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Education and Social Opportunity: Bridging the Gap[#]

A. K. Shiva Kumar[*]

I feel very privileged to have been invited to deliver the Foundation Day Lecture of the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA). COVID-19 has made this an unusual event in the history of this eminent institution. It would have been so much better if we were able to see each other and have face-to-face interactions.

The loss suffered by people due to the pandemic is immeasurable. I only hope that the worst is over and that people in India and across the world can begin to rebuild their lives.

I shall be speaking on education and social opportunities. I use the term 'social opportunity' in much the same way that Jean *Drèze* and Amartya Sen use it in the title of their book *India: Economic Development and Social Opportunity*, published in 1995.[1] The term 'social' in the expression 'social opportunity' is to emphasise that individuals and their opportunities should not be viewed in isolation. What an individual can achieve through education or health will depend upon a number of factors shaping the social context including relations with others, effectiveness of institutions, and what the state provides and does. Also, the use of the term 'social' is not intended to contrast it with 'economic.' This is because many complementarities and inter-connections between social and economic opportunities make the distinction blurred especially when it comes to education.

I would like to situate the discussion on education and social opportunity against the backdrop of viewing development as an expansion of freedoms and an enhancement of capabilities – ideas articulated by Professor Amartya Sen. According to Sen, freedom implies not just to do something, but the capabilities to make it happen. "What people can positively achieve is influenced by economic opportunities, political liberties, social powers, and the enabling condition of good health, basic education, and the encouragement and cultivation of

initiatives."[2] In this context, Sen lists five types of interrelated freedoms, namely, political freedom, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency, and security.[3]

Before evaluating the role of education in expanding social opportunities, let me briefly recapitulate the many distinct ways in which education can be valuable to the freedom of an individual. Education is intrinsically important regardless of whether education enables an individual to earn an income or not (for example, many educated women in India do not earn an income). Education also has instrumental significance. It helps individuals acquire productive skills, get a job, and earn a decent income. This in turn adds to a person's freedom to do the many things he or she values. Similarly, education contributes to health and wealth. The more educated a person is, the healthier and wealthier she is likely to be.

Education also brings with it collective benefits as it is valuable for society. It develops civic skills, makes for meaningful participation in political and public life, and strengthens democratic citizenship. *Drèze* and Sen point to the empowerment and distributive roles of education, namely the ability to resist oppression, to organise politically, and being able to negotiate a better deal even within families.

The significance of education is articulated in India's New Education Policy 2020[4] which opens with the following two sentences:

> Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development. Providing universal access to quality education is the key to India's continued ascent, and leadership on the global stage in terms of economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, national integration, and cultural preservation.

Against this backdrop, in this lecture, I shall evaluate the extent to which education has been instrumental in expanding social opportunities. Two qualifications. One, I shall limit my observations to school education. Two, I want to acknowledge upfront the enormous heterogeneity in terms of the contribution of school education in India. I shall still draw some broad conclusions – knowing that these may not be entirely applicable to all states and regions of India.

I have divided my lecture into three parts. In the first section, I shall flag some of education's significant instrumental contributions to India's overall development. In the second section, I shall discuss why education's contribution to enhancing individual freedoms has been limited. In the concluding section, I shall list some actions that are needed for education to amplify, in future, the benefits from an expansion in social opportunities.

Education and Instrumental Benefits

Education has brought with it many instrumental benefits to Indian society. Let me list three of them.

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[2]   Sen A. Development as Freedom. Introduction: page 5. New York: Alfred Knopf; 1999.

[3]   Ibid.

[4]   *New Education Policy 2020*, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India (Available at https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf)

First of all, expansion of educational opportunities has been an important factor, among many others, that has contributed to increasing productivity and expanding incomes in India. India, as we know, has experienced an exponential rise in GDP and GDP per capita, post liberalisation, starting in the early 1990s. Some part of this can be attributed to the educational expansion in India over the past 25 years. In 1991, barely half of India's population was literate. By 2011, close to 75 per cent of the population could read and write.

Since 2005-06, there has been a substantial increase in the percentage of women and men, aged 15-49, attending school and completing higher levels of education, and the gap between women and men has narrowed. According to the National Family Health Survey-4, in 2015-16, close to 85 per cent of children 6-17 years were attending school.[5]

The combination of an expansion in educational opportunities and economic growth has contributed to rising incomes, better standards of living, and improved access to a range of goods and services that was quite unimaginable some 25 years ago. It has also contributed to a reduction in poverty. For instance, over the ten years between 2005-06 and 2015-16, the incidence of multidimensional poverty (MPI)[6] has halved – from 55 per cent in 2005-06 to 28 per cent in 2015-16. Close to 271 million people moved out of multidimensional poverty between 2005-06 and 2015-16.[7] One can only speculate how much more India's income would have grown and multidimensional poverty come down had the country been able to assure good quality education to all children across the country.

Second, educational expansion has contributed to a significant improvement in child survival. In 1992-93, the under-five mortality rate (U5MR) in India was 109 per 1000 live births. By 2015-16, it had been halved to 50 per 1000 live births.[8] Child survival is closely associated with educational levels of mothers. For instance, the U5MR among mothers who have completed 12 or more years of schooling is half the U5MR among mothers with no schooling. Of course, it is not education alone but the interaction of education with many other factors that influences child survival. These include the incomes of parents, the prevalence of malnutrition and disease, the availability of clean drinking water, the reach and efficacy of health services, and the health and position of women – all of which have also seen improvements over the past decade or more.

Third, educational expansion has brought with it a reduction in India's fertility rates. According to the National Family Health Surveys, in 1992-93, India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) was 3.4. By 2015-16, it had fallen to 2.18 – close to the replacement fertility rate of 2.1. The decline in fertility rates over the past 25 years has been accompanied by improvements in female literacy and the schooling of mothers.

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[5]   International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and ICF. 2017. National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4), 2015-16: India. Mumbai: IIPS.

[6]   The MPI looks beyond income to understand how people experience poverty in multiple and simultaneous ways. It identifies how people are being left behind across three key dimensions: Health (measured by nutrition and child mortality); Education (measured by years of schooling and school attendance); and Living standards (captured by sanitation, cooking fuel, drinking water, electricity, housing and assets).

[7]   Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI). *Global MPI 2018 Report*, chapter 2: MPI in India, A Case Study. Accessed https://ophi.org.uk/multidimensional-poverty-index/global-mpi-2018/#t1

[8]   National Family Health Survey-4

Several explanations are posited to explain the negative association between educational attainment levels and fertility rates. The economic explanation has to do with the incentive effect. More educated women, especially if they are in paid employment, have higher opportunity costs of bearing children in terms of lost income. The household bargaining model suggests that women's education shifts the intra-household balance of power in favour of women. More educated women are better able to support themselves and have more bargaining power. They also have greater say on matters including family size. According to the ideation theory, more educated women learn different ideas of desired family size through school, community, and exposure to global communication networks. Finally, more educated women know more about prenatal care and child health, and hence might have fewer children because of greater confidence that their children will survive.[9]

It is important to note, however, that in all the three cases of rising incomes, improving child survival, and declining fertility, it is not education *per se* but education in conjunction with a number of other factors that contributes to improving societal outcomes.

Educational Expansion and Inequality

Let me move on to address briefly the question of educational expansion and inequality.

Until a few months before the COVID-19 pandemic struck India, much of the policy discourse centred around India's economic growth. Government of India had set out a vision to become a 5 trillion-dollar economy by 2024-25. This would have required a further acceleration in economic growth. Amartya Sen has pointed out that it is often common to think of development as an expansion of a country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, GDP or its expansion cannot be valued for its own sake. Income has only an instrumental significance. Higher incomes alone cannot constitute the ends of development. It is an expansion of freedoms that matters. According to Sen: "Growth of GNP or of individual incomes can, of course, be very important as means to expanding the freedoms enjoyed by the members of the society. But freedoms depend also on other determinants, such as social and economic arrangements (for example, facilities for education and health care) as well as political and civil rights (for example, the liberty to participate in public discussion and scrutiny)."[10]

More education, increased awareness, improved communication, and higher incomes have contributed to visible improvements in the access that even the poor have to a wide range of goods and services. Today, many families living in 'slums' have televisions, smart phones, and motorcycles which they did not own some two decades ago. Young men in Delhi's slums wear the same type of T-shirts and blue jeans which children of middle class or rich families wear. So much so that if you line up young men in a row, it will be difficult to say who is from a rich household and who from a poor household. Your guess as to who comes from a poor household might be totally wrong because the young man wearing the torn or ripped blue jeans might actually belong to a rich family!

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[9] Thomas J. Pfaff. How strong is the relationship between women's education and fertility? September 7, 2017. Accessed at https://sustainabilitymath.org/2017/09/07/how-strong-is-the-relationship-between-womens-education-and-fertility/

[10] Sen, A. *Development as Freedom*, Introduction: page 3. New York: Alfred Knopf; 1999.

Similarly, better awareness and income expansion have made it possible for young women in slums to use the same shampoo and other cosmetics that are advertised by film actors. A relatively poor mother in a slum can afford to feed her children Maggi noodles that cost around Rs 10-12 a packet, just like a well-to-do mother on television does. This is partly because, with people's incomes rising considerably over the past 25 years, many more can afford to buy such goods. It is also because corporations have begun to market shampoo in affordable sachets or noodles in small packets to those at the 'bottom of the pyramid.'

These so-called improvements in living standards and consumption patterns have created an illusion of equality. Educational expansion and economic growth have led to a convergence in the space of consumption of commodities, but to a divergence in the space of capabilities and opportunities. The poor simply do not enjoy the same freedoms or have access to the same opportunities that children in the rapidly growing middle class families have – the opportunity to eat nutritious food, the opportunity to go to good schools, the opportunity to access decent health care, and so on.

Something more than basic education is needed for people to enjoy social benefits. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the precariousness in the lives of millions of schooled workers who come to cities in search of jobs. For example, migrant and other informal sector workers may be more 'educated' today than they were some three decades ago. But it is difficult for society to reap the benefits of educational expansion unless there are sufficient policies in place to create decent jobs and provide social security to workers.

Similarly, while higher levels of literacy and more years of schooling may have contributed to increasing incomes, these do not seem to have necessarily bridged the income gaps. Quite the contrary. Many recent reports suggest that income or wealth inequalities in India are widening. A recent Oxfam Report[11] spotlights the dramatic inequalities in wealth in India. The top 10 per cent of the Indian population holds 77 per cent of the total national wealth. Also, 73 per cent of the wealth generated in 2017 went to the richest one per cent, while 670 million Indians who comprise the poorest half of the population saw only a 1 per cent increase in their wealth. Again, Lucas Chancel and Thomas Piketty have argued, using tax data, that income inequality in India today is higher than at any time since 1922 when income tax was first introduced.[12]

Part of the unequal expansion of income within Indian states can be attributed to persistent inequalities in educational attainments. Bihar and Kerala represent two contrasting profiles of literacy. In 2015-16, Bihar had the lowest literacy of 50 per cent among women and 78 per cent among men, while literacy was almost universal among women and men in Kerala. This is one of the factors that explains why Bihar's per capita income is roughly 20 per cent that of Kerala's.

While educational inequalities can lead to income inequalities, it is equally important to recognise that educational inequalities tend to sustain social disparities in society. I recall attending a meeting in the early 1990s with the late Prof. Myron Weiner, an American political scientist and scholar of India, who was addressing the issue of why India had failed

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[11] Oxfam International, *India: Extreme Inequality in Numbers*, Accessed at https://www.oxfam.org/en/india-extreme-inequality-numbers

[12] Lucas Chancel and Thomas Piketty. Indian Income Inequality, 1922-2015: *From British Raj to Billionaire Raj?*, March 27, 2018. World Inequality Lab. Accessed at https://wid.world/document/chancelpiketty2017widworld/

to provide free and compulsory education for children. Prof. Weiner, a frequent visitor to India, would often remark that the living standards of the middle class in India, then a low-income country, was the envy of the richest families in high-income countries of Europe and North America. He would point out that the average middle-class family could afford to hire a cook, a maid to look after the children, a gardener, a driver, someone to wash and iron clothes – something that even rich families in North America could not afford.

He urged people in the audience to join him in a thought experiment. Imagine, Prof. Weiner said, we are in 1950, the Constitution of India has been adopted, and Prime Minister Nehru has convened all of us for a meeting as members of his Cabinet. Nehru asks his Cabinet: what is the one decision India needs to take today (that is, in 1950) so that 50 years later (by the year 2000), India will become the envy of all rich nations – in the sense that even the average middle-class family can afford to hire so many staff members to make their lives so comfortable? Prof. Weiner noticed the silence around the table and went on to answer the question: "Deny half the population access to basic schooling and decent education." "This way," Professor Weiner said, "the average middle class Indian family will be able to support an extraordinary lifestyle which is the envy of most Americans for another 50 years at least." There is so much truth to this statement. It is unfortunate that persistent educational inequalities have continued to perpetuate such social inequalities in society, especially when there are no social protection measures in place for domestic workers.

Education and the Flourishing of Human Lives

Let me move to the next segment of my lecture.

The conversion of education into social opportunities is mediated by a number of factors that could inhibit the flourishing of human lives. Let me give three examples.

Take the case of education and employment. Conventional wisdom tells us that education enables individuals to acquire more skills, become more productive, get better jobs, and earn higher incomes. While this is true for Indian men, it is not the case with a large majority of Indian women. While educational levels of Indian women have gone up, women's labour force participation rate has fallen from around 43 per cent in 2004–05 to 23 per cent in 2017–18. India ranks among the bottom 10 countries in the world in terms of women's workforce participation. The only countries that rank lower than India on female labour force participation rates are Egypt, Morocco, Somalia, Iran, Algeria, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. The trend in India's female labour force participation rates contrasts sharply with Bangladesh where the country's GDP grew at an average rate of 5.6 per cent between 1991 and 2017, and women's participation in the labour force increased from 24 per cent to 36 per cent.[13]

India has not been able to create sufficient jobs for women, especially in labour-intensive manufacturing sectors, unlike Bangladesh.

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[13] Deepa Krishnan. As India Advances, Women's Workforce Participation Plummets, *World View*, May 15, 2020. Accessed at https://www.strategy-business.com/blog/As-India-advances-womens-workforce-participation-plummets?gko=762f7

One would not be concerned with the declining female labour force participation rates despite more education if women were free to decide whether to work or not. Clearly this does not appear to be the case.

Several explanations have been posted for the low and declining female labour force participation rates in India.[14] Some are not necessarily indicative of the restrictions on the freedoms of women to pursue work. For example, it is pointed out that more women in both rural and urban areas are staying longer in education and not entering the labour market at an early age. Also, more educated women are likely to marry more educated men with higher incomes. If family income is high, women would have less incentive to work and might be willingly opting out of the labour market

On the other hand, several other factors limit the freedoms that Indian women have to pursue opportunities for paid employment even if they wish to Caste and class may be restricting women's freedoms. The decline in labour force participation with more education could be due to the higher concentrations of forward castes among moderately educated women. This is because while it is socially more acceptable for women of lower castes to work, women belonging to higher castes tend to face greater restrictions on their mobility. Women from relatively better-off families with improved social standing may prefer to stay at home. This is because the greater the seclusion for woman, the greater is the prestige for the family. Cultural expectations are that married women should not work and that they should prioritise housework and care work; and women may be discouraged from seeking paid employment outside their homes because of the problem of sexual harassment and violence against women --- on the way to work and at the place of work.

While there may be elements of truth in all of these explanations, the fact remains that for men, greater education leads to higher participation in the labour force. This is not the case with women. Even with more education, several structural and socio-economic as well as cultural factors limit the freedoms that women have to enter the labour market; and this thwarts the potential benefits of education.

The second example has to do with marriage – an institution that comes in the way of educated women pursuing a working career even if they wish to. Many young Indian women in middle class families are 'allowed' to work before they get married. This expression 'allowed' itself is problematic – in the sense that young women do not have the freedom to choose on their whether or not they can work. But soon after marriage, as we have seen earlier, they stop working for a variety of reasons.

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[14] Several recent articles have examined the reasons for the declining female labour force participation rates in India. See, for example, Sonalde Desai and Omkar Joshi, 2019. "The Paradox of Declining Female Work Participation in an Era of Economic Growth," *The Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, Springer; The Indian Society of Labour Economics (ISLE), vol. 62(1), pages 55-71, March; Erin K. Fletcher, Rohini Pande, and Charity Troyer Moore, *Women and Work in India: Descriptive Evidence and a Review of Potential Policies*, Centre for International Development (CID) Faculty Working Paper No. 339 December 2017. Accessed at https://www.hks.harvard.edu /sites/default/files/centers/cid/files/publications/faculty-workingpapers/women_work_india_cid wp339 .pdf; and Luis A. Andres, Basab Dasgupta, George Joseph, Vinoj Abraham, and Maria Correia, *Precarious Drop: Reassessing Patterns of Female Labour Force Participation in India*, Policy Research Working Paper 8024. The World Bank Group. South Asia Region Social Development Unit April 2017. Accessed at http://documents1.worldbank.org /curated/en/559511491319990632/ pdf/WPS8024.pdf

Even more disturbing is the limited role that education plays even today in enabling women to exercise freedoms relating to their marriage decisions. Though it is true that more educated girls tend to have a greater say in marriage decisions, this is not automatic or the norm. The exercise of freedoms by young educated girls and women is mediated by restrictive socio-cultural norms and traditions that govern marriage decisions. In 2006-07, the International Institute of Population Studies and Population Council conducted the first ever study of youth in India[15] in which they interviewed married and unmarried young women and unmarried young men aged 15–24 and, married men aged 15–29, in both rural and urban settings across six states. Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu represented 39 per cent of the country's population and were purposively selected to represent the different geographic and socio-cultural regions within the country.

The findings of the Youth Survey of 2006-07 were quite shocking.

- 35 per cent of girls got married below the legal age of 18,
- 54 per cent of parents did not even ask for their daughter's opinion about when to get married,
- 64 per cent of young women were meeting their spouse for the first time on the day of the wedding,
- 81 per cent of young women did not get a chance to meet or speak to their fiancée alone before the marriage.

The situation should have improved since then. But progress despite increasing levels of education appears to be slow in many parts of the country. A similar youth survey conducted in Bihar in 2015-16[16] reveals that the exercise by adolescents of choice and freedoms in marriage-related decisions remains severely limited even though access to school enrolment is nearly universal among adolescents.

- As many as 61 per cent of girls reported that their parents had not sought their approval at all,
- 94 per cent of girls had married a partner chosen by their parents,
- 77 per cent of married girls had met their husbands for the first time on the wedding day.

Let me give one more example of the seeming disconnect between education and the flourishing of human lives. This has to do with attitudes towards wife-beating and violence against women. The National Family Health Surveys asked women and men 15-49 years if they agree that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife under each of the following seven circumstances: she goes out without telling him, she neglects the house or the children, she argues with him, she refuses to have sex with him, she doesn't cook food properly, he suspects her of being unfaithful, and she shows disrespect for her in-laws.

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[15] International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and Population Council, 2010, *Youth in India: Situation and Needs, 2006–2007,* Mumbai: IIPS.

[16] Population Council India. UDAYA, Adolescent Survey, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, 2018–19. Accessed at

https://www.popcouncil.org/research/udaya-adolescent-survey-bihar-and-uttar-pradesh-201819

In 2015-16, 52 per cent of women agreed that a husband is justified in beating or hitting his wife.[17] What is even more disturbing is that the proportion of women who agree that a husband is justified in beating or hitting his wife is higher than the proportion of men (42 per cent) who agree with this statement.

Levels of education do not seem to matter that much when it comes to attitudes towards wife beating. The proportion of women who admitted that a husband is justified in beating his wife varied from 50 per cent among those who have completed 12 or more years of schooling to 59 per cent among women who had no schooling.

Sikkim reported the lowest proportion of women – 8 per cent – who admitted that a husband is justified in beating his wife. On the other hand, Kerala, where schooling is almost universal, reports among the highest proportions of women (69 per cent as against the national average of 52 per cent) who admitted that husbands are justified in beating or hitting his wife. Levels of education in Kerala also do not seem to make such a noticeable difference. More than two-thirds (67 per cent) of women who had completed 10 to 12 years of schooling admitted that a husband was justified in beating or hitting his wife. The Kerala data on attitudes towards wife beating are particularly puzzling given the efforts made by the State to advance health and education as well as promote gender equality.

