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# **National Journal of Education**

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## Editorial

The present age of human civilization has witnessed unparalleled development in all spheres of social, national and global welfare. On the one hand it has opened new vistas of knowledge while on the other hand it has made its reach across globe to share human and knowledge capital. Amid such an age it is really blissful to work towards betterment of human society in totality. A part of the world however has grey areas and deprivations that hamper human development activities in various ways.

The spread of pandemic COVID – 19 and conflicts between several countries have posed huge threat for existence of human habitat. India, being the largest democracy of the world follows the path of peace and fortunately its citizens have never been under any serious kind of survival crisis. But, the wave of COVID pandemic had severely affected human activities in all spheres. Apart from its effect on human health, national economy it has grossly affected teaching and learning. Everything came to a halt, but with the advent and spread of digital and virtual learning its effect was combated successfully. The corona warriors like doctors, cleanliness workers and defense personnel are greatly acknowledged to work toward normalization of the situation. But, at the front of teaching learning a silent corona warrior too battled at par with bravery and grit of other working professionals. Unfortunately their contributions were not much acknowledged.

Teachers have played a tremendous role to manage quality teaching learning amidst the pandemic situation. Without much prior training and preparation they played significantly to ease out the effect of COVID in teaching learning. In such premise, the research activities and other related institutional activities too were seriously affected. Several institutional activities remain stagnant to prioritize life or teaching to students for their academic growth.

All such factors contributed that the publication of NJE too underwent some turbulence but on behalf of entire editorial team I extend heartfelt appreciation to all who contributed intellectually to continue the mission of advancement and dissemination of knowledge.

The publication of the three volumes of the journal after a long gap of two years of the pandemic gives us immense pleasure and marks a small victory over the many obstacles we faced worldwide. At the outset I would thank all authors for their patience and trust in us. These three volumes of the journal are combined volumes

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of two issues for each volume so that the publication of the journal is regularized and the gap is bridged, I am hopeful that the subsequent volumes will be published on time and we shall have the same support of the researchers' fraternity.

I once again appreciate the efforts of academic fraternity for their tireless efforts in keeping the journey of academics alive through their dedicated efforts. At the end, I express my earnest optimism that through our efforts the world will become a peaceful and healthy abode to work together towards welfare of our young and coming generations.

**Editorial Board**  
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## National Journal of Education

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## **A Study of Perception of Teacher Evaluation System in Elementary Schools of Tapi District of Gujarat**

*Ganga Yadasing Thapa\* Sujata Srivastava\*\**

### **Abstract**

*Quality education is of paramount importance as it is one of the major indicators of human resource development. Elementary education is the foundation on which a healthy society rest on. The present focus needs to be on building a nurturing school culture where teacher practice can flourish as a result of teacher evaluation. The perception of elementary teachers on system of evaluation existing in their schools would help in school improvement. Tapi district in Gujarat state has elementary schools run by the zilla panchayat. At present the teacher evaluation practices carried out in elementary zilla panchayat schools are Gunotsav, school inspection, SSA evaluation program and principal observations. The present study focuses on the perception of elementary school teachers towards teacher evaluation system in their schools. For this study, 214 school teachers were selected from Zilla panchayat schools in Tapi district of Gujrat. Likert scale was used for data collection. Results and conclusion are discussed further.*

**Keywords:** *Teacher evaluation system, Zilla panchayat schools, Gunotsav.*

### **Introduction**

Basic education allows personal development, intellectual autonomy, integration into professional life and participation in the development of society in the context of democracy (The Dakar Framework for Action, 2000). Effective teachers strengthen education. National Curriculum Framework (2005) states that “No system of education can rise above teachers”. Teacher effectiveness greatly depends on the means deployed for selection, procedure used for training and systems adopted for teacher evaluation. Justice Verma committee report (2012) stated “it is felt that teacher audit followed by required corrective measure would lead to improvement in teacher effectiveness which, in turn, would enhance the effectiveness of schools”.

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Teacher and Administrator Performance Evaluation Policy Document (2010) explains teacher evaluation as the process of assessing or determining the effectiveness of the performance of the certified employee in a given teaching and learning or leadership and management situation, based on predetermined criteria, through periodic observation and other documentation such as portfolios, peer reviews, products and performances. It is without doubt that an effective teacher evaluation system is strongly linked with improved teacher performance and professional growth. Zarro (2005) found that quality professional development and a healthy school culture are catalysts for improving classroom instruction and student learning. The perception of teachers on evaluation methods in their schools would go a long way in creating an open school culture, creating sound teaching practices and desirable student –outcomes.

Tapi district in Gujarat state has elementary schools run by the zilla panchayat. At present the teacher evaluation practices carried out in elementary zilla panchayat schools are Gunotsav, school inspection, SSA evaluation program and principal observations.

Gunotsav was introduced in 2009 with the purpose to bring about qualitative improvement in academic and administrative activities. This is a measurement of every activity done by teachers in the classroom and in schools with the help of the Gunotsav Evaluation Booklet. Gunotsav is conducted by external evaluators like politicians, public administrative officers, principals or excellent teachers of secondary or higher secondary schools with the help of liaison officers. In Gunotsav reading, writing and counting (arithmetic) skills of the students of class II to VIII are evaluated and exam of Maths, Science, Gujarati, Social Science class VI to VIII students are conducted of the previous year. On the basis of student performance, the teachers are evaluated giving 7 types of grade – A+, A, B, C, D, E, and F. Now from 2019 second semester, new version of Gunotsav 2.0 with variations have been introduced once in every semester.

For monitoring and supervision, the SSA resource persons such as Cluster Resource Center coordinator, Block Resource Center coordinator, Block Resource persons regularly visit schools and fill data online. The Resource person visits the class and checks the students' attendance, and performance of students randomly and of government decided activities/program such as Pragna in Gujarat. On the basis of these, suggestions are given to the teacher for further improvement. Problems are also written online, if any.

Besides these, school inspection is conducted regularly every year on academic and administrative aspects by a principal who has qualified in the Head Teacher

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Aptitude Test (HTAT), kendra shikshak, Cluster Resource Center coordinator, and expert teachers of various subjects. On the basis of inspection, Confidential Reports are filled. In the inspection process both academic and administrative aspects are included for evaluation.

Besides these, there is teacher evaluation done by the school principal regularly. The principal observes the class and evaluates performance of the students specially in reading, writing and arithmetic skill to know effectiveness in teaching. The observation and feedback are documented in the logbook and oral feedback is also given.

### **Review of related literature**

Teachers perceive teacher evaluation to have a strong impact on teacher development. Elementary teachers perceived the district teacher evaluation system as having a strong impact on improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning and elevated professional growth (Doherty, 2009). It was found that teachers want to perform well on evaluation, but feel that needed collaboration time with colleagues (Carroll, 2018). Sosanya- Tellez (2010) revealed that teacher desired insight, knowledge and reflection with other. They welcomed a framework to guide their reflection. Robles (2007) highlighted in his study that teachers perceive current status of evaluation as ineffective and useless, wanted the process to continue with principal observation as the key component and felt that evaluators should be more competent in the areas they evaluate. Most teachers agreed that if the feedback is given in a considerate, compassionate manner, the positive working relationship between teacher and evaluator is much more likely to survive the post-observation conference (Killian, 2010). Brock (2005) revealed in his study that self-reflection of teacher improved performance and found that when changes in the classroom were implemented, those changes were exclusively the result of teacher reflection not the outgrowth of conversation with administration.

### **Research Question**

What is the perception of elementary teachers towards the teacher evaluation system in their schools?

### **Objective**

The objective of the study was to study the perception of elementary teachers towards the teacher evaluation system in their schools.

### **Research Method**

A descriptive survey method was adopted for the present study.

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### Sample

Out of 801 elementary schools managed by Zilla Panchayat of Tapi district of Gujarat, 10% schools i.e. 80 schools were selected randomly. From these 80 schools, 5 teachers were selected randomly from every school. If a school had less than 5 teachers, then all the teachers were selected. 214 teachers of elementary schools managed by Zilla Panchayat of Tapi district of Gujarat were selected applying the random sampling technique.

### Tools for Data Collection

A Likert type perception scale was developed to meet the objective that was to study the perception of teachers towards the teacher evaluation system. It had five alternatives such as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. The perception scale consisted of 23 items related to the dimensions of quality, growth, attitude, appropriateness, timelines, methods and types of evaluation competency of evaluators, student performance, school environment, job satisfaction, feedback mechanism, outputs, grade/reward and satisfaction with present evaluation system.

### Data Analysis

Data was analyzed by finding out frequency and percentage.

### Results and Discussion

**Table 1: Teacher's perception towards Teacher Evaluation System (Responses are given in percentage)**

No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I feel that teacher evaluation focuses on my growth.	26.64	58.41	8.88	6.07	0.00
2	Teacher Evaluation makes me accountable.	36.92	54.67	6.08	1.40	0.93
3	Teacher evaluation develops sense of confidence in me.	36.91	57.48	3.27	2.34	0.00
4	I have positive attitude towards teacher evaluation.	39.71	59.35	0.47	0.47	0.00

5	Teacher evaluation increases job satisfaction of teachers.	26.17	40.65	28.51	4.67	0.00
6	Evaluators are competent to evaluate the performance of teachers.	26.64	45.33	21.03	7.00	0.00
7	Teacher evaluation is done timely in my school.	22.43	39.25	31.78	6.54	0.00
8	Evaluators evaluate me objectively.	18.22	59.81	15.89	6.08	0.00
9	I reflect or review my performance frankly and objectively in self- evaluation.	39.25	55.14	5.61	0.00	0.00
10	Teacher Evaluation based on students' performance gives the correct picture of my actual performance.	47.67	35.98	11.68	3.27	1.40
11	Evaluator helps teacher when special assistance needed after evaluating the teacher.	16.82	38.32	34.58	9.81	0.47
12	Follow up work is done regularly.	20.09	51.40	26.17	2.34	0.00
13	I feel a stress -free environment during teacher evaluation by external agency.	19.63	43.93	17.76	13.55	5.14
14	Feedback has strong positive effect on my performance.	27.57	57.01	14.49	0.93	0.00
15	Evaluator gives negative feedback with specific and clear examples/ evidence and explanation.	19.16	31.31	37.38	10.28	1.87

16	Setting of objectives motivates me to compete with myself to reach my goal.	35.51	58.41	5.61	0.47	0.00
17	Teacher evaluation encourages me to evaluate student effectively and keep record of it.	44.39	50.93	4.21	0.47	0.00
18	I find my strength as well as my weaknesses through teacher evaluation.	40.18	49.07	10.28	0.47	0.00
19	Teacher evaluation provides opportunity for experience sharing.	21.49	57.48	20.56	0.47	0.00
20	Teacher evaluation system provides sufficient and accurate, reliable and credible data of teacher performance.	24.77	44.86	21.96	7.48	0.93
21	I get appropriate grade as per my performance.	31.78	53.27	11.21	3.27	0.47
22	Rewarding excellent performance of teacher after teacher evaluation attracts me to perform better.	34.11	48.13	15.42	1.87	0.47
23	I am satisfied with present teacher evaluation system.	21.02	55.61	14.49	6.54	2.34

### Teachers' perception on attitude towards teacher Evaluation system

58.41% teachers agreed and 26.64% of teachers strongly agreed that teacher evaluation focuses on teacher's growth. 54.67% teachers agreed and 36.92% strongly agreed respectively to the statement that teacher evaluation makes them accountable for their work. 57.48% teachers agreed and 36.91% teachers strongly agreed that teacher evaluation develops sense of confidence in teachers. In a response to the

statement that they have positive attitude towards teacher evaluation, 59.35 % of teachers agreed to it and 39.71 % answered strongly agreed.40.65% of teachers agreed that teacher evaluation increased job satisfaction where as 26.17% of teachers strongly agreed and it was found that 28.51% teachers were neutral in their response.

Through the data analysis of given responses in the perception scale, it is clear that teachers have a positive attitude towards teacher evaluation and believe that it is an effective tool that focuses on teacher's growth, confidence, accountability and increase in job satisfaction. Campbell (2014) revealed that teachers see the value in teacher performance evaluation. They understand that teacher performance evaluation can provide both opportunities for individual teacher growth and development, and at the same time holding teachers accountable.

#### **Teacher's perception on Evaluator Competency**

45.33 % teachers agreed and 26.64 % teachers strongly agreed that evaluators were really competent to evaluate the performance of the teachers. It was also found that 21.03 % and 7.0% teachers were neutral and disagreed respectively in their responses. Most of the teachers perceived that their evaluators were competent to evaluate the performance of teacher. The reason could be that they believed that the evaluator had knowledge of content and of the government program, method of teaching, and mechanism of evaluation. However, some teachers were neutral and disagreed to finding them competent.

#### **Teacher's perception on Teacher Evaluation Procedure**

39.25% teachers agreed and 22.43% teachers strongly agreed that teacher evaluation was done timely in their school whereas 31.78% teachers were found neutral. 59.81% teachers agreed that their evaluator evaluates them objectively. 55.14% teachers agreed and 39.25% teachers strongly agreed that they reflected on and reviewed their performance frankly and objectively in self-evaluation. 47.67 % of teachers strongly agreed and 35.98% teachers agreed with the statement that teacher evaluation based on students' performance gives the correct picture of their actual performance. 38.32% of teachers agreed and 34.82% teachers were neutral in the case of evaluators helping teachers when special assistance was needed after evaluating them. 51.40% teachers agreed with the statement that follow up work were done regularly. In response to feeling of a stress-free environment during teacher evaluation by external agency, 43.93% teachers agreed and 19.62% teachers strongly agreed to it. It was also found that 17.76% teachers were neutral and 13.55% disagreed with this statement.

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Teacher evaluation in most of the schools was done timely. Yet some teachers were found neutral in their perception and some disagreed in this regard. Timely evaluation could be due to the adequate number of human resources available such as Cluster resource center coordinators, timely evaluation in each and every school was possible. Most of teachers evaluated themselves frankly and objectively. Beaty (1989) found in his study that self- observation, self- rating and self-ranking is always used in conjunction with other types of teacher evaluation. Ahuja (2005) revealed in his study that self -evaluation was the most effective and efficient staff development technique. However, Frimannsdottir (2010) also presented the possibility to be ineffective when preparation is absent, terms and roles are poorly defined and no resources are available. Most of the teachers believed that student performance gave a correct picture of teacher's performance. It is a common method used in government schools.

In Gunotsav, teachers were evaluated on the basis of student's performance in basic skills such as reading, writing, counting (arithmetic) skills and performance of tests taken from classes 6 to 8. However, some were found to be neutral, some disagreed and some strongly disagreed in this regard. The reasons could be technical problems in Gunotsav, varied local condition, fear or slow learners. Some of the teachers perceived that they didn't get proper assistance after their evaluation was conducted. This could be taken care if the evaluators are perceived as supportive and encouraging. This is also possible when frequency of evaluation or visits are more. Most of the teacher didn't find the evaluation environment stressful as it is part of the school practice.

#### **Teacher's perception of feedback**

Most of the teachers were found positive in their perception on feedback. Among them 57.01% teachers agreed, and 27.57% teachers strongly agreed that feedback had strong positive effects on their performance. In response to statement that evaluator gives negative feedback with specific and clear examples/evidence and explanation 37.38 % were found neutral. It was found that 31.31% teacher agreed, and 19.16% teachers strongly agreed whereas 10.28% teachers disagreed in their responses.

Most of the teachers perceived that feedback had a strong positive effect. Gholam & Kobeissi, (2012) revealed in their study is to provide teachers with useful feedback and give them opportunities to improve in areas in which they score poorly. The result of the study of Frasier, (2017) found that ongoing formative feedback by observer who can identify what good teaching looks like in a context is more valuable and motivating to teachers than summative assessment. Almost half of the teachers were either neutral, disagreed or strongly disagreed to negative feedback given with specific and clear examples explanation, and evidence while the other half perceived it positively.

#### **Teacher's perception on Teacher Evaluation Outcomes**

Outcomes of teacher evaluation was found to be positive in the present research. 58.41% teachers agreed and 35.51% teachers strongly agreed to the statement that setting of objectives, motivated them to compete with themselves to reach their goal. As a result, it encourages them to evaluate students effectively and keep record of it properly was the affirmative reply of 50.93% of teachers who agreed and 44.39% of them who strongly agreed. 49.07% of teachers agreed and 40.18% strongly agreed that they found their strength as well as weakness through teacher evaluation, while 10.28 % of teachers were found neutral. In matter of

experience sharing 57.48% and 21.49% of teachers agreed and strongly agreed respectively that teacher evaluation provides opportunity for experience sharing whereas 20.56% of teachers were found neutral in their response. The statement that teacher evaluation system provides sufficient and accurate, reliable and credible data of teacher performance was agreed by 44.86% of teachers and strongly agreed by 24.77% of teachers where as 21.96 % and 7.48% teachers were found neutral and disagreed respectively with this statement.

Most of the teacher's perception towards outcomes of teacher evaluation such as objective setting, encouragement to evaluate students effectively, finding their own strength and weakness, experience sharing, reliable data of teacher performance were found positive. The elementary teachers perceived the district teacher evaluation system as having a stronger impact on improved teacher instruction, sustained school improvement, increased student learning and elevated professional growth (Doherty,2009). Most of teachers have positive belief that teacher evaluation provides sufficient and accurate, reliable and credible data of teacher performance.

#### **Teacher's perception on Awards/ Rewards**

On teachers' perception on awards and rewards, 53.27% teachers agreed and 31.78% teachers strongly agreed that they got appropriate grade as per their performance. 48.13% teachers agreed and 34.11% teachers strongly agreed that rewarding excellent performance of teachers after teacher evaluation attracts them to perform better.

Most of the teachers perceived that they got appropriate grade and rewarding teachers encourages them to perform better. Teachers desire words of appreciation for encouragement whether in form of grades or rewards. It is not necessary to have it in the form of financial reward. Nelson (2015) revealed that only 21% of teachers agreed that an ideal evaluation system should be tied to financial rewards as a component of teacher evaluation.

