hectic profession, but during the past two decades the situation has become worse and most importantly management teaching profession and professionals are experiencing high-stress and challenging situations. Worldwide teaching is turning into a highly challenging profession. Rigorous surveys conducted globally exposed extensive unease about the consequences of stress on academician, their perception of well-being, and their enthusiasm to remain in the teaching profession. Cotton and Hart (2003) reported that occupational Stress is an expanding crisis worldwide, which results in substantial damage both to profession and professionals. Stress is defined as “a state of psychological and physiological imbalance resulting from between situational demand and the individual’s ability and motivation to meet those needs” (Hans Seyle, 1956). Occupational stress is an extremely commonplace psychological fact that is dominant among individuals working in a variety of duties and occupations. As education is a human assistance occupation, the stress surrounding the teaching occupation is significant and may have far-comprehensive concerns on the absolute education approach. Management teaching profession is a complicated method in which the academician is projected to demonstrate several potentialities and skills. This triggers an academician to encounter stress in the occupation. **Figure: 1, Source:**(Griffith, Steptoe & Cropley, 1999, Schultz & Schultz, 2002).



**Figure: 1, Source:**(Griffith, Steptoe & Cropley, 1999, Schultz & Schultz, 2002).

### Occupational Stress Model

Teaching and learning is a progression that improves the character of the student and is only possible by the interface between the students and their atmosphere, and academicians are the most strongest and powerful instruments for student's growth and development. The responsibility of academics is not only confining to conveying information and acquaintance only, but in enlargement the nationwide attitude improving a logic of effectiveness and capability among the imminent generations, and formulating persons for the precise category of occupation. Occupational stress among the academicians of management institutions is really high because

of the responsibilities like targeted-oriented admission, classroom teaching, course completion, intensive, placement opportunities, personality development, communication growth, and also the conflict inside the institutions. For eras, learning and teaching have been categorized as a profession that is “emotionally taxing and potentially frustrating” (Lambert, O'Donnell, Kusherman, & McCarthy, 2006). It is also observed from the literature that academicians belonging to management institutions quit their profession at a significantly higher rate than other professions (Minarik, Thornton, & Perreault, 2003).

Numerous research has shown that academicians of management institutions experienced strain in several circumstances, such as managing classrooms, discipline among students, planning lectures, organizing extracurricular activities, class monitoring, attaining administrative responsibilities, managing queries of students and parents (Chaplain, 2008; Kyriacou & Kunc, 2007, Brown 2005, McCarthy et al., 2009). Research is also evident that managing students' attitudes, excessive work pressure, time management, reforms in the educational sector, and preparation for educational review, are the most frequently experienced sources of occupational stress. For occupational stress of management institution's academicians' poor institutional policies, poor administrative cooperation, unfair division of work, less supportive peers, subordinates also responsible. According to the most recent Academics Follow-up Survey, 32% of teaching professionals who switch from one institution to another, cited “poor working conditions” as an imperative purpose for their decision, and over 37% of academicians who left the job stated they were leaving to “pursue a job outside of teaching” (Cox et al., 2007). Females, working in management institutions experience a comparatively higher level of occupational stress than their male peers because of students' behaviour (Klassen, 2010). Among the academicians of management institutions, male professionals experience low stress and high job satisfaction whereas females have just adverse experiences (Pal, 2011). In his study of job satisfaction and occupational stress among teaching professionals, found male teachers to be more satisfied and less stressed with their jobs as compared to their female counterparts. It is also observed that the less efficient and effective teachers of management institutions have more occupational stress (Rana 2014). In the teaching profession excessive of occupational stress is always harmful because teachers are responsible for the holistic and entire development of students which hampers due to teacher occupational stress, anxiety, depression, excessive workloads, and lack of a familiar institutional environment.

### **Causes of Occupational Stress**

Occupational stress is commonly defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the demands of the job exceed the capabilities, needs, or resources

of the worker”. Generally, occupational stress arises and is experienced by employees in the work place during the course of his/her employment and it is different levels like mild, moderate, and high for different reasons. During the ancient time when the term stress was not introduced to biological science or behavioral science, it existed in the form of happiness and sorrow. In simple terms all the favorable things to us are happiness and all the unfavorable items are sorrow like hot water in winter is happiness and the same hot water in summer is sorrow. So, it depends upon us how we take our surroundings, stressfully or joyfully.

**Work Overload :** To perform economic activity to satisfy social, and economic needs is universal and important too. But here the prime concern is to do work in such a way so, that it will not act as a superset. “Work is a subset of like not superset”. To lead a better life, we all struggle professionally but sometimes for several reasons employees get over loaded with work and work overload is a prime reason for occupational stress.

**Colleagues :** Human beings are social creatures, and they need society and social beings to stay happy in both the happiness and sorrowful moment. Professional co-workers play an important role in the life of every employee. A cooperative and supportive colleague is essential to reduce occupational stress and vice versa. Employees spend their valuable time in the organization and when they don’t find supportive co-workers, they have high amount of occupational stress. As we all know when we share our internal feelings and pain in front of a cooperative individual, we get relaxed and balanced, so this is also applicable in our professional life too.

**Role Uncertainty :** Uncertainty and lack of security in the job create work stress in the organization. Because of the uncertainty always employees are in a stress mood and are afraid to meet the future expectations of the own and family members. This kind of thought reduces their performance level, skills, and efficiencies and this is another important cause of occupational stress.

**Occupation :** The nature of the job and work profile are also responsible for occupational stress such as the sectors that involve risk and hazards. Sometimes it’s the job demand to do several kinds of activities that causes stress among employees.

**Annoyance :** Both self-irritation and working with irritated colleague creates work stress and it destroys occupational harmony and well-being. Too much annoyance is harmful to individual peace and satisfaction, and it creates occupational stress among the employees.

**Job Duration :** According to the World Health Organization, “long work hours have a causal effect on health and also claims that 745000 deaths were caused by long working hours” in the year 2016. They conducted a systematic study, and many participants were from blue-collar occupations, pink-collar occupations, and white-collar occupations. It found that men are more identified with work-related burdens and diseases too. Too many working hours lead to several diseases and medical practitioners also suggest that while employees work for more than 55 long working hours, they experience a 35% higher risk of heart stroke and 17% more risk of cardio vascular diseases. Long and excessively stressful working hours lead to breast cancer among women.

**Sexual Harassment :** There is much evidence of literature that reveals that sexual harassment affects adversely the professional over all well-being and affects badly to women. It is also true that women who face higher levels of sexual annoyance perform poorly in the organization. sexual harassment is not specific to any gender, it takes place with any gender and the harasser also be of any gender and it is also not necessarily compulsory that the harasser be of the opposite sexual identity. In the organizational structure, it is more likely to be seen that the harasser belongs to a professional of a higher position but not always. There are many forms of sexual harassment such as rape, trying to rape, sensational contact, forcible sexual performance, sharing of sexually identified photos, videos, and massages, verbal and non verbal harassment, cracking of jokes referencing sexual acts, and opening with sexual relations and fantasies.

**Workplace Bullying :** Both in structured and unstructured organizations workplace bullying refers to the poor behaviors and poor treatment of employees and managers towards other employees. Here the main concern is about power distribution and power imbalances, the employees having more power and authority in the organization engage in bullies towards the employees having lower positions and authority. Bullying of employees includes utter abuse, psychological exploitation, and corporal abuse, and it results in depression and lower productivity in the workplace. Workplace misbehavior impacts a lot in the mind of employees and creates complex and self-neglected behaviors.

**Life and Career Changes :** Every individual expects a good life and career for their own well-being. Any kind of adverse changes that arise in life and career options like not getting the required favorable life options or not owning the career option as expected creates stress among the individual in a greater response.