The third point I wish to highlight is the link between education and citizenship.

The National Policy on Education 1986[18] underscored the broader goals of education.

> Education has an acculturating role. It refines sensitivities and perceptions that contribute to national cohesion, a scientific temper, and independence of mind and spirit – thus furthering the goals of socialism, secularism and democracy enshrined in our Constitution.
>
> In our culturally plural society, education should foster universal and eternal values oriented towards the unity and integration of our people.

Some of these ideas are reiterated in the National Education Policy 2020:

> The purpose of the education system is to develop good human beings capable of rational thought and action, possessing compassion and empathy, courage and resilience, scientific temper and creative imagination, with sound ethical moorings and values. It aims at producing engaged, productive, and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive, and plural society as envisaged by our Constitution.

To what extent has our education system contributed to promoting equality, compassion, and sympathy? My intention here is not to examine whether we, as a society, are more polarised or less today than we were some 25 years ago. I merely want to point out that education, as it is imparted through our institutions, might not be effectively contributing to the equity and social justice agenda.

Let me give some examples.

One would expect that better education and more education will contribute to a reduction in gender biases against girls. However, this does not appear to be the case in

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[17] International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and ICF. 2017. National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4), 2015-16: India. Mumbai: IIPS.

[18] Accessed at http://psscive.ac.in/assets/documents/Policy_1986_eng.pdf

India. For example, the child (below six years) sex ratio in rural India and among communities belonging to Scheduled Tribes is better than in urban areas across almost all states. This suggests that son-preference and daughter aversion are stronger among families living in urban areas than among families residing in rural India. Clearly, higher educational achievements in cities and urban areas have not been able to adequately reduce the grip of adverse social norms that discriminate against the girl child.

Similarly, the COVID pandemic has exposed how minimally interested the average middle-class resident and the rich in cities are in embracing notions of social equality and justice. Gated housing societies in New Delhi were never porous, but when the lockdowns started, many Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) began acting as 'vigilantes' and barred the services of domestic workers, drivers, plumbers, electricians and others from entering the colonies. They destroyed the livelihoods of these people in one stroke. Protecting oneself became the paramount concern, trumping any consideration of how most of these workers, often migrants, would be able to survive. Some housing societies even banned the entry and exit of doctors and medical workers, citing the risk of spreading the virus. Equally disturbing has been the attitude of businesses in cities that simply shut down operations rendering millions of migrant and daily workers jobless and without a penny in their pockets. Very few employers even thought of providing these helpless workers shelter and food within their factory compounds until travel arrangements could be made. Such selfish and harsh behaviour of urban families contrasts sharply with the large-heartedness of many of the less educated poor rural families that open their homes to people like us when we go there for our field studies.

These examples suggest that higher levels of education in urban areas have not necessarily met the demands of social justice.

Let me sum up. Three factors have held India back India from converting the spread of education into a rapid and equitable expansion of social opportunities. One, it is not education *per se* but the socio-cultural, economic and political contexts in which education is delivered that matter for the transformation of society. Several adverse norms and attitudes continue to limit the potential of education in India to expand social, cultural and economic opportunities. Two, efforts at strengthening the linkages between education and the labour market especially for women have been limited and unsuccessful. Three, India has not done well to promote the overall purpose of education, especially when it comes to civic education and meeting the demands of social justice. It is no doubt important to pay attention to factors within educational systems such as the content of textbooks, pedagogy, teaching and learning outcomes, and how education is delivered. However, such a focus is too narrow. It may have fulfilled – and that too only to an extent – the short-term goal of reducing educational backwardness, but it has not sufficiently met the long-term goal of strengthening democratic citizenship.

Three Areas for Public Action

In the concluding segment of this lecture, I shall list three areas where clarity of thought and concerted public action could help advance the education and social transformation agenda.

One, it is critical to clarify the role of the public sector in the future provisioning of school education in India. An obvious corollary: it is critical to clarify the role of the private sector in the provisioning of school education.

The National Education Policy 2020 acknowledges that public education system is the foundation of a vibrant democratic society, and the way it is run must be transformed and invigorated in order to achieve the highest levels of educational outcomes for the nation. At the same time, the private and philanthropic school sector must also be encouraged and enabled to play a significant and beneficial role. The policy states that best practices of private schools will be documented, shared, and institutionalised in public schools.

India has a large private sector in school education. A recent report on the State of Private Schools in India[19] points out that the elephant in the classroom is really the private school. Nearly 50 per cent of all students in India are enrolled in 4,50,000 privately managed schools all over the country. Nearly three out of four children in urban areas attend private schools.

This is certainly not the case in most other countries of the world.[20] In 2016, more than half (51 per cent) of India's children in secondary education were enrolled in private schools. Contrast this with only 20 per cent of children in high income countries who are enrolled in private secondary schools. The proportion is around 4 per cent in Singapore, 9 per cent in the USA, 10 per cent in China and 11 per cent in Thailand. In fact, there were only 10 countries where the proportion of children enrolled in private secondary schools was higher than in India.

Can India achieve universal schooling without a dominant public sector in education? A basic textbook in microeconomics will point to serious market failures when it comes to private schooling. Private markets will tend to ignore the positive external benefits of schooling and this will lead to under-provisioning of school education. How India plans to achieve universal good quality education with the support of such a dominant private sector in schooling needs to be debated and discussed. This becomes even more critical against the backdrop of a diminishing role of the welfare state in enhancing security in the lives of ordinary people.

Two, considerations of equity should remain in the forefront of discussions on education. Despite the growing access to private schools among the middle class and even the poor, equity remains a matter of concern.

The private sector in education is as heterogeneous as it is in health. In the private health sector, there are quacks on one side and high-end hospitals offering world class services on the other. Similarly, in schooling too, we have some setups that can hardly qualify as schools in villages that could be charging less than Rs.100 a month as fees, and at the other end, we have fancy 'international' schools charging even Rs.75,000 a month as fees. Even so, features of private schools suggest that they are perpetuating inequities. We find that a majority of private schools end up serving lower proportions of the poor, girls, and children belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. While children in India's private schools perform better than their government counterparts at reading and maths,

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[19] Central Square Foundation. 2020. State of the Sector Report on Private Schools in India. Accessed at https://centralsquarefoundation.org/State-of-the-Sector-Report-on-Private-Schools-in-India.pdf

[20] UNESCO Databases of Resources on Education. Accessed at https://en.unesco.org/themes/education/databases

reading levels in India's rural private schools over the last 10 years, have stayed the same, while arithmetic skills have worsened. And private school students in less developed villages have the worst outcomes. This could be because private schools working in lower resource settings may face an additional burden due to challenges to learning based on student background.

Equity concerns have become even more serious because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying loss of livelihoods and incomes which has exposed the fragility of an education system that is heavily dependent on the private sector. At least in the short run, the private sector is likely to shrink, and this will affect the learning of a large majority of children attending private schools. Many private schools are likely to close down given the inability of parents to pay fees. Other schools that have low liquidity and financial reserves are also likely to close down. Parents will try to move their children to more affordable schools, including government schools. But government schools may not be prepared.

The United Nations and others have warned that the Covid-19 pandemic has caused an "unprecedented education emergency" and many children may never return to school. A majority of parents of private school students are unlikely to be able to support their children with digital learning. As a result, learning gaps between low- and high-fee private schools are likely to further widen, and exacerbate other forms of social and economic inequalities.

Not long ago, there used to be intense discussions on the need for a common school system. Now no one hears about this expression. We are resigned to a highly fragmented, unregulated and expanding private educational delivery system that continues to perpetuate and amplify social inequalities. This is very worrying.

Three, a strong political will is needed to fulfil the commitment to invest in education. India's low and stagnant public spending on education is a cause of and an exacerbating factor in the challenges of educational inequity, inadequate availability and reach, unequal access, low levels of learning, and poor quality of education.

The NEP 2020 underscores the importance of significantly raising educational investment, as there is no better investment towards a society's future than the high-quality education of our young people. The policy unequivocally endorses and envisions a substantial increase in public investment in education by both the Central Government and all State Governments. The Centre and the States, the policy states, will work together to increase the public investment in education sector to reach six per cent of GDP at the earliest. This is considered extremely critical for "achieving the high-quality and equitable public education system that is truly needed for India's future economic, social, cultural, intellectual, and technological progress and growth."

Unfortunately, as stated in the NEP, public expenditure on education in India has not come close to the recommended level of 6 per cent of GDP, as envisaged by the 1968 policy, reiterated in the policy of 1986, and further reaffirmed in the 1992 review of the policy. The current public (Government – Centre and States) expenditure on education in India has been around 4.4 per cent of GDP and only around 10 per cent of the total government spending goes for education. These numbers are far smaller than most developed and developing countries.

Where will the additional financial resources for education come from? The potential for levying education sector-specific central taxes is small. The education sector has already got the benefit of specific cesses – a two per cent education cess introduced in 2004 to finance

the universal midday meal in public schools; a one per cent secondary and higher education cess was introduced in 2007-08; and, in 2018-19, the education cess and the secondary and higher education cess were merged into a health and education cess at four per cent. The education sector also receives part of the proceeds of a social welfare surcharge of 10 per cent on import duties.

How will State Governments, which contribute to over 75 per cent of public spending on education, generate the additional fiscal resources? Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the fiscal health of most State Governments was in a precarious situation.

Let us not forget that Government of India has also promised to increase the government expenditure on health from around 1.2 per cent to 2.5 per cent of GDP. If public spending on both education and health increases, then of course the synergistic benefits are likely to be substantial. But these increases in public spending on education and health do not seem possible in the short run or even over the next 4 or 5 years. This is because the government will have to rely primarily on future economic growth to meet the growing financing needs of the education sector. Public expenditure on education can increase only to the extent that GDP expands – unless the State realises that there is an educational crisis and an emergency.

Concluding Remarks

Let me conclude by reiterating that India needs better and more 'education' today than ever before. There are many benefits still to reap from educational expansion.

The social transformation of Indian society (for the better) depends critically on expanding education opportunities. Education can and should contribute even more to the flourishing of human lives and to developing an equitable and just society. It can be a major factor contributing to the ending of anti-female biases and systematic discrimination against girls and women. Education can prepare young people for life, citizenship, effective participation in our democracy, and meeting the demands of social justice. The emphasis of education, however, should not be only on imparting skills that are appropriate for the job market. We need fresh thinking, new public policies and additional investments in education to expand freedoms and bring about transformational changes in society.

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NIEPA

Management Strategies for Effective Course Advisership in Public Universities in Edo State, Nigeria

H. O. Alonge*

Abstract

Course advising is the fulcrum of roles played by academic staff in a university system towards ensuring quality production of human capital needed for development. This study investigated the level of effectiveness of course advisers and their challenges in public universities in Edo State. The descriptive survey of course advisers in University of Benin, Benin City and Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, during the 2018/2019 academic session was adopted for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 40 course advisers from each of the two institutions across ten uniform departments. 1600 students who served as respondents to the instruments were also purposively sampled. 80 students each were sampled from the study population from the 10 common departments in the two institutions The results of the analysis revealed that course advisers in the public universities in Edo State were generally ineffective. It was also found that there was no significant difference in the effectiveness of course advisers based on experience and gender. The Course advisers' effectiveness was hampered by many challenges. Some managerial strategies, recommended to improve their effectiveness, include regular workshops, seminars and trainings to be organised for capacity building of the course advisers. It was also recommended that they should be equipped with computers and internet facilities so as to boost their effectiveness and efficiency. Another recommendation was that online course advising should be introduced to ease the problem of students' pressure.

* Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria, Email: hezekiah.alonge@uniben.edu

Introduction

The university system is the pinnacle of educational system where human capital is trained for sustainable development of the concerned nation, in this case Nigeria. According to Alonge, Obanor and Osagiobare (2013) and Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014), universities educate future leaders, train and develop high level manpower that underpin economic growth and development. The critical and laudable objectives of university education can therefore not be fully realised if the inputs (students) are not properly and diligently guided in their training by the institution.

Course advising is an educational construct required of an academic staff in a tertiary institution as a responsibility to students' academic and welfare services. Course advisership is primarily to assist students in behaviour modification, general development that will lead to meaningful accomplishment of educational objectives and lifelong goals. According to Sindabi (2001), the purpose of academic advising is to assist students in the development of meaningful educational career goals.

A course adviser could be referred to as an academic advisor, mentor or counsellor who fosters intellectual, moral, social and personal growth of students in an institution through effective interaction and guidance. An academic adviser therefore plays an indispensable role in the academic, moral, social, political and economic life of a college student which have great consequences on his/her future endeavour.

Academic course advisers are therefore positioned to promote students' persistence by educating them about the value of co-curricular participation and by encouraging their involvement in developmental programmes of great influence to their career (Cuseo, 2015). The duties and responsibilities of a course adviser are numerous and challenging. Among which are helping students in making useful academic decision that could help them maximise their potentials; to this end, he assists/guides the students, especially new entrants, to choose courses required of them in their respective disciplines and as per the expectations them as a requirement before they could graduate. Others include career counselling, personal counselling, processing of examination results and host of others.

Any academic staff appointed to perform the task of course advising must be knowledgeable, current in information with regard to university extant rules that relate to students' academic activities. Unfortunately, such course advisers often rely on their personal experiences since no special training is given on academic advising before their appointments. Their effectiveness in the discharge of academic advising is therefore a combination of the advisor's diligence, hard work, time management and level of professional relationship with his/her advisees.

Effective or ineffective course advisership has consequences on students' learning outcome (Drake, 2011). Dibia and Obi (2013) averred that the importance of effective course advisership of undergraduates cannot be overemphasized but it surely contributes to students' success. It, therefore, suggests that the fulfilment of the quest for university education is largely dependent on the ability and willingness of the students to avail himself/herself for academic advising. The personal and professional attributes of a course adviser could therefore influence his effectiveness. Nevertheless, it has been observed that while a few of the students avail themselves on this opportunity, especially the newly admitted ones, others by sheer ignorance do not seek academic advising. Student dropouts, repetition or withdrawal from the university could be the result of ineffective course

advising. Effective advising does not only promote quality teaching and learning outcome but foster academic satisfaction and success of students' life ambition.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The study is based on the social learning theory propounded by Bandura and supported by the *in-loco-parentis* principles of education law. Bandura (1987) propounded that humans learn through social interactions, conversation, observation and apprentice activities. The theory also places emphasis on the significance of observation and modelling of human behaviour, attitudes and emotional reaction on others for growth and development. It can thus be inferred from the assumptions that academic advisership/mentorship is likely to provide a number of opportunities for academic role models (academic advisers) who may play special roles in the career growth, personal, cognitive and emotional development of a university student for a successful life endeavour.

The *in-loco-parentis* principle is a legal doctrine which confers the power and responsibilities of a parent to another who stands in gap. In colleges and tertiary institutions like universities, the school through course advisers can aid or assist in the best interest of the students. As Activities such as, provision of relevant information, counselling orientation, pep talks and other behavioural modification and academic assistance, could enable the student derive maximum satisfaction from the school for successful academic output.

The basic duty of a course adviser is to assist students in the development and accomplishment of meaningful educational plans that are compatible with their life goals. It is on this note that Creamer (2000) opined that academic advisers assist students with decision making as a means to maximise their potentials. In relation to the relevance of students' advisership, Oriano (2013) and Cuseo (2015) comprehensively conceptualised course advising as a systematic process based on a close-student-advisor relationship intended to aid students in achieving educational, career, and personal goals through utilisation of the full range of institution and community resources.

The need for academic advisory in the university education is a *sine qua non* for a human capital development mandate of the system for national and global growth and development. Consequently, the inputs (students) are to be processed for wealth creation and development while in the university might experience one challenge or the other. Effective course advising could help overcome these challenges. Cuseo (2015) remarked that the problems of university/college students might vary by gender, course of study/career choice, year of entry or age in school. Other problems of the students, according to Motler-Leinkhuler (2002) could be psychological, social or emotional. The problem of unbridled freedom in campus, which hitherto the students were denied while with their parents, could be another aspect an academic course adviser needs to grapple with for a successful learning process among students. Peer influence sometimes entice students into anti-social behaviour like drug abuse, cultism, irresponsible sexual behaviour which eventually interrupt their studies (Muola, Maithya & Mwinzi, 2011). This underscores the need for effective course advising.

In order to carry out the tasks of academic advising, a course adviser need to be effective. Effective advisers achieve their goals of advising when they are accessible, and do more than provide information (Hunter, McCallen-Wriggens & White, 2007). According to Hemwall and Trachite (2005), the principles of effective course advising include:

consideration of university mission and vision; encouragement of critical thinking in students, alignment of advisees' personal goals with institutional goals; awareness of advisees' strengths and weaknesses, dissecting advising mindset and sensitizing them as well as understanding advisees' individual background. Other qualities of an effective course adviser as recorded by Gordon, Habley & Associates (2000) and Alonge (2019) are: accessibility and approachability, professionalism, experience, patience, flexibility, communicative skills, creativity, honesty, intelligence, responsibility and skill of organisation.

The university management, however, needs to leverage on course advisership effectiveness to enhance students' academic performance and general learning outcome in terms of character, training and skills acquisition. This is because the resultant effect of ineffective course advisership or students, who did not receive course advising services as found by Sayles (2005), is lower GPA, elongated year of graduation. It could result to wastage such as repetition or withdrawal which has almost become a phenomenon among undergraduates in Nigerian universities. To reverse this trend, Dibia and Obi (2013) suggested that the current structure and practice of course advising need to be more effective and impactful. Collaboration between university management, academic heads of departments, course advisers and the students is therefore advocated for quality and successful university education.

Statement of the Problem

Course advising is one of the major academic services rendered by universities and other tertiary institutions to their students. The aim is to foster students' retention, reduce wastage and assure quality university education capable of stimulating sustainable growth and development. It has, however, been observed that course advising is underestimated as a potent factor for successful university education by the university authorities, designated/appointed course advisers and the students themselves.

University authorities have been fingered for poor quality course advisership. This is due to high student enrolment which sometimes exceed the approved quota for admission by National Universities Commission (NUC), besides a shortage of qualified academic staff, inadequate office accommodation and poor training orientation for course advisers by these institutions.

The appointed/designated course advisers, on the other hand, do not seem to appreciate their responsibilities to the students as parents-in-gap for children who are in search for knowledge, skills, competencies and values for personal and global development trusted upon them for care and mentorship. Quite a number of the course advisers have been accused of unwholesome and unprofessional practices. A significant number of them appear to be lackadaisical while some are hostile and unfriendly to their advisees. Others brazenly display ignorance and inexperience with regard to the principles of course advising.

Nevertheless, it has been noted that some undergraduates do not eek academic advice, perhaps because of their limited knowledge of the efficacy of course advisership for educational goals attainment. Others perceive their course advisers as 'harmful' for some reason or other and would rather seek the advice of their colleagues than the college course advisers who are supposed to be more professional and effective.

In fact, the consequences of poor/ineffective course advising are enormous. Internal efficiency could be compromised while high rate of students' dropout, elongation of study duration, low academic performance resulting into students' poor satisfaction and wastage of the limited resources in the system could be the order of the day. It is against this background that the present study aimed at investigating the level of the effectiveness of course advisers in public universities in Edo State, Nigeria. Another objective is to proffer management strategies for effective course advisership in the university system.

Research Questions

The following five questions were taken up for the study:

1. What is the level of course advisers' effectiveness in public universities in Edo State, Nigeria?
2. Is there a variation in the level of effectiveness of course advisers in public universities in Edo State on the basis of experience?
3. Does gender influence the level of effectiveness of course advisers in public universities in Edo State, Nigeria?
4. Do gender, level of study and department of study influence the rate at which students consult their course advisers in public universities in Edo State, Nigeria?
5. What are the challenges to effective course advisership in public universities in Edo State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

Three out of the five research questions were thus hypothesised:

HO_1: There is no significant variation in the level of effectiveness between experienced and less experienced course advisers in public universities in Edo State, Nigeria.

HO_2: There is no significant difference in the level of effectiveness between male and female course advisers in public universities in Edo State, Nigeria.