#### **Teacher's perception on satisfaction with present Teacher Evaluation system**

55.61% agreed and 21.02% teachers strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the present teacher evaluation system. Whereas 14.49% were neutral in their response, 6.54% and 2.34% of teachers disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with this statement.

Most of the teachers were satisfied with present teacher evaluation system. But some were neutral and some responded negatively. This could be because teacher's dissatisfaction with the low grades of achievement, lack of time given by the

evaluator and a lack of a nurturing culture amongst other factors. Jaffurs (2017) found importance of culture as well as involvement of teacher in development and implementation for acceptance of teacher evaluation system. Wacha (2013) came up with a finding, though teachers have negative perception towards teacher evaluation, yet they can't deny potentiality of teacher evaluation in improvement of teaching learning.

### Conclusion

The teachers have a positive perception on the dimensions of teacher evaluation system existing in the zilla panchayat elementary schools of Tapi district of Gujarat. They are satisfied with the teacher evaluation practices of Gunotsav, school inspections and principal observations. However, the competency of evaluators in giving feedback with more examples and evidences can be enhanced. This has implications for the Education Department Government of Gujarat at the state level and the District Education Office in conducting training programs for all personnel involved in the teacher evaluation process at the district level. This would help in further building a strong relationship between the teachers and their evaluators. There is no doubt that a robust teacher evaluation system in schools goes a long way in developing teacher effectiveness.

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## The Rigor and Ethics of Educational Research

Amit Ahuja\*

### Abstract

*Research is a structured and systematic way of solving a problem or exploring the phenomena. Research broadens the vision of the researchers, especially where little is known. Research is a scientific way of exploring the world. The credible reflector of the quality of research is its rigor. It is the quality or state of quality that is précised, accurate or cautious enough in meeting the norms/ standards set by the community of the researchers. Research, without rigor, has no worth or significance and stands like fiction and loses worth. Rigor strengthens the research design and answers the research questions. It minimizes the element of subjectivity on the part of researchers. It answers the perennial questions of establishing the methodological concerns in a setup. The rigor of research primarily focuses on the validity and reliability aspects. Research ethics provide guidelines to a researcher for the responsible conduct of research. Research ethics educate the researcher to maintain the ethical standard of the research being conducted. Research ethics monitor the ethical concerns of the research under process. Integrity, objectivity, honesty, openness, carefulness, respect for community, confidentiality, non-discrimination, genuine publication, competence, etc. are some ethical aspects associated with a research process. Informed consent involves competence, voluntarism, full information, and comprehension. If all these four rights, that is competence, voluntarism, full information, and comprehension, are assured by the researcher then it may be inferred that the research ethics have been duly considered.*

**Keywords:** *Research, Research Rigor, Research Ethics, Objectivity, Quality.*

### Research & its Nature

Research is a structured and systematic way of solving a problem or exploring the phenomena (Kaul, 2009). Research, as a process, shows the trends, ways or the means through which the practices conducted by the community of researchers may be improved. Research broadens the vision of the researchers, especially where little is known (Best & Kahn, 2016). The research adds into the existing system of practices or the body of knowledge and the added component is always open for updation, debate, and enrichment.

Research is a scientific way of exploring the world (Cohen et al, 2011). Research supports the researchers in focusing on the problem or issue and thus helps in deducing the conclusions and deriving generalizations and implications for the

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stakeholders so that the coming outcomes may be predicted. The process of research entertains the knowledge- based queries that can be subjected to observation and experimentation. Research primarily satisfies the curiosity of the researchers (Kaul, 2009) and it seeks conclusions. Research as a process involves some interrelated activities in which the steps may overlap. These steps/operations are so interdependent on each other that the earlier steps/operations determine to a substantial extent the nature of the latter ones. Each of these steps has a profound effect on the subsequent steps. Educational research is concerned with the discipline of education and the interdisciplinary approach in conducting educational research may prove catalytic in arriving at the conclusions and deriving the implications. The insight of the educational researcher facilitates in framing the research questions (Cohen et al, 2011). The research domain in education may be disorganized and random but the research through rigor and ethics may bring some quality methodological inputs in itself. Educational research economizes efforts and increases efficiency (Best & Kahn, 2016). It brings a sense of awareness among the researcher community and may show the ways for educational reforms also. It must be noted that the mere defining, reporting, listing, stating or arranging some numerical data is not educational research. In fact, it is a careful or critical inquiry in seeking facts (Guba, 1981).

It is a diligent investigation in ascertaining. It is an intellectual activity that brings to light new knowledge and corrects previous errors and misconceptions and adds in ordered ways into the existing corpus of knowledge. Knowledge gained through research is of the highest order (Johnson & Larry, 2012). It usually employs description, explanation, and interpretation in the overall process. It comes out of a desire to do things better. It aims at narrow downing of the proverbial gap between the theory and practices in education (Miller & Dingwall, 1997). It is based on the interdependence of causes and effects. It follows the scientific ways of investigation. Educational research focuses on human-human interactions so its qualitative concern rests in the behavior of humans as people have reasons to behave (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011).

### **Research Rigor**

The credible reflector of the quality of research is its rigor. It is the quality or state of quality that is précised, accurate or cautious enough in meeting the norms/ standards set by the community of the researchers (Seale & Silverman, 1997). Research, without rigor, has no worth or significance and stands like a fiction hence loses worth (Morse et al 2002). Rigor strengths the research design and answers the research questions (Davies & Dodd, 2002). It minimizes the element of subjectivity

on the part of researchers that may become inherent in some unavoidable way. The rigor of research refers to its exactness and objectivity. It is the disciplined application of reasoning and logic to knowledge (Tesch, 1990). It is the scientific way of adhering to facts and reasons while exploring a phenomenon. It answers the perennial questions of establishing the methodological concerns in a setup (Anfara, & Mertz, 2006). The rigor of research primarily focuses on the validity and reliability aspects. The validity and reliability aspects of rigor focus primarily upon the research design and result analysis. The validity of research work implies that it finds out what it intends to find. It reflects the accuracy and trustworthiness of the process. The scientific notion of reliability lies in establishing objectivity through repeated treatments. More repetition with similar results shows the stability of the phenomena under consideration. The similarity in results is significant as the tools or the measurement process itself may yield different observations. The validity and reliability aspects of the rigor of research pertain exclusively to research tools. The validity of the research tool means it should measure what it intends to measure (Kaul, 2009). The reliability aspect shows the repeated measures of results. Exploring, comparison and description are the goals of qualitative research (Malterud, 2001).

Research questions, research objectives, hypotheses, methodology, research design, tools, and their validity and reliability, sample, sampling, techniques of data analysis, findings, implications and reporting collectively determine the rigor of research (Seale & Silverman, 1997). It is the confidence of a researcher in deriving the conclusions. The research must have pragmatic implications for its stakeholders like in educational research the stakeholders may be parents, students, teachers, administrators, textbook developers, and curriculum planners. It is the legitimate and fair criteria to enhance the generalizability of qualitative research. To ensure sound research rigor the researchers must have control over the variables or parameters that may affect the research. Besides rigor of research the research ethics, as another quality concern, must be met by the researchers. Pertaining to qualitative research credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability are the criteria of scientific rigor. Triangulation enhances the credibility of research work.

### **Research Ethics**

Research ethics provide guidelines to a researcher for the responsible conduct of research (Resnik, 2015). Research ethics educate the researcher to maintain the ethical standard of the research being conducted (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011). Each stage in research raises the question of ethics that is to be maintained. The voice to ensure ethics in research may arise from any corner like nature of the research project

undertaken, the context of the research, the procedure to be adopted, methods of data collection, nature of the participants, data collected and its type, data analysis techniques, concluding, etc. (Cohen et al, 2011). Research ethics monitor the ethical concerns of the research under process. Integrity, objectivity, honesty, openness, carefulness, respect for community, confidentiality, non-discrimination, genuine publication, competence, etc. are some ethical aspects associated with a research process.

While conducting the research, the qualitative researchers may maintain the ethics by not forcing the people to participate in their study as it helps in obtaining genuine data and information from the participants. This also requires that those participants who voluntarily give consent to participate in the study, their privacy must be maintained. The researcher should adhere to the timings of observation and conducting interviews because whenever there is a deviation from the time sought, the informed participants may lose zeal in responding. So, due care must be taken with respect to the time factor to ensure ethics. The researchers must treat the participants in a dignified manner as it motivates the participants to fully respond. It supports the researchers in seeking the cooperation of the participants. The researcher must respond honestly whatever the results are obtained as fabricating/distorting the data lowers the worthiness of the research process (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011). Informed consent is one of the most crucial ethical codes in educational research that must be duly taken care of by the researchers. Informed consent is of paramount importance when the researchers intend to conduct a case study or their research work requires exposure of stress/strain to the participants (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1992). The principle of informed consent arises from the participants' rights to self-determination and freedom. Consent protects the human rights of the participants as it ensures that the participant is free and living in a democratic setup. Microscopically, the informed consent involves competence, voluntarism, full information and comprehension (Diener & Crandall, 1978). *Competence* refers to the correct decision to participate in research work and respond as and when required will be taken by the mature and responsible individuals. It is the moral duty of the researchers to ensure that only those participants are engaged in the research work who are capable of making decisions to respond. *Voluntarism* refers to applying the principle of informed consent and hence ensuring that the participants are free to take part in research and are well aware of any associated risk, consequences, etc. This aspect of voluntarism is of significance in medical research as people are first subjected to medication and medical testing as guinea pigs. *Full information* implies that obtaining consent means the participant is fully informed though it is very difficult for the researcher to inform, intimate about each

and every aspect associated with the research work to the participant. Sometimes the researchers themselves do not know the further line of action and the research work may need to ensure some secrecy also so, it becomes difficult that the participant is fully informed. So, under such circumstances, the strategy of reasonably informed consent is applied. *Comprehension* implies that the participants are fully aware and understand the nature of research work even though the research work involves some risks.

So, if all these four rights, that is competence, voluntarism, full information, and comprehension, are assured by the researcher then it may be inferred that the research ethics have been duly considered.

### **Conclusion**

The need for the rigor of research and ethics arises as there is a tendency of some legitimate inquiry to answer the research questions through the research objectives framed. The worth of any research is assessed by its readers or stakeholders. The qualitative concern of research underlies its ability in addressing the empirical world through the sample selected. The rigor of research as a quality parameter is significant enough in ensuring the trustworthiness of the research work under study and hence addressing the issues and solving the problems. The ethical aspect ensures the degree of trust on humanitarian grounds as the subjects involved are humans.

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## Development of Social Media Addictive Tendency Scale (SMATS)

*Pallavi Agrawal\* Meenakshi Singh\*\**

### *Abstract*

*This paper is focused on construction of a tool to measure the social media addictive tendency among university students. The purpose of developing this tool was twofold: firstly, to provide a conceptual framework which can distinguish excessive & compulsive social media usage as problematic or addictive behaviour which is similar to drug/substance usage addiction, gaming addiction and internet usage addiction. Secondly, to provide a reliable and valid scientific instrument which can be used as a screening tool, in combination with other relevant personal data and tests, which can identify the addictive tendency of social media usage among university students. For this purpose, vast area of literature was reviewed by the researcher and the present tool was constructed.*

**Keywords:** *Social media, Social media addiction, SMATS.*

### **Introduction**

During the past few years, social media has permeated its way into our daily life, especially amongst the youth of the nation. India's shift towards digital economy has created a favourable environment in this regard. From infrastructural factors such as, greater availability of budget smart phones, cheaper data packs, faster internet speed, etc. to operational factors such as, ease of use, anytime and anywhere real-time connection, etc. provided by these communication medias have made it greatly affordable and accessible for individuals to mark their presence on these platforms. These platforms have been designed in such a way that they have an appeal for each and every section of society regardless of their socio-demographic differences. The ease of operation and availability of multiple features to express one on these platforms enables everyone, from a child to an elderly, to become their avid user. In fact, socialmedia has become an inextricable part of youth's lives today.

Statistics show India as the leading country in the world, followed by U.S.A. and Brazil, with 300 million active Facebook users as of January 2019 (Statista, 2019). The average global daily time spent on social media usage has increased from 90 minutes in 2012 to 135 minutes in 2017.

Another survey conducted in 2015, showed that in India, on an average, approximately 17 percent of youth spent between two to four hours on social media

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daily (Statista, 2019). Data also reveals that approximately 71 percent of total Facebook users in India lie in the age group of 18-34 years (Napoleancat, 2019). All these figures are estimated to further increase in coming future. This clearly indicates that social media has indeed become a part and parcel of the lives of our youth.

It is a common saying that technology is like a double edged sword. Productive and controlled usage leads to happiness and prosperity whereas meaningless and uncontrolled usage will then lead to destruction and other negative consequences. Social media is also no exception to this. Marking one's presence on various social media platforms is the latest fad amongst the youth these days. Not only this, but these platforms have also given birth to a new space i.e., the virtual space whereby users maintain a digital representation of their real selves. This virtual space is parallel to the real-world space where we actually live. Now, the existence of these dual spaces creates the need in the individuals to be there and remain updated with the happenings going on in both these spaces.

This need adds as a catalyst for greater presence on social media platforms, failing which, they experience a fear of missing out (FOMO) on things happening around them in both these spaces (Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan, and Gladwell, 2013; Jamal J. Al-Menayes, 2015).

Usage of social media, like any other technology, in balanced proportion is healthy but, when this usage starts taking an unbalanced proportion in one's life, it creates problems as indicated by the data given above, social media now- a- days occupies a large chunk of youth's daily activities. If this usage stays within limits, such that, it doesn't affect other aspects of their lives negatively, then it is unobjectionable. But if the situation is reverse, then it is indicative of a problematic usage of social media which demands immediate attention so that preventive and curative steps could be taken in time. In either situation, the first logical step would be identification of such problematic usage. So, to determine whether the social media usage by the youth of the nation is problematic or not, the usage pattern should be compared against some standards. Since it is still a novel and developing field, there are only a few standardized tools available at present for the assessment. Most of these have been developed in nations other than India. Therefore, to measure whether the social media usage by university students is problematic/ addictive or not, this tool was developed in accordance with Indian conditions.

### **Context and Theoretical Framework**

The purpose of developing this tool was twofold: firstly, to provide a

conceptual framework which can distinguish excessive & compulsive social media usage as problematic or addictive behaviour which is similar to drug/substance usage addiction, gaming addiction and internet usage addiction. Thereby, laying down scientific bases to consider it as a potential hazard to mental health. Secondly, to provide a reliable and valid scientific instrument which can be used as a screening tool, in combination with other relevant personal data and tests, which can identify the addictive tendency of social media usage among university students.

With this aim in mind, the researcher reviewed the available literature but found a dearth of scientific studies on the addictive nature of social media usage by university students along with lack of instruments designed to specifically assess addictive behaviour towards social media usage. All the forms of addictions display some basic underlying symptoms which are common to such behavioural addiction disorders. Kuss and Griffiths (2011) also share similar opinions on this matter and conclude that “*SNS addiction shares a common underlying etiological framework with other substance-related and behavioral addictions.*” Since excessive social media usage can be classified as a form of internet addiction disorder (Eijnden, Lemmens, and Valkenburg; 2016) therefore, in this study it was defined along the lines of substance usage addiction, alcohol addiction, online gaming addiction, internet addiction, cyber-sex addiction, and the like.

### **Literature Review**

The ubiquity of social media in India is a phenomenon of very recent development, the past decade at most, owing to extensive development of technology enabling budget smart phones and cheaper data packs which made it possible for everyone and anyone to access social media anytime and anywhere. However, existence of social media, in varying degrees and forms, precedes that. Prevalence of internet is a precursor for social media and hence it comes first. Internet opened up a virtual world with an assortment of content having appeal for everyone and made available anytime and anywhere. The attractiveness and ease of use and accessibility of the virtual world led to a shift from real-world to the virtual world, especially, amongst the *digital natives* (Prensky, 2001).

This is the generation which has grown up with the computers and internet, so, such attraction to the virtual world is quite natural to them making the virtual world an inevitable part of their lives. But when this attraction started taking an unhealthy and dangerous turn morphing into compulsive usage and dependence on virtual world activities, ranging from online gaming, shopping, browsing, chatting to gambling, making cyber relations and indulging in sex-related activities online, this

attraction became a real-world problem. They started exhibiting symptoms similar to that of a typical drug addict or alcoholic. This compulsive or problematic usage of internet was recognized as an addiction by clinical psychologist Kimberley Young (1996) who also developed the famed Internet Addiction Test (IAT) in 1998.

*Addiction of any kind is traditionally associated with an uncontrollable urge and habit-formation often accompanied by a loss of control, a preoccupation with use, and continued use despite negative consequences* (Young, K., 2004). It is also true for internet addiction. A range of instruments available to measure internet addiction were developed on the premise that the symptoms of internet addiction, though do not involve use of intoxicant, depict behavioural symptoms along the lines of, but not restricted to, impulse control disorders, substance dependence and obsessive-compulsive disorder (Marks, 1990; Aboujaoude, 2010). The common symptoms/ dimensions of internet addiction featured in such tools were favourable change in emotional state, hiding usage, lack of control over oneself, anxiety and irritability on usage cessation, problems in personal, social & professional life, relapse, etc.

Since social networking is a subset of activities performed via internet, excessive and compulsive online social networking behavior has been suggested as a behavioral addiction and defined accordingly (Eijnden, Lemmens and Valkenburg, 2016). Owing to its recent origin, the phenomenon of social media addiction has yet to be recognized as a part of clinical psychiatry, nonetheless, it is gaining recognition as a behavioural disorder with hazardous potential for mental health when not recognized and left untreated.

*“Marks (1990) defined the concept of “behavioural addictions” as a group of behaviours characterised by the repeated need for assuming behaviours with known negative consequences, developing behavioural sequences that generate stress and recurrent phases of urgency until they are completed, together comprising a syndrome that is activated by external and internal signals and that ultimately entails difficulty in one’s everyday functioning.”*

So attempts have been made in this study to draw conclusions from scientific researches/studies on social media addiction and similar addictive behaviours so that comprehensive dimensions for social media addiction can be specified, based on which the instrument could be made which is in accordance with Indian socio-cultural conditions. For this purpose, studies related to online gaming disorder, internet addiction, substance-related disorder, cyber-sex addiction and the likes were reviewed.