**Role Characteristics :** This is another type of feature of an individual stress or that exists within the individual itself and the individual fights with his/her own personality. This is a situation where our roles are completely unknown to us and we never have an idea about it, simply we can say it as an unconscious stage for the individual.

**Social Change :** When any kind of change happens in our society or our immediate environment then also our body and mind experience stress. When someone changes location from one place to another, a college change, a school change, going to a new family after marriage, all these are the clear pictures of social change that generates stress in the individual mind.

**Technological Changes :** For a growing society technology is required and on the other side society needs technological progress for its growth as well as prosperity. And to deal with society it is a requirement to be technology-friendly and tech-savvy without which we will leave behind from development. As with the above statements, it is also true that sometimes it is difficult to learn new things after a certain period and there, we unconsciously call the stress element. Without technological knowledge, our productivity is reduced, and every single task consumes extra time with more trials and errors.

**Lack of Group Cohesiveness :** Group cohesiveness stands for respect for each other in a group and team, commitment towards others in the group, and every group members should be responsible for the accountability of others, all these are the positive impacts that an individual requires when starts living in a group and without the group cohesion individual experienced stress.

### **Organisational Policy**

When an individual works for the organization it is his/her responsibility to correlate personal objectives to organization all objectives to work peacefully and smoothly. Every organization follows a specific kind of standard norms of its own, it is the only employee who needs to manage because the organization can't change its policy for every single employee. In the organization, if the employees are easy with the policy, then there are no disturbances and if not, then the stress component starts to play its own role.

According to the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), there are some practical and efficient steps to reduce occupational stress in the organization.

- We need to ensure that the employees are not overloaded, and they are assigned the task as according to their capacity and the available resources.



- Designing jobs in such a way that they will be more meaningful and create opportunities to use their skills.
- Transparency in mentioning the employee's job role.
- To manage occupational stress, managers may supervise the workload of esteemed employees regularly and organize stress management programs.
- Create open opportunities for employees to participate in the organization's decision-making.
- Improves job security and future development opportunities for employees.
- Opportunity for personal get-togethers among workers to build good inter personal relationships.
- Manage work schedules in such a way that they will meet the demands of the organization.
- Abolition of work place discrimination related to gender, community, caste, colour, race, religion, personal identity, and physical identity.
- Promote the participative leadership style in the organization so, that it will be helpful to reduce stress.
- Promote an equilibrium work-life approach in the organization. Job recognition for effective performance.
- Fairness and job neutrality toward employees.
- Inspire mindfulness.
- Inspire them to move regularly.
- Supportive towards professionals during their difficult times.
- Assistance plan for the benefit of professionals.
- Creation of self-respect and satisfaction.
- Opportunities for participatory leadership style in the organization.

### **Alarming Situation of Occupational Stress**

Occupational stress is so persistent that we recognize it as a truth of existence and life, but the fact is that challenging occupations do more than make us disappointed, and unhappy it edge major mental and physical effects.

**High risk of Heart Attack :** According to a study conducted in the year 2011 and published in the journal PLOS ONE, employees who work for more than 11 hours a day and twice a week are more expected to suffer from heart attack and other heart-related disorders. Depression will also be caused and it reduces life expectancy, lack of sleep, and high risk of stroke and attacks.

**Risk of Diabetes :** Women professionals engaged in stressful jobs and targeted occupations are at a higher risk of diabetes and it is also the same for men.

**Wrenched Relationship :** Occupational stress creates risk for personal emotions, sentiments and relationships. Research says that in the case of men 79% and women 61% have relationship issues caused by occupational stress.

**Burnout :** Burnout is a situation when we receive information from our brain to take a break and it's very frequently experienced by professionals due to excessive workload, sentimental exhaustion, dissatisfactory work, and the workplace.

**Low Emotional Wellbeing :** Research says that 15% of professionals described that occupational stress disturbed their mental health, well-being, and peace. They also reported that the level of stress they are experiencing is so high which breaks them emotionally and sentimentally. Due to high occupational stress employees get disconnected from their fellow being and distracted emotionally.

**Accelerated Ageing :** Naturally aging is good, but the literature shows that occupational stress accelerates the aging of professionals and that high levels of occupational stress result in the shortest telomeres.

### **Objectives of the study**

- To study occupational stress and its differential impact on the teaching community.
- To study the job satisfaction level of teaching professionals.

### **Research Gap**

- The studies of occupational stress in the teaching community are unexplored because of the stereo type perception of society and other professionals.
- The research study of occupational stress only includes female academicians and the study of male faculty members is ignored.

### **Teaching Profession and Occupational Stress**

High-stress levels are plaguing the teaching profession, but one factor makes a big difference in terms of whether teachers are still satisfied with their job: their ability to cope with the stress. A team of researchers from the University of Missouri analyzed survey data of 2,300 teachers from Missouri and Oklahoma who were asked to rate their levels of work stress, job

satisfaction, and how well they feel they can cope with work stress. They found that teachers who say they are not coping well with work stress report far lower job satisfaction compared to teachers who say they have found ways to manage workplace pressures. The role of a teacher is filled with challenges that are devastating and occasionally depressing (Wiggins 2015). Coping refers to the action taken by an individual concerning the internal and external demands of a situation perceived as threats. Teachers need to cope with things that transpire to them and the things that occur within them. Having a positive attitude allows the teacher to practice professional efficacy by handling problems correctly. They engaged in positive coping mechanisms for a corresponding volume and level of stress trending the teachers. Conversely, when a teacher faces challenges poorly, this response precipitates a state of stress that is potentially dangerous to their performance and wellness.

### **Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction in the Teaching Profession**

“Job satisfaction was a positive or pleasurable reaction resulting from the appraisal of one’s job, job achievement, or job experiences”. (*Locke, 2002*)

Job satisfaction is the satisfactory or negative independent response with which employees view their job responsibility. It results when there is correspondence between demands, job expectations of employees, and requirements of employees. It conveys the degree of coordination between the expectations of employees and the amount of rewards received by employees from the organization. It is also true that the physical and mental condition of employees is always important for job satisfaction and productivity. “Job satisfaction is defined as an effective or emotional response toward various facts of one’s job” (Kreitner&Kinicki, 1998). Presently it is a common misconception spreading in society that professionals involved in the teaching profession are not satisfied with their jobs specifically management faculty members because of reasons like excessive administrative responsibilities, poor peer culture, and lack of opportunities for personal growth. Irrespective of gender, job satisfaction is influenced by factors like personal growth, promotion, increment, self-esteem, good HR policies, positive coordination, efficient staffing, and a supportive institutional environment.

### **Findings**

- Due to occupational stress academicians suffer from diseases like high blood pressure, neck pain, feeling low, asthenopia, hypertension, anxiety, spondylitis, sleeplessness, heart problems, irritation, digestive issues, joint pain, schizophrenia, psoriasis, vertigo, psychosis.

- Despite different affiliations and standards all institutions work for an average 8 hours per day which is satisfactory. Still, some institutions seem to be harassed intentionally. Employer approach for late evening schedule, organize meetings after the 8 hours of the scheduled time, organize seminar / workshop on Sunday, deduct official holiday which results from the higher level of occupational stress and reduce job satisfaction too.
- In both the institutions and university, teaching staff are overloaded with administrative responsibilities, which causes higher occupational stress and lack of job satisfaction.
- In the workplace academicians face difficulties of both financial and non-financial benefits, which is a key for occupational stress and job dissatisfaction.