HO_3: There is no significant relationship between gender, level of study and department of study with the rate at which students consult their course advisers in public universities in Edo State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

--- determine the level of effectiveness of course advisers in public universities in Edo State, Nigeria;

--- ascertain if there is a variation in the level of effectiveness of course advisers in public universities in Edo State, Nigeria based on experience;

--- find out if gender influences the level of effectiveness of course advisers in public universities in Edo State, Nigeria;

--- investigate whether there is a significant difference in the rate at which students consult their course advisers in public universities in Edo State, Nigeria; and to

--- identify challenges to effective course advisership in public universities in Edo State, Nigeria.

Methods

In this study, the descriptive survey of the *ex-post facto* design was used. Data collected were described without manipulation to describe the observed phenomenon.

Participants

In Edo State, Nigeria, there are two public universities. They are the University of Benin, Benin City (UNIBEN) which is managed by the federal government, while the second one is Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma (AAU, Ekpoma) owned by the State Government. However, there is a university, Edo University, Iyarmoh, which is jointly managed by both the public and private sector.

For the purpose of this study only the University of Benin, Benin City (UNIBEN) and Ambrose Alli University (AAU), Ekpoma, were selected. A purposive sampling technique was used to sample respondents from the two institutions during the 2018-2019 academic session. To achieve this, the researcher deliberately selected twenty respondents who were accessible and willing to participate. The students were drawn from ten uniform departments from the two institutions. They are the Departments of Educational Foundations, Business Administration, Public Law, Electrical Engineering, Crop Science, English Language and Literature, Vocational and Technical Education, Biochemistry, Religion and Philosophy, and Mathematics. Course advisers from each level (100 – 400) from the ten departments sampled were automatically part of the study.

A total of 1600 students and 80 course advisers were selected for this purpose in the two public universities.

Table 1 shows the sample distribution and demographic characteristics of the respondents.

TABLE 1

Sample Distribution and Demographic Characteristics of Students and Course Advisers

Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma				University of Benin, Benin City			
A	Dept.	No. of Students (100 – 400 level)	No. of Course Advisers	A	Dept.	No. of Students (100 – 400 level)	No. of Course Advisers
1	Educational Foundations	80	4	1	Educational Foundations	80	4
2	Business Administration	80	4	2	Business Administration	80	4
3	Public Law	80	4	3	Public Law	80	4
4	Electrical Engineering	80	4	4	Electrical Engineering	80	4
5	Crop Science	80	4	5	Crop Science	80	4
6	English Language and Literature	80	4	6	English Language and Literature	80	4
7	Vocational & Technical Education	80	4	7	Vocational & Technical Education	80	4
8	Biochemistry	80	4	8	Biochemistry	80	4
9	Religion & Philosophy	80	4	9	Religion & Philosophy	80	4
10	Mathematics	80	4	10	Mathematics	80	4
	Total	**800**	**40**		**Total**	**800**	**40**
B	Gender	M F	M F	B	Gender	M F	M F
		380 420	26 14			430 370	18 22
C	Experience	-	Exp. Less Exp.	C	Experience	-	Exp. Less Exp.
			14 26				16 24
	Total	**800**	**40**		**Total**	**800**	**40**

Instruments

Two research instruments designed by the researcher were used to collect relevant data for the study. The first one was titled: Students Effective Course Advisership Questionnaire (SECAQ). It was used to elicit responses from the sampled students. The instrument had three sections. Section A contained demographic characteristics of the respondents such as gender, level of study and Department. Section B contained 15 items which bothered on course advisers' effectiveness with regard to academic activity and other services to course

advisees. The items were rated on a four-point Likert scale --- Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). Section C of the instrument had 10 items based on the rate at which students consult their course advisers on a modified Likert scale --- Often (3), Sometimes (2) and Seldom (1).

The second instrument, aimed at collecting information from the course advisers, was tagged: Challenges to Effective Course Advisership Questionnaire (CECAQ). It had two sections: A and B. Section A was used to collect demographic information about the respondents while Section B had 10 items with modified four-point Likert scale responses --- Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

The instruments were validated by three experienced and senior academics from the Departments of Educational Management and Educational Evaluation and Counselling Phycology, University of Benin, Benin City. Their expert review and comments were used to affect necessary corrections before the finalisation of the instruments for administration.

The instruments were later subjected to reliability test using test – retest option within an interval of two weeks. Thirty subjects who were not part of the main study participated in the reliability test. The Cronbach alpha statistics was used to compute the reliability test on the first instrument titled: Students' Effective Course Advisership Questionnaire (SECAQ). It yielded an alpha result of 0.65. The second instrument: Challenges to Effective Course Advisership Questionnaire (CECAQ) was tested for its reliability with the aid of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistics. This yielded a coefficient of 0.71.

The administration and collection of data lasted for two months. Two trained research assistants helped to collect the data. However, 746 administered copies of questionnaire were found useful while 72 copies of the questionnaire completed by course advisers were returned. This accounted for 93 per cent and 90 per cent return rate of the two sets of questionnaires used to collect data for the study.

Data Analysis

The data collected were analysed by using descriptive statistics such as mean ($\bar{x}$), standard deviation (SD) and percentages (%) for the research questions. Inferential statistics like t-test and ANOVA were used to test for significance of groups at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The results of the study are presented in the tables below.

TABLE 2

Mean Analysis of Course Advisers' Level of Effectiveness

S/N	Items	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD	Remark
	My course adviser:			
1	guided me during course registration	3.61	1.07	Effective
2	shared information with me about academic rules and regulations in the university	2.64	0.97	Effective
3	advised me on how to manage time and other resources in the university	1.96	0.61	Ineffective
4	encourages me in my career growth and development	2.11	0.46	Ineffective
5	is diligent in examination results preparation	2.61	1.21	Effective
6	keeps/kept carefully my academic and personal records	2.57	1.04	Effective
7	is always available for consultation	2.06	0.78	Ineffective
8	monitors my academic progress	1.74	0.66	Ineffective
9	took personal initiative to contact me when there was need for it	2.30	0.93	Ineffective
10	shows/showed concern about my personal challenge	2.41	0.51	Ineffective
11	is friendly and approachable	2.54	1.03	Effective
12	maintains genuine relationship	2.27	1.04	Ineffective
13	is discreet and confidential	2.58	1.15	Effective
14	respects/respected my personal views and decisions	2.38	0.50	Ineffective
15	is patient and tolerant	2.52	0.64	Effective
	Average mean	**2.42**	**0.84**	**Ineffective**

Source: Researcher's field work (2020)

Table 2 shows that course advisers in public universities in Edo State are generally ineffective in the discharge of their responsibilities (average mean of 2.42). However, the table indicates that course advisers were effective with regard to items 1, 2, 5, 6, 11, 13 and 15.

TABLE 3

t – Test Analysis on Level of Course Adviser's Effectiveness Based on Experience

Group	N	Mean ($\overline{x}$)	SD	Df	t-value	Sig. level
Experienced	32	15.64	2.97			
				70	1.75	.95
Less experienced	40	12.38	1.84			

Source: Researcher's field work (2020)

Table 3 reveals that the mean of experienced course advisers was 15.64 with a standard deviation of 2.97 while that of less experienced course advisers was 12.38 with a standard deviation of 1.84. The computed *t* was 1.75 and the significant value was .95. This suggested that the result was significant at 0.05, that is $t_{(70)} = 1.75$; $P < 0.05$: it implies that there is a significant variation in the level of course advisers' effectiveness between experienced and less experienced ones.

TABLE 4

t – Test Analysis on Gender Difference in the Level of Course Advisers' Effectiveness

Group	N	Mean ($\overline{x}$)	SD	Df	t-value	Sig. level
Male	37	10.24	2.41			
				70	.97	1.13
Female	35	11.08	2.65			

Source: Researcher's field work (2020)

In Table 4 the number of experienced male course advisers was 37 while their female counterparts was 35. The male course advisers had a mean of 10.24; the female course advisers had a mean value of 11.08. The standard deviation was 2.41 and 2.65 for male and female course advisers respectively. The t – value was .97 while the significant value was 1.13. It implied that the result was not significant at 0.05 level of significance. That is, $t_{(70)} = .97$; $P > 0.05$. The hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the level of effectiveness between male and female course advisers in public universities in Edo State is therefore accepted.

TABLE 5

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis between the Predictor and Criterion Variables

R = .670
R^2 = .560
Adjusted R^2 = 0.554
Standard error of estimate = 6.32426

ANOVA					
Source of variation	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	P
Regression	10,781.132	3	2247.069		
				42.538	< 0.05
Residual	8946.231	743	.174		
Total	19727.363	746			

Source: Researcher's field work (2020)

Table 5 indicates that the independent variables (gender, level and department of the students) statistically and significantly predict the dependent variable which is the rate at which students consult their course advisers, F (3,743) = 42.538; P < 0.05. However, when the adjustment was made for other factors, the contribution of the predictors was 55.4 per cent. Nevertheless, the table shows that there is a significant relationship between the gender, level and department of study on the rate at which students consult their course advisers while on campus.

TABLE 6

Mean Analysis of the Challenges to Effective Course Advising

S/N	Challenges	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD	Rank order
1	Limited knowledge about my responsibilities	3.06	0.65	7
2	Lack of incentives	3.40	0.67	3
3	Excess workload	3.65	0.82	1
4	Lack of office accommodation	3.15	0.70	6
5	Students' pressure and poor time management	3.46	0.71	2
6	Poor record keeping facilities	3.30	0.80	4
7	Students' nonchalant attitude to academic advising	3.21	0.65	5
8	Safety and security	2.56	0.74	9
9	Poor coordination and communication	2.70	0.89	8
10	Instability of academic calendar	1.96	0.73	10

Source: Researcher's field work (2020)

Table 6 discloses ten major challenges facing effective course advising in public universities in Edo State. The five major challenges in a ranked order and their corresponding means are: excess work load, pressure of students and poor time management, lack of incentives, poor record keeping facilities and students' nonchalant attitude to academic advising. The least of the challenges is instability of academic calendar which rank number 10 with a mean of 1.96.

Discussion

The result of the first research question revealed that course advisers in public universities in Edo State, Nigeria, are generally ineffective in the performance of their academic and *in-loco-parentis* responsibilities to their advisees (students).

The study, however, indicates that course advisers are effective in the area of providing academic information such as course registration requirements, conduct of semester examinations, and consequences of students' involvement in examinations. But in the areas of personal support services such as counselling, monitoring of students' academic progress; course advisers have not been responsible and responsive to such students' needs. This finding therefore confirmed Dibia and Obi's (2013) conclusion in a study that academic advising in South East Nigerian universities focussed mainly on academic aspects neglecting important areas like social, career focus and adjustment to university life.

The result of the study further reveals that there is a significant variation in the level of effectiveness between experienced and less experienced course advisers. This implies that a few of the course advisers are effective in the area of comprehensive students advising and support services. Course advisers who are experienced could be more professional and dedicated than their counterparts who are mainly young academics saddled with very many other responsibilities in the institution. The approach to advising of a young academic is prescriptive rather than developmental according to Pargett (2011). The finding presupposes the fact that experienced course advisers have good mentorship, listening and communicative skills. Also, they build meaningful relationship and are more approachable than others. Students who are under the care and tutelage of such advisers might experience holistic training and development for future success in life.

It was also found in this study that there is no significant difference in the level of effectiveness between male and female course advisers. This finding is no surprise; rather it confirms that appointment/engagement of academics in universities is devoid of gender preference rather on perceived level of productivity or efficiency. But in the case of course advising, both male and female course advisers were perceived to be generally ineffective. This suggests that course advising services by both male and female academics have not been impactful in the academic training and development of the students in recent times. The probable reason for this finding according to Dibia and Obi (2013) could be as a result of the failure of the institutions to put in place mechanism that will ensure quality students' advisership.

The data analysed in Table 5 disclose that there is a significant relationship between gender, level and department or course of study with the rate or frequency at which students consult with their course advisers. This implies that the rate of students' consultation with their course advisers varies by some factors. It is expected that students irrespective of gender, level of study or course of study should seek the services of their academic advisers

at all time in view of the benefits such advice has in the academic and career development of the student.

Muola *et al* (2011) had earlier provided reason(s) for this finding. According to them, students at different levels experience different unique problems which might influence the rate at which they consult their course adviser for solution or advice. For instance, a new entrant into the university (100 level student) might often seek the guardian of his course adviser than 200 and 300 level students who are already used to the culture of the university. Supporting this finding, Moller-Leimkuhler (2002) explained that female traditionally have the tendency to seek help more than their male counterparts in dealing with difficulties like academic problems. Also, older students who are in 400 level and above might want to consult regularly with their advisers to know how they are faring academically with regard to their GPA. The need to know how to make a successful career in the midst of unemployment and stiff competition might also influence older students who are about to graduate to seek counsel or more information from their course/academic advisers. Similarly, students in sciences and vocational department where specific skills, knowledge, values and training are required for competency and professionalism will have the tendency to always consult their course advisers for success than those in liberal or humanities department.

Lastly, Table 6 reveals that course advisers in public universities in Edo State are faced with a plethora of challenges. Prominent among them is the excessive work load which has a mean of 3.65 while the least is instability of academic calendar which has a corresponding mean of 1.96. This finding is, however, in consonance with Pargett (2011); Dibia and Obi (2013) who in separate studies reveal that academic advisers have some challenges because of weak institutional mechanism.

The challenge of excess work load for course advisers and students' pressure coupled with lack of time management among others appear to be exacerbated by the exponential increase in students' enrolment in university education in Nigeria. These major challenges are some of the reasons for incessant industrial disputes between the proprietors of public universities and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU).

If a university system is a citadel where human capital is trained and processed for sustainable national and global development, course advisers and other academics must be effective and efficient in their responsibilities for maximum goal achievement. Effective course advisership therefore is capable of stimulating a productive bonding between the advisee and the course adviser which could result into students' satisfaction and career success in future.

Conclusion

University education is pivotal to socioeconomic and political development of a nation. This is because human capital development is critical particularly to the survival of an individual but requires skills, creativity, knowledge, training, attitude and sound morals or character disposition for the 21st century economic challenges. To achieve these aims, effective course advisership of students is germane. The study however found that effectiveness of course advisers in public universities in Edo State, Nigeria is limited due to some challenges. The university management at different levels need to ensure that there is

quality and effective course advising for academic excellence and students' success in the world of work.

Recommendations

The following management strategies are recommended for effective course advisership.

1. University authorities should place a high premium on course advising through their mission statements and academic policies. It should be seen as something more than guiding students during course registration and preparation of results. It should rather be taken as an indispensable service to students that can assure their all round development for a productive and meaningful life.
2. The capacity and effectiveness of course advisers should be improved upon through regular workshops, seminars and briefings. During such meetings, lectures on educational psychology, human psychology, guidance and counselling and other knowledge areas that could help course advisers perform their responsibilities effectively should be shared.
3. Faculty Deans and Heads of Departments should appoint a senior academic staff as coordinator of course advisers. His responsibility shall include but not limited to providing leadership for course advisers, interface with them to know their needs and challenges for earnest attention.
4. Special incentives should be provided for course advisers as motivation.
5. They should be provided with computers and ICT facilities in order to increase their effectiveness and efficiency.
6. Office accommodation, together with records keeping facilities, should be provided for course advisers.
7. Public universities in Edo State should introduce online course advising to mitigate the challenge of students' pressure and time management issue arising from high enrolment.
8. Course advisers should always endeavour to provide their advisees with relevant information using different means of communication. They should explore their professional skills and personal values such as honesty and friendliness in the discharge of their responsibilities.
9. Academic work load such as the courses to be taught by course advisers should be reduced in order for them to be more effective in course advisership duties.
10. University authorities at different fora such as orientation, matriculation, induction ceremonies should emphasise the need for students to always consult with their academic advisers or mentor in all areas of needs.

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Developing Leadership Skills in Secondary Students

Ruchi Dwivedi[*]
Sujata Srivastava[#]

Abstract

The need for developing leadership skills among students have been felt for a long time. The objective of the study was to develop and implement a Student Leadership Programme (SLP) and study its effectiveness for developing the leadership skills of Empathy and Communication among secondary school students. The research design was quasi-experimental in nature and a convenient sampling technique was used. The sample included two secondary schools of Vadodara city, one serving as the experimental and the other being the control group. The SLP was developed and implemented. The data were collected using the Leadership Knowledge Test and Intended Behavioural Scale. Mean, SD, and Mann-Whitney U-test were used for data analysis. The results showed that the Student Leadership Programme (SLP) was effective as the students of the experimental group had significantly higher conceptual knowledge and intended behaviour in the skills of empathy and communication.

[*] Department of Education, Faculty of Education and Psychology, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara, Gujarat, Email: ruchidwivediperfect221286@gmail.com

[#] Department of Education, Faculty of Education and Psychology, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara, Gujarat, Email: s_sujata1@rediffmail.com

Introduction

India is known as the world's largest democracy. In any democracy effective leaders are essential for all sectors of economy. Today's students are tomorrow's workers and must be ready for jobs where leadership plays a critical role. Leadership skills learning is not only related to jobs in schools, universities, organisations or other skilled work situations, it is important in day to day functioning of students and helps manage their life's critical situations. Due to all these vital requirements of today's civilisation, the development of leadership skills among students has been high on education-related policy agenda. There is a requirement of optimum age and mental readiness for the inculcation of leadership skills. The acquisition of leadership skills among students, imparted at the school level, will help in the enhancement of their academic as well as social performance in their everyday life.

Leadership Skills at Secondary School Level: Their Importance

Shrivastav and Jatav (2017) have stated that the existing skill development policy in India needs an urgent treatment. Learning leadership skills does not mean that the person is a speaker in front of thousands or holds a political position. This learning becomes important because it is required by all for their effective functioning as individuals and in relation with their respective social environments. The students of today will join the workforce of tomorrow and they must be job-ready where leadership skills, besides technical skills, will play an important part. The research of Schmidt and Sheri (1996) revealed that the development of leadership skill is needed for all individuals in any field and it is imperative that students get the required exposure for development of skills such as delegation, motivating others and self, and other interpersonal skills. This emphasises that the students in an educational setting need to be equipped with various skills for a successful future as only subject knowledge will not help in dealing with life situations. NCERT (2000) discussed that there are certain core skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, self-awareness, coping with stress, decision making, and empathy amongst others essential for the growth of an individual, and that, ideally, education must prepare students to face the challenges of life.

In school, student representative councils and school parliaments provide excellent opportunities for students to apply their learning in making decisions, managing conflicts, teamwork, and self-motivated cooperative conduct. If a student can acquire leadership skills in school by participating in various activities that are conducted in assembly, if the students participate in various co-curricular activities like debate competition, quiz competition, poem or *shloka* recitation competition, skit/drama competition, fun fair/exhibition, and even in various sports competitions, there is no doubt that they will become good leaders in the future as they can lead under any form of circumstances. For example, to be a good public speaker, it is essential to present the ideas to all. It may ne achieved by involving the students in club activities such as debating clubs to help them gain the confidence to speak in public without fear.

The development of student leadership skills involves opportunities which encourage students to act with responsibility. Eccles (1999) emphasised that "school can be a vital environment for children of teenage, where growth takes place and future is sculpted." The secondary school phase is where significant growth and development of a

student is observed. According to Moss (2012), "Adolescents should begin learning leadership concepts as early as possible so that they can sharpen their leadership skills and develop their minds to think critically about various situations." This is an appropriate phase where students understand the importance of skill development for self and to meet the demands of the society. The secondary school provides an excellent platform for students to involve themselves in student councils, as student heads and in other leadership roles, and to demonstrate leadership skills.

The skills of communication and empathy are important interpersonal skills as students must deal with the teachers, peer groups, family members, relatives, people at the future workplaces and with the society at large. If these skills are developed, it would help students to express themselves and enhance their interpersonal relationships. We need to understand that the conceptual knowledge of leadership skills helps the learners acquire knowledge and understanding of the skills while their intended behaviour reveals their perception towards these skills. The presence of these interpersonal skills would help the students in confronting various future challenges, understanding others, expressing themselves and, finally, in developing self-confidence. Communication and empathy skills can be developed by implementing a programme for student leadership wherein skills can be inculcated through practice.