According to a WHO document, *The Alcohol, Smoking And Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST): Guidelines For Use In Primary Care*, published in 2002, which was developed as a guideline to construct screening test for individuals involved with alcohol, smoking and other substance related addictions, most common symptoms of such addictions were *strong desire for usage, loss of control over usage, persistent usage despite negative consequences, tolerance to usage, withdrawal and troubles in one's personal and professional life*.

In another study, undertaken by researchers from Marmara University in Turkey, *degradation of functionality* was considered as the key indicator of social media addiction. The study also recognized *diminishing academic & work performance, inability to fulfill responsibilities, disruptive psycho-social functions, persistent desire for usage, loneliness & restlessness when terminating usage, usage as a means of escapism, withdrawal, inability to stop usage and some physical symptoms like insomnia, weight gain triggered by inactivity, eating disorders, etc.* among the symptoms which comprise social media addiction (Kirik, Arslan, Çetinkaya And Gül, 2015)

Social media addiction forms a part of internet spectrum addiction disorder (Starcevic & Billieux, 2017) and has been developed along those lines. So, it is customary mentioning the works of Kimberly S. Young (2004) who laid down eight criteria of Internet Addiction while comparing it with pathological gambling and thereby characterizing it as compulsive and impulse-control disorder. These eight criteria are:

- *preoccupation with usage*
- *ever increasing desire of usage*
- *failure in discontinuing usage*
- *feeling restless, moody or irritable when ceasing usage*
- *unintended longer duration of usage*
- *jeopardizing one's personal, academic or professional life*
- *usage concealment, and*
- *usage as a means of escapism or mood- alteration.*

Similarly, cyber- sex addiction is also a part of internet addiction. It has also been utilized to build up the conceptual framework of social media addiction. In this context, Delmonico and Miller (2003) had identified five factors for their

questionnaire ‘Internet Sex Screening Test’ (ISST) which were: *online sexual compulsivity, online sexual behavior- social (engaging in interpersonal interactions with others), online sexual behavior-isolated (engagement in solitary online sexual behavior), online sexual spending and online sexual behavior (using computer for online sexual pursuits).*

Northup et. al. (2015) while developing their instrument, Internet Process Addiction Test (IPAT), based it on Young’s test but added these seven dimensions of their own:

- *minimizing usage*
- *use for escapism*
- *use other technologies to attempt to cease use of the processes*
- *experience withdrawal symptoms on ceasing usage*
- *lose track of time during usage*
- *replacing previously enjoyed interests with usage, and*
- *continued usage despite adverse effects.*

Andreassen (2015) in their review paper enlisted few existing instruments to measure social media addiction namely,

*Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale* by Andreassen, Torsheim, Brunborg and Pallesen (2012),

*Facebook Intrusion Questionnaire* by Elphinston and Noller (2011),

*Facebook Dependence Questionnaire* by Wolniczak et al. (2013),

*Addictive Tendencies Towards SNSs* by Wu, Cheng, Ku and Hung (2013),

*Social Networking Website Addiction Scale* by Turel and Serenko (2012),

*Addictive Tendencies Scale* by Wilson, Fornasier and White (2010),

*Generalized Problematic Internet Use Scale 2* by Lee, Cheung and Thadani (2012),

*Facebook Addiction Scale* by Koc and Gulyagci (2013),

*Facebook Addiction Scale* by Çam and Isbulan (2012),

*Facebook Addiction Scale* by Balakrishnan and Shamim (2013),

*Facebook Addiction Scale* by Hong, Huang, Lin and Chiu (2014),

*Facebook Addiction Scale* by Sofiah, Omar, Bolong and Osman (2011),

*Facebook Addiction Symptoms Scale* by Alabi (2012),

*Social Networking Dependency and Addiction Scale* by Cheak, Goh and Chin (2012).

All these were broadly based on internet, mobile or videogame addictions and behavioural addictions. However, it was pointed out by the reviewers that these scales lacked a representative cross-sectional study design, some measured only specific SNSs, lacked focus on comprehensive aspects of addiction and were ineffective in specifying a cut-score for addicts categorization. The efficacy of instruments measuring specific SNSs versus those measuring them in general is also debatable.

Kuss and Griffiths (2011), while acknowledging the similarities and differences of social media addiction with other substance and internet related addictions, offered a *biopsychosocial perspective* to look at this phenomenon proposing it as a blend of these three factors i.e. biological factors, psychological factors and social factors.

A summary of various studies reviewed for the purpose of analyzing the dimensions of addiction have been compiled in a tabular form below:

**Table-1: Summarization of Studies Outlining the Dimensions of Addiction**

<b>Dimensions of Addiction</b>	<b>Type of Addiction</b>	<b>Studies</b>
Strong usage desire; Loss of control over usage; Persistent usage despite negative consequences; Tolerance to usage; Withdrawal; Personal and professional life troubles.	Alcohol, Smoking Substance Usage	WHO (2002)
Functional degradation; Diminished academic & work performance; inability to fulfill responsibilities; Disruptive psycho-social functions; Persistent usage desire; Loneliness & restlessness on usage termination;  Usage as a means of escapism; Withdrawal; Inability to stop usage; Physical symptoms like Insomnia, Weight gain triggered by inactivity, Eating disorders, etc.	Social Media Addiction	Kirik, Arslan, Çetinkaya and Gül (2015)

Usage preoccupation; Ever increasing desire of usage; Usage discontinuation failure; Restlessness, moodiness or irritability on usage cessation; Unintended longer duration of usage; Jeopardizing one's personal, academic or professional life; Usage concealment; Usage for escapism/ mood-alteration	Internet Addiction	Kimberly S.Young (2004)
Online sexual compulsivity; Engagement in online sexual interpersonal interactions; Engagement in solitary online sexual behavior; Online sexual spending; usage of computer for online sexual pursuits.	Cyber-Sex Addiction	Delmonico and Miller (2003)
Minimizing usage; Use for escapism; Use of other technologies to attempt to cease use of the processes; Withdrawal symptoms on usage cessation; Losing track of time during usage; Replacing previously enjoyed interests with usage; Continued usage despite adverse effects.	Internet Process Addiction	Northrup, Lapierre, Kirk & Rae (2015)
Saliency; Mood modification; Conflict; Withdrawal;Tolerance; Relapse.	Facebook Addiction	Andreassen, Torsheim, Brunborg and Pallesen (2012)
Saliency; Loss of control; Withdrawal	Social Media Addiction	Wilson, Fornasier and White (2010)
Compulsive use; Withdrawal; Tolerance; Interpersonal & health consequences; Time management difficulties.	Internet Addiction	Chen SH, Weng LC, Su YJ et al. (2003)

Cognitive salience: Loss of control; Mood modification; Tolerance; Withdrawal; Conflict; Relapse.	Problematic Mobile Phone Usage	Billieux, Maurage, Lopez- Fernandez, Kuss & Griffiths (2015)
Preoccupation; Tolerance; Withdrawal; Displacement; Escape; Problems; Deception; Displacement; Conflict.	Social Media Disorder	Van den Eijnden, Lemmens and Valkenburg (2016)

Thus, a careful review of available literature brings out following dimensions of social media addiction, which are broadly parallel to the regular symptoms of substance addictions: mood modification, preoccupation with usage, failure to resist usage, ever increasing use of social media over time, incompetence towards responsibility fulfilment, experiencing withdrawal symptoms on restricted usage, relapse, conflict with one's personal, social, academic or professional interests, continued usage despite problems, usage for eluding from problems in one's life, avoiding one's interests, hobbies and other such pleasing activities for usage, increased monetary expenditure to access or ensure usage, concealment of usage, declining performance in academic/professional life, insomnia, weight gain/ loss, eating disorders, etc. After carefully considering the literature and the various features of addictions mentioned therein, dimensions of the present tool were decided which are described ahead.

### Dimensions of the Present Tool

Following six dimensions were finalized by the researcher to define the construct 'Social Media Addiction' and subsequently to prepare the present tool for its measurement:

- 1. Compulsion:** This domain reflects a strong compulsive urge or craving to use social media. The individual seeks pleasure through usage whereas inability to do so causes dissatisfaction. Hence, a strong desire for more and more use of social media persists all the time (preoccupation with usage or salience). The individual also believes that using social media will help in bringing a favourable change in their emotional state, so they quickly turn to it whenever faced with a distressing emotion (mood-modification).

**2. Inadequate Self-regulation:** This dimension shows lack of control over oneself while using social media. The individuals become so engrossed while using social media that they often lose track of time and awareness of their surroundings (inability to abstain). They also become easily irritable and might display aggressive tendencies when interrupted during their social media usage. Moreover, they suffer from frequent periods of relapse when attempting to seize or cut down the usage.

**3. Withdrawal:** Withdrawal represents the common symptoms exhibited by addicts/individuals after cessation of the usage. In this case, individual's inability to access social media or discontinuation of usage triggers physiological and psychological symptoms like restlessness, irritability, anxiety, insomnia, fatigue, poor concentration, poor memory, loss of appetite, lack of interest or apathy, anger, depression, shaking, nausea, bowel and gastrointestinal problems, etc. In this study focus has been kept on the psychological symptoms only rather than physiological symptoms, as the present scale has been prepared exclusively with the intent of developing a yardstick/standard indicating the addictive tendency of social media usage and not a diagnostic instrument to detect social media addiction.

**4. Conflict/ Adverse consequences:** Conflict as a dimension of social media addiction characterizes the conflict with one's personal, social or professional life and the resulting adverse consequences which the individual faces due to their excessive social media usage. It comprises conflicts and confrontations with friends and families, failure to fulfill one's commitments and obligations, relationship problems, sacrificing social, occupational and recreational activities, social isolation, increased expenditure to ensure access, disregard for harmful consequences while maintain continued usage, etc.

**5. Secrecy/ Concealment:** Secrecy regarding one's social media usage or concealment of the usage is another vital component of social media addiction. It shows the tendency to take measure to hide usage from family, friends, colleagues or others upon realization of their behaviour as wrong or problematic in an attempt to reduce other's concerns. This cover-up is not just confined to usage of social media but also includes hiding truth regarding actual amount of money spent for ensuring access to usage.

#### **Preparation of the Blueprint**

The tool was to be made in the form of a five-point Likert type scale. Based on a thorough review of literature, the domains of the present tool were finalized. Since the other tools available to measure addiction were generally in the form of Likert-scale, this tool was also made in the similar manner because, given the constraints,

this form of scale appeared to fulfil the objectives and purpose of the test without compromising the quality. First draft of the tool was prepared in the conventional manner of tool construction. It was developed only in English language as the participants/ population constituted of university students who are pursuing higher studies and thus, are well-acquainted with English language. Moreover, since most of the social media platforms primarily operate in English language, making it their default language, it was assumed that students will not face any problem in responding to the questionnaire in the said language.

### **Items selection**

The items for the present scale were to be made in the form of simple statements so that a Likert type scale could be formulated. Statements were to be made in such a manner that each of the five domains had at least 15-20 statements representing them. For this, items were written after a thorough review of various articles, surveys, and books for the available literature on this construct and similar constructs. Discussions were also held with the experts and other stake holders. As a result, a large number of items were compiled. While framing these items due care was taken to avoid double barrelled statements, double negation, and redundancy.

### **Preparing the first Draft**

The first draft consisted of 78 items with clear written instructions for the respondents. Each item was followed by five response categories of varying degrees to choose from: Always, Mostly, Sometimes, Rarely, Never. This draft was sent to experts for their opinion regarding further modifications and additions keeping in mind the appropriateness of items to their corresponding dimensions. As per the experts' suggestions 21 items were dropped and the second draft of the tool was left with 57 items. The now improved draft was pilot tested on 25 university students on a "one to one" basis, so that ambiguities, repetitions and problems with language could be detected and rectified. After this pilot testing, necessary alterations and deletions were done, leaving the scale with 46 items.

### **Pre-Try-out**

The second draft of the tool, consisting of remaining 46 items, was utilized in pre-tryout to prepare the final draft of the scale. It was administered on 74 university students who were similar in characteristics to the study population. Now, item- total correlation (excluding the score on given item from item series) was computed for all the 46 items to check for the inconsistency of given/corresponding item with

overall test score so that the inconsistent item could be discarded. Rule of thumb is that smaller value of item-total correlation, generally less than 0.25 or 0.30, indicates that the given item is not measuring the same construct as measured by other items included in the test, so it could be dropped (Everitt, 2002; Field, 2005). Following this, cut-off  $r$  for this scale was kept at  $r=0.45$ . Accordingly, items whose item-total correlation value was  $<0.45$  were dropped from the scale. Table no. 1 shows the value of item-total correlation ( $r$ ) for each item and its status in the scale:

**Table No. – 1: Representation of Item-Total Correlation for the Second draft of SMATS**

Item No.	$r$ Value	Item Dropped / Retained	Item No.	$r$ Value	Item Dropped / Retained
1	0.501482	Retained	24	0.288639	Dropped
2	0.357826	Dropped	25	0.705205	Retained
3	0.560257	Retained	26	0.295903	Dropped
4	0.455743	Dropped	27	0.600712	Retained
5	0.634434	Retained	28	0.346978	Dropped
6	0.623446	Retained	29	0.495913	Retained
7	0.808351	Retained	30	0.49115	Retained
8	0.662093	Retained	31	0.595703	Retained
9	0.315802	Dropped	32	0.549291	Retained
10	0.469386	Retained	33	0.110268	Dropped
11	0.369645	Dropped	34	0.737166	Retained
12	0.703686	Retained	35	0.35911	Dropped
13	0.303274	Dropped	36	0.41262	Dropped
14	0.604437	Retained	37	0.400238	Retained
15	0.658345	Retained	38	0.565082	Retained

16	0.603314	Retained	39	0.619968	Dropped
17	0.3433	Dropped	40	0.30344	Retained
18	0.412175	Dropped	41	0.573307	Retained
19	0.470205	Retained	42	0.407567	Retained
20	0.769117	Retained	43	0.586956	Dropped
21	0.553067	Retained	44	0.288639	Retained
22	0.542434	Retained	45	0.705205	Dropped
23	0.64915	Retained	46	0.295903	Retained

### Reliability of SMATS

Establishing the reliability of a measuring tool is a crucial step towards its standardization. A test is considered reliable when it produces similar results even after repeated administrations on similar samples provided the conditions are consistent or when it shows overall consistency in responses throughout the scale. Thus, various methods are available to determine the reliability of a given tool, such as test-retest method, split-half method, inter-rater reliability, parallel form method, etc. The reliability coefficient explains the variability in the test scores as an attribution of chance errors or errors in measurement and as an attribution of true differences in the characteristics under consideration. In this study, the researcher utilised Cronbach's Alpha as a measure of reliability to explain the internal consistency of the scores. The Cronbach's Alpha was found to be 0.949632, which shows that the present tool is highly reliable in terms of internal consistency measure.

### Validity of SMATS

The validity of a tool shows that the test is measuring what it actually intends to measure, i.e., the test items are constructed in such a way that in the end they measure only the construct under consideration rather than some other concept. In this way, a valid tool is also considered to be a reliable tool as it will reproduce similar results under specified conditions. The most basic test of validity is the face validity wherein the validity is established by the experts after going through the content of the measuring tool. The present tool was also given to the experts in the

concerned field to check for the face validity. After a careful scrutiny by the subject experts the present tool was found to be possessing face validity. The test was also checked by the experts for content validity which was also found to be present as the items of the present test are representative of the key domains of the construct under consideration, i.e. social media addictive tendency. In this way the present tool was found to be both reliable and valid.

### Final form of SMATS

Once the above steps were successfully completed, the final form of SMATS started taking shape. After removing all the dropped items from the scale, the final form of SMATS came into view, consisting of a total of 30 items pertaining to five domains as described above. A dimension-wise categorization of finalized items of SMATS is given below:

Sr. No.	Dimensions	Total No. of Items
1	Compulsion	6
2	Inadequate Self-Regulation,	5
3	Withdrawal	6
4	Conflict & Negative Consequences	7
5	Secrecy & Concealment	6
<b>Total Number of Items in SMATS</b>		30

### Instructions for Administrations

The final form of SMATS was administered after carefully providing appropriate and succinct instructions which are provided below:

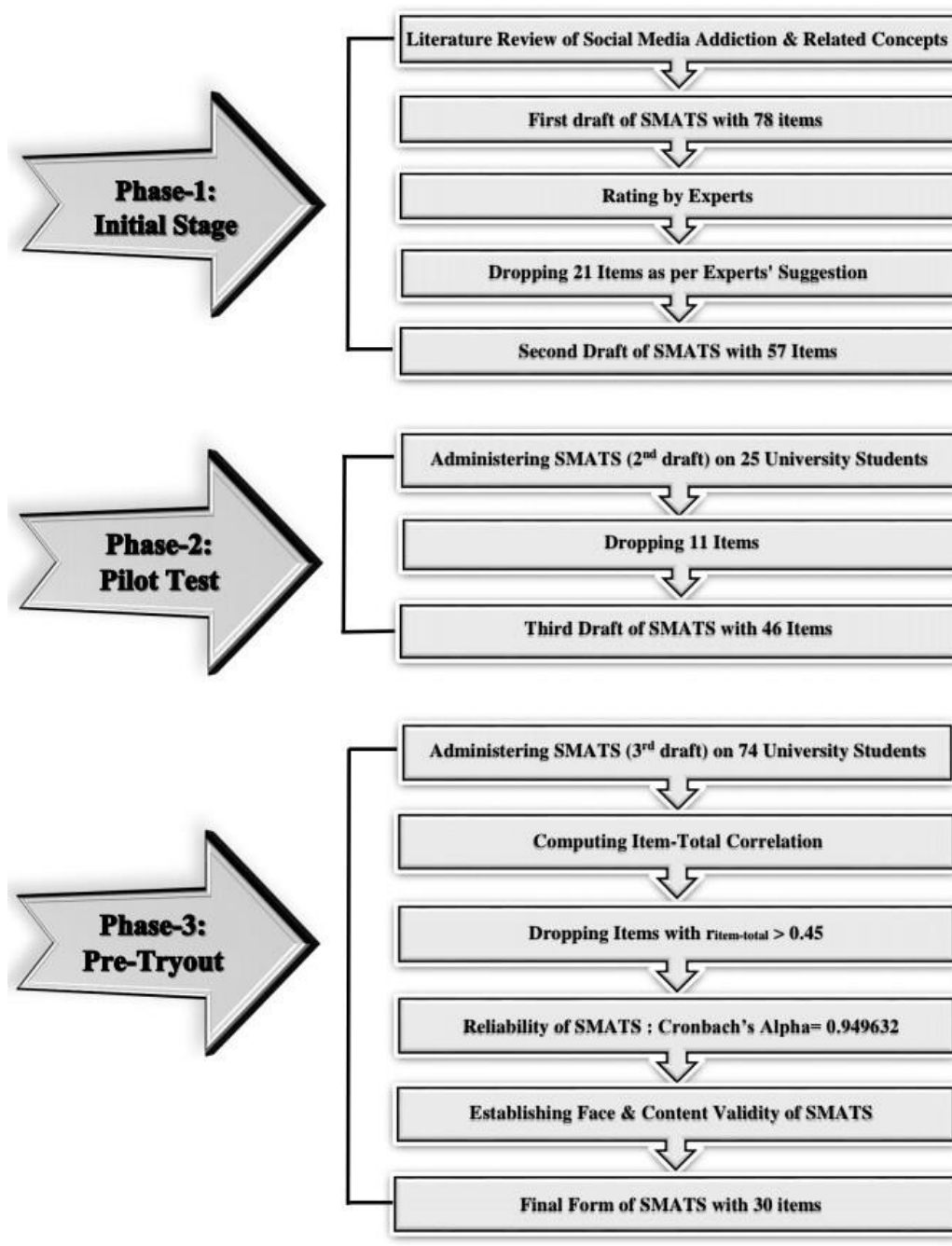
Present scale consists of 30 statements related to your social media usage habits. Each statement is followed by a five-point rating scale which describes how much/ the extent to which the given statement applies on you. For each statement, you have to put a tick mark (✓) against one of the given options (Always, Often, Mostly, Rarely and Never) which applies to you the most. There is no right or wrong

answer for these statements. They simply state various behavioural patterns or habitual practices related to social media usage and you are required to express how much the given situation is applicable on you.