### **Suggestions & Recommendations**

Every teaching institution needs productive and efficient professionals for growth and development and employees need continuous and constant motivation to be productive without any distress environment. It is also an obvious human tendency to take the job and environment seriously which creates stress, job dissatisfaction, and incidence of work-life imbalance. So, it is wise and advisable for every institution to have a scope of counseling by registered counselors for professionals who cooperate with the employees to settle down mentally and physically. Teaching profession and professionals are like rollers, they grow and shine the way they roll, so continuous learning is a requirement for faculties to survive and sustain. Professors of management institutions are continuous learners, so for learning purposes, they need sabbaticals and study leave with pay because their learning will be an additional advantage for the institutions. There are several proven methods to deal with stress positively that help the employees to balance their personal and professional lives such as meditation, exercises, music, reading good books, aerobics, Zumba, and many more, so employees expect a gymnasium with professional experts, motivational talks in regular intervals, good cafeteria etc to chill with colleague. Generally, an employee of any institution works for financial (salary) and non-financial benefits (medical benefits, health insurance, transport facilities, working lunch). Apart from the above the faculty members also recommended things for a stress-free environment of institutions and smooth running of academics with job satisfaction, which are as follows:

- To reduce occupational stress academicians, need to adopt healthy diets, physical workouts, exercises, practice of mindfulness, and social-emotional outlets.

- It is recommended that creche facilities inside the organization campus can widely reduce the level of occupational stress associated with academicians.
- A strong faculty association needs to be formulated with neutral representation to address academicians' challenges and difficulties.

### **Conclusion**

Job is an essential part of our life and we spend much of our hours in occupation and organization. After our family it is the job only where we are attached and involved with commitment so, it needs to be flexible, familiar, and stress-free. Like other teaching profession also need to be modified with stress-free programs, orientation, awareness campaigns, and mental well ness workshops because teachers with stress, anxiety, and dissatisfaction can't act efficiently and are not able to show justice to the students and society. The teaching profession and teachers need to be specially taken care of by the organization and the government because teaching is such a profession where professors teach to another profession (David Hasilkorn 1991). Teachers are those people in the university who inspire their students to have some dreams, follow their dreams, help to discover the student's research, and innovation and motivate the students to use their potential fullest. Teachers are the most responsible and respectable individuals in our society because their valuable efforts decide the future and fate of society as a whole. Teachers need to be very happy with their job because they are the primary source to our future generation towards nation-building and new innovation. It is our foremost responsibility to think about teachers and the teaching profession and how they get optimum satisfaction out of that which help them to maintain equilibrium in their professional and personal life. And lastly, teachers are contributing more to our future generation than other professions so, they need to stay happy, satisfied, and blessed to contribute from generation to generation.

### **Limitations**

- This study is confined to the teaching community (Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professors) of institutions and universities.
- Time constraint is another limitation because this research study demands a prescribed time limit to complete the work successfully.
- Financial constraints are also there during this study.

### Further Scope of Study

This study understands the handling of occupational stress in teaching communities by the human resource management department and the occupational stress management system. This present study would help institutions and universities to know the factors of occupational stress and to reduce the amount of stress in academicians. After analyzing occupational stress institutions would initiate to achieve job satisfaction among academicians.

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## A Survey of Academia's Preferences towards the Evaluation Process of B.Ed. Programme

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### Abstract

*Preferences of Teachers and Students towards the evaluation process of B.Ed. may have an important impact on holistic development of Academia. There are two types of testing format of evaluation process of B. Ed programme in DBRAU Agra named mixed type test (objective questions, short and long answer type questions) which is the old pattern and the new one is MCQ (Multiple choice Questions).*

*The objectives of this research paper are to know about preference of students and teachers about The MCQ Format and Mixed questions-based testing tools of Evaluation process.*

*Survey method is used and 160 and 80 samples of students and teachers are chosen respectively and a half of the sample of students is chosen from female candidates which are selected through stratified random sampling technique. A self-made questionnaire is prepared and a Google form is also created to approach the targeted sample.*

*The MCQ format is most preferred by students but is not preferred by teachers. The role of gender is not significant in deciding preferences towards assessment testing tools while the mixed questions-based testing format of evaluation is most preferred by teachers, but not as much by students.*

**Keywords:** *Testing, Evaluation, Examination, Preference and DBRAU Agra etc.*

### Introduction

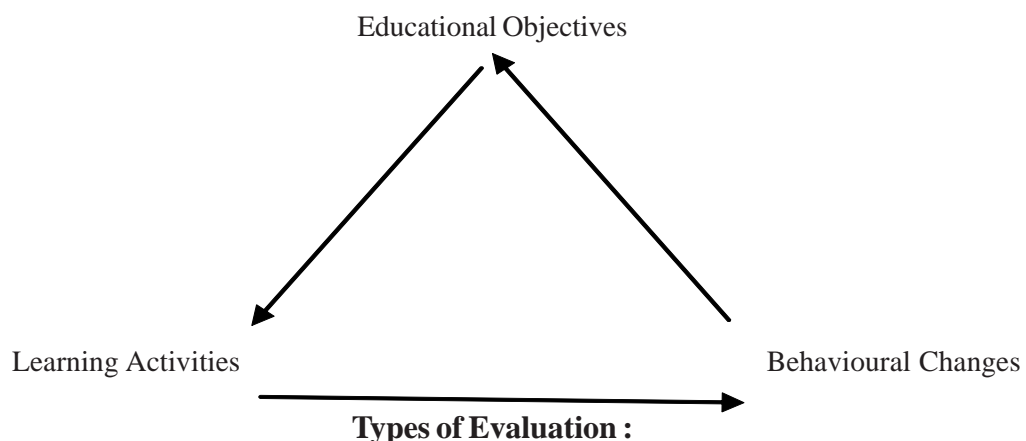
The evaluation process is an essential part of the education system as it is well known that the objective of education is all round or holistic development of learners and the evaluation process is directly associated in attaining this objective and testing which is a part of evaluation process is widely used in assessing the academic desirability level of learning which is defined



by H.H. Remmers & M.L. Gage- “evaluation assumes a purpose or an idea of what is ‘good’ or ‘desirable’ from the standpoint of the individual or society or both” so it is clear from this definition that evaluation process is that by which the desirable level of learning or objectives of education is decided and attained. the evaluation process may be of different types under different circumstances and at various stages or age of learners. In other words, it can be said that evaluation is a process of attaining overall grading and desirability level of learning which is pre-decided by the concerned authorities in the same environment. Additionally, in the education system, evaluation is to get feedback and insights from learners to improve the teaching and learning process so that problems of educational environment can be addressed and new innovative educational strategies, reformation and initiatives etc. also be applied based on it.

### Modern Concept of Evaluation

The modern concept of evaluation in education is comprehensive, dynamic, inclusive, multidimensional and above all digital technology oriented. It was introduced by B.S. Bloom in 1956 in his famous work ‘Taxonomy of Educational Objectives’. According to him, the function of evaluation is desirable or expected behavioural changes in learners and he established education process on Evaluation. He divided the evaluation process into three major part (I) educational objectives (II) learning activities and (III) behavioural changes. These are correlated and interdependent. First, education objectives are set to start learning activities which are measured in behavioural changes of learners by getting the feedback the pre decided or set educational objectives are reset and again learning activities are reorganised. Thus, this process continues till the expected behaviour is not attained. In Bloom’s Taxonomy, there are three mental domains of a person with its subdivisions are mentioned such as cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domain which are measured by evaluation process.