Communication Skills

Communication skill is an ability to listen, understand and speak clearly; it is an essential and core skill. The main purpose of communication is to transport the ideas, thoughts, and beliefs to another person in a way that it creates understanding. According to Verma (2013), "the leaders also need finely-tuned communication skills." Communication skills are essential for the successful future career of a student. Venkatraman's (2011) study on student leadership skills to explain the comparative account between traditional schools and alternative schools, found that communication skills were one of the dimensions, and an ability-oriented curriculum is best for their growth. Students with strong communication skills are more likely to contribute to classroom discussions become active participants of group and pair and share activities and eventually gain more learning experiences. Eriguç & Kose (2013) established that emotional intelligence was closely linked to communication skills. One of the premises on which emotional intelligence rests is empathy.

Empathy Skills

Empathy skill is an ability to sense other people's emotions, coupled with the ability to imagine what someone else might be thinking or feeling. It contributes to an understanding of others, their perceptions and their concerns. Leaders with empathy can relate to the situations in real life and sense them very easily. Empathy is a construct that is fundamental to leadership. For the students, empathy serves as a focal point for socio-emotional development, as it focuses on their deep understanding of themselves and their various perspectives. As the students learn to master and manage their own emotions and learn to understand the perspectives of others, they will also be able to develop at the same time. This would lead to better self-control and effective intrinsic motivation.

Leadership skill development in students can be done in different ways and one way is the development and implementation of a programme for student leadership.

Student Leadership Programme

Kolzow (2014) is of the opinion that leadership development training/programme has a vital place of great importance in today's world as leaders are now viewed as evolved rather than innate/born. It has been observed that the learning of the students from the school marks a phenomenal impact on their understanding; it could be either in terms of academic, co-curricular or even in the form of training or any programme. The literature affirms that "student leadership learning is improved by enhancing quality, effective activities and practices that are utilised in the classroom" (Siamoo, 2013). Bass (1990) stated that one of the basic goals of leadership training programmes is to increase the human relationship knowledge, skills, and abilities, to solve interaction and communicative problems. We need to realise that such a programme exists within a context or area of focus where students may develop and practise leadership skills. The school's Student Leadership Programme will be more sustainable if it is supported by students, parents, teachers, the school and local community (Hughes, 2015).

Student leadership programme for secondary students with the aim to develop leadership skills of communication and empathy has been effective. Mbele and Msomi (2006) found that an improvement of leadership skills programme can bring about a significant progress in communication skills. The intervention performed by Baghcheghi *et al* (2011) also directed towards the significant increase of the communication scores of the students who had gone through an intervention. It has been observed that training courses have a positive impact on skill development. The longitudinal study of Cunico *et al* (2012) revealed that unique training courses can develop empathy skills in students effectively. The secondary school students are adolescents and a systematic leadership programme in empathy skills would help them in enhancing their coping mechanisms. This is consistent with Srikala and Kishore's (2010) investigation about adolescents where the findings reflected that the adolescents in the developmental programme had significantly better self-esteem, is better in coping and adjustment specifically with teachers in school and in pro-social behaviour. The results of the effects of social-emotional learning programming claimed that empathy programme is highly successful in improving emotional intelligence (Cain and Carnellor, 2008). The Student Leadership Programme may go a long way in ascertaining the skill development. It may show that the programme has scope for students to work together in leadership situations, learn from each other and accomplish leadership development goals.

The current study aims to develop and implement a student leadership programme (SLP) for development of leadership skills of communication and empathy in secondary school students. Its further studies the effectiveness of the Student Leadership Programme in terms of conceptual knowledge and intended behaviour of students in the above skills.

Null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.01 level of significance. We therefore hypothesised that there will be no significant difference between the mean post-test scores of the students of control and experimental groups of class IX in the conceptual knowledge and intended behaviour of the leadership skills of communication and empathy.

Method

A quasi-experimental research design was used and the Pre-test-Post-test-Non-Equivalent-Control Group Design was followed in the study. A convenient sampling technique was used to draw the sample. Two schools in the city of Vadodara were selected and one section of standard IX in one school constituted the experimental group while a section of standard IX in the second school formed the control group. As the design is non-equivalent in nature, it becomes essential to match the experimental and control groups which were done by administering the Raven's Matrices (Raven's Progressive Matrices) as a pre-test. The participants who finally participated were (n = 30) in both the groups.

Material

Intelligence: Raven's Progressive Matrices (1998 edition, revised 2003) Intelligence Test was used. It has a reliability score of 0.96 and was administered as a pre-test to the experimental and control groups only with the aim of matching the groups.

The intelligence test was selected for the purpose of matching the group. Many researches on the relation between intelligence and learning ability find no difference in intelligence tests (such as an IQ test) and learning ability/skill development. Moreover, it implies a powerful correlation between the ability of skill development ability and intelligence ability.

Conceptual Knowledge: A Leadership Knowledge Test was constructed for the students by the investigators to study their conceptual knowledge in communication and empathy skills. The Leadership Knowledge Test for both the leadership skill of communication and empathy comprised a total of 32 items which were of a total of 40 marks. There were open-ended and close-ended items related to the meaning, definition, and characteristics of the skills, respectively. The different types of items consisted of multiple-choice questions, one sentence answers, fill in the blanks, and true/false. The Leadership Knowledge Test had a reliability coefficient of 0.79 when tested for test-retest reliability.

Intended Behaviour: An Intended Leadership Behaviour Scale was constructed by the investigators to study the intended behaviour of students towards communication and empathy skills. The marks allocated to each skill were 40, making it a total of 80 marks. It consisted of eight situations for each skill. There were five close-ended alternatives to each situation wherein the students had to choose one appropriate alternative. The five alternatives had strongly positive polarity, neutral polarity, negative polarity, strongly negative polarity and the alternative scores ranged from 1 to 5, 1 for strongly negative polarity, and 5 for strongly positive polarity. When tested for test-retest reliability, the intended leadership behaviour scale showed a reliability coefficient of 0.76.

The Intended Leadership Behaviour Scale and Leadership Knowledge Test were validated by the expert in the field of education.

Procedure

Development of Student Leadership Programme (SLP): The Student Leadership Programme was developed for the secondary students of standard IX to develop leadership skills of communication and empathy. For each skill, a total of thirteen interactive session

plans with aims, knowledge, and activity inputs were developed. Each session consisted of conceptual knowledge about the topic and sub-topics of the skills taken, keeping the student's level in view. The programme had features of a stress-free, fun-filled environment for student participation. Every session consisted of 40 minutes in which the theoretical inputs were of 15 minutes duration and the activities were conducted for 25 minutes, focusing on the theoretical inputs imparted. The theoretical input of each session started with general objectives, instructional objectives, and content on different sub-topics. It was followed by indoor and outdoor activities, self-reporting exercises, role plays, assignments, video clips, documentary movies, daily to-do tasks and case studies that could help students relate to the real-world scenarios, as parts of the programme. At the end there was an engaging de-briefing/discussion session with the students. The discussion method was used.

The research was carried out in four phases. In the first phase, the Student Leadership Programme (SLP) was developed. Raven's Progressive Matrices Intelligence Test was administered to the control and experimental groups, with the sole purpose of matching the groups in the second phase. In the third phase, Student Leadership programme (SLP) was implemented for the experimental group. The experiment included 26 sessions, where the students of the experimental group were taught the skills of communication and empathy during one school academic year. For each skill, 13 sessions were conducted. One session consisted of 40 minutes which was taken during three days of the school week. For both the skills of empathy and communication, the sessions were conducted for nine hours each, making it a total of 18 hours. The sessions involved a variety of activities, such as indoor games, outdoor games, assignments, written exercises, short documentary films, video clips, case studies, role plays and a debriefing exercise at the end of each activity. The discussion on conceptual knowledge of different skills included the meaning, characteristics, components, and their relevance in the day to day life of the concerned students. On the other hand, regular curricular and co-curricular activities were conducted in the control group without the implementation of Student Leadership Programme (SLP). The various inputs in the control group included regular assembly events such as reading the news, prayer, and school updates. The control group students were also subjected to debate competition, essay writing, quiz competition, school council elections and dance/*rangoli* competition.

In the fourth phase, the Leadership Knowledge Test and the Intended Leadership Behaviour Scale were administered as a post-test to both the control and experimental groups.

The data collected were analysed quantitatively, using non-parametric statistics as non-probability sampling technique was used. Mean, SD, and Mann-Whitney U-test were used to analyse the data. The Mann-Whitney U-test was considered appropriate as the sample was selected by a convenient sampling method. It is one of the most powerful and robust nonparametric tests, taking care of a small sample size. The mean of post-test scores of the experimental and control groups were taken for analysis in accordance with the experimental design.

Results

TABLE 1

Summary of Mann-Whitney U-Test for the Conceptual Knowledge of Communication Skill

Students	N	Mean of Ranks	Sum of Ranks	U-Value	Z- Value	Probability (p)
Control Group	30	15.50	465.00			
Experimental Group	30	45.50	1365.00	0.000	-6.77	0.000

The analysis shows that the experimental group (M = 11.23, SD = 1.47) differed from the control group (M = 1.7, SD = 1.17). The higher mean score of the experimental group in the Conceptual Knowledge of Communication Skill was about whether the difference in the mean was significant or by chance. It aimed to test the null hypothesis. The Mann-Whitney U-test was used as the sample was taken by a convenience sampling technique.

Table 1 presents the results of the Mann-Whitney U-test. Referring to the Table for normal probability (Table A of Siegel, 1956) under null hypothesis (H_o) of z, for z <= -5.490, the two tailed probability was found to be 0.00 which was lesser than our decided $\alpha = 0.01$. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected. The findings suggest that the students of the experimental group and the control group differed significantly in the Conceptual Knowledge of Communication Skill. It can be concluded that the Conceptual Knowledge of Communication Skill of the students in the experimental group was stochastically higher than that of the students in the control group, which was due to the Student Leadership Programme in developing the leadership skill.

TABLE 2

Summary of Mann-Whitney U-Test for the Intended Behaviour of the Leadership Skill of Communication

Students	N	Mean of Ranks	Sum of Ranks	U-Value	Z- Value	Probability (p)
Control Group	30	17.17	515.00			
Experimental Group	30	43.83	1315.00	50.000	-5.933	0.000

The analysis shows that the experimental group (M = 33.9, SD = 3.91) differed from the control group (M = 23.2, SD = 3.61). The higher mean score of the experimental group in the Intended Behaviour of the Leadership Skill of Communication in comparison to the control group may be attributed to the Student Leadership Programme in developing the leadership skill. To find whether the difference in the mean was significant or by chance and to test the null hypothesis, Mann-Whitney U test was used as the sample was taken by a convenience sampling technique.

Table 2 presents the results of the Mann-Whitney U-test. Referring to the Table for normal probability (Table A of Siegel, 1956) under null hypothesis (H_o) of z, for z <= -5.490, the two tailed probability was found to be 0.00 which was lesser than our decided $\alpha = 0.01$. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected. The findings suggest that the students of the experimental group and the control group differed significantly in the Intended Behaviour of the Leadership Skill of Communication. It can be concluded that the Intended Behaviour of the Leadership Skill of Communication of the students in the experimental group was stochastically higher than that of the students in the control group which was due to the Student Leadership Programme in developing the leadership skill.

TABLE 3

Summary of Mann-Whitney U-Test for the Conceptual Knowledge of Empathy Skill

Students	N	Mean of Ranks	Sum of Ranks	U-Value	Z- Value	Probability (p)
Control Group	30	15.50	465.00			
Experimental Group	30	45.50	1365.00	0.000	-6.757	0.000

The analysis shows that the experimental group (M = 11.8, SD = 0.98) differed from the control group (M = 1.2, SD = 1.27). The higher mean score of the experimental group in the Conceptual Knowledge of Empathy Skill in comparison to the control group may be attributed to the Student Leadership Programme in developing the leadership skill. To find whether the difference in the mean was significant or by chance and to test the null hypothesis, Mann-Whitney U-test was used as the sample was taken by a convenience sampling technique.

Table 3 presents the results of the Mann-Whitney U-test. Referring to the Table for normal probability (Table A of Siegel, 1956) under null hypothesis (H_o) of z, for z <= -5.490, the two tailed probability was found to be 0.00 which was lesser than our decided $\alpha = 0.01$. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected. The findings suggest that the students of the experimental group and the control group differed significantly in the Conceptual Knowledge of Communication Skill. It can be concluded that the Conceptual Knowledge of Empathy Skill of the students in the experimental group was stochastically higher than that of the students in the control group which was due to the Student Leadership Programme in developing leadership skill.

TABLE 4

Summary of Mann-Whitney U-Test for the Intended Behaviour of the Leadership Skill of Empathy

Students	N	Mean of Ranks	Sum of Ranks	U-Value	Z- Value	Probability (p)
Control Group	30	16.92	507.50			
Experimental Group	30	44.08	1322.50	42.500	-6.038	0.000

The analysis shows that the experimental group (M = 33.3, SD = 4.19) differed from the control group (M = 23.8, SD = 3.20). The higher mean score of the experimental group in the Intended Behaviour of the Leadership Skill of Empathy in comparison to the control group may be attributed to the Student Leadership Programme in developing the leadership skill. To find whether the difference in the mean was significant or by chance and to test the null hypothesis, Mann-Whitney U-test was used as the sample was taken by a convenience sampling technique.

Table 4 presents the results of the Mann-Whitney U-test. Referring to the Table for normal probability (Table A of Siegel, 1956) under null hypothesis (H_0) of z, for z <= -5.490, the two tailed probability was found to be 0.00 which was lesser than our decided α = 0.01. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected. The findings suggest that the students of the experimental group and the control group differed significantly in the Intended Behaviour of the Leadership Skill of Empathy. It can be concluded that the Intended Behaviour of the Leadership Skill of Empathy of the students in the experimental group was stochastically higher than that of the students in the control group which was due to the Student Leadership Programme in developing the leadership skill.

Discussion

The results showed that the Student Leadership Programme (SLP) developed to inculcate leadership skills among secondary school students was effective. It was found that the conceptual knowledge and intended behaviour in leadership skills of communication and empathy skills for Class IX students of the experimental group was higher due to the implementation of Student Leadership Programme (SLP). The control group was given curricular and co-curricular inputs as scheduled in their regular school program wherein the focus on the skills of communication and empathy may have been lacking.

The adolescent students at the secondary level were at the appropriate stage for skill development. This is consistent with Dean's (2018) study that community-based group programmes for adolescent students are useful in the development of leadership skills. However, community-based activities were not a part of the programme which could have been included.

The Student Leadership Programme (SLP) comprised hands-on activities which led to experiential learning. The interest and involvement of the students in various activities at the secondary stage further helped in skill development. The individual and group indoor and outdoor activities included games, assignments, group discussions, video clips,

documentary movies, role plays amongst others. Parlar *et al* (2017) found that teachers are in favour of indoor and outdoor skills-oriented activities other than the prescribed curricular activities.

The programme had sessions scheduled systematically for the leadership skills of communication and empathy in which discussion and activities were incorporated to enhance conceptual understanding and develop skills. This is in line with Mbele and Msomi's (2006) finding which confirmed that leadership skills can be acquired through conscious effort. The Student Leadership Programme (SLP) focused on developing communication skills with their relevant theoretical and practical inputs which led to its effectiveness. Sapriadil *et al* (2018) & Venkatraman (2011) showed the importance of communication skills at school that supported the development and implementation of SLP for secondary students. A deliberate and conscious effort was made to expose the students in different sessions to various communication situations, which led to a better understanding of communication skill and was reflected in their intended behaviour. Iksan *et al* (2012) found that students get acquainted with communication situations in the real world when they have the right exposure in terms of conceptual knowledge and practical activities. It has been observed that communication and empathy skills go hand in hand.

The study by Eriguc and Kose (2013) has shown a significant correlation between emotional intelligence and communication. Therefore, a student leadership programme with two critical leadership skills, such as communication and empathy, is an important step in the initial development of skills. The students were exposed to discussions on empathy skill along with indoor and outdoor activities which were integral components of the Student Leadership Programme. Studies by Cain and Carnellor (2008), Durlak and Weisberg (2011) and Cunico *et al* (2012) have confirmed the importance of the training / programme to the significant development of skills among students that conferred that exposure of various practical activities with conceptual knowledge has helped the students to have more understanding about the empathy skill.

Implications

The study found that the Student Leadership Programme (SLP) was effective in developing leadership skills of empathy and communication. This has important implications for the policy makers and curriculum designers. Leadership skills could be integrated with the content of various subjects in the school curriculum and transacted. The secondary school teachers could design a separate leadership programme to inculcate leadership skills in the learners as a part of the curricular or co-curricular activities .The school teachers also have a scope to teach the content integrated with leadership skills using the Integrated Approach. The findings also have significance for secondary school principals who could play an encouraging role by providing resources to teachers to design and implement the leadership programmes.

Conclusion

In any democracy, the importance of leadership skills for secondary school students cannot be denied. It is critical for the development of the self and the nation. Training programmes in leadership skills would go a long way in realising this aim. The Student

Leadership Programme (SLP) was found to be effective in developing the communication and empathy skills in terms of conceptual knowledge and intended behaviour in secondary students. There is no doubt that the prescribed secondary school curriculum has activities to develop the leadership skills of communication and empathy among students directly or indirectly. However, the transaction of the school curriculum at the secondary level often lacks focus on these skills. A systematic, concentrated approach in the way of a Student Leadership Programme (SLP), developed and implemented for secondary students, would be effective in accomplishing the goals of skill development. The students today are the leaders of tomorrow, taking the country forward.

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Social Sciences Teaching and Research: Its Resilience and Relevance in Times of the NEP and Pandemic

Rukmini Sen[*]
Krishna Menon[#]

Abstract

The proposed changes in education through the New Education Policy and the pandemic induced transformations in teaching and learning both coincided in 2020. This paper is an attempt to understand the ways the future of social science education will be impacted, as imagined in the proposed NEP and as experienced through the shift to mass scale online education as a result of the global pandemic. By engaging with some of the themes of the NEP and reviewing the recent literature that reflect on the experiences of higher education during the recent public health crisis, this paper proposes the relevance and resilience of social science education with an aim to create socially engaged citizens. A creative administrative framework with a vision towards dialogic decision making is envisioned to facilitate a just and co-dependent interdisciplinary ecosystem.

[*]   School of Liberal Studies and Centre for Publishing, Ambedkar University Delhi, Room No 27, Teacher's Gallery, Lothian Road, Kashmere Gate, Delhi 110006, Email: rukmini@aud.ac.in

[#]   School of Human Studies, Dr. B R Ambedkar University Delhi, AUD Kashmere Gate Campus, Lothian Road, Kashmere Gate, Delhi-110006, Email: krishanmenon@aud.ac.in

Introduction

The year 2020 was witness to many shifts and challenges in the conception, execution and organisation of education across the world. While the teaching-learning pedagogies have been drastically impacted at all stages of education, this paper will focus on the higher education landscape and more specifically on the proposed transformations in transacting social sciences education as per the New Education Policy (NEP, July 2020) and the actual changes that became necessary responding to the pandemic induced online teaching since March 2020. While the two are apparently disconnected, there are connections and there are long term implications of a government policy and a public health crisis. This paper, while engaging with some of the challenges and opportunities that NEP and the pandemic created in the context of social science teaching and research, will primarily argue that the inherent evolving character of social science pedagogy enables it to accommodate and survive the various social crisis situations and emerge as still more relevant and resilient. This paper seeks to demonstrate the close connection between the process of knowledge creation and the administrative structures and processes that hold it together. It argues that structures and processes, principles and norms that are counter to independent thinking and autonomous functioning would fail to succeed in facilitating the creation of engaged and interdisciplinary scholarship as envisaged by the NEP.

NEP: Negotiating Hierarchy and Autonomy within Higher Educational Institutions

The New Education Policy 2020 states, "Education, thus, must move towards less content, and more towards learning about how to think critically and solve problems, how to be creative and multidisciplinary, and how to innovate, adapt, and absorb new material in novel and changing fields. Pedagogy must evolve to make education more experiential, holistic, integrated, inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centred, discussion-based, flexible, and, of course, enjoyable." This announcement of the NEP with its focus on ushering new beginnings could also be the context for examining the hierarchical nature of our campuses, which could prove as a deterrent to the proposed pedagogy. Bureaucratised hierarchy is, by its nature, antithetical to academic and intellectual pursuits. Knowledge is created in the unlikeliest of locations --- while the wisdom of senior scholars is valuable, universities should feel emboldened to be open to the newer voices in every domain --- both from within and outside the academy. The kind of creative and multidisciplinary thinking that is proposed in the NEP can come from scholars and practitioners across age and profession. An empathetic and engaged social science necessitates an engagement with the community and learning from experiences. This kind of an approach would certainly bring in much needed openness and freshness of perspectives on our campuses, especially for students of social sciences and humanities. This can be facilitated when administrative structures are open to enabling new voices and ideas and not be insistent on conventional curriculum or assessment patterns.