### **Scoring of SMATS**

Since SMATS is a 5-point Likert-scale with only positive items, the items were scored in the following manner: Always-5 points, Often- 4 points, Sometimes- 3 points, Rarely-2 points and Never-1 point. The composite score of all 30 items yields the final score of a respondent on SMATS. Higher scores on SMATS are indicative of respondent's addictive tendency towards social media usage. Similarly, lower scores on SMATS indicate that the respondent doesn't tend to be addictive towards social media usage.

### **Development Process of Social Media Addictive Tendency Scale**



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## Higher education, Scholarships and Social Mobility of Females: A Case Study of Haryana

*Anjali Tiwari\**

### *Abstract*

*Education and social mobility are closely linked to each other as education is one of the tools which can promote the growth of individual both economically and sociologically. But we all are aware of the fact that educational inequalities are persistent around the world, including India and these inequalities become more profound in the case of higher education. Females are also victims of these disparities. Government policies and interventions play a pivotal role in reducing these gender-based inequalities in educational opportunities. In contemporary times, the government has launched many scholarship schemes for breaking this status quo and to provide opportunities for females to enter and excel into higher education. In this paper, some of the scholarships provided by the Union government have been analyzed to explore their outreach. Further, questionnaire and focused group discussion were administered with female students of two districts of Haryana, i.e. Mahendragarh and Jhajjar, to understand whether these initiatives have played any significant role in the upliftment of female students or are they just token representations given to them? After the analysis, it becomes evident that these scholarships have a moderate impact on females of the state as there are many paradoxes within the eligibility criteria and other requirements which shrinks the impact of these scholarship. There is also a lack of information regarding these schemes among females. So, it may be inferred that the drafting and advertising of the scholarship schemes need to be introspected and improved to increase their impact over the females' participation in higher education.*

**Keywords:** *Females, Scholarships, Higher Education, Social Mobility*

### **Introduction**

In the discourse of gender equality, education has been positioned as a primary catalyst for achieving social justice and social transformation. If we look historically, then we can find that educational documents have also validated this assertion, for instance, Report of the Education Commission, 1964-66 argues that “the education of girls should receive emphasis, not only on grounds of social justice but also because it accelerates social transformation (Ministry of Education, 1966, pp-xiv).” The report further states “If this 'change, on a grand scale' is to be achieved without violent revolution (and even for that it would be necessary) there is one

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instrument, and one instrument only, that can be used: EDUCATION (Ministry Of Education, 1966, pp-6).” Besides this, the National Policy on Education (NPE) (1986) also states that “education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of the woman. In order to neutralize the accumulated distortions of the past, there will be a well- conceived edge in favour of women. The National Education System will play a positive, interventionist role in the empowerment of women (NCERT, 1986, pp- 8).” Similarly, number of earlier policy documents like University Education Commission 1948-49 (Ministry of Education, 1962), Committee on differentiation of Curricula for boys and Girls 1961-1964 (Ministry of Education, 1964), Report of Education Commission 1964-66 (Ministry of Education, 1966), Towards Equality Report (Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, 1974) have also emphasised on the role of higher education in bringing social transformation and mobility in the everyday life of females.

But if we look at the statistical levels, then it became evident that the opportunities of gaining higher education are highly influenced by the differences and hegemonies present in society. Many researchers have also tried to validate this argument and share that inequality of educational opportunities among different socio-economic strata continues and sometimes increase too despite increase in educational development (Varghese and Malik, 2016; Desai and Kulkarni, 2008; Hasley, Heath and Ridge, 1980). Similar trends are evident in India too. Dominant groups have greater representation in arenas of education and marginalized groups including females have less participation in the said field. When we locate the position of females in this scenario, then it comes to light that they have very limited access to higher education, as enrolment statistics indicate that females in higher education comprise of only 44.4% of total enrolment (MHRD, 2015; Government of India 2016). These kinds of data present serious contestations before developing countries like India, who are trying to reduce educational inequalities in all sectors, especially in higher education. In such situation, government tries to use affirmative policies to reduce educational inequality and scholarships are one of them. In order to increase the participation of females in higher education, government of India has started various types of scholarship programmes and schemes. Some of the scholarships are as follows:

- 1) Post- Doctoral Fellowship for Women Candidates;
- 2) Swami Vivekanand Single Female Child Scholarship for Research in Social Sciences;
- 3) Post- Graduate Indira Gandhi Scholarship for Single Female Child for PG Programmes;

- 4) Central Scheme of Scholarship for College and University Students;
- 5) National Scheme of Incentives to Females for Secondary Education.

There are various other scholarships too which are not specifically for females, but are availed by many female candidates. Some of them are:

1. Junior Research Fellowship
2. Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship

Other than these scholarships, there are various other scholarships which are provided by central government to female candidates/students/researchers so that, they can enter into higher education and can expand their job opportunities and further the process of their social mobility. But in this paper, I am analysing only the above mentioned scholarships to get an overview about their influence on the higher education and social mobility of females of Haryana.

This research is significant due to its unique geographical location, as the state, Haryana, is adjacent to the national capital of India, i.e. New Delhi and its thirteen out of twenty two districts come under National Capital Region. This geographical proximity of the state to national capital, have influence over its socio-economic milieus, as large number of people move to and from Delhi to Haryana on a regular basis for various reasons including, work and study. This two way spatial movement of people formulate a unique socio-cultural environment, which is evident in the form of polar representations of conservative as well as progressive ideas in Haryana (Chaudhry, 2007; Kohli, 2017). These polarities of ideas are also evident in the form of participation of females in Higher Education as many researches and studies show that more and more females of Haryana are pursuing higher education. For instance according to the report of Confederation of Indian Industry (2015) the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of females of Haryana is 26.6%, compared to national GER of 20.1. But further analysis of the patterns of enrolment of females in higher education shows that, females of Haryana with 43.7% of total enrolment lag behind the national percentage of 44.9%. This disparity is also evident in the statistics of gender parity index of the State which is 0.88, much lower than the national's index of 0.98, which shows paradoxical representation of the state in terms of female's higher education and their social mobility. These paradoxical facts prompted me to explore the role of scholarships in increasing the prospects of attaining higher education for females of Jhajjar and Mahendragrah districts of the state of Haryana.

These two districts were selected as they are at the verge of continuum of development. On the one hand, Jhajjar is one of the highly developed districts of

Haryana, whereas Mahendragrah is one of the least developed districts. Further, there are differences in availability of higher education institutions too. For instance, the Central University of Haryana is located in Mahendragrah, but apart from this there are no other national level university available in the area. Whereas, there are two private universities in Jhajjar, but no government university is there as shared by UGC latest details available on the website. So these, districts were considered apt to develop an overall picture of understanding the role of scholarship in the paving the path of social mobility for the females who are pursuing their higher education.

### **Research Method**

This study is based on qualitative research design and was done in two phases. In the first phase, the researcher tried to find out the details of different scholarships schemes launched by central and state government which are exclusively available for female students who are pursuing their higher education or are interested in going for higher education. But after a brief analysis of state level scholarships it came into light that they are available for those females only who pursue their education in the state of Haryana. But, many females who are residing in these districts are pursuing their higher education from nearby states also, so they are not entitled to avail these state sponsored scholarships. So, in order to bring homogeneity in the study, only some of the national level scholarships were chosen.

A total of 4 scholarships were selected at the initial phase, one each for each stage of higher education. One scholarship was meant for Post- doctoral female students, one was for female research scholars, and one-one each for post-graduate and undergraduate female students. Later on one more scholarship was added in the analysis section, which is given to female students of marginalized community who are enrolled in class IX, but they can withdraw this scholarship amount only after attaining the age of 18 years. So, it might have an impact on the chances of females' access to higher education, because generally students enrol themselves for undergraduate courses at this age. Later on 2 more scholarships were also analysed, which are not exclusively meant for females. Because, during the pilot study, the respondents shared about these scholarships, which some of them were availing too. So, those scholarships were also included in the study to strengthen my understanding of the whole process of scholarship's impact on females' higher education and social mobility. So, a total of 7 scholarships were selected for the study. After selection of the scholarships, their detailed content analysis was done to find out their aims, objectives, purpose and target population.

In the second phase, semi- structured interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with 50 female students (25 females from each district) residing in

two districts of Haryana i.e. Mahendragrah and Jhajjar. The females who were selected as sample for the study belonged to different socio-economic backgrounds. The level of educational qualification of females of both the districts varied from graduation to Ph.D. Random sampling was used for the process of data collection. Multiple ways were used to collect the data. For instance, face to face interviews were conducted with few respondents, whereas telephonic conversation was also used to collect data from some of the respondents, who were studying in different parts of the country.

Focus group discussion was also conducted with some of the females residing in both the districts to understand the role of these scholarships on the prospects of higher education and social mobility of females.

#### **Paradoxes within the scholarships**

A total of seven scholarships were analysed under this study. Which are as follows:

- Post- Doctoral Fellowship for Women Candidates;
- Swami Vivekanand Single Female Child Scholarship for Research in Social Sciences;
- Post- Graduate Indira Gandhi Scholarship for Single Female Child for PG Programmes;
- Central Scheme of Scholarship for College and University Students;
- National Scheme of Incentives to Females for Secondary Education;
- Junior Research Fellowship;
- Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship.

All these scholarships catered to different academic levels and social groups. For instance, the Post- Doctoral Fellowship for Women Candidates is provided by UGC. In this scheme 100 scholarships are being awarded per year and females belonging to all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds are eligible for applying under this scheme. It opens new avenues for those female students who are keen to go for researches in the field of higher education. Whereas, Swami Vivekanand Single Female Child Scholarship for Research in Social Sciences is only meant for single female child who are pursuing M.Phil. or Ph.D. In a patriarchal society like India, where male child is mostly preferred because of multiple reasons including carrying of the lineage in the line of males only. It is quite rare that people opt to have single child and that too a female. This was also evident in my data as none of the respondent was single girl child and majority of them had either one or two

brothers. The statistical representation of the same is as follows:

Total number of siblings	Respondents from Jhajjar	Respondents From Mahendergarh
No sibling (single girl child)	0	0
Only one sister	2	1
Only one brother	13	12
More than one brother	9	12
More than one sister	1	0

Further, this scheme is only meant for the research scholars. The dominant social norm of marriage of a girl at a particular 'apt' age may also restrict the possibilities of many females of availing this scholarship. As a result of this mostly females of educated urban families may probably gains benefit from this type of scholarship program to some extent. The females from lower strata of the community or from countryside where social threads and norms are relatively stronger might have less chances of achieving this type of benefit.

The third scholarship which is being analysed in this study is Post- Graduate Indira Gandhi Scholarship for Single Female Child which is provided to females who are pursuing PG Programmes. This scholarship is available for females who are pursuing their master's degree in non-professional courses only. Which give a slight indication that, the government as well as education system want to push the females towards particular stream and wants to keep them away from STEM Courses (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). Still, this scholarship provides a good footing to those females who are unable to pursue professional courses due to multiple reasons including social and economic constraints. It gives them a new opportunity to make their career in non-professional courses and to gain social mobility to some extent.

The fourth scholarship included in the study is Central Scheme of Scholarship for College and University Students which is provided by Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD). As 50% scholarship is reserved for the female student, that's why it opens new avenues for them. Further, the area of reach of this scholarship is wider than other schemes and scholarships which are being studied. The National Scheme of Incentives to Females for Secondary Education is another scholarship which is not directly provided to females who are pursuing their higher

education but is very much relevant because under this scheme, a sum of Rs. 3,000 are deposited in Bank Account of females who complete their class VII and they can withdraw the said amount only after attaining 18 years of age. Although, this scheme was started for a good cause as its main motive was to retain females in the education system till they attain 18 years of age. But during interviews and focused group discussion, the female respondents of marginalized groups shared that, most of the families use this amount for the marriage of that beneficiary female instead to spending it on her higher education. One of the respondent shared that parents of one of her distant cousin forcibly send her to Kasturba Gandhi Vidhyalya (the students studying in this school only are eligible for this scholarship) in nearby village instead of allowing her to study in the village school and after completion of her study, they married her off immediately after completion of her class XII and used the money of the scholarship to buy clothes for her marriage. This shows that patriarchal notions of the society still promote that the marriage of a girl is more important than her education.

Apart from these scholarships which are directly or specially meant for females, there are some other scholarships also which are not exclusively meant for them. Two of them are Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) and Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship (RGNF), which were analysed after having pilot study with females as they were beneficiaries of this scholarship. 3 respondents were availing JRF and 2 were getting RGNF. They shared that, these scholarships played a very crucial role in providing space for them in higher education institutions and furthering their social mobility. Further, the area of reach of this scholarship, the number of beneficiaries and the amount disbursed under this scheme is higher than other scholarships.

In this way, all these scholarships have their own benefits and contestations, which have an impact over their reach to females. These contestations also influence the opportunities of females for gaining higher education and of attaining social mobility. In the later part of the study, I tried to understand the perspective of females of Haryana towards these scholarships and their impact on the process of their social mobility.

### **Perspectives of females**

In order to understand the impact of scholarship on the prospects of higher education of females of Haryana and their subsequent social mobility, I conducted focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with 50 females.

Following are the basic detail of participants:

Total Respondents	Respondents from Jhajjar	Respondents From Mahendergarh
50	25	25
Social Category	Respondents from Jhajjar	Respondent's From Mahendergarh
Unreserved	10	9
Other Backward Caste	9	11
Scheduled Caste	5	4
Scheduled Tribe	1	0
Minority	0	1

Further, the respondents were pursuing their higher education from different colleges and universities. The diversity in the educational qualification of the respondents is as follows.

The present course pursued by the Respondent	Respondents from Jhajjar	Respondents from Mahendragarh
Post- Doctorate	1	0
Doctorate	3	2
Post-graduation in liberal courses	6	9
Post-graduation in Professional Courses	3	1
Graduation in liberal courses	9	11
Graduation in professional courses	3	2

Despite the variation in the level of education, majority of the respondents were not getting any kind of scholarship. But most of them were aware about JRF and RGNF. 5 respondents were also availing the same. Further, some respondents shared that some of their family members and relatives are taking coaching to clear the exams for these scholarship. But they were oblivious about other scholarships. Majority of them shared that if they would have known about these scholarships, then it would have been beneficial for the larger group. The females who belonged to

rural areas were more uninformed about these scholarships and shared that they do not get any information about these kinds of scholarships schemes from anywhere. From these responses it can be inferred that there is lack of information proliferation between the state institutions and its students. The lack of advertisement and promotion of these initiatives from the side of government machineries may be one of the prominent reasons for this kind of ignorance and unawareness.

But most of the respondents had the view that scholarships have a positive interventionist role in female's access and excel in higher education. They explained that in patriarchal society like 'us' where boys have special privileges as they are portrayed as breadwinners of the family so more money is spent on their education. One respondent shared-

*“choran ne hi padhawe hain yahan te, mere bhai ne padhan khatir Bangalore bhej diya, par maine boli ki papa manne bhi graduation karan khatir Delhi jana hai to naatge. Bole ke karegi Delhi jaake, yade haina padh le. Faltu ke paise ko ne. Tere byah khatir rakhein hain. Byah paache jitna marzi padh liye.”*

(Families only allow boys to study; they sent my brother to Bengaluru for study. But, when I told them that I want to go to Delhi to pursue my education, than they denied. They said that they don't have money. They are gathering money for my marriage. I can study after my marriage too)

In such scenario, economics take centre stage in the case of females' education, so scholarships schemes which provide monetary benefits to female students help in their higher education. With the help of these scholarships, females gain some liberty to acquire higher education. Some of the respondents (only 5), who are availing one of these scholarships shared about the changes which they feel after gaining these scholarships. They feel more confident and take their education more seriously. Further, the financial independence has also improved their status and says in the decisions within the family which is a sign of their upward social mobility. One respondent quoted that:

*“Jab maine ye scholarship leni start ki, aur haath mein paise aaye, to mujhmein bada confidence aa gaya. Ab kisipe depend nahi rehna padta. Ghar pe bhi log sunte hain. Pehle to kehte the shaddikar le, shaddikar le. Par ab kehte hain padhai purikar le, koi ne”.*

(When I got this scholarship and gained money, I attained confidence. Now, I don't depend on others for money. Now my family also listen to me. Earlier they used to force me to get married. But now they say, that I should complete my study first.)