There are many tools and techniques which are used in evaluation systems. Sometimes, these tools and techniques are also called evaluation due to their importance. These are as below: (Dixit, Priya Nandini, 2016)

Technique	Tools
Testing	Essay type test, Objective type test, Oral test Practical
Observation	Scales, Checklist, Cumulative Record, Anecdotal Record
Sociometry	Sociograms, Sociometry coefficient, Sociometric chart
Self-report	Questionnaire, Attitude Scales, Aptitude Scales
Interview	Structured Interview, Unstructured Interview
Projection	Perception of ink blots, Interpretation of Pictures, sentence completion

Evaluation process can be classified into several types based on age, availability of resources, educational level, facility, need and purpose etc. (Gupta, S.P. 2010)

1. Formative Evaluation
2. Summative Evaluation
3. Continuous-Internal Evaluation
4. Constant and Comprehensive Evaluation
5. Diagnostic Evaluation
6. Norm-Referenced Evaluation
7. Criterion-Referenced Evaluation
8. Ipsative Evaluation

### **Evaluation Process of the B.Ed. programme in DBRAU Agra**

There are almost 298 colleges of the B. Ed programme which are affiliated with Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar University Agra. From the viewpoint of colleges and students, it is a big number in India. Generally, this course can be completed in two years and there are three parts

in evaluation system. First, much weightage is given to written examination as good presentation, deep understanding, critical thinking, and retention capacity is highly required for a teacher so, it is assessed by mixed questions-based achievements test in which more weightage and focus is given to long answer type questions. This is called testing, which is a major part of evaluation and sometimes interchangeably used. The second part has a practical examination in which teaching aptitude, Internal and External related works are evaluated. In the third part, internal works, academic activities, discipline etc are also evaluated. Thus, the combination of these three examinations is an evaluation process for the B.Ed. programme which is widely accepted among academia except some exceptions.

But during Covid pandemic, most of the educational institutions had to change in the way of imparting education as well as in the evaluation system. So, DBRAU Agra had to go through various changes and adopting MCQ tools for testing or evaluation is one of them. In those circumstances, it was feasible but after post pandemic its implementation arises some confusion among Teachers, Students, and other stakeholders as before this mixed tool in which essay types questions or long answer type questions are weighed much having some MCQ or very short answer type questions in the B.Ed. Evaluation system. It is also a fact that the MCQ Format is not suitable for assessing the presentation skill, deep understanding, critical thinking, and retention capacity etc. (MangalS.K.2019)

### **Literature review on Evaluation system**

A few current and relevant related literature reviews is being done on this topic so that the purpose and need for further research could be justified which is as follows:

Kathrin F. Stanger-Hall (2012) conducted this research to find the knowledge of assessment tools in increasing critical thinking of students of science courses. Using experimental design for this purpose one group was assessed by the traditional MCQ format, and the other was by constructed-response format. It was found that the MCQ Format was a hindrance in critical thinking of students in comparison of constructed-response format.

Basera, C. H. (2019) endeavoured to determine the perceptions of learners in relation to formative and summative assessment (assessment strategies) in higher education. An exploratory research design with a sample size of 46 students carried out at Great Zimbabwe University's Mashava campus. It was concluded from respondents' perceptions that Formative assessment methods were found crucial for effective learning in higher education.

Anita, Holezinger and others (2020) conducted this research study at the Medical University of Vienna and the main purpose of it was to assess perceptions and preferences of 2nd year undergraduate medical students towards Multiple-Choice Question (MCQ), Short Answer Question (SAQ) and oral examination from the sample of 459 out of which 41.8% preferred MCQs, 24.0% oral examinations, and 9.5% SAQs, and female students had higher preference for oral examination than the male students, if freedom is given to them to choose the assessment tools.

Kagan, Buyukkarci and others (2021) conducted research based on the aim to gain information about the relationship among traditional assessment, formative assessment, and self-assessment preferences of students from Cukurova University English Language Teaching Department in Türkiye. It was concluded by experimental study that the traditional type of assessments (MCQ) test was highly preferred by both the experimental and control group of language Students.

Kececi, A., Dogan, C. D., & Gonullu, I. (2022) tried to know the preferences of nursing and medical students for assessment for this purpose a non-experimental of correlational design was used upon 641 participants (including 169 medical students with 472 nursing students) it was found by the use of linear regression statistical analyses approach that nursing students' choice was MCQ format while medical students preferred complex/constructive assessment.

Sekhon, Tegbir, and Others (2023) conducted this close-ended questionnaire-based cross-sectional research to get insight into dental undergraduate students' preferences towards Formative assessment and Multiple-choice questions (MCQs). A sample of 382 was taken out of which (214) 56.2% rated the MCQ Format very useful for dental students while (141) 36.8% preferred Formative assessment in India.

Raja and others (2023) studied the preference of 125 faculties of medical and dental undergraduate programmes of private and public sector institutes across Karachi regarding e-assessment. Almost 68% from the sample reported that their issues were not resolved effectively in conducting e-assessments.

These research works have been done about faculties and students' preference towards evaluation/assessment which present mix results. Additionally, Empirical observations and scholars' discourse are also found to have mixed conclusions. Keeping in mind the findings of these research works and current testing procedures for B.Ed. course in DBRAU Agra, the following questions are to be answered at present for the very purpose of this research topic.

1. Is MCQ based testing tool preferred adequately by academia?
2. Is MCQ based testing tool preferred adequately by both sex of academia?
3. Is a mixed based testing tool preferred adequately by academia?

### **Hypotheses :**

Based on above questions, the following three null hypotheses are framed.

1. There is no difference between students and teachers' preferences on the MCQ based testing format.
2. There is no difference between male students and female students' preferences on the MCQ based testing format.
3. There is no difference between students and teachers' preferences on the mixed Questions based testing format.

### **Delimitation:**

1. A sample of Pupil Teachers (students) and their teachers from both aided and self-finance colleges affiliated to DBRAU Agra.
2. This research paper is restricted only to testing tools of the Evaluation process for B.Ed. programme in DBRAU Agra.

### **Methodology**

According to purpose and nature of the studying problem, Survey method is applied with stratified random sampling technique. First, A list of all aided and self-finance colleges from all four districts which are affiliated with DBRAU Agra was prepared and 160 students and 80 teachers were chosen randomly having 50% female students of the sample and approached with the help of phone call, WhatsApp, and face to face manner from each district seeking their preference on the B.Ed. evaluation process. A self-made questionnaire and its virtual form (google form) having three-point scales is prepared for convenience to approach target samples and chi-square test is used to deduct findings.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The above pre-decided three null hypotheses are to be tested and interpreted one by one after analysing the gathered data as follows:

1. There is no difference between students and teachers' preferences on the MCQ based testing format.

Variable	Preferred	Not preferred	Neutral	Total
Students	134	15	11	160
Teachers	6	69	5	80
Total	140	84	16	240

By Testing the above null hypothesis and analysing the tabulated data with the help of MS Excel-19, the following values are obtained:  $df=2$ , Computed value of chi-squared is 168.86 and critical value of it at 0.05 level is 5.991 that is much lower. So, it is significant at this level. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, it can be said that the difference between students and teachers' preferences on MCQ based testing format is not the same.

2. There is no difference between male students and female students' preferences on the MCQ based testing format.

Variable	Preferred	Not preferred	Neutral	Total
Male Students	71	6	3	80
Female Students	63	9	8	80
Total	134	15	11	160

$df=2$ , Computed value of chi-squared is 3.09 and critical value of it at 0.05 level is 5.991 which is bigger than computed value. So, it is not significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis is accepted. Thus, it can be said that the difference between male students and female students' preferences are the same on the MCQ based testing.

3. There is no difference between students and teachers' preferences on the mixed questions-based testing format.

Variable	Preferred	Not preferred	Neutral	Total
Students	21	126	13	160
Teachers	63	9	8	80
Total	84	135	21	240

df=2, Computed value of chi-squared is 103.23 and critical value of it at 0.05 level is 5.991 which is much lower. it is significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, it can be said that the difference between students and teachers' preferences on the mixed questions-based testing format is not the same.