While there is no doubt that universities are charged with the task of knowledge creation, yet to quantify and define knowledge in limited ways has gradually led to an obsessive focus on international journal based publications and research (Kothiyal and

Banerjee 2021). The classroom has come to be seen only as a space where already existing knowledge is 'transacted' and the teacher a mere 'facilitator.' An active social science mind cannot be compartmentalised into 'teacher'and 'researcher.' It is a seamless continuum where one nourishes the other. Teachers do more than 'complete' the syllabus and give out grades, in a hierarchical society such as ours, the classroom and teaching pedagogies could result in transformative consequences. In fact, by bringing in differential perspectives in the classroom, feminism has challenged social and disciplinary norms and boundaries, bringing into the academy new ways of being and knowing' (Govinda *et al* 2020), thus making the classroom an important site of dialogue. Discussions generated in the classroom through the teacher but with and among the students, coming from different social locations, enriches the learning of social sciences within a certain context. The recent publication of auto-ethnographic essays by feminist academics (Govinda *et al* 2020) appropriately questions the artificial binary between teaching and research, by doing pedagogically reflexive enquiries into the transformative potential of the classroom from the point of view of the student as well as generating new knowledge. At a time when the NEP recognises the need for psychological well-being of young people on our campuses, more emphasis on the mentorship role played by teachers is valuable. A vision of higher education which is reflective, critical as well as empathetic, and in which the subjective context of every student's life matters, requires teachers to be more than transactors of already existing information (Oberoi 2019). The NEP focuses a great deal on multidisciplinary campuses. It is indeed a welcome idea to incorporate an understanding and appreciation of the social and economic context within which knowledge is produced. This would hopefully make scientific, technological, medical and managerial education for instance, less alienated and instrumental in nature. Interestingly, the relevance of social science education had been previously felt in spaces of legal education (the national law schools since the early 1990s emphasised on interdisciplinary social science teaching to create socially sensitive lawyers, Sen 2010), or even in management schools and engineering colleges. Of course, Baxi (1986, 2) has been one of the pioneers since the eighties in promoting social science driven legal education, articulating a concern that 'although there is much talk about law and social change all around, there appears to be no sustained attempts at examining the potential and actual role which the legal process bears to initiation and attainment of social change.' In similar efforts, feminist science studies moving beyond the pro- and anti-science schisms, proposes to '(i) place science within society and at the centre of critical scrutiny, and (ii) examine science from the standpoint of women's lives and other marginal locations in order to present a "different picture" of what is "taken for granted" as science' (Chadha and Achuthan 2017). Feminist Science Studies have been critical of the 'organisation of science as an institution that is deeply situated in Western modernity, with the ideas of rationalism, development, progress, utilitarianism, and nationalism that are associated with it' (Chadha and Achuthan 2017). Multidisciplinary campuses should not stop at playing host to various disciplines; rather, as demonstrated through the examples of social science driven legal education, or feminist science studies, the aim should be to bring these disciplines in conversation with each other and use the methods and approaches drawn from such an exchange in meaningful ways. This would, in turn, help create an understanding of the world that is not compartmentalised, but is interconnected. The pandemic, for instance, requires us to inquire into it from the lens of health and medicines, epidemiology and virology, political

economy, industry and trade (especially the Pharma industry), travel and aviation, gender relations and cultural norms, political arrangements and so on (Ackerley *et al* 2020, 453-455).

NEP also raises concerns with education induced employability (Kumar 2020), although that alone cannot be the outcome of education. The rising rate of unemployment (7.8 per cent for the week ending November 22, 2020) could result in deep social tension and violence. The focus on skilling and on vocationalisation on the one hand and entrepreneurial training on the other hand is an effective approach, but not an end it itself. The NEP states that 'different models of vocational education, and apprenticeships, will also be experimented by higher education institutions. Incubation centres will be set up in higher education institutions in partnership with industries.' (NEP 2020, 44). But it is important to equip both the 'job givers' as well as the 'job seekers' with the critical and analytic insights about the socio-cultural contexts in which they are expected to provide others with jobs or seek jobs for themselves. In a democracy, the education and ethos of our universities need to equip young people with the skills to both understand and interrogate the social context which creates certain kinds of jobs and businesses and, in turn, endows them with varying degrees of value within the market economy. Unquestioningly fitting into jobs and businesses have never really been and cannot be the objective of critical and empathetic social science education. In a recent study, conducted among 223 Amazon's German distribution centres evidenced that work dissatisfaction, reliance on trade unions, and having temporary or permanent positions predicted decisions vis-à-vis strike participation among the workers. A minority of highly qualified workers unable to find employment in their actual profession take these low-income jobs as well, which often provide the only possibility of professional advancement for people unable to migrate to other parts of the country. Experiencing a loss of job autonomy due to the high degree of Tayloristic working conditions together with the experience of downward social mobility may motivate people to strike [Apicella and Hildebrandt 2019, 172-189]. It is also important to note that instead of the employment relationship, we are witnessing the rise of 'freelancing' or the 'gig economy' as workers become self-employed and contractors instead of remaining as employees. Globally, only about half of all employed people are employees. That's mostly because, in developing countries, a lot of work is in the 'informal' sector outside the scope of employment regulation. So there is another paradox — the rise of new models like Uber, with their use of contract labour rather than employees, which exist side by side with the continuing importance of employment. For those who are reliant on gig economy earnings as their sole source of income, their responses to attempts to organise to improve conditions of employment may be through taking collective action, sometimes strike action (like the Amazon example), in support of improvements in pay or conditions. The paradox of the rise of new 'gig economy' models like Uber, and the continuing importance of employment, is explained by the ongoing efficiency of employment as a means to control worker behaviour, alongside the ongoing urge of capital to cut costs (Peetz 2019, 141-178). In the current neoliberal market conditions such as ours, focusing on employability without acknowledging the precarity and dissatisfaction of the worker would be a very narrow approach.

Scholars have observed that universities within the neo-liberal dispensations are charged with the task of creating epistemologies that consolidate the 'entrepreneurial self' (Ferna´ndez-Herrerı´a 2016, 314-326). The kind of knowledge that is produced within a neoliberal context urges human beings to conduct themselves like entrepreneurial beings

throughout their lives and in all settings. The thrust of such an education is to prepare individuals to respond effectively and with 'flexibility' to the precarity of the global economy. The idea of flexibility itself has been critiqued by scholars of new managerial approaches in neoliberal economies, since one person's flexibility would in all likelihood be another persons' insecurity and precarity (Peetz 2019, 141-178). Ferna'andez-Herreri'a and Rodri'guez have argued that there is a concerted effort to 'naturalize' this precarity and thus train young people to seize the initiative, develop adaptability and also the acceptance of risk. Individuals are taught to believe that they are responsible for their success and their failures thus divorcing the individual from the larger socio-economic context.

While there are many ways in which the NEP seems to propose new ways of imagining higher education institutions, yet the main concern is that unless the intrinsic character of these institutions are transformed, unless more autonomy is exercised by higher educational institutions, the realisation of these imaginations will be a challenge. This is also because experience shows us that universities in our country are often run on non-dialogic, bureaucratic, hierarchical and individualistic patterns, thus taking away the agency from teachers and students, their ability to participate meaningfully and acquire a sense of ownership over what they know best --- the activity of teaching and learning! Institutional and teacher autonomy (Sancheti and Pillai 2020) are interlinked because it not only enhances the academic worth and potential of our universities, but is crucial in the creation of creative and free thinking citizens of a democracy. Any discussion on autonomy should be accompanied by some deliberations on autonomy from what and autonomy to do what. Through the proposed 'light but tight' structure of governance that NEP proposes, would the valued autonomy facilitate freedom to formulate courses and design curricula and explore new pedagogies and institutional arrangements? It is important to recognise that institutions are organic entities with their own histories, contexts of origins, that they are rooted firmly in and engaging dynamically with the students who push and also redesign some of the originally held ideas. Creation of a new ecosystem cannot be engineered through top-down fiats (Menon 2020), but rather through deliberation and dialogue between all sections of a higher education institution — faculty, students and the leadership. This became even more necessary in a pandemic affected higher education landscape where physical distancing made it important to connect online.

Pandemic, Online Classes and Innovative Social Science Pedagogies

Epidemics are social as well as biological phenomena. As social scientists around the world share early findings about pandemic and the impact that long and stringent lockdowns left upon the people's lives, one important question to ask, again, is: Will this ultimately be a good or bad thing for the social sciences? Will social scientists generate a huge range of new questions, leading to a fresh appreciation of their importance in helping us tackle major global challenges? Will people turn to social scientists for answers like, for instance, anthropologists such as Melissa Leach at the Institute of Development Studies in Brighton, UK, who had played an important part in curbing the West African Ebola epidemic with proposals to substitute risky burial rituals with safer ones, rather than trying to eliminate such rituals altogether (https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-00064-x).

The alternate question to ask is: Will trust in them be damaged by the emergence of fault lines between competing theories and disciplines? Reflecting on lessons learned from the Ebola crisis of 2013-16, Margaret Chan, former director-general of the World Health Organisation, acknowledged that "inadequate engagement with affected communities and families" posed a significant obstacle in developing an effective response and called for "multidisciplinary approaches to community engagement, informed by anthropology and other social sciences."

The year 2020 will go down in the annals of education as one of the fastest responses that teachers had to acquire towards the use of digital mediums to transact classes for students — from schools to universities after a nationwide lockdown was announced towards the end of March. Education shifted online. While India has experimented with distance learning and UGC does have video lectures through their SWAYAM initiative, yet the ubiquitous mechanism of teaching is always in the classroom, in campus, face to face. The expressions of the curious, excited, discerning, bored or disinterested student in the classroom all were important for the teacher to respond to — with patience and empathy. Expressions and impromptu interactions form an important component of classroom transaction and 2020 made teachers learn the importance of online platforms like Google Meet, Zoom, Microsoft Team, and keep teaching and conversations going with students, on most occasions with the screen having the name of the student and not the face. Use of the chat facility in all these platforms helped students type their questions to facilitate some form of organic interaction in online classes. We also encountered the online access divide across Indian cities, towns, villages and the ways it impacted 'presence' in the online class. As *Ackerly et al* (2020) write, 'Far from being a global leveller, this pandemic has become a revealer of injustices and inequalities across the globe. Epistemic justice requires that we acknowledge these revealed structures of oppression, and reject complicity in a discourse of a global solidarity that ignores the reality of inequality and injustice for the many millions of people living on the margins of neoliberal economies in the Global South and the Global North'.' Undoubtedly, this pandemic thereby aggravated many of the inequalities that characterise the higher education landscape in India, while also opening up many new possibilities of overcoming these (Gopinath 2020). As the crisis continues and our social world gets remade, there is no doubt that the research agenda of social scientists will change profoundly. Whether this becomes a defining moment for them in other ways, it is perhaps too early to judge. But it does feel as though this is the time for the whole to become greater than the sum of its parts, and for specialists to bring their expertise and insight together not just to cope with the crisis but to help promote a regrowth of culture, society and economy in ways that enable future generations to flourish. [https://www.timeshighereducation.com /blog/what-social-science-can-offer-us-time-covid-19]

There has been quite a bit of discussion around unequal access to online education for school children, since only 24 per cent of Indian households have access to education. Through a survey conducted by Pratham Education Foundation, what came out very clearly is how differential household resources and access to learning materials led to differential access to online education. Additionally, as per an OXFAM September 2020 survey, more than 80 per cent of parents surveyed with children studying in government schools that education was 'not delivered' during lockdown. The situation was even graver in case of the Dalit, Adivasi and Muslim households across five states where the survey was conducted. In contrast, while there has been much lesser reflection on online teaching in colleges and

universities, there seems to be an acknowledgement that the higher education sector in India has been slow to adopt online education and has therefore been relatively unprepared to cope with the sudden need for online teaching. It is important to talk about alternative narratives of extreme care taken by educational institutions to reach out to its students. One such example was Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) which is a home for 30,000 poor tribal students from interior districts of Odisha, pursuing their studies from Standard-I to PG/PhD level. The KISS was one of the early institutes to begin online classes and has been maintaining the academic schedule perfectly for students of all levels. However, realising that the Zoom platform may not be the best form of online education, the KISS launched an e-learning initiative with support from Kalinga TV, which is telecasting the classes every day. Follow-up instructions and study materials are also provided to the students in WhatsApp groups (September 2020, *The Hindu* news).

As per the Observer Research Foundation, one of the key challenges of providing more online courses is the fact that many faculty members in higher education are not trained and therefore, not prepared to conduct classes online, and this shift to emergency remote learning had an impact on teachers as well as students. Besides this, the digital divide is corroborated by surveys conducted by premier universities such as University of Hyderabad, in which only 37 per cent students said they were able to access online classes and 90 per cent preferred to view lectures offline. Mizoram University also conducted a survey (Mishra *et al* 2020) among teachers and students about their perception on online learning. One of the important findings about this perception that got assessed was that 'excellent domain knowledge, proficient computer knowledge, communication skills, clarity of expression, emotionally connect with the students and other necessary skills were required to deal with the demands of the online platforms. It added that patience, empathy, care for students, excellent presentation skills, proper handling of teaching-learning tools available with user-friendly features were the additional skills found to manage online teaching process.' While highlighting uninterrupted internet connectivity as the most important concern, students in the same study said 'teachers should create friendship and enlighten the environment of the groups, apps or any platform through voice call if possible.' The IQAC of TERI School of Advanced Study, New Delhi conducted two surveys among their students between March and April 2020 enquiring about pedagogic methods, increase in screen time, feedback on comparing learning outcomes of a course transacted through in class and online mode, online examinations, etc. Most of the 123 students who had taken part in the survey mentioned, like students in Mizoram University, uninterrupted internet connection as the main infrastructural hindrance. While most students appreciated the efforts made by faculty in the minor shifts made in pedagogic practices to suit online teaching, majority reiterated the importance of the classroom space (https://terisas.ac.in/pdf/Secondsurveyamongstudentsononlineclasses_TERISAS.pdf).

It is extremely relevant to quote Avijit Pathak (2020b) who wrote a salutation to teachers in his articulation that 'despite all these structural constraints and the dictates of techno-managers or academic bureaucrats, it is not altogether impossible to find teachers amongst us who still believe in the art of possibilities. Teaching, for them, is not just a "technique"; it is essentially an art, a quest, a meditative contemplation. And possibly, even in the virtual classroom, they are doing something more than just dictating the notes of biology and geography; they are touching and healing the tormented souls of their students.'

While these technological changes and learnings started from mid-March, another equally and perhaps more significant question was: What knowledge could we gather and/or produce in this times of the pandemic crisis with our students? To document the swift change, we have newspaper reports, analytical pieces in webzines, online journals, podcasts, webinars, etc, all witnessing, discussing and interrogating the multiple effects of Covid-19 and the consequent lockdown on various scales. Social sciences, humanities and feminist pedagogies facilitate and promote the use of reflexivity, embodied experience from one's social location being one of the bases of knowledge generation. The pandemic became a moment when students could bring their own and related others' stories of distress, loss, care, suffering and support that have encouraged us to break up homogenous binaries of privilege/marginalisation and carefully connect the sequestered domestic with the social. Can the question, 'how best to teach' therefore be about drawing epistemological lessons from the processes through which we as teachers in higher education institutions in India transacted with our students as we moved online? This is a question which finds echo to what Pathak (2020a) asks: ' …at this crucial juncture, as educationists we must ask ourselves whether we should redefine education as a new quest of a wanderer. Should education give us the psychic, spiritual or aesthetic strength to understand our location in this vast universe, cherish a sense of gratitude and humility, and live gracefully even amidst the fragile character of the phenomenal world…..'

While many of the attempts made towards connecting with students by overcoming distances, are done at an individual faculty level, the pandemic and shift to online teaching, create an important opportunity for institutions to make a rigorous reassessment of ways and means by which the marginal is further marginalised within these systems. While access to online education was an important public matter of discussion, online teaching also created opportunities to be reflexive about empathetic and ethical teacher-student relationships, innovative ways of designing curricula, moving away from but not compromising on the rigour of teaching resources, and creative modes of thinking about assessments beyond the 'final' examination. Some of these pedagogic practices are proposed in the NEP and the emergency remote learning that the pandemic induced, created a moment to experiment with some of these teaching learning practices as well as increased conversations with students.

While social science teaching has taken innovative forms and methods to wade through the challenges of the pandemic and lockdown, there is little doubt that an effective response to Covid-19 will require social science expertise. As with previous epidemics, such as Ebola, social science research and expertise have proven invaluable in combatting the infectious diseases and contributing to epidemiology and public health, which are themselves both examples of multidisciplinary fields that from their inception have been strongly influenced by a wide range of social science disciplines. Will the experience of remote working contribute to a greater recognition of the complex domestic social structures that sustain academic research? Will the pause on academic conferences and events lead to more serious engagement with open and online forms of research communication? Will the present dire need for social science expertise lead to a greater recognition of the profound and subtle ways in which social science contributes to society? The way the pandemic has impacted our pedagogy is far-reaching and it needs empathetic reflexivity about re-search for the future social world. The pandemic gave us a moment to engage with crisis and move towards

resilience through the time tested relevance of social sciences and humanities — amenable to be interdisciplinary (as the first section of the essay highlighted) and also empathetically innovate, as this section states.

Futuristic Social Science Education: Creating Socially Engaged Citizens

What a policy on education and global health crisis impacting education exemplified is the relevance of social science education as knowledge, ethics and practice. It is through that kind of education that socially engaged citizens have been and will continue to be created. While the NEP (2020, 37) states, "As the world is becoming increasingly interconnected, Global Citizenship Education (GCED), a response to contemporary global challenges, will be provided to empower learners to become aware of and understand global issues and to become active promoters of more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure, and sustainable societies." One of the global issues that we encountered in 2020 is this public health crisis, which brought to the front the hierarchies that exist between worlds, in healthcare access, between migrant and healthcare workers on the one hand and corporate and other white collar workers on the other hand. An engaged social science and humanities education will need to look at and make sense of these worlds, which got re-constructed through these words that all of us encountered, but with different implications in the last one year — lockdown, quarantine, work from home, social distance or online education. All of these have brought social science education to an important futuristic crossroads where its relevance is rekindled. It is with this renewed significance that the practice and discourse of social sciences will enable the creation of socially engaged and resilient citizens — of the local and global. In order to facilitate this, it is equally necessary to enable the bulk of faculty and students on our higher education campuses to think of themselves as having meaningful roles to play in determining the conditions, nature and purpose of their work as academics and scholars with the purpose of transformation and not merely acquiesce. In order for this to happen, we perhaps need a special team of academic administrators who would be sensitive to and value the intrinsic relationship between institutional autonomy and intellectual growth. Public universities, in a post-NEP and pandemic worlds, should be imagined as the ideal site for socially engaged citizenship nurturance site. Unfortunately, the Union Budget, 2021 has not acknowledged the impact of the pandemic on the education sector in the general and the higher education landscape in particular (Jebaraj 2021). Among other disappointing aspects of the budget, is the fact that there was no mention of operationalisation of the Gender Inclusion Fund affirmed in NEP 2020, which is essential given the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on women students. To make matters worse, in the first post-pandemic budget, the spending on education has been reduced by Rs 6,076 crore --- from Rs 99,300 crore in 2020 to Rs 93,224. In fact, the education budget this time is the lowest in three years — with school education taking the biggest cut of almost Rs 5,000 crore — while the allocation for higher education has decreased by roughly Rs 1,000 crore to Rs 38,350 crore. It is important to note that Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA), a central body meant to grant interest-free loans to higher education institutions and raise money from the market, seems to have lost its sheen, four years after it was created and has had its allocation slashed severely. The allocation for the education

ministry has been cut to Rs 93,223 crore from Rs 99,311 crore, as per the budgetary proposals (Union Budget, 2021). Without financial commitments from the Government of India, it is very difficult to imagine how the lofty targets and proposals of the NEP can actually be translated into reality. In this context, the NEP seems like a non-starter. The non-state interests in the higher education sector can of course be expected to take the initiative to expand and innovate if they are able to raise funds (Sharma 2021).