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So, it can be understood that that these scholarships are making their mark in opening up their prospects of gaining higher education and attaining social mobility. These females are now trying to question social stereotypes too and paving their own path of growth. Still, there is a long way to go.

### **Scholarships: A Way Forward Towards Social Mobility of Females of Haryana**

From the study, it can be inferred that scholarships facilitates the process of females' access to higher education in Haryana to some extent. In patriarchal societies like that of Haryana, the families usually prefer to spend more wealth on the education of males as they are traditionally seen as the main source of income and future breadwinner of the family. Further, families also perceive investment on women's education as a non-refundable one because in patriarchal societies females have to move to other family after marriage. So scholarships, which provide monetary assistance to females somehow reduces the 'burden' of the family and they manage to allow them to go for higher education. Further, these types of scholarships also help them in gaining self- respect and motivate them to attain success in life. This also gives them strength to create their own destiny in their own ways. Some of the respondents even broke their geographical barrier and are studying in different states of India. They are also raising questions against the dominant gender stereotypes. Furthermore, they are also acting as role model for other females of the area. They also motivate other females to pursue their dream of gaining higher education, as many of the respondents shared that they admire those females who are availing scholarships and they themselves will work hard to gain them. In this way, these scholarships not only facilitate the social mobility of the beneficiary female, but also act as a positive interventionist in motivating other females too.

But, it was observed after the analysis of scholarships schemes that, majority of scholarships provided by the Central Government have limited target population, most of them are meant either for single girl child or marginalized communities. There are only few scholarships like Central Scheme for College and University Students and Junior Research Fellowship which are available to all female candidates irrespective of their socio- cultural and economic background. Due to this, female candidates belonging to large families or unreserved category lag behind in availing these scholarships. This is also evident from the statistics because majority of the respondents (45) were not availing any kind of scholarship, as they either belonged to upper caste or they had more than one living sibling. Further, some scholarship like National Scheme of Incentives to females for secondary education have a time frame, in which the beneficiary can withdraw the amount only after attaining certain age, and it came into light after focus group discussions and interviews that usually

this amount is used for marriage of females rather than on their education. This manifests that dominant social norms are still impeding the educational prospects of females, even if the scholarships are available for them.

It also came out in discussion with females that there is lack of promotion of these scholarships and incentives from the side of government. Due to this, most of the female students do not have awareness about these schemes and incentives. This may negatively influence the females' access to higher education. Females, who have some information about these incentives, excel in higher education to some extent. But those who are not able to get hold of these types of information are more prone to remain outside the arena of higher education, due to which dispersion of higher education among females remains somewhat limited.

Although, if we look at the impact of these type of scholarships than we can infer that they promote females' higher education to some extent and further help them in attaining social mobility too, but their impact is also hampered by the dominant social norms. For instance, the norms of passing on the lineage through males, lead to proliferation of various evils like female foeticide and female infanticide. This is more severe in the state of Haryana, which have an adverse sex ratio. Further, the socio-cultural scenario of Haryana restricts the spatial mobility of females to a large extent and limits their roles and responsibilities within the periphery of home. The socio-cultural institutions like Khap Panchayat further promotes up this kind of gender stereotyping. The recent orders of Khap Panchayats of banning girls from wearing jeans and using telephones are examples of the measures used by the community to restrict the mobility of females (Ahlawat, 2012). In such scenario, it become difficult to gain access to these kinds of opportunities provided by the central government to gain financial assistance for exceling higher education. So, the government also need to take steps to eradicate these kinds of social evils who restrict the path of social mobility of females.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Many scholarships schemes have been introduced from time to time by the Central Government of India for the upliftment of female's education and to further their mobility in society. Some of those scholarships are being analysed in this study. During the analysis of these scholarships and schemes, it was found that there are varied paradoxes within them which reduce their target group as well as their impact of the higher education's prospects of the females of Haryana. After the interviews and focus group discussion with females of Jhajjar and Mahendragarh districts of Haryana, it has been found that scholarships play a crucial role in improving the

female's access and excel in higher education. This also helps them in paving way for success in their life and they also become role models for their future generation. But the path to reach to these scholarships is tough, and one of the most important reasons behind this- is lack of information provided by the government machineries regarding these scholarships. Further, varied social stereotypes and norms, including early marriage, patrilocality, preference of male child etc. also obstructs the impacts of these scholarships on females' higher education and further in their social mobility too. These social stereotypes become more severe in the case of Haryana which are evident in the form of adverse sex ratio and dominance of Khap panchayats in the socio-cultural matters. So, the females of Haryana have more challenges and barriers which they need to cross for excelling on the path of higher education and furthering their social mobility.

This study is of very short duration and is done with a slightly small sample size of females students of only two districts of Haryana, so in this study there is lesser chance of generalization of inferences. Despite of that, this study may help in creating a nuanced understanding of the impact of these scholarships schemes on the female students and consequently on their social mobilization. Further, if the government machineries will try to promote these scholarships and schemes to all nook and corner of the society by the help of print and electronic media, then it will be more beneficial for females. Further, social norms also needs to be questioned and modified so that females can attain their spaces in higher education institutions and could become strong enough to write their success stories with greater self-confidence.

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## **A Study of Upper Primary Students' Opinion about the Social Science Multimedia Packages**

*Akhilesh \* Anjali Bajpai\*\**

### **Abstract**

*The use of technology has become an integral part of education today. Special attention has been given to the adaptation of computer technology into teaching-learning process in form of multimedia based technology for effective learning and increasing students' achievement. Present study aims to find out the opinion of upper primary students about the social science multimedia packages. This descriptive study through purposive and incidental sampling technique the sample constituted of 702 upper primary students of CBSE schools situated in Udham Singh Nagar District (Uttarakhand). Students' opinions were found out and analysis was done using frequency, percentages and chi-square. Findings revealed that through use of multimedia package teaching-learning process of social science has become better but proper integrations of content and multimedia component is required. Students of upper primary level got motivated by social science multimedia lessons and they look forward for such interactive learning sessions.*

**Keywords: Social science, Multimedia packages, Technology.**

### **Introduction**

Social Science as a subject encompasses diverse concerns of society and it carries a normative responsibility to create and widen the popular base for human values such as freedom, trust, mutual respect, respect for diversity etc. The selection and organisation of material into a meaningful social science curriculum, enabling students to develop a critical understanding of society, is therefore a challenging task. The possibilities of including new dimensions and concerns are immense especially in view of the student's own life experiences. At the upper primary stage, the subject-area of social science draws its content from history, geography, political science and economics. Social science teaching needs to be revitalized towards helping the learner acquire knowledge and skills in an interactive environment. The teaching of social science must adopt methods that promote creativity, aesthetics and critical perspectives and enable children to draw relationships between past and present to understand changes taking place in society.

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Teaching should utilize greater resources of audio-visual materials, photographs, charts, maps, and replicas of archaeological and material cultures. Recent developments have created new opportunities for making teaching of school subjects more effective, assisted by technology. Major improvements have taken place in both hardware and software. The technological advancements have made society take exponential growth towards development. Every technological reform is a small step towards advancement, it is a step towards progress of mankind. Centuries ago, hardly anyone would have even dreamt of working on a computer. Generations of the yester years would have hardly imagined being able to communicate with people on the other side of the globe. But there were some intelligent minds to dared to dream of such revolutionary discoveries and they made the impossible possible. Since several years ago, education experts had been proposing a new style of education involving using multimedia, which differs radically from the traditional ways. Changing the education systems as a new ways is towards a new paradigm for teach (Rosenberg, 2001).

### **Rationale of the Study**

Technology does not necessarily drive education, that role belongs to the learning needs of students. With multimedia, the process of learning can become more goals oriented, more particularly, flexible in time and space, unaffected by distances, tailored to individual learning styles and increase collaboration between teachers and students. Multimedia enables learning to become fun and friendly, without fear of inadequacies or failure. Studies have shown that people retain 25% of what they hear, 45% of what they see and hear, and almost 70% when they actively participate in the process (Myers, 1990). It shows that two different modes of sensory input lead to greater retention and recall than either mode itself. Lee & Sullivan (1995) found that the use of multimedia-based classroom instruction, as support materials is an effective medium for reinforcing student attention and understanding. Many other studies found positive correlations between multimedia use such as computer software programme, animation, motion picture with sound and students learning (achievement, understanding and interest) (Berger et. al., 1994; Papanastasiou, 2002, 2003; Kelly & Jones, 2007). Similarly, Mouza, Parson, & Ferreira (2003) investigate the impact of technology integration on students' learning. The findings reveal an interesting link between technology enhancements in the learning environment and the motivation of learners in early childhood (2 to 10 years-old). These studies show that multimedia is considered as having potential to increase the students' learning. Technology offers several advantages for improving the teaching of social studies, for helping students understand complex concepts

and for enabling them to develop the problem solving and decision-making skills that can promote their much needed motivational boost to a subject that rarely ranks at the top of students' list of participation as informed citizens of a democratic society. Furthermore, technology can add a favourites (Rosenzweig & Thelen, 1998). Although studies indicate that social studies teachers do not make widespread use of technology in instruction (Ehman & Glenn, 1991), a growing body of research and anecdotal evidence suggests how technology may improve outcomes for students who are not disabled. Also, where applicable, conclusions about the potential impact and challenges are extrapolated from studies of technology use in literacy and other content areas. Students tend to learn about social studies topics in a fairly passive manner, but research indicates that comprehension is enhanced when classroom study is paired with civic experiences (Hahn, 2001; Marri, 2003). This integrated approach is an essential means both for teaching the strengths and problems of democracy and for providing students with an understanding of its processes (Wenger, 1998).

The social studies classroom is where education meets the community it serves. Numerous efforts to introduce technology into this process have not produced meaningful results. More often than not, the incorporation of these digital technologies has only changed the manner in which tasks are accomplished rather than adding significant value to what is taught or learned. As many researchers have indicated, this is in part because the software products currently available to schools do not necessarily match well with the aims of social studies education (Cuban, 2003; Whitworth & Berson, 2003; Thornton, 2004). Therefore, it seems that the personal and situational variables of the teachers affect their efficiency to use multimedia for teaching their subject. Educational institutions now often encourage the use of multimedia aid in teaching and educators from fields such as medicine already use videos to enhance teaching on a regular basis, as videos can serve as good visual aids. On the other hand, faculty members from certain social study fields use multimedia sources less often, possibly because appropriate instructional material for those areas are difficult to find.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- 1- To study the opinion of upper primary students about the social science multimedia packages.
- 2- To study the opinion of upper primary students about the social science multimedia packages in relation to their Gender and Class wise.

## Method

Descriptive survey method in view of its suitability has been employed for finding the opinion of students about the social science multimedia package.

## Population and Sample

The population consisted of students at upper primary stage in upper primary classes of CBSE schools situated in Udham Singh Nagar District (Uttarakhand). In this study, sample constituted of 702 students of class VI, VII and VIII.

## Sampling Technique

Purposive and incidental sampling technique was employed to draw a sample. In selecting sample from the population, ten CBSE schools situated in Udham Singh Nagar District were selected purposively. While selecting these schools it was assured that multimedia were used in the classroom of these schools for teaching social science subject as use of multimedia was one of the variable of the study. 100% of the students studying in VI, VII and VIII classes were selected by incidental sampling method. Investigator got sufficient number of student sample (about 700) from first four schools within ten schools.

**Table 1: School wise break-up of the student sample**

Si. No.	Schools	No. of Students			Total
		Class	M	F	
1	Shailly School	VI,VII & VIII	98	69	167
2	Jaycees PublicSchool	VI,VII & VIII	103	81	183
3	Hind PublicSchool	VI,VII & VIII	76	56	132
4	Samar Study Hall	VI,VII & VIII	122	98	220
	<b>Total</b>				<b>702</b>

## Tool Used in the Study

Multimedia Package-Student Opinionnaire (MPSO) - This Opinionnaire was used for evaluation of multimedia package by students. It consisted of four

dimensions namely- Educational Effectiveness (E.E.), User Friendliness of Technology (U.F.T.), Integrity of Multimedia Components (I.M.C.) and Students Edutainment (S.E.). Each dimension was prepared after consulting relevant literature, books and journals. It was decided to provide a response format of yes/no. To determine validity of the tool investigator measured the content validity and it was given to the foremost experts of Faculty of Education (Kamachha) and Social Science Teachers. In order to establish reliability of tool test-retest method was used. After reliability analysis reliability was found to be 0.81.

### Statistics used

For systematic analysis of the data statistics like frequency, percentages and chi-square were used.

### Findings related to objective 1 -

**Table 2: Showing the Opinions of the Students in Yes and No on Items of MPSO**

Items	Response	Students	
		Frequency	%
1	1. Yes	585	<b>83.33</b>
	2. No	117	16.67
2	1. Yes	247	35.19
	2. No	455	<b>64.81</b>
3	1. Yes	490	<b>69.80</b>
	2. No	212	30.20
4	1. Yes	246	35.04
	2. No	456	<b>64.96</b>
5	1. Yes	542	<b>77.21</b>
	2. No	160	22.79
6	1. Yes	424	<b>60.40</b>
	2. No	278	39.60
7	1. Yes	550	<b>78.35</b>
	2. No	152	21.65

<b>8</b>	1. Yes	163	23.22
	2. No	539	<b>76.78</b>
<b>9</b>	1. Yes	542	<b>77.21</b>
	2. No	160	22.79
<b>10</b>	1. Yes	352	<b>50.14</b>
	2. No	350	49.86
<b>11</b>	1. Yes	566	<b>80.63</b>
	2. No	136	19.37
<b>12</b>	1. Yes	433	<b>61.68</b>
	2. No	269	38.32
<b>13</b>	1. Yes	598	<b>85.19</b>
	2. No	104	14.81
<b>14</b>	1. Yes	235	33.48
	2. No	467	<b>66.52</b>
<b>15</b>	1. Yes	548	<b>78.06</b>
	2. No	154	21.94
<b>16</b>	1. Yes	240	34.19
	2. No	462	<b>65.81</b>
<b>17</b>	1. Yes	546	<b>77.78</b>
	2. No	156	22.22
<b>18</b>	1. Yes	142	20.23
	2. No	560	<b>79.77</b>
<b>19</b>	1. Yes	561	<b>79.91</b>
	2. No	141	20.09
<b>20</b>	1. Yes	243	34.62
	2. No	459	<b>65.38</b>

**Interpretation:**

Opinion of Upper Primary Students about Social Science Multimedia Packages are:

The opinion of Students toward Multimedia Package of Social Science on items no. 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17 and 19 were favourable. Hence, it reveals that they agree on items regarding Social science multimedia software lessons easy to follow, The video quality showed clear pictures & descriptions, Social science multimedia software lesson operated on the basis of easy instructions, The information contained in the multimedia software lessons were not matched with social science textbook, The activities in the social science multimedia software lessons gave them enough practice, Map practice was effectively done by social science multimedia software lessons. The audio narration in social science multimedia software lessons was not clear & easily heard, The examples & illustrations in social science multimedia software lessons helped them to learn better with more interest, In the social science multimedia software lessons revision of topics are difficult, They liked the use of humour in the multimedia software lessons of social science, They could get their doubts cleared up easily through the links provided in multimedia software lessons of social science, In the social science multimedia software lessons, content was broken down into units that are small enough to be easily learned and Graphics, fonts & other visual elements were legible, functional & attractive in social science software lesson. Desai (2004) reported while teaching with multimedia package in home science, students having favourable opinion towards multimedia approach. Baviskar (2007) also reported that in Zoology multimedia package was beneficial for students. Benjamin & Edward (2007) also reported favourable attitude of students in physics towards interactive multimedia based learning courseware.

On item no. 2, 4, 8, 14, 16, 18 and 20 their responses were unfavourable. Hence, it reveals that they do not agree on items regarding There is no logical inclusion of graphics, texts, audio, video and animation etc in multimedia software lessons of social science, No technical knowledge is needed to operate the social science multimedia software lessons, There was no novelty in teaching when the social science lesson was taught through the multimedia software lessons, Theories & procedures were not explained well in the multimedia software lessons of social science, Use of technology in social science unnecessary increased, They would not like to learn more social science in this way and They could have learned this lesson without the use of the social science multimedia software lessons.

#### **Findings related to objective 2:**

H01. There is no significant difference in the opinion of Male and Female students of upper primary level about multimedia packages of social science.

**Table 3: Showing  $\chi^2$  values of Opinions of the Students about the Multimedia Package in Terms of their Gender**

Items	Response	Students' Gender wise		$\chi^2$	df
		Female	Male		
		Observed	Observed		
1.	1. Yes	247	338	1.265	1
	2. No	56	61		
2.	1. Yes	104	143	.174	1
	2. No	199	256		
3.	1. Yes	206	284	.832	1
	2. No	97	115		
4.	1. Yes	192	264	.593	1
	2. No	111	135		
5.	1. Yes	234	308	.00	1
	2. No	69	91		
6.	1. Yes	109	169	2.933	1
	2. No	194	230		
7.	1. Yes	237	313	.005	1
	2. No	66	86		
8.	1. Yes	236	303	.367	1
	2. No	67	96		
9.	1. Yes	236	306	.140	1
	2. No	67	93		
10.	1. Yes	155	197	.219	1
	2. No	148	202		
11.	1. Yes	244	322	.003	1
	2. No	59	77		

12.	1. Yes	118	151	.088	1
	2. No	185	248		
13.	1. Yes	259	339	.036	1
	2. No	44	60		
14.	1. Yes	195	272	1.125	1
	2. No	108	127		
15.	1. Yes	229	319	1.923	1
	2. No	74	80		
16.	1. Yes	201	261	.065	1
	2. No	102	138		
17.	1. Yes	234	312	.093	1
	2. No	69	87		
18.	1. Yes	245	315	.390	1
	2. No	58	84		
19.	1. Yes	246	315	.539	1
	2. No	57	84		
20.	1. Yes	201	258	.213	1
	2. No	102	141		

\* Significant at 0.05 level

### Interpretation

With reference to above table the result shows that value of all the items of opinionnaire are not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the opinion of students about social science multimedia package does not differs in terms of their gender.