### **Findings**

By the above analysis and interpretation the following findings are obtained as below:

1. Students' preferences towards MCQ format of assessment/ evaluation are greater than that of teachers.
2. Male and female students' preferences towards MCQ format of assessment / evaluation are technically the same.
3. Teachers' preferences towards mixed questions-based testing format of assessment/ evaluation are greater than that of students.

### **Recommendations**

Most of the students favour MCQ format that is supported by various researches which are mentioned earlier. In this context, conclusion of Kathrin F. Stanger-Hall (2012) indicates that MCQ format is hindrance in critical thinking and NEP-2020 is also focus on essential learning outcomes by encouraging both MCQ format and descriptive format of assessment. So, it would be highly important to implement both types or mixed type of assessment in B.Ed. evaluation process.

### **Conclusion**

It can be easily concluded from the interpretation of the tested hypotheses and observation that 83.75% of students have a high preference for the MCQ-based testing format, while only a small percentage (7.5%) of teachers share this preference. Gender Preferences are not found significant in deciding preference towards MCQ format of assessment/ evaluation. Teachers' preferences towards mixed types questions-based testing format are found high with low preferences of students.

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## **A School with a Difference: “Binapani School” in the District of Malkangiri – A case Study**

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### **Abstract**

*This essay outlines the history, challenges, and successes of a unique, community-driven school in Malkangiri, Odisha, an economically disadvantaged, tribal-dominated, and Naxal-affected district. Founded in 2007 by a group of like-minded individuals, the school was converted from an English-medium to an Odia-medium institution to emphasize learning in the students' state language. Despite the challenges of teaching tribal students who speak different mother tongues, the school provides instruction in both Odia and English from a pre-primary level, differing from government schools where English instruction begins later.*

*Operating on limited funds from CSR contributions, individual donations, and modest fees, the school maintains its infrastructure and adopts innovative teaching methods to overcome systemic shortcomings in government education. These include “Map Classes,” “Dictionary Classes,” and “Newspaper Classes,” which foster skills in self-learning, geographic awareness, and general knowledge. The school also emphasizes exposure to diverse reading materials and engages students in practical work through farming, which instills values of physical labor and self-sufficiency. The institution's success is evident in the students' academic achievements and the notable skill level of its alumni, creating a potential model for improving rural education in Odisha. However, resource constraints limit the school's ability to scale this model across the state.*

**Key Words:** *Learning, Map Classes, Dictionary Classes and Newspaper Classes*

### **A Brief History**

The school is about 17 years old, established in 2007. Someone started this school as an English Medium School. As the man who started the school failed to manage. Some like-minded friends took it over and converted it into an Odia Medium School forming a society. The school is recognised by the Govt. of Odisha and it follows Govt. Schools syllabus with minor differences. Unlike Odia medium Govt. schools which start from class one, we have one year pre-primary year. In Govt. schools teaching of English starts from Class III, but we start both Odia and English from pre-primary class strongly believing in the fact, that both the languages can be developed together provided taught highlighting the similarity among language, (All languages are about 80% similar with peripheral differences of 20% especially between Odia and English). We the founding members, are against English medium schools as we strongly believe that mother tongue is the best medium of learning. But unfortunately we have not been able to provide our learners learning through their mother tongues as almost all of our learners are tribal learners belonging to different tribes with different mother tongues. But we help them develop mother tongue-like fluency in Odia which is the language of the state and the medium of instruction. We started with up to Class VI and later added Class 7 and 8 and have no intention to add more classes as most of our students qualify in entrance examinations for free boarding schools run by Govt. and private schools meant for poor and tribal students where they study up to Class 12. The school started as a day scholar school, but currently more than 50% students stay in hostel. The current strength of the school is about 300.

### **The Locality and the Learners**

Odisha is an economically and educationally backward state with a large tribal population and Malkangiri is the most backward district of the state. The school is located in the most backward block of Malkangiri district, Korkonda. The district and the block are in Naxal affected area. The school is located at Tallkota, a tribal area close to MV 37 a village for the Bangladeshi refugees. A few kilometers away are the cut-off area where about 20,000 tribal live in 151 isolated villages/hemlets on mountain tops separate from the district by water bedim created by a dam constructed about 70 years back. The school serves the poor and the tribal students of this Naxal-affected area. This ideal location of the school, we the founders did not choose, but it happened to the best of our intention to educate the most deprived children of the most deprived district of Odisha.

### **The Infrastructure and Funding**

Currently the school has two buildings constructed with funding from the ESSR Company from its CSR money and the first floor of one of the building was constructed with MP LAD money. Initially the school had two acres of land and later three acres were added funded by

Dr. ManmathKundu, one of the founding members of the school, who looks after the academics of the school. The running expenses are met by funding from CSR fund of the ESR Company, individual contribution from the founding members and their friends and very moderate fees from some students who can afford. The school does not have separate hostel for students. The main buildings are used for both purposes – classrooms and hostel.

### **The Academics**

The school follows the syllabus of the Govt. Odia Medium Schools with necessary modifications plus some simple no or low-cost innovations based on commonsense which compensate the pitfalls of Govt. schools. Currently the Govt. Odia Medium School education is in a pitiable state with rampant low-proficiency among learners. In every class more than 90% of the students are much below their class level in skill and proficiency. Even students who pass class 10 exam. can hardly read an Odianews paper and do a simple sum. The problems lie mainly in three major areas – the material, methods of teaching and evaluation. In our school we try our best to set right these problems which is why more than 90% of our students are, unlike the students of Govt. schools, much above their class level in skills and proficiency. First, we modify the materials before teaching and strictly follow a learner-centered interactive approach of classroom teaching. The learners are made to interact with the writers through the text. They are encouraged to learn on their own unlike in Govt. schools where the teacher mostly explain the texts to the students, the students playing a passive role. For this we continuously train our teachers and train our learners as well. We encourage peer learning and peer teaching in our schools. Learners not only learn from each other, the senior students also teach their juniors. The lessons of every text books are examined, adapted, supplemented and modified with the help of students, teachers and specialists in different subject. Similarly we involve learners in evaluation. One a lesson is over, the students in groups, frame questions/tasks from the lesson which are then discussed the defective ones getting eliminated. The final questions are put in Question Bank from where the questions are set in examination. Students are continuously given feedback on their performances and special care is taken of the students who lay behind. These are totally absent in Govt. schools.

This on-going teaching/learning process is further supplemented and complemented by some commonsense-based, no-cost and low-cost simple easy-to-use innovations. Some of them are briefly stated below –

#### **(1) Map class**

Map classes, once in two weeks, help students map reads as it is an important aspect of learning especially improving the general knowledge and general understanding of students. For this atlases (both in Odia and English, Oida for lower classes and English for higher classes) are

used as textbooks, each learner having an atlas. In contrast, in Odia medium Govt. schools use of map is only confined to geography or history classes that too often teachers forgetting to take the maps to the class though maps are systematically displayed/stored on map stand in the school office/store rooms. Maps, in our school, are also displayed pasted in classrooms and verandas within the reach of the students.

## **(2) Dictionary Class**

Similarly we have dictionary class, once in two weeks, for learners of all classes to help them develop reference skills promoting self-learning. As our classes are learner-centered classes copies of dictionaries are kept in all classes. Our teachers are restrained from telling the meaning of difficult words from the text to the students. Instead they encourage the students to guess the meanings of the difficult words from the context and then see the dictionary on their own. Like maps, we use dictionaries of Odia and English for the purpose. Our students, therefore, learn to use dictionaries from very early classes.