Some of the questions that social science research and teaching will have to engage with in the near and distant future after the pandemic, keeping citizens at the heart of the discussion, are: (a) How to analytically and pedagogically engage with the crisis and resilience in everyday life? (b) How to re-imagine the 'field' of research when traditional anthropological modes of 'going to the field' itself has taken a pause due to the pandemic? Thus it becomes important to ask: (c) What are the ethics of redefined fields and new modes of technology mediated research? And (d) How to do critical social sciences from multiple social and political geographies, engaging with words like social distancing, quarantine, touch, self-isolation or contagion that pandemic has made us confront both in our everyday lives as well as academically? Citizenship education in a democracy requires reflexive and empathetic listening to the people's experiences and suffering, independent and critical thinking, expressing creative and sustainable paths of progression into a just future world. This is where critical pedagogy and education becomes important. Globalisation has threatened the 'public good' nature of sectors such as health or education and this crisis has brought in by increasing attempts to privatise these sectors is deeply connected with the threat to democracy as an ideal and as a principle of governance. It is in this context that Fernández-Herrería and Rodriguez (2016) made a plea for an education that develops all types of intelligence- to result in the creation of what they call a 'biophilic consciousness' --- a consciousness of the interconnected nature of human beings and of human life and the natural world. In this approach, the starting point of education would be the principle of cooperation and collaboration rather than individual excellence and competition, thereby revealing the social nature of life itself. Such an approach to education would be consistent with the community of life and culture of care, interdependence, global responsibility, and planetary citizenship wherein survival is not so much competition as cooperation. It would be less about an isolated pursuit of autonomy and would have more to do with rooting and integration. It is such an approach to education that would help create global citizens and to care for a shared biosphere in a holistic way. The pandemic too has demonstrated the importance of planned, creative leadership management and resilience in face of a human civilizational crisis. The NEP 'aims at producing engaged, productive, and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive, and plural society as envisaged by our Constitution' Socially engaged social science education has the potentiality to confront the challenges of the present moment and move towards an ethically resilient future.

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Managing Inclusive Schools in India: A Study of School Management Committees in Tribal Concentrated Districts of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh

Vinay Kumar Singh[*]
S. C. Chauhan[#]

Abstract

School and society are socially and structurally linked, since both share responsibilities in the development of the child. Children and parents are the primary beneficiaries of an education system as well as, on the other hand, they are the prime sufferer of any faulty school system. Parents play a catalytic role in improving the functioning and management of the schools and also the qualitative standard of education. Besides other school functionaries, parents are responsible for their children's education. The provision of School Management Committees (SMCs) in the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009 is the obvious outcome of this dream to involve parents as members of the SMCs. In this study, an attempt has been made to explore the status of SMCs and their responsibilities towards the management of inclusive schools providing education to tribal children and children with disabilities (CWD) along with all other children in the tribal concentrated districts of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. The study was exploratory and descriptive in nature. The findings of the study revealed that children were receiving low quality education because of the neglecting attitude on the part of the government mechanism, school authorities and school functionaries towards education of children in these tribal areas. The school infrastructure in tribal concentrated districts of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh is in a pathetic condition. No school had barrier free infrastructure

[*] Department of Education of Groups with Special Needs (DEGSN) in the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi, Email: vinay.singh303@yahoo.com

[#] Department of Education of Groups with Special Needs (DEGSN) in the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi, Email: sc_chauhan59@yahoo.com

and it was also found inaccessible for children with different disabilities. An SMC had been constituted in every school without any conscious effort to include a representative member from among the parents of children belonging to disadvantaged and disability groups. The members were found completely unaware of their roles and responsibilities towards development and management of an inclusive school. It was recommended that the SMC members require training in planning, management and monitoring of different activities of school such as preparing a School Development Plan (SDP), monitoring of quality of learning activities and fund utilisation, and social auditing of school etc. Provision for incentives for members of SMCs is also recommended to motivate them for their active and effective involvement in school activities.

Introduction

With the enactment of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009, education became a fundamental right of all children including children belonging to disadvantaged groups and children with different disabilities. Children belonging to disadvantaged groups include the children belonging to the Scheduled Castes (SCs), the Scheduled Tribes (STs), the socially and educationally backward classes or such other groups which are disadvantaged owing to social, cultural, economic, geographical, linguistic, gender or such other factors as specified by the government. Children with different disabilities include the children with long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment as defined in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPD) Act 2016. The act promises to enrol all children in neighbourhood schools and no denial of admission on the basis of their socio-cultural identities or inherent disabilities. The RPD Act 2016 necessitates for teaching and learning of different types of students with disabilities in a barrier free, accessible and suitably adapted school and classroom environment to meet their diverse learning needs. Assistive devices and appropriate technology-based tools as well as adequate and language-appropriate teaching-learning materials are necessary for providing them high quality education ensuring equitable opportunities. Children with benchmark disabilities (40% and above) have the options of regular schooling, special schooling, open schooling and home-based education, etc. Resource support and therapeutic services through resource centres and support from special educators to assist the regular teachers are also made mandatory in managing the school education programme. As per the special amendment in Section 35(1) in respect of implementation of Clause (c) of Section 8 & 9 of RTE Act, 2012 with regard to children from socially disadvantaged or weaker sections of the society, as mentioned in Clause (n) of Section 2, every school shall take appropriate measures to (a) Safeguard the interests of the child (b) Eliminate discrimination or harassment of a child in schools by prohibiting and by providing for preventive and protective measures to facilitate its eradication, and (c) Promote equality for children of such groups. Further, in respect to the children with 'multiple disabilities' referred to in Clause (h) and children with "severe disabilities" referred to in Clause (o) of Section 2 of the National Trust for Welfare of persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities (NT) Act, 1999 (44 of 1999), such children may also have the right to opt for 'home based education.' The right to education is an integral facet of the guarantee of equal rights for children with disabilities and their social inclusion.

Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, formed as separate states in 2000, have large populations of the tribal groups (26.2% and 30.6% respectively, according to the Census of India, 2011), with their own ancient lifestyles, cultures, traditions, rituals, and religious practices, etc. Jharkhand has 32 tribal groups, namely, Munda, Santhal, Oraon, Kharia, Gond, Kol, Kanwar, Savar, Asur, Baiga, Banjara, Bathudi, Bedia, Binjhia, Birhor, Birjia, Chero, Chick Baraik, Gorait, Ho, Karmali, Kharwar, Khond, Kisan, Kora, Korwa, Lohra, Mahli, Mal-Paharia, Parhaiya, Sauria-Paharia, Bhumij, whereas the main tribes in Chhattisgarh are Gond, Abujmaria, Bisonhorn Maria, Muria, Halba, Bhatra, Parja, Dhurvaa in Bastar; Muriya, Dandami Mariya or Gond, Dorla, Halba in Dantewara; Kol, Gond, Bhunjia in Koriya; Korwa, Gond, Rajgond, Kawar, Bhaiyana, Binjwar, Dhanwar in Korba; Parghi, Savra, Manji, Bhayna in Bilaspur and Raipur; Kamar in Gariabandh, Mainpur, Dhura, Dhamtari; and Munda in Surguja and Jashpur.

Both the states have rich mineral resources and geographical locations for better opportunity and possibility of development. But facts are quite otherwise. If we look into the economic status of both the states on the basis of per capita income, the Jharkhand state shows Rs. 44,045/- per capita income whereas the per capita income in Chhattisgarh state was Rs. 50,691/- --- in comparison to the national per capita income of Rs. 68,747/- in the year 2012-13. According to Census 2011 of India, regarding literacy rate, Jharkhand stood at the fourth place from below in the list of literacy of all states in India. Overall literacy rate of Jharkhand was 66.41% (76.84% of male and 55.42% female). However, Chhattisgarh was in a slightly better position in comparison to Jharkhand with regard to literacy; in the literacy rate list of India it was at the 27th place, i.e. 9th from below. In Chhattisgarh, the overall literacy rate is 70.28% with male literacy rate of 80.27% and female literacy rate of 60.44% (Census, 2011). Both the states have lower literacy rates than the national literacy rate (74.04% overall, 82.14% male, 65.46% female). As against the 59.0% literacy rate of scheduled tribes (68.5% male and 49.4% female), in Jharkhand the tribal literacy rate was 57.1% (68.2% male and 46.2% female), whereas in Chhattisgarh the tribal literacy rate was 59.1% (69.7% male and 48.8% female). Although sincere and concerted efforts were made for the economic and educational development of the tribal people; despite these efforts, the performance of the tribes in education has been much lower than the Scheduled Castes (Brahmanandam & Babu, 2016). The qualitative aspects of education in these states are also not very much promising.

The RTE Act 2009 makes an arrangement for free and compulsory education for all the children of 6-14 years, and for children with disability (CWD), the age limit extends up to 18 years of age. After the enactment of this Act, all schools are now inclusive in nature, wherein students with and without disability learn together and the system of teaching and learning is suitably adapted to meet the learning needs of different types of students with disabilities (RPD Act, 2016). In India people's participation in the form of volunteers has been taking place in all sectors such as education, health, industry, environment, skill development. In education, volunteers play a significant role in creating a supporting and welcoming environment at school (Henderson and Mapp, 2002). Tyagi (2012) has also emphasised upon the need for reforms in educational systems with particular emphasis on decentralisation and localisation of the administration of education. For better functioning and management of the schools and improving the qualitative standard of education, it was thought that parents should also made responsible for their children's education.

The provision of SMCs in the RTE Act 2009 was an obvious outcome of this dream. According to the RTE Act 2009, three fourth of the members of SMCs are to be from parents

or guardian of the students of the school. It further allowed proportionate representation of the disadvantaged and weaker sections in constituting the SMCs. It also mentioned that 50% of the seats would be given to women. The basic role and responsibilities of SMC members are developing and recommending SDP, monitoring the working of school, analysing the needs of the school and planning to actualise those needs, monitoring the utilisation of the grants given to the concerned school by the state authorities or those coming from other sources. These are the duties articulated in the RTE Act, 2009 and the RTE Rules, 2010 of the states' rules, which require strengthening of the SMCs for improving the quality of elementary education, making them aware of their roles and responsibilities towards functioning of elementary schools and, overall, enhancing their active involvement in different school activities. The present study kept in view these issues and concerns regarding the roles and responsibilities of SMCs towards development and management of inclusive schools which are supposed to provide education to tribal children and CWD along with all other children in the tribal concentrated districts of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.

Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the issues and concerns related to the education of tribal children and CWD in Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh; and
2. To study the status of SMCs and their responsibilities in the management of inclusive schools.

Research Questions

1. Whether the schools in tribal concentrated areas are following the norms and standard prescribed under the RTE Act, 2009?;
2. Whether the school's infrastructure is child-friendly?;
3. What are the status of constitution of SMCs in schools of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh?;
4. What are the compositions of SMCs in terms of representation of parents from diverse groups of children attending schools?; and
5. Whether the SMCs members are aware of their roles and responsibilities towards inclusion of tribal CWD in elementary schools?.

Methods

Study design: This study was qualitative in nature.

Tools: The major tools used in this study were observations, interactions with school personnel, SMC members, community, students, headmasters and teachers, support staff, and parents. Group discussion and dialogue with professional experts from the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), Block Resource Centres and Cluster Resource Centres was also included as a useful tool for getting data and information.

Sample: The educational institutions under study included 35 schools selected by the Directorate of Education of Jharkhand and the State Council of Educational Research and Training, Raipur. The District Institute of Education and Training (DIET), Kanker were visited to collect the information regarding the functioning of schools and the responsibilities of the SMCs. In Jharkhand a total number of 10 schools in two districts were visited --- 4 schools in Gumla and 6 schools in Khunti. Three out of these 10 schools were Kasturaba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs), 6 were Government upper primary schools and 1 was a Government primary school. Two BRCs (1 in Gumla, and another in Dudari, Murhu Khunti) were also visited. In Chhattisgarh, 25 schools from 3 districts, viz, 6 schools in Dhamtari, 3 schools in Kanker and 16 schools in Dantewada were visited. Among these schools, two were Cluster Resource Centres--- the Government New Primary School of Kailashpuri Charra, Matipara, Kurud, Dhamtari and Charmuria Resource Centre, Kurud block, Dhamtari. As many as 12 out of these 25 schools were primary schools and the remaining 13 were upper primary schools.

Data Analysis: A qualitative procedure of data analysis was adopted in view of the uniqueness and subjective nature of the information obtained from the primary sources.

Findings and Discussion

Non-residential primary and upper primary schools

School is one of the most important institutions of society, which should not be viewed as an educational body owned by the government but that of the common people, community members and parents. School and society are socially and structurally linked, since both share responsibilities in the development of the child. In this study, the selected schools were situated in rural and remote areas populated by the different tribal communities which were residing in scattered habitats, known as '*Tolas*' and '*Paras*', in hilly, forest and difficult terrain, etc. Within these habitats, most of the primary schools were found in open space without any fencing or boundary walls. A similar situation was also observed in some middle or upper primary schools adjoining with the primary schools. These findings were in consonance with the DISE report (NUEPA, 2016) in case of the state of Jharkhand which reflects that only 17.48% primary school and 39.55% of primary with upper primary schools of Jharkhand had boundary walls, but somehow dissonance with the state report of Chhattisgarh, where 58.18% of primary schools and 81.41% of primary with upper primary schools have boundary walls. The schools studied had very minimal infrastructure. The basic amenities were not available in most of the schools.

SMC, as an organised authoritative body, has a very crucial role in actualising the goals of RTE as articulated in Chapter IV, sections 21 (1) & (2) and 22(1) & (2) of the RTE Act. Now the SMC is responsible for its own school system, and the efficiency and quality of education provided to their children. The implementation of RTE Act requires a comprehensive understanding of the system among members of SMC. Parents have been entrusted with certain powers under this Act --- through the SMCs elected by them. They can play their intervening role only by equipping themselves with a sound knowledge of governance. They need to be given opportunities and support to bring about a change in the education system. The Act has tried to ensure representation of different segments of the

community in the composition of school's SMC with the specified functions of monitoring of the working of school, prepare and recommend SDP, monitor the utilisation of grants received from the Government or local authority or any other sources, and perform such other functions as prescribed.

TABLE 1

Qualitative Analysis of Non-Residential Elementary Schools of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh

S. No.	Name of Schools	Major observations on the Basis of Interactions with the School Functionaries, Parents, SMCs and Faculties of SCERTs and DIETs Regarding the Functioning of Schools and SMCs
1.	Government Middle School, Sisai, Gumla, and Block Resource Centre, Gumla, Jharkhand	• 285 students, out of which 3 were identified as students with disabilities and 2 for Home Based Education programme, managed by 8 teachers and 2 part time teachers against a total of 15 sanctioned posts. • School ramp was there but it was inaccessible. Toilet was not accessible. The resource room has no light and ventilation. • Incomplete individualised education programme (IEP) for CWD was prepared consisting of the case history and short term objective for 3 month, mainly in the areas of personal, social and communication. • CWD were taught separately in resource room and activities like threading beads, recognising pictures from flash cards were in progress during visit. CWDs were sitting on a mat on the floor, in a row, in which the implementer was also sitting beside her. • Unaware of preparing SDP and monitor of the school activities.
2.	Government Middle School, Block Head quarter, Sesai, Gumla, Jharkhand	▪ Coeducational school having 1300 students managed by 14 teachers and 4 para- teachers. ▪ Classrooms were overcrowded. There was only one toilet, that too without shed for 1300 students including girls. It is also inaccessible for CWD. School has no boundary wall. ▪ It has been provided 7 computers out of which 1 computer was stolen. Security of those computers is a serious problem there. Computers are not being used there because of security problems. There is no internet facility and electricity in their school. ▪ Participation of SMCs is lacking in development of academic calendar of the school, however, involvement in civil work and distribution of scholarship are reported.

3.	Government Upper Middle School, Lakeya, Gumla, Jharkhand	• Coeducational schools having 77 students (4 students with disabilities) were present, out of the 267 students enrolled, and managed by 4 regular teachers and 2 para teachers. • IEP for CWDs was not prepared except the case report. • Infrastructure of the school was inaccessible, and basic amenities were lacking. School corridor was dirty and was crowded with animals like goats, dogs and pigs etc. The same corridor was used by children during mid-day meal. • Very less participation of SMC members in school activities and negligible participation in preparation of SDP.
4.	Government Primary School, Block Colony, Khunti, Jharkhand	• Coeducational school with 378 managed by 3 regular teachers and 3 para teachers among which 2 teachers have locomotor disability and hearing disability using assistive devices like crutch, and behind the ear hearing aid. • 9 CWD (Class-II- 1-CWVI, 1-CWID, 1-CWHI; Class III- 2 –CWLD; Class VI- 1CWHI, I CWSLD; Class V-2-CWVI) • School building was not barrier free, it has no boundary and toilets were also dirty and not usable. • There was only one computer in the school but was not being used by children. Security of computer is a big concern and worry for the school administration. • The SMC was recently constituted. 2 members from SMC were from parents of CWD although it was not the mandatory government criteria. SMC meets in school on the last Saturday of every month with low attendance and passive participation in school related activities. • Middle school is around 5 km from this place. SMC members want to upgrade this school up to class 8th so that dropout rate could be controlled. • Resource teacher used to visit the school and children under Home Based Education programme on the interval of 10 to 15 days regularly.
5.	Government High (upgraded) Middle School, Kalamati, Khunti, Jharkhand	• Coeducational school having 441 students (ST-407, SC-11, and OBC-23), 8 children with different disability were also attending the school. (4-CWVI, 3-CWLD, and 1-CWMD), managed by 4 regular teachers against 6 sanctioned posts and 4 para teachers. • Inaccessible ramp made in the school. • 2 computers were provided without internet facility, out of which only one was working. There was no computer teacher. • Newly constituted SMC, No member in SMC is from the parents of CWD. SMC members were found unaware of their roles and responsibilities in school activities.

6.	Government Middle (upgraded) School, Dudari Muruhu, Khunti,	- Coeducational school having 125 students managed by 1 regular teacher and 3 para-teachers. - School has *pucca* building and two toilets also, but the toilet was not in use and was fenced in such a way that nobody could use it. Children were also not allowed to use these toilets. Toilets were completely inaccessible. It was reported that the toilets were fenced because general public always try to use them and make them dirty 3 children were wrongly diagnosed as having veneral infections. - School has ramp but it was inaccessible. School has no furniture in classroom. - SMC members were not participating in preparing and recommending SDP, monitoring of school activities and financial expenditure.
7.	Block Resource Centre, Dudari Muruhu, Khunti, Jharkhand	- In this BRC, total 405 CWD are identified in 74 schools. 48 children are under Home Based Education programmes who were from far off places like Jiuri, Karanka, Dulu, Sarvada, Jalala, Ninda and Gutuhatu. Total 10 CRCs are there in Muruhu Block. - Only 4 resource teachers were appointed to cover 6 blocks of Khunti district. - Assessment camp is organised once in a year to identify the CWDs. - No IEP was prepared for the CWDs attending regular school. - Unaware of role and responsibilities specified under RTE Act, require training in preparation of SDP and monitoring activities.
8.	Government Primary School, Kurud, Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh	- Coeducational school having 123 students managed by 1 regular teacher and 2 para-teachers. - No adequate facility of water, electricity, toilets, seating arrangement and other infrastructure. - Most of the SMC members were labourers and they expressed that they also require some incentives as they are not getting their wages for a day when they do attend school meeting. - Though prior information was given several times, the presence of SMC members was very poor. Only 3 members were present there. Their participation in school activities was passive.
9.	Government New Primary School, Kailashpuri, Charra, Matipara, Kurud, Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh	- Coeducation school having 133 students managed by 2 regular and 3 para teachers. This school was serving as a cluster resource centre. - SMC members complained about the drinking water problem with village panchayat and they were also noticing the need of separate toilet for girls and boys, and other needs of CWDs, which were not taken care of. They were unaware of grievance redressal mechanism for betterment of the school.