Hence, with reference to table no. 3 the related null hypothesis (H01) is accepted that opinion of students does not differs in term of their gender and HR1 is rejected.

H02. There is no significant difference in the opinion of students' class VI, VII and that of class VIII about multimedia packages of social science.

**Table 4: Showing  $\chi^2$  values of Opinions of the Students about the Multimedia Package in Terms of their Class**

Items	Response	Students' Class-wise			$\chi^2$	Df
		Class-VI	Class-VII	Class-V		
		Observed	Observed	Observed		
1.	1. Yes	190	198	197	1.241	2
	2. No	44	38	35		
2.	1. Yes	85	83	79	.264	2
	2. No	149	153	153		
3.	1. Yes	177	160	153	5.870	2
	2. No	57	76	79		
4.	1. Yes	150	152	154	.313	2
	2. No	84	84	78		
5.	1. Yes	188	173	181	3.435	2
	2. No	46	63	51		
6.	1. Yes	91	99	88	.864	2
	2. No	143	137	144		
7.	1. Yes	184	189	177	1.008	2
	2. No	50	47	55		
8.	1. Yes	179	179	181	.325	2
	2. No	55	57	51		
9.	1. Yes	182	181	179	.079	2
	2. No	52	55	53		
10.	1. Yes	115	119	118	.149	2
	2. No	119	117	114		
11.	1. Yes	192	189	185	.465	2
	2. No	42	47	47		

12.	1. Yes	91	92	86	.230	2
	2. No	143	144	146		
13.	1. Yes	194	203	201	1.481	2
	2. No	40	33	31		
14.	1. Yes	152	161	154	.565	2
	2. No	82	75	78		
15.	1. Yes	185	187	176	.982	2
	2. No	49	49	56		
16.	1. Yes	157	144	161	3.907	2
	2. No	77	92	71		
17.	1. Yes	183	181	182	.245	2
	2. No	51	55	50		
18.	1. Yes	183	191	186	.576	2
	2. No	51	45	46		
19.	1. Yes	193	179	189	3.738	2
	2. No	41	57	43		
20.	1. Yes	152	160	147	1.045	2
	2. No	82	76	85		

\* Significant at 0.05 level

#### Interpretation:

With reference to above table the result shows that  $\chi^2$  value of all the items of opinionnaire are not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the opinion of students about social science multimedia package does not differs in terms of their classes.

Hence, with reference to table no. 4 the related null hypothesis (H02) is accepted that opinion of students does not differs in term of their class and HR2 is rejected.

#### Conclusions:

On the basis of the findings of the study following conclusions have been drawn:

- As per students opinion content of multimedia package and content of social science text books of upper primary level are not matched totally. There were some contents which were not found in multimedia package.
- The opinion about multimedia packages by the school students in terms of dimensions- Educational effectiveness, Integration of multimedia components, User friendliness of Technology, Content availability and Student Edutainment were found satisfactory and they admitted that by this multimedia method teaching-learning process of social science will become better but proper integrations of content and multimedia component is required. Students of upper primary level also got motivated by social science multimedia lessons and they look forward for such interactive learning sessions.

#### **Implications of the Study:**

If multimedia packages will be properly integrated after a deep & thorough research of text books, then it seems that students' interest as well as knowledge would be enhanced. Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, some important educational implications are as follows:

- 1- This study may be beneficial for multimedia package developing companies.
- 2- The study may be beneficial for making social science presentation through multimedia more effective.
- 3- It would be better for present and forthcoming multimedia companies to take all the necessary action research to incorporate all the points of social science text books for betterment of subject.
- 4- School should provide good quality of multimedia package to the teachers and students. School should create an effective implementation mechanism to integrate social science multimedia in their schools, so that multimedia resources could be used by teachers effectively.

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## **An Assessment of Expansion and Excellence in Contemporary Higher General Education in Universities of West Bengal: A Geographical Perspective**

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### **Abstract**

*Excellence in higher education actually is the quality that reveals the efficiencies and effectiveness of the higher educational institutions, being largely predisposed by the expansion of this respective sector. This is an essential aspect of development as well as social wellbeing of society. Keeping this in mind, in independent India, several national policies have been implemented to promote the excellence along with the expansion in this very sector. Formation of UGC, a statutory regulatory body and subsequent formation of NAAC with the extended power of the former are two most significant steps taken for the enhancement of the quality through the assessment of higher educational institutes. Very recently, the union government of the country has introduced NIRF ranking method also to evaluate the yearly performance of the same. The present paper aims to study the district level spatial variation of West Bengal in this regard, along with the underlying causes so that, viable ways may be found out to minimize this disparity for overall enhancement of the quality of general degree higher education in the state. For this, spatio-temporal growth, the outcome of the assessment and accreditation by NAAC as well as NIRF has emphatically been studied from the information, available in the reports published by UGC, NAAC and Department of Higher Education, Government of West Bengal. Primary information has been collected through the primary survey as well as personal interview of the experts. It has been found that the districts either with proximity to Kolkata Metropolis or having older universities, have performed consistently well in the present context. Exchange of ideas and augmentation of infrastructure, would have to be the basic solutions to this present problem.*

**Keywords:** UGC, NAAC, NIRF, Expansion and Excellence, University education, West Bengal

### **Introduction:**

Education enables mankind to address the present and future global challenges in a constructive, creative and organized way, that finally creates a sustainable resilient society (UNESCO: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural

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Organizations, 2017). It is the key of nation-building, acquisition of requisite knowledge along with the skill for sustained economic growth and subsequent national progress (Kumar, 2013: p. 44). So, education is the obvious strength of a nation forever.

Inevitably, the developed nations of the world are the educated ones (Shaguri, 2013: p. 3). Thus, higher the level of education, higher would be the level of development of society. So, this is the most significant social indicator of development. Consequently, every constituent of the society has a fundamental right to it irrespective of their socio-economic and cultural differences (Shaguri, 2013: p. 3). Therefore, duration, accessibility along with quality of education would be the essential aspects for society, to receive the maximum attention.

Excellence is one of the three basic pillars of education along with the expansion and equity (Kumar, 2013: p. 44). Excellence is generally defined as an outstanding, as a quality that surpasses a defined threshold in a particular field, fundamentally exhibiting the outstanding characteristics (Komureigil, 2013). Quality in higher education is a multidimensional, multilevel, and dynamic concept that relates to the contextual settings of an educational model, to the institutional mission and objectives, as well as specific standards within a given system, institution, programme, or discipline (Viasceanu, Grunberg and Parlea, 2004). On the other hand, accessibility or expansion refers to the availability or ease of achieving the higher education (from the under graduate level onwards) to the people of the state. That initially means the availability of suitable number of higher educational institutes across the region to fulfill the regional demand; depending primarily upon a number of factors like expenditure, learning resources, educational services etc. (Shaguri, 2013: p. 19). So, accessibility plays a vital role on excellence as well quality of higher education. Thus, accessibility, excellence and quality of higher education are the inseparable, interrelated and intertwined aspects of concern.

### **Role of University Education**

In India, Under the UGC Act, 1956, “University” means a university established by or under a central act or provincial act or a state act, and includes any such institution as may, in consultation with the university concerned, be recognized by the commission in accordance with the regulation made in this behalf under this act. Those universities may be of central, state, public, private, deemed, open etc in the category concerned (AISHE, 2013).

The universities award degree to the students of their affiliated colleges as well as to their own academic departments, on the basis of certain predetermined criteria. Usually, the universities offer Under Graduate (after 10+2) courses with the duration of 3/4/5 years and subsequent Post Graduate courses of 2 years duration in general and / or professional streams. Research degrees (M. Phill, Ph. D), PG Diploma, integrated programmes, certificate courses are also offered by those in regular mode or formal system, self financing courses in regular mode, corresponding mode or in distance mode (AISHE, 2013).

### **Expansion, Accessibility, Excellence and Academic Quality in Higher Education at Universities of India**

In 1857, three Presidency universities were set up as per the directives of the Wood's Despatch in 1854. The University of Calcutta was one of those universities in West Bengal. Unexpectedly, during the next forty years since the establishment, there was no improvement of those universities. Moreover; University administration faced a considerable collapse. The Indian Education Commission (1882-83) was precluded from reporting on university education (Purkait, 1992: p.83). So, they recommended in favour of the gradual decrease of the control of the government on this field. As a result, Indian private entrepreneurs got their entry in this field (Purkait, 1992: p. 64 and p. 65).

On 27<sup>th</sup> of January, Curzon appointed the University Education Commission, 1902 to find out the exact scenario as well as the prospects of the Universities in British India (Purkait, 1992: p. 83). Indian University Act, 1904 was formulated with the foundation of the report, documented by the aforesaid Commission (Govt. of West Bengal, 2000: p. 32). Lord Curzon was the person, who initiated the first government funds for the universities in 1904-05 (Banerjee, 2004-2005: p. 141). Curzon provided initiatives for the permanent recurring grants also (Purkait, 1992: p. 87 and Banerjee, 2004-2005: p. 141). This was one of the positive aspects of this respective act. Afterwards, the government appointed the Calcutta University commission in 1917 to point out the problems and short comings of the university education in the country (Purkait, 1992: p. 106). This commission proposed that University of Calcutta would be the reservoir of the resources for the higher educational studies (Banerjee, 2004- 2005: p. 142).

After independence, Government of India set up a University Education Commission (1948-1949) under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, where a number of eminent academicians from different parts of the country as well abroad; rendered their valuable services as its members (Purkait, 1992: p. 150). This commission emphasized on the introduction of general education in colleges and

universities and recommended to include the university education in the concurrent list (Purkait, 1992: p. 157). Thus, the Central Government became responsible for all kind of financial provisions, co-ordination of facilities, determination of standard and adoption of national policies concerning the higher education (Purkait, 1992: p. 157 and Banerjee, 2004-2005: p. 49).

To implement the National Educational policies as well as to distribute the Government grants, UGC was set up very quickly. For the upgradation of higher education, the universities would receive grants from both of the central and state governments. One third of the salaries of the teachers should be shouldered by the government, and additional one hundred million rupees should have to spend on the same purpose for the colleges. Otherwise there would be no financial supports for the colleges at all (Purkait, 1992: p. 157). The private colleges may receive grants only for the construction of the buildings, purchase of the required materials to meet the recurring expenditure of the institutes (Govt. of West Bengal, 2000: p. 35). Afterwards, UGC was severally reformed with extended power by different acts in 1953, 1955, 1956 and so on (Banerjee, 2004-2005: p. 48 and p. 49).

In 1955, Central grants for university education turn into its disposal. The commission disburses the amount according to its own plans (Banerjee, 2004-2005: p. 145). In 1956, under the UGC act, 1956, the commission achieved the statutory status of it. It started to perform a number of other functions of higher education, being a paying, allocating as well as dispensing organization. Introduction of the three year degree course at under graduate level along with the revision of pay scales, improvement of libraries and laboratories, promotion of research works were the remarkable activities of the commission as measures of the promotion of the standard of higher education of the country (Agarwal, 2004: p. 244).

In the 12 (b) section it stated that allocate and disburse, out of the fund of the commission, grants to universities established or incorporated by or under a central act for the maintenance and development of such universities or for any other general or specified purpose (UGC, 2002: p. 10).

In 1968, the National Policy of Education clearly told that the organization of the post graduate courses has to receive the special attention obviously. To make this course beneficiary, research works would be encouraged within the fold of the universities. Universities can offer correspondence courses and part time courses both for the teachers and students of the schools, industrial or other workers also (Govt. of India, 1990: p. 43 and p. 44).

But unfortunately, the policies, that offer the economic concessions to the students, do not have focus on intelligence plus effort is equal to merit, instead of mediocrity and money equating merit (Dahiya, 2012: p. 19 and p. 20).

Therefore, due to lesser availability of Government-aid, the higher educational institutes have to increase their course fees. Consequently, the meritorious students with low affordability find it difficult to continue their higher education. Similarly, the employees find unfavorable circumstances to sustain themselves. Moreover, a large number of institutions are suffering from insufficiency of educators along with the officials, leading to the irregularity of all of the higher educational services along with the teaching-learning process here in the state. Besides, lesser the government-aid, lesser would be the renewal or upgradation of the infrastructural facilities also (Primary survey, 2014-15). Thus, accessibility along with quality of higher education suffers from an unwanted dilapidation.

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), the organization, that assesses and accredits the higher educational institutes in India, was established in 1994 in response to recommendations of National Policy in Education (1986). This autonomous body came into action, headquartered at Bangalore, of which parent agency is UGC and parent department is Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India (Prasad, 2004: pp. 9). Actually, since 1980s, UGC was empowered with planning, reform in academic standards and examination systems, research, and other matter of importance (Purkait, 1992: p. 160).

The union government of India introduced National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), to rank the higher educational institutes throughout the country in each and every year, first approving the method on 29<sup>th</sup> of September, 2015 by MHRD. The alike ministry set up a committee, who detected the parameters to priorities and pay attention teaching and learning resources, research and professional practices, graduation outcome, number of faculty with the qualifications and eligibility as per UGC recommendation, perception etc. Since 2017, the parameters remained unchanged, but the category included discipline specific rank along with the common overall rank of 2016 (NIRF, 2019).

### **An Overview of the Study Area**

Recently, the state of West Bengal has a total of 21 districts with a total population of about 91,276,115 within the total area of 88,752sq km (Census of India, 2011). In West Bengal, the higher educational institutes are distributed unevenly

across the state, in spite of very recent growth of the number (NUEPA, 2013-2014). The table about the regional disparity of University Grants Commission (UGC) shows that in terms of access parameter (formal system) in higher education, this state is within the range from 3 to 5.69%, which is lower than that of national average of 5.75% (Dahiya, 2012: p. 20). The number of degree awarding institutions (university/ university level institutes) is lower here-26 only (rank-9<sup>th</sup> in India), in relation to the other states like Tamilnadu (59), Uttar Pradesh (58), Andhra Pradesh (46), Rajasthan (48), Maharashtra (44) etc. (Shaguri, 2013: p. 6). Consequently, the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) count (7.8% at present) is unsatisfactory in relation to national average (16%) as well as global average (26%) in this state (Dahiya, 2012). More specifically, the young population (18-23 years) counts 10971915 (general), 2684937 (SC), 663237 (ST) (Census of India, 2011), while the category wise GER count is low- 12.8%, 8.6% and 5.9% respectively in the state (MHRD, 2013). An unsatisfactory scenario persists in Gender Parity Index also (Kumari, 2014). Number of institutes of national importance is again unsatisfactory here-4 only, in relation to the other state in India (MHRD, 2013).

### **Objectives of the Study**

Being motivated by the above considerations, the present study has the following primary objectives. The fundamental one is to find out the circumstances of expansion along with the level of excellence of general stream of higher education at district level. Subsequently, the study has to focus on the district level spatial disparity of accessibility as well as quality of general higher education, analyzing the causes behind this. The correlation between expansion and excellence would have to be highlighted in this context also to eventually improve the overall status of this particular sector. All of these aspects would have to be studied with special reference to the universities of the respective study area.

### **Methodology and Database**

The indicators of NAAC accreditation and assessment are very much practical, quantifiable, self assessed in nature; method of accreditation is quite acceptable, transparent as well as justifiable, and the grading system is not complex. So, the outcome of the accreditation and assessment of NAAC is one of the most significant bases to analyze the scenario of quality of the higher educational institutes especially, offering general degree courses in India. So, present paper reviews the performances of these institutes in the different cycles of NAAC assessment. The total number of accredited institutes in each district, their grades in different cycles, upgradation and

degradation in the consecutive cycles has been considered and analyzed for the accurate perceptible. In addition to this, NIRF is one of the ways to rank the Indian higher educational institutes, especially the universities, introduced by the Ministry of Human Resource Development of the union government at very recent past. This is done in each and every year; completely on the basis of the most fundamental requirements for the expansion and quality enhancement of this sector. By this ranking method of union government, the institutes can analyze their status and shortcomings with respect to the others for a specific year.

Thus, this short term assessment becomes helpful for them to promptly overcome the particular problems. All of these aforesaid necessary information have been collected from the websites of UGC, NAAC, MHRD and Department of Higher Education of Government of West Bengal and on the websites of the individual institutes (IQAC-SSR reports for the period: 2014- 2019 mainly ) etc. Questionnaire survey with the Purposive Random Sampling Technique and personal interview has been conducted to collect the primary information and opinion of the expertise and the academic peers.

#### **Scenario of Expansion of the Universities in West Bengal**

After independence, the government of West Bengal had an attempt to ensure positive changes in terms of both quantity and quality with some limited resources. The major financing agency is the state government while the union governments disburse and allocate grants through UGC. Besides, the local bodies' private individuals also provide financial supports and assistances for educational developments of this state (Govt. of West Bengal, 2000: p. 104).

On 15<sup>th</sup> of July, 1981, the state government appointed the commission under the chairmanship of Dr. Bhabotosh Dutta to exclusively review the conditions of higher education as well to recommend the solutions as per contemporary UGC regulations. The committee submitted their report on 4<sup>th</sup> of April, 1984 containing 226 recommendations (Govt. of West Bengal, 2006: p. 172).

They observed that there was a rapid growth in terms of the number of colleges since independence. But most of those had no infrastructural facilities along with the hostel, canteen, playground etc. Even some of the colleges became compelled to introduce the additional shifts to meet the demand of the admission of the eligible students (Govt. of West Bengal, 2000: p. 36).

### **Privatization in Higher Education of West Bengal**

Actually, in this phase, the crisis due to the descent of Indian economy into the balance of payment and its eventual subjection to fund-bank therapy led to the preference of privatization of economy, to be applied as well extended in the field of higher university education also (Govt. of West Bengal, 2006: p. 41).