## **(3) Newspaper Class**

Like Map and dictionary classes we have newspaper class every week once for each class. Newspapers are used as the most important reading materials in our schools. It is not just confined to the newspaper class but reading newspaper is a regular day-to-day habit of our students. We buy multiple copies of about 10 newspapers in Odia and English. Every month we conduct workshops for a student who cut important, interesting and relevant news, often with photographs from old newspapers and then posts them on cardboard to be used as reading materials in reading classes. The most important ones are laminated for long used as reading cards are kept in boxes. Use of newspapers has helped our students improve their reading skills and broadened their general knowledge and both these skills, in contrast, are abysmally lacking in the students of Govt. schools who tend to read only their prescribed textbooks. We also devise interesting activities from newspapers such as matching the news with the title, improving and providing news titles, writing news on local events etc. Because of the day-to-day use of newspapers as part and parcel of our school teaching, most of our students have become newspaper addicts. Missing newspaper reading for most of them, most particularly for the boarders, is like missing their breakfasts.

## **(4) Exposure Class**

The source of all learning is exposure and exposure determines learning. If exposure is less, learning is less. The opposite is also true. Learning in Odia medium school is less because the learners in these schools are only exposed to the prescribed textbooks. Our education is exam-oriented and questions in exam. come only from the textbooks. The students are, therefore, forbidden both by the teachers and parents, to read anything other than the prescribed textbooks.

To overcome this limitation we, in our school have introduced Exposure class. Every class in every week has an exposure class of two-hour duration. For the exposure class students are taken to a hall, close to the library, where about 500 to 1000 reading materials are arranged in rows which suit the level of the students. The two-hour time is divided as follows. The first half-hour is devoted to browsing. Each student is advised to browse at least thirty reading materials – see the covers, the context page and flip through the pages. Once the browsing time is over, each of the students picks up one reading material which s/he finds interesting during the browsing time and reads a part of it for half an hour. While during browsing time students move around the class, during reading time they sit in one place and read mindfully the material chosen in the last half-an-hour. Once this time is over, students, one after another, tell the whole class what they have read. The rest of the students listen to him/her and ask question if they like. This part of the question an answer lasts for one hour.

Once an exposure class is over, students who want to read the material of which they have read only a small portion, are allowed to borrow the material to read at home.

From Exposure class we got the idea and realized the need for an Open Library. Currently a room is devoted for the purpose with about 5-10 thousand books placed in open racks. Students can borrow the books and return them on their own keeping recording on the register placed in the room. Initially we lost many books and we were in indecisive – to keep it open or close it. But we continued to keep it open and the loss became minimum and gradually it has approached nil at present.

### **(5) Authentic Material Class**

A major problem in our education is the fact that we fail to link classroom education with learners experience outside the classroom. This has twin disadvantages. It makes learning theoretical and incomplete, learners failing to get advantages out of education. This is more true of English language education in our country. We have, unlike other countries like Germany, France, Russia, China etc. plenty of English in our environment outside the school and the scope to use English. But unfortunately we fail to link our classroom English with the English outside the class. This not only comes on the way of learning English, but also makes classroom English unusable outside. Our Authentic Material class is to link learning of English in classroom with the English in the environment. Authentic materials in English include all kinds of wrappers in English and also tourist brochures and news papers of English. Students start with reading what is written on the wrappers such as toothpaste and soap covers. Next they write about the toothpaste or soap and finally learn to write for similar covers for other items in English. In higher classes the read tourist brochures, advertisements and also write similar brochures and advertisements in English. Ideally such activities should form a part of the workbook activities the English textbooks.

Besides these innovation classes the other two major differences with the Govt. school are class time and use of both Odia and English textbooks of science and social science.

**(6) Class Time**

In Odisha, may be in other states as well, the length of a class in school and is of 45 minutes since very long, because the teaching was an lecture mode. But this continues even today though we claim that we have switched over to learner-centred interactive mode of teaching which shows we are still in lecture mode paying only a lip service to learner-centred and activity oriented teaching. In order to allow learners to work on their own following an activity-oriented approach, the class time needs to be at least one and half-hour. As our classes in our school are about 80% learner-centred our class duration is one and half hour. In fact we do not bell at the end of a class. Whenever students need a break they go out and come back on their own after 5 or 10 minutes. After every one and half hour classed change without a bell. We have only three bells – one at the beginning, one at the end of the school and one for midday meal. Only recently our Govt. has decided to increase the class time to one and half hour that too. For classes in three subject – Science, English and Math. ‘This will not work as teachers, still accustomed to following a teacher-centred approach of explaining the texts in’ lecture mode, do not know how to engage a class for one and half hour.

**(7) Use of Odia and English Textbooks**

We strongly believe that learners can develop competence in both Odia and English if taught following the right approach. And there is also a need for developing competency in English at the school level in Odisha, and in India, as in higher and technical education the medium of instruction is mostly English. One way of improving the English language skills of our students is the use of textbooks of Science and Social Science in both the languages. First to develop basic concepts, we use the Odia textbooks and later they are encouraged to read English textbooks on their own with little help from the teachers. We use the NCERT textbooks for the purpose. It becomes comparatively easy as most of our Science and Social Science textbooks of Odia are literal copies of the English textbooks of NCERT. And we have been successful in improving the English language skills of our students in this way which has helped our students getting selected in the Entrance Examinations for a variety of schools like OdishaAdarshaVidyalay, NavodayaVidyalaya, Ramakridhna Mission Schools, EkalavyaVidyalays etc. which provide free education from Class VI to Class XIII following CBSE syllabus. And our students, because of their strong foundation in English, not only fare well in these examinations, but also getting admitted to these schools, do well in their studies.

Linking Education with Work is another important feature of our school, similar to Gandhi’s concept of Basic Education, the education for the poor, where our children from poor families, both learn and earn in the sense that they consume what they produce, mostly vegetables



and fruits. We have our vegetable and fruit gardens for the purpose. They also look after hens and cows, and arrow fish in our school ponds. Thus, along with education, they have hand-in-experiences in agriculture, pisciculture, poultry and diary. We may not call this vocational education, but a kind of initiation to vocational education, the most important outcome being developing a positive attitude to physical labour. And the education and work in our school are properly blended as while working they learn the basics of geology, geography, botany, chemistry and physics, mixing education with experience. Their learning of math and geometry in classrooms, for example, is tried out in planting saplings in equidistance and measuring the losses and gains from agriculture, poultry, diary and pisciculture. They learn the harmful effects of chemical manures and pesticides. In our organic farming their own health and that of the plants they grow are in a symbiotic relation.

### **Our Success**

The successes of the school are many. It has been successful in laying a strong academic foundation of its students. More than 90% of the students, skill-wise, above their class level in contrast to the Govt. schools where 90% and above students are much below their class level. While in our school there is hardly a student who is low-proficient which is why remedial teaching (first three months of the academic year) has become a permanent feature of Govt. schools. As per our assumption our students are equally good in Odia and English. Their interactive reading skills, the skill to interact with the writer through text, in both the languages are so good that they can read and easily comprehend the textbooks for higher classes on their own. This is the secret of their success in the Entrance Examinations for different schools. As many of our students of class V and VI get through there examinations and join these school we have very less number of students in class VII and VIII. To cite the latest example, the Ramakrishna Mission School selected 18 students from the Malkangiri district for its school through entrance examination. Out of these 18, the students of our school are 9 while the rest 9 are from the 1350 Govt. Primary Schools of the district, which is not a small achievement. Even with regard to a simple and elementary skill like handwriting all our students have good handwriting which we have achieved through meticulous care, handwriting tasks, followed by correction feedback. We too have prepared special handwriting books for our school. Above fifty percent of our students, as stated before, get selected in the entrance examination for other good schools, we have less students in Class VI, VII and VIII. These students who join other schools in Class IX and X, do very well in their studies which is, again, due to the good foundation laid by our school. This we know from our regular tracking of our school learners. Those who fail to study further, they take to small trades, cultivation or live a simple but happy life growing vegetables, keep cows, goats and hens on their land occasionally also working as labourour on the lands. This is mainly because of their experience in our school. Even some of our teachers have taken to part time agriculture in their own small lands. Some of them resigned from our school because of the meager salary we give and now are doing full-time cultivation. The 'work' part of our school