10.	Government Primary School, Bahapara, Nashiyanavagaon, Kanker, Chhattisgarh	• Coeducational school having 29 students (1 girl child with ID) managed by 1 regular teacher and 1 para teacher. • Newly constituted SMC, but no representative member from the parents of CWD. • SMC members received one day training and monthly meeting was conducted on regular basis, though the attendance of SMC was very poor in meeting as reported. Their participation in preparing SDP, fund management, monitoring of quality learning, social auditing etc. was very limited.
11.	Government Primary School, Gadagauri, Charama, Kanker, Chhattisgarh	• Coeducational school having 51 students managed by 3 teachers, out of which 2 were appointed by panchayat. • The previous SMC had received training in which, Right to education, development of SDP, social auditing etc. was discussed. The newly constituted SMC members required training for their roles and duties towards school, preparing SDP, monitoring financial expenditure and academic activities of school, social auditing etc.
12.	Government Primary School, Chattipara, Dewari block, Kanker Chhattisgarh	• Coeducational school having 37 students managed by 1 regular teacher and 2 para-teachers. • The SMC were involved in different activities of the school like monitoring the attendance sheet, mid-day meal, school cleanliness, teaching learning in the classroom, infrastructural activities etc. They also involved themselves in SDP for 3 years.
13.	Government Middle School, Rakhi, Dhamtari Chhatisgarh	• Coeducational school having 112 students (Boys 51, Girls-61, 2 children with intellectual disability, 2 with hard of hearing, 1 with deafness and 2 with LD), managed by 5 female teachers out of which 1 teacher was appointed through gram panchayat. • Learning materials for CWD were not available. IEP was not prepared. Resource teacher used to come once in a month/two months. • Except CWD, none of them were getting any kind of support for their education. • No representative members in SMC from parents of CWD. SMC members were unaware of their role and duties, preparation of SDP, fund management, monitoring of learning and other activities of school etc.

14.	Government Girls Upper Middle School, Kurud, Dhamtari Chhattisgarh	190 students managed by 1 regular teacher and 3 para teachers. - Infrastructure of the school and classrooms was not appropriate. - Ramp and toilet was but was inaccessible to children. - Reconstituted SMC. The training of SMC members are conducted at block level once in a month, however, their participation was lacking in monitoring of administrative, civil and academic activities of the school.
15.	Prathmik Shala, Renga Nar, Kuankonda, Dantewada, Chhattisgarh	- Coeducational school around 50 km away from the district headquarter, having 26 students (16 boys and 10 girls), managed by a regular and a contract teacher, first generation school goers. - Languages: Maria, Gondi, Muria, classroom teaching: in Hindi, big gap of communication between teachers and learners. - Fifth class students could not solve simple addition and division questions, could not write simple words in Hindi. - Aganwadi centre and upper primary school attached with this school. The Aganwadi centre was in very poor condition, has no activity kits, lacking basic infrastructure. - SMC constituted and meeting held in every month, but attended by very few members below 40% attendance. They require training for preparation and recommendation of SDP, finance management and monitoring of different school activities.
16.	Upper Primary School, Para, Kuankonda, Dantewada, Chhattisgarh	- Co-educational school with 19 boys and 15 girls managed by 2- regular teachers. - School building constructed by the Rajiv Gandhi Mission under the Scheme of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). - Low attendance of students was because of 'Marini' ceremony of elder person in the village. - Students of class-VII, could not write single 5-6 letters words, could not solve simple division question, low level of achievement. - Classroom transaction in Hindi, children speak Gondi, fearful children as anything can happen anywhere, but they feel safe in school - Fearful teachers, afraid in talking about incidents and guarded replies, not encouraged open discussion. - Nearby Anganwadi - SMC has been constituted and meetings held in every month. Members passively participate in some of the school activities like cultural and other functions celebrated in the school. They were unaware of their actual roles and duties in school development and management.

17.	Government Primary School, Penta, Kuankonda, Dantewada, Chhattisgarh	• Co-educational school with 16 boys and 10 girls managed by 4 regular teachers, run by the tribal welfare department, around 42 km away from the district headquarters. • Poor infrastructure • Mostly tribal children could not read and write, can do simple addition and multiplication. • Teacher guidelines on implementation of Continuous & Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) were disseminated among teachers without any orientation and training. • Teachers reported that the school was not affected by human action and violence and they were not aware of such activities. • SMC constituted and every month, meeting of SMC was conducted, though with poor presence of members. SMC members require training since they were found unaware of their roles towards development of the school and learning of their children.
18.	Geedam Govt. Primary School Gumda, Menda Para, Dantewada, Chhattisgarh	• Co-educational school with 14 boys and 23 girls managed by 3 regular teachers. No teacher was present during visit. • School building was in bad shape, there were cracks and leakages in roof. No repair and maintenance of building. Unsafe and unhygienic conditions. • SMCs constituted without any significant roles assigned.
19.	Upper Primary School Gumda, Dantewada, Chhattisgarh	• Co-educational school with 16 boys and 14 girls managed by 4 regular teachers. • Mainly from OBC categories, very few from tribal community. • Halwi and Gondi languages. • Shortage of water, polluted air, rice mill in the school campus. • Nearby an Aganwadi Kendra-5 out of 15 children were present. • SMC constituted, though their participation in school related activities like making SDP, involvement in financial activities etc. were very less.
20.	Govt. Upper Primary School, Keshapur, Dantewada, Chhattisgarh	• Coeducational school with 16 tribal students (6 boys and 10 girls), managed by 2 regular teachers and 3 contract teachers. • Poor infrastructure, require repairs and renovation. • Classroom transaction was unsatisfactory. • Main occupation agriculture and grow only one crop, seasonal migration by family in search of job along with their school going children were most common. • In a naxal movement, a month ago land mine blast reported near the school, injured Ex-Member of Parliament and Member of Legislative Assembly and a Jawan died. • SMC constituted, though their participation in school related activities like making SDP, involvement in financial activities etc. were very less.

In both the states, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, SMCs were constituted in elementary schools. The DISE data (NUEPA, 2015) also reflects that 98.62% and 99.24% of schools have constituted SMCs in Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh states respectively. However, the representation of parents of children belonging to socially disadvantaged groups like tribals, scheduled castes and minority children were not taking place in compositions of SMCs in both the states. Only one school among the visited ones had a parent of a child with disability as one of the members of the concerned SMC and that selection was also by chance, not by following the procedure of constitution of SMC of having a member from among the parents of CWDs. It was interesting to know that the school authority and state education authorities were found unaware of such representation of socially disadvantaged groups in SMCs. States have not mentioned such criteria in their guidelines on formulation and constitution of SMCs in schools, though the central rules on RTE Act 2010 clearly recommended the representation of parents of CWD and children belonging to disadvantaged groups. Most of the SMC members were illiterate --- labourers and migrants. They expressed their inability to attend the monthly meetings in the schools since they lose their daily wages whenever they attend such meetings. Unfavourable opinion of community members towards education of children from socially disadvantaged groups including tribal children were reported in earlier study (Singh, 2014). They desired to be paid for the day on which meetings are held. It was found that they hardly participate in school activities, contrary to an earlier study conducted by Godfrey (2016) from Zimbabwe Open University in which the findings reported that parents shared the responsibilities of providing food, school uniforms, stationery, homework completion, monitoring student teacher attendance, construction of classroom, building maintenance, school governance and school budget plans.

The challenges in effective community participation lie in low living standards, community attitude towards education and family economic status. In this study it was found that most of the SMC members were unaware of the benefits and incentives provided by the government for their own children. It was found through interactions with the school functionaries and SMCs members that parents in both the states, when they migrate to other states or districts to earn their livelihood, they generally carry their children with them to their job areas and stay there for long durations, say, six months or more, without enrolling their children in schools located in the those areas. However, in case of the CWDs, parents used to leave their children at their home with their relatives since they found it difficult to carry such children with them to the job areas. In one of the cases in Gumla, Jharkhand, parents left a child with blindness to its grandparents, who were also blind and unable to take care of self and the child with blindness due to their own geriatric and disabling conditions. The situation of education of such children was pathetic. Chauhan and Singh (2015) reported in a study on education of children from scheduled tribes in Dantewada District of Chhattisgarh that school education has also been impacted by the socio-political conflicts and the related disturbances in the life of the people in general and education of tribal children in particular, though perception about such impacts was different among different sections of the society. Besides education, the impact was also observed among school going children in terms of their living conditions, changing social and cultural practices, physical and mental health, safety and security, support services like human resources, material resources, infrastructural resources, etc, provided by the government.

DISE data (NUEPA, 2016) show that 95.38% and 92.88% of CWD are enrolled in elementary schools of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh; it was also observed that the CWDs

who have enrolled in schools were found attending the classrooms in most of the visited schools; however, no school had barrier free environment for the CWDs as prescribed in the norms and standard under RTE Act 2009. The classrooms, corridors, kitchen, toilets, approaching road to school etc. of the schools were found inaccessible for the CWDs. In some of the schools, ramps were made, but without following any norms and specifications, creating more barriers in accessibility than disabled friendliness. It was observed in a few schools that ramps were made of mud, without any railing, which signifies that the ramp was made without any conscious effort --- just to show compliance of the government order. The reasons were explored and found that SMCs members and school functionaries were unaware of the specifications required for making a ramp. These findings were also in accordance with the DISE report (NUEPA, 2016) which reflects that 34% schools in Jharkhand and 32.1% schools in Chhattisgarh did not have ramps even after implementation of the RTE Act, 2009 in these two states. Identification camps were reported to be organised at the district and block levels once in a year in these states to identify and provide supportive services to the CWDs. The medical professionals in these medical camps used to assess, diagnose and provide disability certificates to the CWDs. However, while the children having visible disabilities were getting certificates, those with invisible disabilities like mental illness, intellectual disability, autism etc., were being mostly misdiagnosed. Some CWDs require detailed assessment and examination for establishing their disabilities, which were found completely ignored in these tribal areas. The Aganwadi centres were also found nearby the schools in which CWDs were enrolled without taking any measures for their identification, diagnosis, care and early detection and follow up interventions. The ultimate sufferers were the affected children. State governments of both of the states have also taken initiatives to implement technology in education in schools and installed computers in some of the schools. However, most of the computers were found non-functional. The school teachers reported that keeping computers in schools are creating security problems in schools and provided evidences of theft in schools.

Residential Schools and Ashrams for Tribal Children

Although infrastructure of some of the schools was found adequate, the strength of children was more than the capacity of the hostels in these schools. In both the states, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, the hostels were found overcrowded. Children were sharing beds on cot. In some of the KGBVs, there were no cots and students were sleeping on mattresses spread on the floor. There was no provision for any medical emergency. In Jharkhand, the KGBVs were upgraded up to class 12 but that too with the same infrastructure. A KGBV visited in Gumla district of Jharkhand, was functioning in the panchayat building without adequate infrastructure. A village road was passing through the campus of this residential school and thus separating the two buildings of the residential hostels. At night, one of the buildings remains without a warden and electricity. The boundary wall was found broken. Safety and security of girl students was a serious issue there. When asked about the school building, it was reported that the new building was coming up some 8 km far from that block. Although electricity was available in these schools, UNICEF has distributed solar lamps to the students of some of the KGBVs for study in case of power disruptions. As per the DISE data (NUEPA, 2016), in Jharkhand, 3.48% primary, 13.09% primary with upper primary and 82.93% up to secondary and senior secondary

schools have computers in schools while in Chhattisgarh, 3.02% primary, 43.42% primary with upper primary and 79.93% up to secondary and senior secondary schools have computers. During visits to the residential schools in these two states, computers were found installed, but were very few in number. All students were not getting an opportunity to access the computers for study purposes. In computer rooms, most of the computers were found non-functional. The internet connection was provided to the office computers only, which was used only by the office staff, not by the students. There was no regular computer teacher appointed in many of the schools. These observations were the field reality of inclusive schooling drawing attention to the substandard level of education and facilities provided in tribal areas.

TABLE 2

Qualitative Analysis of Residential Elementary Schools of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh

S. No.	Name of Schools	Major observations on the basis of interactions with the school functionaries, parents, SMCs and faculties of SCERTs and DIETs regarding functioning of schools and SMCs
1.	Kasturaba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV), Sisai, Gumla Jharkhand	• 172 girls (SC-6, ST-130, OBC-30, Muslim minority-6) managed by 4 regular teachers and 8 contract teachers (5 male teacher) • School was functioning from Panchayat building. New building is coming up around 8 km far from this place. Children are residing in 2 building which are not adjacent. A road and some houses divide these 2 building. One building remains without warden and electricity in the night. Boundary wall is also broken. Safety and security of girl student is a serious issue there. • There is no provision for any medical emergency. • School administration performs activities without consulting SMC members and they are also not cooperative with SMC members.
2.	Kasturaba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, Kalamati, Khunti, Jharkhand	• 269 girls (ST-175, SC-26, OBC-49, Minorities-17 and Disabled-2) managed by 5 teachers (4 subject teacher and 1 para teacher) 1 teacher is teacher-cum-warden. • Hostel was overcrowded. Children were sleeping on mattresses placed on the floor. • An auto on call is provided in case of any medical emergency • 5 computers were given out of which 1 was being used in school office. Only office computer has internet connection. • Medium of instruction was Hindi. • Students run their own library. There was no librarian. • SMC has been constituted but not actively involved in school activities, financial activities and preparation of SDP.

3.	Kasturaba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, Muruhu, Khunti, Jharkhand	274 girls (ST-219, SC-15, OBC-40, CWD-4) managed by 2 regular teacher against 4 sanctioned posts and part time subject teachers. There was no warden. One teacher was acting as a teacher-cum-warden. - IEP for CWD was not prepared. - An auto on call is provided in case of any medical emergency for carrying children to nearby Government hospital. - The school building was *pucca* and good, neat and clean, but was not disabled friendly. - Hostel was overcrowded. 5 computers were there without any internet facility and computer teacher. - UNESCO has provided solar lamp to each student for study. - Library was run by children only. Children also got award for their art and craft work. - Role of SMC members in school development was negligible there. SMC members were not being involved in school developmental activities by school administration.
4.	Charmuria Residential School, Kurud, Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh	- This school was especially for CWD. - Schools for 38 students, 9 were present at the day of visit (CWVI-8, CWHI-9, CWID-18 and CWLD-3) Managed by 5 teachers, 2 watchman and a cook. - Children were given training on activities of daily living, motor skills, communication skills, functional, academics and recreational skills. - SMC constituted, though their participation in school related activities like making SDP, involvement in financial activities etc. were very poor.
5.	Charmuria Resource Centre, Kurud Block, Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh	30 students managed by 2 contract teachers. - Equipment for CWD were not available. - CWD used to visit the school for learning personal, social and communication skills. - SMC members were not present during visit in spite of prior information.
6.	Primary Balak Ashram Shala, Gongpal, Kuankonda, Dantewada, Chhattisgarh	- Co-educational ashram school with 92 boys and 39 girls managed and a CWD managed by a regular and a contract teacher, run by Tribal Welfare department. - Most of the students were non-local, from 10-30 kms far away from school; speak 'Gondi', vocal and knowledgeable. 4-students attending Navodaya Coaching School. - Children stay in 'ashram without any teacher/warden, 'Chowkidar' looks after them during night.

		• Teacher avoided questions like, 'why you admit outside student', No satisfactory response due to some kind of fear. • SMC Meeting held in every month. But their involvement in school activities is very less.
7.	Katekalyan Kanya Ashram, Mokhpal, Dantewada, Chhattisgarh	• 30 girls in this Ashram managed by 3 contract teachers. Most of the girls belong to areas which are located 10-30 km away from the Ashram. • During visit girls were looked after by watchman as no alternative arrangement for care and looking after of girls during night if warden in case got ill and absent • Teachers received training on Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) • Maintained stock of activities by students like painting, drawing, project work, poem, teaching aids • SMC, meet once in a month. Only 2-3 members were found actively involved in school activities when communicated by the member secretaries.
8.	Kanya Madhyamick Ashram, Badegodra, Dantewada, Chhattisgarh	• Co-educational residential school with 35 boys and 100 girls managed by 2 regular and 2 contract teachers. • Mostly Muria Tribal girls, others belong to Navsudras, Dhakar and OBCs. • Gondi & Muria languages for conversation. • Classroom transaction in Hindi • Supervision of girls during night by male warden. • Role of SMC members were ignored in different activities of the school.
9.	Gurukul Awasia Vidyalaya, Mokpal, Dantewada, Chhattisgarh	• Co-educational school with 230 boys and 105 girls managed by 16 regular teachers. • Residential school 37 km from district headquarters. • Run by the Tribal Welfare Department. • 'Anudesak' for convincing tribal parents for sending their children to the 'ashram'. • Mostly Gond, Maria and Halwa tribal students. • Gondi and Halwi languages for conversation. • SMC members were getting information while distribution of scholarships and other incentives to students. However, their participation in preparing SDP, involvement in financial activities, social auditing etc. were very poor.

10.	Dantewada Astha Gurukul Vidyalaya, Govt. Balak Ashram Shala, Keshapur, Dantewada, Chhattisgarh	- Co-educational residential school with 134 boys and 116 girls managed by 2 male regular and 2 female regular teachers, a lady warden and a sports female teacher - Run by the Tribal Welfare department. - Double-storey building with separate toilets and bathrooms equipped with modern facilities like 14 computers, 2-TV facilities. - Children from Bijapur, Sukma, Narayanpur, Behrumgud, Isralam, Durrapal, Rajnad goan districs which are Naxalite affected areas of Chhattisgarh. All students were affected and had lost either mother or father or both in naxalite and related activities like 'Salwa Judum'. Family members are still staying in the 'shivir' (Rahat Camp) set up by the government for 200-500 families since 2007. - Children studying in 3-three schools- Saraswati Shishu Mandir Kendriya Vidyalaya, and Gayatri Vidyapeeth - Primary School, Middle School and Higher Secondary School. - Students belong to different tribal groups- Gond, Maria, Muria, Halwa, Bhatra and Dolara. - Gondi, Dolari, Halwi and Telugu languages. - The Ashram schedule 5.00 a.m. and continue up to 10.00 p.m. Coaching facilities during morning and evening hours - Durrapal, Behrumgud, Isralam, Durrapal 'shivir' camps were started from 2007. - Suffers due to attack on such 'Shivirs'. - Fearful, whenever made discussion on such human activities - Refusing to go back to 'Shivir' and their village. - No sources of income. - SMC constituted, however, they did not participate in school development and management, did not know to prepare SDP, fund management, social auditing etc.
11.	Government Balak Ashram Shala, Keshapur, Dantewada, Chhattisgarh	- Co-educational school with 19 boys and 13 girls managed by a regular and 3 male and 2 female contract teachers. - Residential school for Tribal Children situated in Dantewada Block 18 km. from district headquarter. 2 teachers from community activists and Nandi Foundation an NGO. 3 teachers deputed by National Mining Development Corporation. - Low paid teachers Rs. 1000-1200/- per month - Low level of education

		• Unable to identify the photos on classroom walls like Sardar Patel, Subhash Chandra Bose, etc.
		• Nearby Anganwadi.
		• SMC constituted, members meet monthly, cooperates and participates in school activities.
12.	Kasturba Gandhi Kanya Avasiya Vidyalaya, Dantewada, Chhattisgarh	• 100 girls were enrolled in this school, managed by 8 regular teachers.
		• 3 km. from Dantewada.
		• Well constructed school building with the hostel. Equipped with facilities like stitching machines, Computer, TV, music instruments etc.
		• Expenses are borne by the government.
		• Schedule 4.30 am and continues up to 10.00 pm.
		• Children face language problems like school vs. home languages, home language like Gondi, Halwi, Bhatri and Dolari.
		• Mainly dropouts children from tribal BPL families from naxalite affected areas, students are affected by the fear of naxalite activities, and do not want to go back to their home, died parents, living like orphans, elder brothers or sisters either forcefully or willingly joined the naxalite movements.
		• School as their second home, they love it, feel common hood, safe and togetherness.
		• SMC constituted, but involvement of SMC members in school planning and developmental activities were almost nil.
13.	Govt. Naveen Kanya Ashram Vidyalaya, Penna, Becheli, Patel Para, Dantewada, Chhattisgarh	• Kanya Ashram is run by Tribal Welfare department, established in 1997, located near Becheli, Beladela iron ore mines in tribal belt
		• 220 girls managed by five `Shiksha Karmis and a warden. Most of the children are coming from 20 to 30 Km. distance.
		• Gondi, Muria speaking children.
		• 10-big halls, 3-big classrooms, one TV room and one computer lab, consisting of five computers.
		• Warden reported that all children are affected by naxalite movement. Naxalites demolished their schools and families were affected. In the interior areas, police use to camp in govt. school. Talmedia was one of the targets, where 67 police jawans was killed by naxalites.
		• Major concern for education of children in targeted villages.
		• SMC also meets monthly, but their participation in school activities were found negligible.