The Mitra Commission (1991) in West Bengal was appointed on 13<sup>th</sup> of August in 1991 under the chairmanship of Dr. Ashok Mitra. This was to envisage and recommend for all level of education in the state (Govt. of West Bengal, 2006: p. 173).

Imposition of educational cess and enhancement of the tuition fees and hostel charges were advised in the report also (Govt. of West Bengal, 2006: p. 173 and p. 174). They were in support of receiving financial assistance from the banks, chambers of commerce, to ensure supply of the funds (Govt. of West Bengal, 2000: p. 39).

At the far end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (1998-2000), UGC decided unexpectedly on contrary to meet the demand of higher education (Govt. of West Bengal, 2000: p. 44). The first step of gradual withdrawal of government funding was to rise the 25% of the recurring expenditure in the universities and colleges by those institutions themselves; through the cost recovery system and mobilization of resources. To implement the policy, Ministry of Human Resource Development on 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2000; empowered those institutes to rise 7% of recurring expenditure from that very academic session with the provision of hike @ 1% every year (Govt. of West Bengal, 2000: p. 44 and p. 45). Another important one was to link the funding with the mandatory assessment and accreditation of the institutes by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). All the universities and colleges themselves must have to be accredited by 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2003 (Govt. of West Bengal, 2000: p. 45).

### **Spatio-Temporal Expansion of the Universities**

In the state of West Bengal, there were only two public universities; one in Kolkata and another in Birbhum before independence. No private university was in the state, in that period.

**Table1: Decadal Growth of Universities in West Bengal (after 1947)**

Decades	Increase				Districts with number of universities
	Public			Private	
	State Aided	Central	Deemed		
1950-60	2	-	-	-	Kolkata 1, Barddhaman 1
1960-70	3	-	-	-	Kolkata 1, Nadia 1, Darjeeling 1
1970-80	-	-	-	-	-
1980-90	1	-	-	-	Paschim Medinipur 1
1990-2000	1	-	-	-	Kolkata 1 (open)
2000-2010	3	-	1	-	Kolkata 1, North 24 Paraganas 1, Maldah 1, Haora 1 (Deemed)
2010-	7	-	-	8	Kolkata 1, South 24 Paraganas 1, Asansol 1, Bankura 1, Puruliya 1, Kochbihar 1, North Dinajpur 1 Kolkata, North and South 24 Paraganas, Birbhum (Private Universities)

**Source: Websites of Department of Higher Education, Government of West Bengal(As on December, 2018) and the respective Universities**

Till now, no State Specialized University (SSU) has been established in the state. After independence, there was no new university in the decade of 1970-80. Next decade (1980-90) found only one new public university at the district of Paschim Medinipur. In the decade of 1990-2000 only one public Open University was founded in Kolkata. Actually, in this phase of 30 years, several measures were implemented to reform, reorient and up grade the general degree higher education as per the recommendations of UGC and different commissions, appointed exclusively by the State government. The number of universities has started to be increased

since the decade of 2000-2010 in this state. The present decade (2010-) has astonishingly double this number in terms of the public ones. Even the private universities also got a breakthrough in the present decade, establishing new heights while having none since 1947 in this category. North Bengal always became neglected in comparison to the Southern part of the state regarding this. Actually, preference is always in favour of plains with suitable climatic conditions in comparison to that of the proper Himalayas. But district wise distribution of both of the public as well private universities in Southern part of Bengal remained uneven evermore.

### **Scenario of excellence of the Universities in West Bengal**

#### **Status of Assessment and Accreditation by NAAC**

The first phase was from 1994-1997. No institutes from West Bengal participated in this event at that phase; as the change in conventional practice was difficult to accept both for the teaching faculty and administrators (Prasad, 2004: p. 56).

The second phase was from 1998 to 2001, when the assessment process was implemented and the field experience strengthened the NAAC's efforts. Principally some of the missionary colleges from Kolkata and Hugli participated for the accreditation. At the tail end of this phase, in 2001, University of Calcutta from Kolkata, Kalyani University from Nadia, University of North Bengal from Darjeeling, and University of Burdwan from Bardhaman became accredited. Since, 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2002, introduced the nine point scale with a combination of letter grades and pluses, which was implemented for the next cycle of assessment of all the institutes replacing the previous star marking (Prasad, 2004: p. 61).

The third phase was initiated since the year of 2002 (Prasad, 2004: p. 66). Jadavpur University from Kolkata and Vidyasagar University from Paschim Medinipur participated in 2003. A large number of colleges attended their first cycle of accreditation in this phase. So, more than 60% of the colleges are at their second cycle of accreditation at present (as on July, 2017) in the state with the five year validity of the accreditation.

As on July, 2017, among the total 19 public universities (excluding the open one) only 32% are at their third cycle of accreditation. The other public universities, which have been founded in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, are not NAAC accredited till now, because of their misfiling as per eligibility criteria for the accreditation. Only the Deemed University from Haora has participated and became accredited in 2019.

**Table 2: Outcome of the Quality of the University in West Bengal**

SL no.	Districts	Universities (number)	Grades in the cycles		
			1 <sup>st</sup> cycle	2 <sup>nd</sup> cycle	3 <sup>rd</sup> cycle
1.	Darjeeling	1	3*	B++	A
2.	Jalpaiguri	-			
3.	Kochbihar	1	-	-	-
4.	N. Dinajpur	1	-	-	-
5.	S. Dinajpur	-	-	-	-
6.	Maldah	1	B		
7.	Murshidabad	-			
8.	Nadia	1	3*	B	A
9.	Birbhum	1	B		
10.	Bankura	1	-		
11.	Barddhaman	1	4*	B++	A
12.	Puruliya	1	-		
13.	Haora	1	A++		
14.	Hugli	-			
15.	N 24 pgs	1	-		
16.	S 24 pgs	1	-		
17.	W.Medinipur	1	3*	B	B
18.	E.Medinipur	-			
19.	Asansol	1	-		
20.	Jhargram	-			

**Source: Websites of NAAC (as on December, 2019) and Department of Higher Education  
 Government of West Bengal**

### **Status of the NIRF Rankings**

In the year of 2015, the Ministry of Human Resource Development of the union government approved this method of ranking of the higher educational institutes. This method was first implemented in the next year of 2016. In this year, only two universities, explicitly Kalyani University from Nadia and VisvaBharati from Birbhum participated from this state. University of Calcutta, Jadavpur University, and Presidency University from Kolkata and University of Burdwan from Barddhaman initiated their participation since 2017 and 2018 correspondingly.

Almost similar scenario is found to be revealed in case of the both of the methods of assessment at the national level in this context. In 2016, Kalyani University and Visva Bharati secured 45<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> rank respectively. In the next year the scenario changed slightly with the participation of more universities in this method. Visva Bharati ranked 19<sup>th</sup> while University of Calcutta and Jadavpur University secured 16<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> position respectively at their earliest participation. In 2018, Visva Bharati ranked 31<sup>st</sup>; Kalyani University ranked 86<sup>th</sup>, University of Burdwan ranked 96<sup>th</sup>, University of Calcutta ranked 14<sup>th</sup> and Jadavpur University ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in the common overall ranking category. In the year of 2019, Visva Bharati, Jadavpur University and University of Calcutta secured 59<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> position respectively in the equivalent category.

### **Discussion on Findings**

#### **Public Universities**

The universities at Kolkata always have been accredited at least with grade A, even at the first cycle of the accreditation of their own. Till the date of the study, there are five public universities (excluding the Open University as this has not participated none of the mentioned assessment processes) at Kolkata. Amongst those, two are at the third cycle, one is at the second cycle and another one is at the first cycle of accreditation. Others are yet to be accredited as they are not eligible for the accreditation by NAAC. The universities from this district are consistently performing well securing high scores and maintain and/ or upgrade their considerably high position in the NIRF ranking also. Even, those institutes surpassed the institutes from other districts in terms of the NIRF rank, initiating their participation later. Actually, this district has always achieved a great preference and precedence of the authorities from the very beginning. It was the national capital of the British period, and has maintained its position as the primate city of the concerned state for a long. Therefore, most of the amenities along with the infrastructural facilities are readily available here in the city within more or less

physical arrangements. So, excepting only the third and fourth decade after independence, the city always experienced the establishment of the new universities in spite of having a large number of existing ones with sufficient intake capacity. It is to be mentioned also, that another two universities have been approved to initiate their academic sessions in near future.

Haora and Hugli being the parts of the Kolkata Metropolitan Area experienced the maintenance of the considerably high level of higher education in spite of having no university within their own territorial boundary for a long time since independence. But, very recently, one deemed university has been found which has achieved A++ grade in 2019 by the new assessment system of NAAC. It has become possible only due to their authority of Ramakrishna Mission. So, it can be expected, that in near future, Haora would occupy a separate unique position in the scenario of higher education, especially the universities.

Bardhaman, Nadia, Darjeeling have experienced upgradation continuously; Paschim Medinipur maintains an identical level of performance regarding this. Actually, these districts have older, affiliating universities (Bardhaman since 1950-60, Darjeeling and Nadia since 1960-70, West Medinipur since 1980-90) with proficient infrastructure, governance and system to administrate and manage a large number of departments of their own along with the colleges affiliated to them at the post independence period. These districts gained comparatively superior fondness in this purpose, due to the favorable physico-cultural set up along with the better transport network mainly via railway connection. So, in the present days, except Darjeeling, the other three districts also obtain remarkably high score and rank in the newly introduced NIRF ranking method of MHRD of the union govt.

Visva Bharati - a Central University, in the district of Birbhum is at their first cycle (participated in 2015) of accreditation at present, being accredited with B grade with the CGPA of 2.82 only. Actually, being a central university consistent allocation and inflow of necessary fund faces no hindrances. Moreover, the participation for NAAC accreditation has become mandatory under UGC Regulations, 2012. The rural location of the institute also has worked as a catalyst of their unsatisfactory performance. Consequently, this university depicts a remarkable and unacceptable degradation of status in the successive years of NIRF ranking similarly. So, the district of Birbhum has become back warded concerning this, in spite of having one and only public central university in the state since the British period.

The other districts either have the newly established university or have none at all. Therefore, both of the assessment and accreditation by NAAC and participation at NIRF ranking remain completely irrelevant for those till now.

### Private Universities

No private university has been accredited by NAAC till now. Actually, these are founded, administered and financially supported completely by the reputed entrepreneurs and industrialists with strong financial potency. Moreover, the offered courses are self financed in nature. As a result, they neither have mandates nor have urge to be assessed by the peers or by themselves. In addition to these, the aforesaid private universities have been established very recently in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Consequently, these are not eligible to be accredited by NAAC. Inevitably, the districts like Kolkata, South 24 Paraganas, North 24 Paraganas, and Birbhum with those institutes could not meet the level of expectation of overall performance in this perspective.

Kolkata has larger number of both of the public and private university (three) in comparison to the other districts. In terms of the performance of the public ones the city is at well situation. But, the scenario becomes disappointing, while considering the private ones along with the public ones.

In the districts of North 24 Paraganas and South 24 Paraganas private ones (one university in each of the districts) have not been accredited by NAAC along with the public ones. So, again the scenario is found to be relatively substandard predominantly in the present context.

The district of Birbhum is found to present a disappointing scenario in this regards having only public university with grade B and one private university without accreditation. The private universities have not participated in the NIRF ranking of the Union Government also.

The missionary institutes are unique in terms of their administration, governance as well as required financial supports. So, they perform well always irrespective of the geographical location. In this state, these institutes have comparatively great proportion of high (A++, A+, A) grade institutes. Actually, the missions have quite enough experience to administrate and govern the higher educational institutes since the phase of “Bengal Renaissance”. They had priority to promote the excellence along with expansion of higher education. So, they involved in the reformation of this sector in a secular manner, in spite of their own religious foundation (Purkait, 1992: p. 78 and p. 79). Autonomy of the higher educational institutes was preferable to them rather than the control and influence of the government (Govt. of West Bengal, 2000). Up gradation of infrastructure, regularization of teaching-learning process as regulated by the UGC as well higher educational services both at under graduate and post graduate level to make this more

contemporary were the philosophy of them. Thus, they have contributed in enhancement of accessibility and quality of this vital sector eternally.

Presently, more than 50% students with good academic records prefer to study the technical or management courses for their higher education in this state (Primary Survey, 2015-2016). Notable increase of private institutes supports the accommodation capacity and consequent accessibility in this context also. So, the general higher education is subjected to suffer from gradually worsening quality.

According to 80% of the eminent academicians and the educators the withdrawal of pass fail system at school level has dampen down the sincerity and circumspection of the students to develop the skill, increase of the depth of knowledge from the grassroots level of their academic career. A large number of the students select their course of study, especially, Honours (Elective) subject at UG level and/ or specialization at PG level, not as per their own skills or preference, rather being influenced by others- almost 75% of the educators stated. Therefore, successful progress faces hindrances. Almost all of the expertise noted that the poor skill of understanding and expression of the candidates in the language (English), acts as a catalyst of continuous deterioration of overall excellence and quality (Primary Survey, 2015- 2016). Because, a large number of students have considerably lesser academic access, exposure and interaction at national as well international level due to their poor quality in the language.

Moreover, 58% of the public university has been established very recently in the present century. Therefore, immediate upgradation of adequate infrastructural facilities along with the other essential services, keeping parity with the contemporary curriculum is quite difficult for them. As an obvious result, those universities along with their affiliated colleges have to suffer from unwanted deterioration in excellence and quality.

### **Conclusion**

It may be concluded from the above discussion, that the urban location of the institutions has a positive correlation with the level of excellence of general higher education in the state. Actually, the urban campuses have good accessibility and almost all kind of academic and other facilities in comparison to the rural ones. Period of the universities also have a positive correlation with the quality. Availability of NAAC accredited degree awarding institutes within a particular district boundary also leads to the comparatively better performance and excellence of the affiliated colleges.

So, to improve the performance the degree awarding institutes would have to be loaded in such a way, that each of them would serve maximum two or three districts. Only the old ones can be loaded with slightly additional charges if necessary. Affiliating institutes would have to be encouraged also to organize a regular assessment of their affiliated colleges on the basis of the criteria determined by the NAAC. To enhance the superiority of the institutes, exchange of idea is to be encouraged both at district level and national level through the arrangement of the academic programmes. If the NIRF ranking can be interlinked with financial provisions, it would probably depict a better scenario in this regards. The new institutions at the greater distance from the nerve centre of the state would have to be facilitated with good transport and communication network mainly via railways and internet services from the sides of the government. Private institutions with an unfortunate approach to commercialize this sector would be encouraged no more to be established to offer the general higher education. Rather, the missionaries would have to be salutation to take the new initiatives concerning this. Simultaneously, the students would have to be encouraged to emphasize on their own choice, preference and skill, while selecting the course of their higher studies. Pass fail system should have to be reintroduced at the school level. Recruitment of academic as well as administrative staffs would have to be organized regularly both at University and colleges of the state, rigorously following the regulations and guidelines framed by the UGC.

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## Challenges In Developing a Constructivist Classroom

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### *Abstract*

*Constructivism as a thought has come a long way since its conception. It has its roots in the belief that knowledge is not transferred as such or is present somewhere 'out there' but is constructed by the learner. This thought has been supported by many and has undergone several changes in terms of its practice since then. In a constructivist classroom, the stereotypical roles of teachers and students take a back seat. Here, the teacher allows the students to take charge of their own process of learning. However, there are some characteristics of a constructivist classroom which need to be taken care of.*

*Also, there are some hurdles and challenges which need to be sought after and overcome when it comes to implementing the constructivist method of teaching in a classroom. The purpose of this paper is to discuss constructivism keeping in mind the role of a teacher and the characteristics of a constructivist classroom and to look into the challenges which come across in developing a constructivist approach in learning.*

**Keywords:** *constructivism, teacher, classroom teaching*

### **Introduction**

A plethora of research has been conducted regarding constructivism in the past few years. The perspective of constructivism has had a huge impact on several dimensions of education. Ranging from classroom teaching at school level or higher education, as well as teacher training or professional development courses, constructivism seems to be the new favourite of researchers, teachers and all those who are linked to the field of education and are benefitted in some or the other way.

For philosophers and researchers' education has always been a subject of inquiry. Intellectuals have been constantly trying to bring up new educational practices. Which method or teaching ideology is the best one for not just the students but also for the society has remain debated.

When everybody is seeking a revolutionary reform in the education system and the ways children are taught worldwide, constructivism comes as a breeze of fresh air and a ray of hope for those pondering over innovative ideas and methods that can be used to make classroom teaching effective yet enjoyable.

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### **What is Constructivism?**

The theory of constructivism is found in psychology. It is a learning theory which explains how knowledge is acquired by people. The theory by Jean Piaget was also constructivist in nature. It had a huge impact on learning theories of education and is still the most sought-after theory which has a direct application in the field of teaching and learning. This theory says that individuals construct meaning and knowledge from their past experiences (Keogh & Naylor, 1996). He believed that the developmental stage of the learner makes a strong impact on learning too (Singh & Yaduvanshi, 2015).

When a person comes across a new piece of information, he tries to match it to what he already knows as a result of which the new information is either accommodated with the existing ones or is rejected straightaway. Constructivism doesn't have pedagogy of its own. It has also been the underlying theme for several movements regarding educational reforms. The research show a mixed result for constructivist teaching techniques, some positively support it while others rejecting it entirely. The idea of constructivism has nothing new about it. Though it deals with both education and the meaning of knowledge, but the core thought behind it has been expressed by many long ago. The only difference is that there are several researches today to support it and there is an awareness and acceptance about it (Hein, 1991).

### **Constructivism in Teaching - learning**

When a teacher chooses to teach by the constructivist approach he follows the constructivist theory. He believes that students learn only when they are involved actively in the process of construction of knowledge. He engages his students in the process of generation and exchange of information rather than making them idle receivers of information.

The whole movement of constructivism has had a noteworthy impact on education and most importantly science education (Keogh & Naylor, 1996). A majority of science educationists are influenced by the constructivist perspectives and keenly promote it. It has now become usual for science teachers to follow and apply constructivist philosophy by attempting to modify their teaching practices. The constructivist perspectives of learning in science imply that learners learn on the basis of their present understanding of a topic. They modify or add to their existing set of ideas by interpreting observations (Driver, 1983).