education has helped them do so. But, unfortunately just the reverse is the case in Govt. Schools. Only less than 1% students get selected in entrance examination to better schools of, very few going for higher education. The rest, about 95%, do virtually nothing becoming burden on their poor parents, some leaving for other states on Prabashi Shramiks doing menial work these ashamed of doing this at their own home or village. One of the greatest success of our school is, therefore, positively reversing the negative trends of Govt. Odia Medium Schools whose about 80% of our students from poor families study. We are, thus, successful in creating an alternative model for Govt. School, if followed, there will be sea-change in the field of education for the poor. The rich can look after themselves through their English medium education in rich schools. To some extent we are able to influence the Govt. school of the state through Dr. Kundu's effort when he was the Academic Advisor to the Dept. of School and Mass Education of the State. Many of the innovations we did in our school with regard to material and methods found place in the English textbooks for the primary schools and the training package for the teachers to handle the textbooks. We are also marginally successful in influencing our neighbouring primary schools. We are very successful in our newspaper movement in our locality. People of our locality, because of our efforts, have developed the habit of newspaper reading. Another important aspect of our success is teacher development. Because our school is in a remote backward hills naxal-affected part of our state and because of the low salary we give, we get low quality less qualified local teachers. But we help them develop very fast in teaching and language skills. And they leave for better jobs and higher education. No doubt we face problems as they leave after getting trained, but we don't mind and rather feel satisfied helping some local teachers grow academically. As we keep track of our learners who leave our school, so do we for our teachers. Many of them have joined better schools with better salary and have become excellent teachers. Some, after higher education, teach in colleges. Thus, our school has been really successful in creating an academic ambience. It is, in fact, an island of excellence.

### **Our Lapses and Limitations**

The causes of our success are also the causes of our limitations and lapses. Concentrating all our attention and efforts on the school, we have been successful in making it an island of excellence. But it remains an island without extending it to other parts of the district and state. Money and special efforts matter for expansion which we badly lack. We are bad in advertising and arranging resources. We thought our Govt. would accept our model for its Odia Medium Schools. We tried, to some extent, to impress upon them, but this was not enough. In one National Seminar at NCERT, New Delhi, Dr. Kundu presented a paper on the successes of our school which very much impressed the then Secretary of HRD, Mr. SubashKhuntia. He asked the NCERT Director to send a team of experts to our school. But when Mr. Khuntia left the Department the proposal was dropped and we failed to follow it up. We have also organized some workshops, seminars and teacher orientation programmes on our school, on other method and approach. But these are not enough to impress the Govt. to follow our model. Again due to



lack of funds we have not been able to open similar schools in other parts of the district and state. Private English Medium Schools have mushroomed and prospered, running schools as business, with for the money they earn through school fees. But this is against our principle. We, therefore, refuse to take children of rich parents on our school is meant for the poor and downtrodden. And whatever financial help we have received from outside so far, the donors have given on their own without asking for donation. We are really pained to give less salary to our teachers as we cannot afford to pay what they deserve. Our greatest problem has been so far satisfying the Govt. norms for running a private school, the most important being getting Govt. recognition. Govt. norms are very stiff. There should be standard infrastructure, both for school and hostel which we lack, especially for hostel as, because of lack of funds our classrooms are also used as hostels. Other private schools manage sometimes by adopting wrong methods. At times, we had to make compromises as without 'recognition' our students will not be allowed to sit for the entrance examinations to other good schools. We are not able to avail the kind of cooperation that is expected from government officials for spread of tribal education. Our M.P. LAD money for a building for example, was delayed for about three years and finally with much effort we could not get the entire fund earmarked for the school. Sometimes these problems pain us to a very great extent and we feel like converting it into a learning centre where we would not need Government recognition. This learning centre may exclusively be meant for school dropouts like the open schools. But this is too futuristic as our country and people are not yet ready for such learning centres being too much obsessed with the concept of learning only through formal schools.





## **Book Review**

### **Title :A Matter of the Heart: Education in India**

**Author: Anurag Behar**

Publication year: 2023, Publisher: Westland Books, Chennai -6000095

**Reviewer: Manindra N.Nayak**

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The author has provided an exploration of Indian education system in his book 'A matter of heart: Education in India'. Drawing from his long association with school education, Dr.Anurag Behar has given an insightful analysis of the triumph and challenges and conditions of school education in India. The book is focused on the critical roles of teachers in a school and support for public education system rather than the private education in schools. The author has extensively visited remote public schools, met with different stake holders and has noted his observations.

The book is divided into six thematic sections and each section is divided into number of chapters. The book primarily focuses on the paramount importance of community involvement in school management, the remarkable achievements of teachers despite limited physical infrastructure, the necessity for professional development and a new teacher education system, the greater importance of teachers over technology, and the myths surrounding the superior performance of private schools.

**Focus on Teachers and Their Professional Development:** Teachers play a central role in the education system, and their professional development is crucial. Effective training programs that align with the teachers' needs and subjects they are familiar with are essential. The author emphasizes that teachers should not be burdened with official duties or ineffective training sessions that do not contribute to their professional growth. Instead, they should be equipped with resources, such as timely delivery of textbooks and increased funding for programs like mid-day meals, to enhance their teaching capabilities. Continuous research and development in teaching methods are necessary to address the complex needs of students, such as their learning patterns, attendance, and time management.

**Engagement of Society with Schools:** The engagement of society with schools is fundamental in fostering a democratic and inclusive educational environment. Public schools, funded by tax revenue, play a vital role in establishing democratic values in society. The involvement of various societal groups, including parents, local communities, and governmental bodies, ensures that schools operate in a manner that reflects the collective interests and values of the community. The author believes that this societal engagement provides a strong foundation for hope in the future of public education and democracy.

**Engagement of Teachers with Pupils:** The relationship between teachers and pupils is pivotal for effective education. Teachers who are actively engaged with their students create a nurturing and supportive learning environment. The author's observations highlight that when teachers are passionate about their subjects and dedicated to their students' well-being, it significantly enhances the students' learning experiences. The belief that every child can learn if properly taught and cared for underscores the importance of teacher-pupil engagement.

**Public Schools and Democracy:** Public schools are seen as better facilitators of democracy compared to private schools. The author argues that public education, accessible to all and funded by public resources, promotes democratic values by providing equal opportunities for every child. In contrast, private schools may perpetuate social inequalities. The focus of public education should be on developing good human beings and a good society, thereby strengthening democracy.

**Political Influence on Education:** The author highlights the significant influence of politics on the content and curriculum of education. Political forces determine what is considered true knowledge and shape the educational agenda, whether through a planning model or a market model. The author calls for a balanced approach that incorporates a universal set of knowledge while allowing for diverse perspectives. Sensible representatives from society should oversee the educational content to ensure it is inclusive and beneficial for all.

**Continuous Research for Complete Teachers:** A complete teacher is one who engages in continuous research to address students' needs effectively. This research should focus on understanding the complexities of student learning, attendance, and time management. By investing in ongoing professional development and research, teachers can better meet the diverse needs of their students and contribute to a more effective education system.