14.	Govt. Kanya Avaisya Shala Tumnar, Geedam, Dantewada, Chhattisgarh	• 130 girls staying in this residential school managed by 2 regular and 5 contract teachers.
		• Halwi and Gondi languages, unknown to teachers.
		• Students belong to tribal communities, from 15 km to 20 km distance.
		• Nearby schools in Munder, blasted by naxalites, school structure destroyed. 120 students shifted to this school. Children feel safe in school and receiving free education.
		• Regular failure of power supply during nights, solar light system required.
		• Poor parents cannot afford the education of their children, parents used to migrate for wage labour or daily work.
		• SMC meets once a month and cooperates in school activities.
15.	Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, Jawaja, Geedam, Dantewada, Chhattisgarh	• 100 girls (96 girls from scheduled tribes communities, 3 OBC and one SC) managed by 7 `Shiksha Karmis`, one warden and one part time computer operator.
		• Speak Gondi, Halwi, Maria languages.
		• Majority of girls come from naxalite affected families, belong to Bijapur, Sukma, Dantewada districts of Chhattisgarh and from other interior areas.
		• Located at a distance of 30 km from Geedam. School has a provision of weaving, stitching, knitting, dance, and songs etc. Girls have been exposed to tailoring, stitching and have exposure to computer operations. There are four stitching machines and 7 computers.
		• Every Saturday the school organises Bal Sabha for exposure of spontaneous speech on different issues and topics.
		• There is wide spread fear in remote this village of the district. The tribal people are attacked by Naxalite activists quite frequently, particularly rich people of the towns and large landowning farmers. Their lands have been distributed among poor cultivators. Most of the large landowners, traders and rich people have migrated to cities. Cities are better protected by forces. The newly constructed K.G.B.V. Ashram School was opened near a town due to better security reasons. Bijapur is one of the districts which is seriously affected by Naxalite attacks. Therefore, a big chunk of students go to Bijapur city.
		• SMC constituted, but the members' involvement in school planning and developmental activities was passive since they were unaware of their roles and responsibilities in planning, monitoring, finance related matters of the school.

As per the National Curriculum Framework 2005, multilingualism, which is constitutive of the identity of a child and typical feature of the Indian linguistic landscape, must be used as a resource, and classroom strategies planned accordingly by a creative language teacher. This is not only the best use of a resource readily available, but also a way of ensuring that every child feels secure and accepted, and that no one is left behind on account of her/his linguistic background (NCERT, 2005). Contrary to this, it was observed that local tribal languages were completely ignored in all the schools --- not only in academic classes but also in day to day activities and conversation in the schools. The hiatus between the home language of a tribal child and the state language, i.e. the medium of education in the school, poses a problem for the children coming from the Scheduled Tribes (Chauhan, 2010; NCERT, 2017; Singh & Chauhan, 2019). Children were found engaged in cooking, cleaning and other such activities of the schools even during school hours. There were insufficient numbers of staff in these residential schools, which might be the reason behind participation of children in such activities other than academic activities. The subject teachers were mostly appointed on contractual basis and that too on period-wise contracts. They were not retained in the school for a complete academic session, which creates obstacles for the learning of children. There were no librarians appointed in these schools. Students were running their own school libraries, without any librarian. The teachers appointed in the schools were also working as wardens of the hostels. If a warden is ever appointed, she works as a teacher as well Let us recall that similar issues was raised earlier also in the Position Paper of National Focus Group on Problem of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe Children (NCERT, 2007 a and b); it had concluded that a highly inadequate teaching force in terms of both quantity and quality, in schools frequented by the SCs/STs, has been a serious facet of unequal provisioning (NCERT, 2007). In Jharkhand, it was reported that there was no warden's post in the residential schools. Many of the girls' hostels had male wardens and watchmen, which again raises concerns and pose serious problems in terms of privacy, safety and security of girls. Therefore the roles of SMCs must be considered all the more significant in case of such residential schools. In most of the residential schools, it was reported by the SMC members that school administration performs activities without consulting SMC members and they do not at all cooperate with the SMC members. The SMCs had no active role in school activities regarding the infrastructural management, monitoring of teaching learning activities, supervision of meals, safety and security, and in formulating the SDPs.

The RPD Act 2016 has assigned to educational institutions the duty to provide reasonable accommodation according to the individual's requirements and to provide them necessary support, individualised or otherwise, in environments that maximise the academic and social development consistent with the goal of full inclusion. It was found that the teaching learning materials and teaching aids used in the classrooms were not adapted as per the needs of such children. Illustrations from local events, materials, actions, festivals, traditional handicraft, occupations etc. add milieu to their classroom contents (Chauhan, 2002). Teachers should be aware of the individual needs of students with disabilities and make necessary accommodations as per the challenges faced by the children with special needs (Singh, 2014). In the earlier, traditional approach to teaching in the class, the tribal and home languages were not used in the classrooms and schools activities, while the teachers need to know about the languages spoken by their children in their own classrooms (Chauhan, 2010). It was almost like the death of their own languages in the schools.

The pupil teacher ratio was not found as per the norms --- contrary to the data provided by the concerned states on school education (NUEPA, 2015). In Chhattisgarh, the SMCs were found comparatively active in some of the monitoring activities of their schools, like attendance of children and teachers, mid-day meals, maintaining school cleanliness etc. They also involved themselves in formulation of SDPs for three years. Positively, as reported by Narwana (2015), strategies for strengthening the community participation should consider the local social and cultural ethos, in the absence of which the community participation in the effective school management would only remain a distant dream. Most of the schools under study did not have adequate facilities of water, electricity, toilets, seating arrangement and other infrastructure. For example, there was only one toilet, that too without a shed for 1300 students, including girls, in the Government Middle School Block Headquarters at Sesai, Gumla, Jharkhand. It was also inaccessible for the CWDs.

Further, Takayi *et al* (2014), in their study, have reported the challenges faced from both side that is educational administration and community. While the educational administration reported inadequate funds, difficult terrains and the lukewarm attitude of the community, the community members mentioned poor communication between the district and the local community stakeholders as biggest challenge. In this study too, the SMC members used to communicate about the lack of facilities in schools to village panchayat. None of the toilets in schools were found disabled friendly. Both the states had appointed resource teachers on contract basis for improvement in education of CWDs, but it was reported that they seldom visited the schools or homes of the concerned children. These children were found completely neglected in the schools as well as in home based education programmes. The reasons might be that these teachers did not know how to deal with these children in the class. Neither they were trained in disability related matters during their pre-service training nor were they oriented for educating such children during their service period.

Let us recall that similar issues had earlier been highlighted in a multi-country review of pre-service teacher education in the Asia-Pacific region --- that study had revealed that pre-service teacher education in many countries in the region still had a long way to go to fully prepare their graduates to effectively address and embrace the diversity of learners (UNESCO, 2013; UNESCO-NCERT, 2017). Teachers had the opinion that only trained teachers should be appointed as resource teachers to educate these children. In practice, the resource teacher has to visit the schools and gather all children with different disabilities of different classes in a separate classroom for teaching survival skills to them for an hour or two. But these resource teachers too showed limitations in their functioning. They were mainly trained to deal with particular types of disabilities. For example, if a teacher was trained to deal with a child with blindness, she could not take care of children with intellectual disability. It was observed that the resource teachers used to visit once in a month or two. Further, learning materials for the CWDs were not available. In most of the schools, Individualised Education Programme (IEP) for the CWD was not prepared and, in place of the IEP planning, only case reports were documented in the IEP file, that too without any detailed assessment. No follow-up intervention was recorded in an individual child record file.

Similar findings such as traditional approach of teaching, temporarily employed teachers and staffs, restricted provision for leisure time activities, unawareness about inclusive education, misdiagnosis/wrong identification, absence of educational and

therapeutic interventions to girls with disabilities and unavailability of support services etc. were reported in the study on KGBVs of Gujarat state (Singh & Chauhan, 2020). Parents of such children and also the members of SMCs were found unaware of such situations. Parents of the CWDs had raised the demand for regular visits of resource teachers in schools and also to attend their children for home based education. But they did not know how to handle such situation with the impression that such children are not educable. Therefore there is an urgent need to orient the SMC members on the issues related to education of CWD particularly in tribal areas. Training the professionals and staff to support inclusive education at all levels of school education is one of the specific measures to promote and facilitate inclusive education as articulated in the RPD Act 2016.

Conclusion

In the states of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, SMCs have been constituted in all the schools. The size of SMCs was 16 in each of the schools, though the composition of SMCs was different in different schools. However, 12 members out of 16 were elected by the local people through *Aam Sabha*. Only one out of 35 schools had a parent of a CWD as a member of the concerned SMC in spite of numerous CWD enrolled in these schools. The state guideline does not specify that an SMC should have a CWD's parent as one of its members.

In spite of prior information to meet SMCs members of schools, less than forty per cent members were present during the school visits. The role of SMC members was not effective in school functioning. In most of the school activities like procurement of items, construction work, mid-day meal, classroom activities, teachers' regularities and attendance, the participation of the SMC members was very unsatisfactory; at places, they were completely ignored by the headmasters of the concerned schools. They did not have information related to different activities and duties as articulated in the RTE Act, 2009. In all the visited schools, although monthly meetings of SMCs were indeed conducted, the attendance of the members in the meetings, was reported very low in most of the schools. Mostly, members were invited in the school functions, disbursement of scholarships, uniforms, etc. Training materials for SMCs, in form of a manual, have been developed in Chhattisgarh, but not yet in Jharkhand. Some hand-outs on RTE Act 2009 have been prepared for distribution among SMC members in Jharkhand.

Teaching in the classroom was carried out mostly in Hindi language, though their home languages were different. Some Block Resource Centres were occupied by police forces (e.g. BRC, as in Muruhu, Khunti in Jharkhand) to deal with Naxalite activities in the area. Most of the KGBVs and other residential schools were found overcrowded. Appointment of wardens (mainly female wardens in the girls' schools) has been ignored in KGBVs (in Jharkhand) in spite of the provision of a warden in the KGBV scheme. Most of the members of SMCs were unaware of the infrastructural facilities, identification, enrolment, regular attendance, classroom intervention, assessment, services of resource teachers, volunteers, IEPs and other entitlements and educational provisions and support services required for tribal children and CWDs. Similar findings were articulated about the lack of basic facilities, absence of barrier free infrastructure, no awareness on inclusive education among teachers and staff, cases of misdiagnosis, poor implementation of individualised education and unavailability of support services in an earlier study on KGBVs of Madhya Pradesh (Singh & Chauhan, 2019). However, in this study, only a few members participated

in the distribution of materials and scholarships under different government schemes to help the headmasters and teachers. In some schools (e.g. Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh), SMCs members used to visit schools daily and contribute in classroom teaching through group activities or story-telling activities and also assist the teachers during examinations. They are contributing in social auditing and assessment (e.g. Kanker in Chhattisgarh) of children during teaching-learning processes in classrooms.

Recommendations

Creating a secure, enabling, accessible and inclusive environment in the schools in tribal areas is a challenging process. There is a need to address this challenge in a more realistic and holistic manner. An innovative approach of teaching and learning, like collaborative learning, peer tutoring, differentiated teaching-learning, adapted and individualised approach of teaching, techno-based and application of multimedia like films, theatre, story-telling through weaving the cultural-lingual aspects of tribals in the classrooms, is required to be implemented. Efforts must be made to bridge the existing gaps between the language spoken by the child and the medium of teaching. Textbooks in classes at the preparatory and middle stages should be in mother tongue of the students and, in case such textbook materials are not available, the language of transaction between teachers and students must be the home language/mother tongue of students. Specific actions including the use of appropriate technology enabling children to work at their own pace, with flexible curricula to leverage each child's strengths, should be initiated. Teachers, besides the knowledge of their subjects and an understanding of the subject-related aims of education, should have relevant skills for understanding of special requirements of tribal children with disabilities. Revamping of the pre-service as well as in-service capacity building programmes is also required to build the capacity of teachers in teaching effectively for realisation of diverse learning needs of tribal children and children with disabilities. Mere capacity building of teachers may not work to address the issues and challenges of education of tribal students with disability; what is needed is the sensitisation of all stakeholders in the school education system, including the SMC members, teachers, principals, administrators, and students, to the requirements of all students with the notions of inclusion and equity. Technology-based solutions can be used for the orientation of parents/caregivers to enable the parents/caregivers to actively support their children's learning needs at home too. Concerted efforts are needed for sharing of resources across schools in tribal areas to remove the crisis of basic facilities and resources in schools. In this regard, it is recommended to intervene for the more robust and improved governance and monitoring mechanism with cooperation and support across schools for the educational management of inclusive schools in tribal areas.

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Book Reviews

Governance encompasses the procedures and methods adopted to direct and control an organisation's working. At a federal level, it involves actors such as political leaders, regulatory bodies and administrators. However, at an institutional level, governance measures involve providing guidance to leaders helping them in their functional practices. Management, on the other hand, refers to the approaches undertaken to streamline the functioning of programs and institutions. The book under review dwells on the structures of governance and management of higher education institutions (HEIs) globally and in India, focussing on the institutional level processes and methods.

The introductory chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the changing models of governance in higher education and evolution of governance structures in India as well as institutional issues of autonomy and accountability.

The book discusses three broad themes: First, it focusses on the macro issues of governance and management structures in India; secondly, it concentrates on institutional experiences in state specific contexts and, thirdly, it deals with the theme of quality management factors leveraged at the institutional level. The chapters draw attention to higher educational reforms, functioning of regulatory bodies, and role of quality assurance agencies, autonomy and governance at institutional level and critically examine issues related to excellence and quality mechanisms of higher education institutions (HEIs).

The first section comprises four chapters which discuss varying aspects of governance of higher education in India. Kuldeep Mathur discusses macro issues related to the role of state and market in the governance of HEIs. He shows how neo-liberal policies have led to introduction of the new modes of institutional management in higher education. Governance as an interactive process has taken a pragmatic turn where markets as well as civil society have taken a central role while the role of state (governments) has been diluted owing to the changing needs of society. However, neo-liberal solutions of privatisation or private-public partnerships (PPPs) may create more hurdles for a country like India which is in a stage of developing higher education infrastructure. The chapter argues for a re-evaluation of the role of the state in higher education governance. Furqan Qamar discusses the regulatory structures of higher education and argues that the diversity of institutional structures make governance a challenging task in India. Very often, the legal and regulatory framework is stitched by universities in their territorial jurisdiction but limited by the act of parliament. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) is the nodal ministry for education, including higher education, alongside sixteen other regulatory bodies for each field of study. Further, the quality assurance, accreditation and ranking are regulated and managed by

three agencies, viz the NAAC, National Board of Accreditation and NIRF. Apart from these key institutions a new regulatory body related to funding and financing of higher education has been established which is called Higher Education Funding Agency (HEFA). He shows that a multiplicity of regulatory bodies with overlapping functions and weak quality assurance mechanisms often leads to ineffective governance mechanisms including poor coordination and accountability measures. The next paper is by I Ramabrahmam and Umamaheshwara Rao who put forward a case for strengthening intermediary agencies such as the State Councils of Higher Education. The state councils were envisaged and established to play an important role in the planning and coordination of higher education at the state level. Each state followed a different model for establishing the State Councils of Higher education (SCHE) and their effectiveness varied. One of the important elements to improve governance is the accountability mechanisms as suggested by M Anandakrishnan to overcome the fallouts of growth and development among HEIs. Governance systems must ensure fiscal accountability, a qualitatively superior teaching-learning environment and safeguarding interests of the disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals. Accountability measures such as implementing a system of self-governance among HEIs, diversifying composition of governing boards to ensure widespread representation, shifting empowerment from public heads to higher education experts, increasing transparency, merit-based evaluation in recruitment policies and incorporating stringent internal performance indicators could bring about the desired revolution in the governance among HEIs.

The second section of the book comprises five chapters which bring forward institutional aspects in governance and management. Mohd Muzammil explores a whole gamut of governance in affiliating systems by tracing the types of affiliation, viz constituent colleges, associated colleges, affiliated colleges, colleges of residential universities, aided colleges, self-financed colleges and specialised (women's) colleges among others. Governance measures aim to look at macro facilities such as infrastructure, academic excellence standards, and teaching faculty however, universities are entangled in *maxmin* strategy that is, maximising the utilisation of inputs to generate minimum gains of output levels. A key drawback here has been inefficient monitoring of the academic performance of affiliated colleges. Thus, the recommendations of the12th five-year plan at reducing the number of colleges within the affiliating universities for better management to efficiently fulfil academic commitments is a welcome step. G D Sharma elaborates on the management of autonomous colleges, tracing the beginning of autonomous colleges and their role in new forms of managing academic and administrative issues. Garima Malik examines governance and autonomy amongst the central and state universities. The diminished role of the state in higher educational governance to promote a *laissez-faire* economy led to a movement towards marketisation which remoulded the higher education system. Substantive autonomy in the governance of HEIs in key respects such as financial, academic, staffing and organisational, has been promoted to enable HEIs to improve government-university relations and within-university relations. The realities of governance and management in embarking on an ambitious voyage of universalization of higher education in India are entangled in a myriad of problems which have been discussed by Rakesh Raman. Rajen Harshe examines the transition from a 'State' to a 'Central' University and the implications for the smooth running of the university system by looking at a case study institution.

The third section, comprising five chapters, explores quality management of HEIs. The role and evolution of National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) as a regulatory quality assurance agency has been described first by Supriya Chaudhuri. It is conceptualised by taking an example of Jadavpur University, defining quality and excellence as pillars of development that can be promoted by restructuring learning environments, training faculty by notching up pedagogy, research, academic performance index, building MoUs with other universities and integrating internationalisation within its educational environment. Narayanan Annalakshmi, Rajalakshmi Bhavana and Bhuvana Esther outline quality and excellence management for Bharathiar University, employing primary data (interviewing students, teachers and recording quantitative statistics of the samples) in the state of Tamil Nadu. The findings point out the process of institutional autonomy, decision-making as well as governance processes. Thus, efforts need to be made at simplifying the administrative procedures, implementing structured academic regimes, ensuring transparency in recruitment policies, ascertaining accountable teaching and research, and promoting participation to all stakeholders. To further address the quality management issues, Sudhanshu Bhushan introduces the phenomenon of temporary teachers in respect of the political economy of governance in higher education. HEIs have been unable to fulfil the increased demand for permanent teachers leading to emergence of temporary faculties. Government regulations withhold direct recruitment of teachers which puts a huge pressure on absorbing temporary teachers as permanent cadre. An example of the phenomenon in states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Kashmir has been elaborated which reflects the challenges of governance in higher education. Technology has been a tool to decode the pentagon puzzle of higher education in India comprising access and equity, relevance, quality, governance and financing. Pankaj Mittal discusses the importance of open education resources, MOOCs, direct-to-home channels among other tech-enabled learning initiatives as important pillars of higher education growth. The technology enabled way not only provides varied approaches to teaching-learning but also fuels capacity building in HEIs. Finally, Nidhi Sabharwal presents an institution-centric approach to devise ways for integrating students in academia and social domains. The empirical evidences of academic and social challenges for students from disadvantageous groups captured in a large-scale CPRHE study are presented. The findings reveal challenges faced by HEIs in managing the diversity of students both inside and outside the classrooms. It is concluded that a strong student support system should be adopted to further development of higher education with a respect for diversity.

The discussions in the book bring forward a theoretical as well as an empirical perspective of the governance and management structures of HEIs in India. It presents a good collection of articles related to different aspects of governance and management of higher education institutions. The book will remain a vital resource for academicians, policy practitioners, researchers and scholars of higher education.This is a must-read book for the anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, educationists, political scientists, especially those associated with policymaking, and social reformers.

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