Due to the drastic shift in the teaching paradigm from traditional to the newer learning environment, several fallacies as well as puzzlement to an extent have been

created around constructivism as a theory. This has also happened due to the different thinking and teaching patterns of different research scholars and science teachers who perceive the idea of constructivism in a completely different manner altogether. However, the utter uniqueness and academic originality of this concept has drawn the attention of most educators worldwide either due to sheer curiosity or an impetuous choice. So, the whole concept of constructivism has more been understood in terms of just a teaching method rather than an epistemology which explains what and why of knowledge reality and truth (Chang, 2007).

Education has always been and still continues to be the most debated topic by societies' intellectuals (Sablonnie're et al, 2009 ). The most debated issue remains to be the two established approaches namely the teacher centered approach and the student centered approach. The former approach believes in the teacher to be the chief source of knowledge whereas the latter considers the learners to be creators of knowledge. In the teacher oriented approach the student has to follow the teacher in order to gain knowledge while in the other approach the teacher works only as a guide or facilitator in the journey of the learner. Here the focus of the whole process of learning is on the student only.

The learners needs to have some previous knowledge about what is being taught. Also knowledge cannot be imparted to learners if they are completely blank slates and do not have a basic idea and a set of prior notions. A teacher will not be able to teach or it will be more apt to say that a learner will not be able to learn if the child does not make a sense at all of what is being taught. He ought to grasp the new knowledge on the basis of his present structure of knowledge or concepts. So we can say that knowledge is constructed only when learners review something and then form an idea or interpretation on the basis of their own knowledge (Sheurman, 1998).

### **Constructivism in Classroom**

The theory of constructivism can play a very helping and therapeutic role when implemented in a classroom. Here the outlook of the teacher about constructivism as a theory and his understanding about its core concept plays an extremely important role. The teaching method used by the teacher in the classroom can make a huge impact on the effectiveness of the theory. The teacher's professional development also is a key factor in helping the teacher to have novel ideas and having a deeper comprehension of the topics instead of having a superficial understanding (Rout & Behera, 2014).

In a constructivist classroom the prime focus of the teacher should be to facilitate discussions which ignite their thought processes. Constructivists don't

believe in a way through which knowledge can be transferred from the mind of the teacher to the mind of the students (Singh & Yaduvanshi, 2015). The teacher's role here is not of a controller or a dictator but of a guide who shows them the right way to learn by asking thought provoking questions and prompting dialogue. In this way the students will be able to draw out their own conclusions regarding the topic of study. The teacher has to take the charge of a facilitator rather than that of a transmitter who considers himself to be the epitome of knowledge and who believes in just passing it on to the next level i.e. students who are supposed to grasp the information provided.

In the constructivist view, learning does not aim the search of truth but rather the creation of truth or knowledge. In order to make this happen, there needs to be a classroom environment which goes in sync with the process of construction of knowledge. The teacher needs to develop the capability of actively engaging the students, help in creation of new ideas. The reflective thinking of the teacher as well as thoughtful and scrupulous planning can work wonders. Creative inputs from the teacher keeping in mind the nature of content and the cognitive needs of the children are also required (Dogra, 2010).

The role of teacher in a classroom has undergone a shift in its prototype. The teaching methods used by the teachers have also undergone modifications as a result of the changes in the understanding and acceptance of new constructivist teaching methods by the teachers. Earlier, the teacher in a classroom used to play a more authoritative role. He used to be less liberating and more directive in his approach which highlights the characteristics of behaviorism.

When a teacher chooses to follow the constructivist ways and wants to implement the same in the classroom in order to bring out the meaningful construction of knowledge by the learners, the teacher has to behave in a few manners as follows-

**Teacher as a collaborator** – When the teacher behaves as a collaborator or facilitator in the classroom instead of behaving as a controller of the situation, he helps to enhance the constructivist environment of the class room by actively engaging the students in the process of generation of knowledge.

**Teacher as a guide or supervisor-** By adopting the role of a guide the teacher helps the students to create their own version of knowledge presented before them, describe the information and interpret conclusions in their own individual and unique manner (Sablonnie're et al., 2009). The teacher allows the students to discuss

amongst themselves, ask questions, and share their ideas with each other. The students exchange thoughts about what they think and understand of the knowledge presented to them while the teacher supervises them in the process of knowledge construction. The teacher tries to engage students by involving them in various activities such as experiments or ask questions to them by putting different situations and conditions before them. The teacher should take care that the students are offered with proper learning experiences.

### **Challenges**

Teaching in the classroom based on a constructivist method sounds innovative and is hugely supported by educationists but when it comes to actually implementing it in real situations its not as easy as it seems. It can be actually very challenging for the teacher and the students as well. The teacher has to be well informed about the ways in which a topic or a concept can be introduced in the classroom in a constructive manner. The teacher needs to be learned and prepared beforehand about how to teach and engage the class from a constructivist point of view. Also, the students are required to get used to and learn how to learn when the teacher maintains a constructivist classroom. The teacher's responsibility here is to make the students familiar to the world of constructivism and make them to be able to grasp the opportunities to become active constructors of knowledge which can be a challenging task in itself. Apart from this the school authorities also sometimes restrict the teacher from experimenting in the classrooms which can also pose several challenges for the teacher.

### **Conclusion**

Constructivism has become the new trend in the arena of education but there are a few things that are to be kept in mind while applying it in real situation. The teacher has to be caught up with the theoretical framework for a hands-on experience in classroom. Before presenting the new information to the students the teacher should check out the level of previous knowledge of the students and then proceed with the new content. Learning builds on the past experiences and combines new information to the previous knowledge. In order to make the classroom learner friendly and to ensure that the students construct knowledge themselves by engaging them in different activities the teacher should also keep in mind that those activities are related to the topic of study. The teacher should look after that the students don't deviate from the subject and are keen to learn through activities and don't get distracted which can happen very easily in an activity-oriented classroom. Moreover,

the teacher has to consciously make huge efforts to modify or change the style of teaching from a primarily teacher controlled to student oriented. The teacher has to make a conscious decision to allow students to be more expressive and free in the classroom. They are required to participate in the classroom activities rather than sitting idle. Here the teacher has to make sure that he brings up the learning material or the topic to be taught in such a manner that all the students are actively engaged in the process of learning. By getting well prepared and following the knowhows of constructivism, a teacher can overcome the various challenges that come in the way of changing a classroom to a constructivist classroom and getting positive outcomes.

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## Conceptual Premises of Psychosocial Attributes Among Secondary School Students and Its Relevance in Present Scenario

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### Abstract

*Psycho-social factors play a key role in the mental health of a person and mental health is necessary for the emotional, psychological, and social well-being of a person. It affects their thought process, feeling, and activity. People having positive Psycho-social factors are generally successful in all areas of life such as social, work, and family domains. The term "Psychosocial" has a broad meaning when considering health research and social epidemiology. It is formed from two words: psychological and social. Psychological factors can be positive, such as happiness, affect, and vitality, or negative, such as anxiety, perceived stress, and depressive symptoms. These can also be split to distinguish between trait and state aspects. Personality traits, depressive factors, well-being, quality of life, and the impact of significant life events and trauma are less likely to fluctuate on a day-to-day basis (i.e., more trait-like or stable variables), whereas anxiety, perceived stress, mood, affect, happiness, and vitality are more unstable (i.e., more state-like). Furthermore, cognitive, behavioral, and affective facets within psychosocial factors can be identified (Long & Cumming, 2013). Psychosocial attributes are very much important for school students. During the time of schooling their mental physical and social development occurs at a rapid speed. There have been serious efforts to attend to individual differences among the learner so that they may attain good mental health contributing to society meaningfully. The psycho-social attributes along with the social attributes of a learner play a very important role to ensure learners' participation in the teaching-learning programs. Hence, the present research article explains the conceptual premises of psychosocial attributes among secondary students and their relevance in the present scenario.*

**Keywords:** *psychosocial attributes, secondary students, mental physical and social development*

### Introduction

Nowadays, with rapid westernization and urbanization youth are becoming more fixated on superficiality as well as negativity which causes many psychological, mental issues like depression, migraine, insomnia, etc. Such a situation is alarming for the individual as well as for its society. In this age of

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globalization, people are leading a life of competition which gives rise to tension, stress, and anxiety in their life. The mental, physical and spiritual banks of youth are getting weak as an outcome of a hectic lifestyle. Globally, the incidents and intensity of emotional health problems among early adolescents are at a steep rise (Resnick et al, 1997; Fatum & Stillman, 2012). The negative energies like stress, depression, laziness, betrayal, etc. are getting dominant and if left untouched then it may lead to serious consequences in the future by negatively affecting school performance, social and emotional life (Iiades, 2013; Napotilana, 2013). The problem starts arising when one's strength is overpowered by its weakness which fits right for the condition of the modern generation in the present era; their insight and behavior are gradually degrading "Adolescence is a period of great storm and stress" (Hall, 1902) since the lives of teenagers undergo many physical, mental and emotional changes because of immensely fluctuating emotions. Therefore, Adolescence can be defined as a transition period between puberty and adulthood. World Health Organization (2002) defines adolescence as the age group of 11-19 years. Ministry of Health and Family welfare reports that 40% of the Indian population is between this age group. It can be characterized by radical, physical, hormonal, mental, emotional, social, educational, or career changes (Kumar & Mishra, 2016) and a phase of overcoming many challenges, difficulties, and new changes (Roth & Gunn, 2000).

### **Concept and meaning of Psychosocial Attributes**

Psychosocial attributes are made by the combination of two words psycho + social attributes. Psycho-social attributes denote the interconnection between psychological sub-components such as emotions, thoughts, and behaviors and social sub-components such as interpersonal relationships, social rules, norms, values, traditions, and community life. These attributes are sometimes also known as psychosocial factors. Psychological factors encompass processes that take place at the individual level as well as the meanings that one attributes to a particular situation which in turn affects our mental state (Upton, 2013). Social factors encompass those that are present in society and influence the individual by their structure and course (Upton, 2013). The term "psychosocial" has a broad meaning when considering health research and social epidemiology. It is formed from two words: psychological and social. Psychological factors can be positive, such as happiness, affect, and vitality, or negative, such as anxiety, perceived stress, and depressive symptoms. These can also be split to distinguish between trait and state aspects. Personality traits, depressive factors, well-being, quality of life, and the impact of significant life events and trauma are less likely to fluctuate on a day-to-day basis (i.e., more trait-like or stable variables), whereas anxiety, perceived stress, mood, affect, happiness, and vitality are more unstable (i.e., more state-like). Furthermore, cognitive,

behavioral, and affective facets within psychosocial factors can be identified (Long & Cumming, 2013). Psychosocial attributes are very much important for school students. During the time of schooling their mental physical and social development occurs at a rapid speed. Psychological attributes are involved in very simple phenomena like in time taken to react to a stimulus, i.e., reaction time, and also in highly global concepts like happiness. It is difficult to count and specify the number of psychological attributes that can be assessed. Psychosocial attributes are an integral part of life which is required for keeping alive interest in life, socializing with others, and developing satisfaction and happiness in one's life. Psychosocial attributes influence the identity of an individual. The better psychosocial attributes and individual would have the more joyful. The psychological and social attributes of students have been observed as a major factor in affecting the academic achievement of students (Weare, 2000). Therefore, implementing and practicing positive education from an early age will help in developing positive wellbeing.

The individual is a joint product of heredity and environment just in the same way as the area of a rectangle is the joint product of its length and breadth (Woodworth and Marquis, 1948). Similarly, the scholastic performance (is the end product of all educational endeavors) of students is the product of the interaction of various internal and external factors, relating to one's own psychological development and also by interaction with, a social environment. These factors are collectively known as psychosocial factors (Erickson, 1950). The psychosocial element involves the aspects of both social and psychological behavior (medical dictionary). Psychological factors are mainly intelligence, anxiety, values, interest, aptitude, motivation, etc, while the social factors include the environment both in and outside the school. Socio-economic factors (SES), locality, gender, caste, religion, etc. as some other important social factors. These factors are responsible for not only the growth and development of an individual but also for the scholastic performance of students.

Schools are miniature societies. Children spend a considerable amount of time at schools with the school community which makes schools an imperative part of a child's all-round development. The child gets many experiences in schools which shape their personality and future. Schools should promote positive feelings and strength among students to improve the environment of the school as a whole, which in turn will foster the development of students. Children who experience healthy development tend to be part of encouraging and supportive environments. Students who expressed higher satisfaction with school indicated more social support and interpersonal interactions than those who are dissatisfied with school. The educational system around the world is facing this difficulty. Some countries are

framing curricula to study psychosocial factors to identify mental health problems in students. After identifying the above-mentioned problem these countries are using therapy medication or other tools to improve the condition of adolescents. The most common types of mental illness are anxiety, phobia, stress, obsessive-compulsive disorder as reported by NIMH (National Institute of Mental Health). These mental problems among adolescents sometimes result in suicides. Psychosocial factors are recognized to be critical in both the causation and the prevention of disease and in the promotion of health. This is so for the health sciences in general and for occupational health in particular, since psychosocial factors are among the most important of those that influence the total health of a working population. (WHO, 1987)

#### **Relevance of the psychosocial attributes among secondary school students.**

With the advancement in technology and changing times, the traditional meaning and essence of education are fading away. The modern education system has become quite convenient as it's not even capable enough to train students for basic challenges of life (Krishnamurthy, 1962) that generates stress, depression, anxiety, Impact of school culture on psychosocial attributes of student's frustration, suicidal thoughts, etc. In the present society, education is seen as a means to develop professional skills that may help in employment, and less preference is given towards knowledge acquisition and learning life skills. But it is very important to have the right approach to education as it prepares an individual for life-long challenges. "The process of socialization of younger generation is possible through education" (Durkheim, 1893). One's character and life-long habits are developed in adolescence i.e., the early years that are being spent in schools. Their habits, values, and behavior are a reflection of what they learn in school as they blindly follow what they learn. It means the personality of an adolescent is shaped by the culture of their school since after the age of three most time of a child's life is spent in school. He blindly follows what he learns there. As a result, his habits, values, and behavior are directly affected by the culture of his school.

Nowadays, traces of stress, depression, and anxiety can be commonly found within adolescents in a higher amount (Ang & Huan, 2006). It directly points out the faults in the present education system that's failing at the very base level i.e., to equip individuals with the skills to lead a happy and contented life. It is in adolescence that a child learns responsibilities, relationships, roles, and sets goals. Adolescents have the tendency and willingness of adapting to the environment, they also possess the flexibility to adapt physically, spiritually, and intellectually to situations and surroundings as they are still in the growing and learning phase (Bogdan, 2003).

Henceforth, a positive school culture plays an important role in the welfare of students. If schools fail to direct the development of adolescents in the right direction, then they'll probably face conflict and stress among themselves. The school culture may either create an individual who is exceedingly 'conceited, adamant, aggravating, emotionally immature and unsatisfied with life and loved ones or it might shape a person who is equipped with constructive identity characteristics like confidence, helping the state of mind, self-adequacy, strength, optimism, self-efficacy, resilience, adjustment and so forth as it is "the set of norms, values, and beliefs, rituals and ceremonies, symbols and stories that make up the 'Persona' of the school" (Peterson, 1998). Subsequently, positive school Impact of school culture on psychosocial attributes of students 2018 36 culture is critical to set up a perfect being. Teachers view children's positive outlook as a crucial factor for success in school (Givner & Pierson, 2004). A child full of negativity is more prone to witness behavioral disorders (Silk & Movacs, 2005). Certain psychological attributes are very important for predicting students' behavior in school and their academic achievement. These attributes such as self-concept are very much responsible for their academic performance. The students having positive self-concept perform well in the examination. Behavioral indicators in terms of psycho-social attributes are effective predictors for academic success and persistence. Many studies have shown that by measuring psychosocial attributes we can find reasons behind dropouts. We can also develop in them a love for school. By measuring psycho-social attributes, we can find early indicators for dropouts so that we can predict dropouts.

Other studies show that psychosocial factors like self-efficacy, self-concept, self-esteem, and motivation are new predictors for academic performance. There is evidence that a lack of self efficacy and motivation can cause students not to be dedicated and committed to school and school works. These psycho-social problems cause poor attendance, adjusting problems, poor social behavior, attention, and concentration issues most of the time. Secondary students having psycho-social problems have been reported as 3 times absent as compared to other students. So, on the basis of the above facts, we can say that the Psycho-social attributes of students are imperative for academic and social success.

Secondary school students are in the phase of social-emotional transition that demands proper caring and sharing to prepare them for future productive citizens of the country as well as to ensure the social, political, and economic development of the country. It is the responsibility of teachers, parents, and all the concerned authorities of secondary students to provide the proper environment for their sound development of psychosocial attributes.

### Conclusion of the study

It is known to all that Education is a tool that is a panacea for all types of abnormalities and calamities as well as to equip students with pertinent knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Apart from that well-versed development of students is ensured through proper education at each level of education like primary secondary and tertiary. Most importantly the development of psychosocial attributes occurs at the age of adolescence when students are entering the prime time of their life and they lie in secondary schools. In this span of life, students learn many things like life skills, universal ethical values as well as develop their self-concepts, self- efficacy, decision-making ability, and emotional, social, and psychological adjustments.

Thus, at this time treating them (students) in a proper and dignified manner considering their socioemotional changes is the need of the hour to ensure their complete development of personality as an outcome of psychosocial development of attributes. In the rapidly changing socio-economic scenario of the country, students are facing various types of stress, antisocial tendencies, criminal behaviors advocate relevance of sound development of psychosocial attributes among students of future generations so that social, economic, and political empowerment of the country can be done by equipping its citizens with relevant psychosocial attributes that provide a sound base for producing best minds in the country. Thus, it can be concluded that the development of psychosocial attributes among secondary school students plays a pivotal role in their overall development of personality as well as in honing their academic achievements. Thus, it is a core responsibility of educational practitioners to mold the teaching-learning process at each level especially the secondary level as per the requirement of the societal needs, aspirations and provide pertinent ambiance as well efforts should be done for the sound development of psychosocial attributes among secondary school students.

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