**Strengthening Public Education:** The author argues that the market cannot adequately deliver essential services like healthcare and education. Instead, there is a pressing need to strengthen the public education system. This involves not only providing adequate funding and resources but also fostering a culture of thinking and critical analysis. Developing the ability to think critically is one of the central goals of the school curriculum, which is essential for preparing students to contribute positively to society.

**Curriculum and Examination Patterns:** The current curriculum and examination patterns may contribute to a rote learning culture. The author questions whether this approach truly prepares students for the challenges of the future. A curriculum that encourages critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving is essential for developing well-rounded individuals who can thrive in a democratic society.

**Teachers' Commitment to Education:** The author shares an anecdote about a teacher's stand before a Naxalite intellectual, emphasizing the teacher's unwavering commitment to teaching until death. This dedication underscores the vital role that teachers play in shaping the future of society and the importance of supporting them in their mission.

By addressing these key themes, the author provides a comprehensive overview of the challenges and opportunities in the education system, advocating for a strong public education system that upholds democratic values and prepares students for the future.

The book makes a very engaging reading. Behar has put it in such a lucid storytelling manner that you can not leave a story or an issue in middle. Very few writer has written such a book on education with such a penetration. Each story shows the resilience of teachers or students or parents. The book covers a very wide spectrum of issues i.e from educational policy and practices as well as conditions on the ground. The book is also an inspiration o students, educators, policymakers and other stake holders.

However, although Behar has extensively visited schools, his visits have been limited to those where Azim Premji Foundation is active. Behar has not been able to cover where the foundation is not active. The story of those schools may not be similar with where the foundation had made an innervation in those schools. Though the approach of the book is different, some basic statistics would have further enriched the book further. With deeper exploration and more analytical depth of certain issues dealt in the book, the value of the book could have been enhanced.

One of the central themes in *A Matter of Heart* is the recognition of rural educators as unsung heroes. Behar presents their resilience and commitment to making education accessible despite minimal resources. By highlighting individual stories, he breaks down stereotypes, showcasing the educators' creative solutions and adaptability in adverse conditions. This book is a significant contribution to the discourse on education in India. The book is a powerful insight to the functioning of the schools. The book has been deeply benefited from the personal experience and professional insight of Behar. The book helps to make highly effective and meaningful innervation at a very low cost. As Noble Laureate James J. Heckman has pointed out, 'Childhood skills shape our life's success- low-cost policies can truly strengthen this'. Behar emphasizes that the core of education lies in empathy, stating, 'Empathy matters most, for at its heart, education is a matter of the heart.'"



URL : [https://jerpp.org/volume1\\_issue1/jerpp\\_2024\\_1\\_1\\_9.pdf](https://jerpp.org/volume1_issue1/jerpp_2024_1_1_9.pdf)

## **Title: Mahatma Gandhi on Education**

**Author: Anil Dutta Mishra**

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The best way to understand Mahatma Gandhi is to read his own writings. The compendium, "*Mahatma Gandhi on Education*," is a reproduction of original writings and speeches on education by Mahatma Gandhi, collected and reproduced by Anil Dutta Mishra's. The book is a detail account of educational philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi's. As the author has put it, "Gandhi's concept of education is creative, original, revolutionary, skill development based on societal need. It is not based on intellectual romanticism rather beyond Marxism, Macaulay, Gurkul and Madrasah. It was unique, innovative, need base and fundamental and provides an alternative." The book contains Gandhi's unique thoughts on how education should not merely be a process of rote learning but rather a means of holistic human development—integrating body, mind, and spirit. Mishra presents Gandhi's ideas in a structured manner, emphasizing the spiritual, moral, and practical dimensions of education.

The book contains a wide spectrum of subjects of Gandhiji on education with utmost clarity and simplicity. Gandhiji's view on "What is education, women's education, laying strong foundation, need of education, education: ancient and modern, scheme for national education, a teacher, education of children, making of a true student, development of body, mind and spirit, education should contemplate on whole life, science and responsibility, primary education, religious education, sparing the rod, faith, school books, *harizan* education, higher education, vocational education, *Nayee Talim* and so many other dimension on education.

Key Themes of the book:

1. **Nai Talim (Basic Education):** Gandhi's concept of *Nai Talim*, or Basic Education, is the cornerstone of his educational philosophy. Mishra explains that Gandhi envisioned education as a tool for self-reliance, making it vocational and craft-centered. Gandhi believed in the integration of productive work with intellectual pursuits, advocating that students should learn through productive manual labor and practical activities. The book highlights Gandhi's idea that education should promote dignity of labor and develop individuals as self-sufficient and socially responsible citizens.
2. **Moral and Spiritual Development:** Mishra also discusses how Gandhi emphasized the importance of moral and spiritual growth in education. For Gandhi, education was incomplete if it only focused on intellectual or technical skills. According to the book, Gandhi believed that education must nurture truth, non-violence, self-discipline, and character, all of which form the foundation of personal and societal well-being.
3. **Education for All:** The book emphasizes Gandhi's advocacy for universal education that is accessible to everyone, regardless of socio-economic status, caste, or gender. Mishra explores Gandhi's views on eradicating social inequalities through education and empowering the marginalized sections of society.
4. **Holistic Approach to Learning:** Mishra highlights that Gandhi's approach to education was holistic and interdisciplinary. Gandhi rejected the idea of compartmentalizing subjects and believed that education should integrate different areas of knowledge, such as arts, sciences, and humanities, into practical life experiences. This was intended to create a balanced development of a student's personality.
5. **Critique of Colonial Education System:** The book critically reflects on Gandhi's dissatisfaction with the British colonial education system, which he viewed as alienating

Indians from their culture, traditions, and livelihoods. Mishra outlines how Gandhi proposed an education model rooted in India's cultural heritage, local languages, and needs of the masses.

The book is a comprehensive analysis as the author Anil Dutta Mishra thoroughly delves into Gandhi's educational principles, and philosophical insights. The book is a well-researched and presents Gandhi's ideas with clarity, making it accessible to both educators and general readers. The book is very much relevant today this draws connections between Gandhi's educational ideas and modern-day challenges in education. The book encourages readers to reflect on how Gandhi's vision of education can still inspire reform in today's educational systems, particularly in promoting equity, sustainability, values-based education and designing the structure of the primary education

However, the book could have more practical applications by including its implementation in contemporary educational settings. Some readers may find the book's focus on theory heavy at times, especially if they are looking for practical strategies for educators. However, this can also be viewed as strength depending on the reader's interest in philosophy.

Anil Dutta Mishra's "*Mahatma Gandhi on Education*" is an insightful work that brings to life Gandhi's radical ideas on education. It offers a deep and thoughtful reflection on how education can be transformed to serve the holistic development of individuals and communities. Gandhi's ideas, as presented by Mishra, challenge conventional educational practices and call for an education system that fosters not just academic proficiency but also moral integrity, self-reliance, and social responsibility.

This book is a valuable resource for educators, policymakers, and anyone interested in exploring alternative visions for educational reform, rooted in the principles of simplicity, sustainability, and ethics.



## **GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS**

The Journal of Educational Research and Public Policy (JERPP) is a bi-annual publication that engages a blind peer-review process to ensure the highest standards of scholarly integrity. JERPP is dedicated to disseminating original, research-based articles, analytical perspectives, detailed case studies, and comprehensive book reviews covering a wide range of topics relevant to education and public policy. The author should adhere to APA style guidelines when writing the paper. Below are general guidelines for prospective contributors.

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2. Manuscripts must be typed exclusively in Times New Roman font.
3. Article Title: This should be centered, bold, with font-size: 14.
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5. Author's Affiliations & Email: This information should also be centred, formatted in normal style, and set to a font size of 11.
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and should also encompass other essential sources that contribute to the understanding of the topic. The author's name in each reference should match that in the original source.

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