RESEARCH AND REVIEWS IN LITERATURE, SOCIAL SCIENCES, EDUCATION, COMMERCE AND MANAGEMENT VOLUME III

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Research and Reviews in Literature, Social Sciences, Education, Commerce and Management Volume III

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PREFACE

In the vast landscape of human knowledge, literature, social sciences, education, commerce, and management stand as pillars that shape our understanding of the world and guide our endeavors. They are the domains where ideas take flight, theories evolve, and practical wisdom finds its roots. It is within this dynamic intersection that "Research and Reviews in Literature, Social Sciences, Education, Commerce, and Management" emerges as a beacon of intellectual exploration and scholarly discourse.

This compendium stands as a testament to the relentless pursuit of knowledge and the unwavering commitment of scholars, researchers, and practitioners in their respective fields. It is a repository of insights, analyses, and reflections that collectively contribute to the ever-expanding tapestry of human understanding.

In the pages that follow, readers will embark on a journey through diverse landscapes of inquiry. From the nuanced realms of literature where narratives intertwine with culture and emotion, to the empirical realms of social sciences where patterns in human behavior are deciphered, each chapter offers a glimpse into the multifaceted dimensions of our existence.

Education, the cornerstone of societal progress, is explored with depth and breadth, illuminating pathways to transformative pedagogies and innovative practices that nurture minds and inspire lifelong learning. Meanwhile, commerce and management, amidst the complexities of global markets and organizational dynamics, unveil strategies and paradigms that drive economic prosperity and organizational excellence.

As we delve into these domains, we recognize that knowledge is not static but rather a river in constant flux, shaped by the currents of inquiry, debate, and discovery. The contributions within this volume stand as tributes to this ceaseless pursuit, offering perspectives that challenge assumptions, provoke thought, and invite dialogue.

At its core, "Research and Reviews in Literature, Social Sciences, Education, Commerce, and Management" embodies the spirit of intellectual curiosity and scholarly rigor. It is a testament to the collective endeavor of individuals who seek to unravel the mysteries of the human experience and contribute meaningfully to the advancement of society.

Editors

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THE EFFICACY OF HERMENEUTICS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING LANGUAGE, CULTURE IN RESEARCH

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Introduction:

The Hermeneutic theory is a sophisticated and vigorous qualitative social science approach under guiding qualitative research. It highlights that wording of languages expose hidden meanings, interpretation is based on how human beings from various community settings understand themselves in the social world and the universality of language. However it can be argued that when practically applying this research theory there are challenges such as failure of the researcher to interpret information conveyed by the participants, ignorant participants. The essay seeks to unravel this theory, starting off with its historical background before delving into the conceptual and theoretical tenents of the same. This is in turn followed by an examination of how the theory works in qualitative research.

Historical development

The term Hermeneutics is believed to have originated from Hermes who was gifted in interpreting messages by a Greek God. Ancient Greeks believed that gods delivered messages which would be interpreted and conveyed to people. Sherma and Sharma (2008:2) observed that, the term Hermeneutics is related to the name of Greek god Hermes, the messenger of the gods and thought to be founder of language itself. In this instance, Hermes had to understand the message that was delivered and interpret to the actors involved using various forms of communication. Similarly, Smith (1993:89) argued that the concept 'hermeneutics' emanated from the Greek verb hermeneuein which literally means "to interpret" and the noun *"hermeneia"* means "interpretation" Modern research content that the term hermeneutics originated from Hermes who was believed to have supernatural powers from the Greek gods. On the same note, Gadamer and Palmer (2007) argued that hermeneutics refers to practice, an art that requires a special skill. He further suggested that,"………..Hermeneutics is the practical art that is involved in such things as preaching, interpreting other languages, explaining and explicating texts" page 44.

Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) who is the founding father of Hermeneutics pointed out that Hermeneutics is not only based on biblical analysis and interpretation of sacred texts but rather it is a philosophy that is mainly aimed at interpreting other texts. On the same

note, Davey (2004:3) observed that, according to Schleiermacher understanding and interpretation of texts does not occur in water light compartments, all forms of understanding itself arise from the shared human ability to elicit meaning. In support of this scholarly view, the writer suggests that Schleiermacher's view explains that interpretation of a text can be linked to dialogue or conversation between the author and actors involved. In this case the reader had to communicate with the author in a dialogue so as to interpret the meaning of the text. In support of this view, Schleiermacher (1998) cited in Ferraris (1996) argued that,'... hermeneuitics is mainly characterized by the use of language and it is also based on understanding the relationship between language and meanings that requires a deeper analysis and interpretation" (p.2). In this case, Schleiermacher pointed out that the principle of understanding cannot be isolated but rather various aspects should be considered when interpreting texts and jargon used by the author.

Wilhelm Dilthey broadened Schleiermacher's idea on hermeneuitics and highlighted that hermeneutics was not only a theory of interpretation of texts as Schleiermacher proposed but rather it was mainly aimed at understanding the inner self of actors involved. In contrast to Schleiermacher, Dilthey pointed out that meaningful objects should be interpreted so as to ensure that social life is maintained Bryne (1998).

Dilthey argued and pointed out that when interpreting data social sciences are different from physical sciences, this is due to the fact that social science research is interpretive in nature. He claimed that social science is a unique field of study which should not be conceptualised as natural sciences Dilthey (1996). In this instance, when interpreting a given situation social science qualitative researchers should be competent enough to use their exegesis to come up with a conclusive remark on a particular issue.

Martin Heidegger assumed that hermeneuitics shifted from focusing on interpretation of texts to understanding human beings themselves and how they relate to the social environment. In contrast to Dilthey assumptions, Palmer (1969) in his discussion on hermeneutics argued that, interpretation is not only characterized by objects but rather it is mainly focused on how human beings experience the world. Martin Heidegger as a Hermeneuitic philosopher expanded Dilthey's assumptions on hermeneuitics to include the theory of being, thus understanding human beings in a social environment. In support of this fact, Thomas (2001:112) further illustrates that the Hermeneuitic circle is essential in understanding human beings in the social world as the researcher would be able to understand the whole by grasping its parts. In this instance, Martin Heidegger pointed out that the object and the subject cannot be separated. He pointed out that individuals experiences and perspectives are shaped by their environment.

Gadamer broadened the concept of Heideggerian pre-understanding of hermeneutics by introducing the concept of tradition. Gadamer and Palmer (2007:132) observed that, Gadamer

extends, broadens and supplements the insights of Heidegger to include the question of the truth of the word in poetry, sacred and legal texts, tradition and even philosophy. For example Gadamer pointed out that in most instances, values, beliefs and norms of an individual form the reader's understanding of texts. On the same note, Gadamer (1998) argued that although interpretation is based on the social environment of the actors involved, understanding is mainly based on an individual's cultural beliefs when analysing texts. As compared to Heidegger who articulated that interpretation is mainly centred on objects and human experience, Gadamers' vision centres on the fact that in order to critically interpret texts there is need to focus on the cultural context of the author.Gadamer further asserts that language is the universal in which understanding occurs just as understanding occurs in interpreting.

Gadamers' theory of fusion of horizons points out that in order to understand texts, there is need engage in a dialogical pattern between the reader and the texts. Thus, in each instance the actors involved would be equipped with a horizon of understanding which would be transformed to create a new understanding of the topic. In conjunction with this view, Davey (2010) noted that, "……understanding is not then a purely individual achievement. It emerges from that unpredictable dialecticity of encounter between the linguistic and cultural horizons of individuals".

Hermeneutics in qualitative research

Wording of languages non-verbally and exposing hidden meanings

The Hermeneuitic theory as compared to other research methods such as ethnography and epistemology it is mainly based on the wording of languages non-verbally and exposing hidden meanings exposed by participants. In conjunction with the above view, Smith (2007:104) pointed out that unlike other types of qualitative research methods, the Hermeneutic theory enables the researcher to eliminate his or her perspectives alongside the participants perspective towards a particular issue. For instance, a researcher conducting research concerning peer influence on drug abuse among young adolescents in high density areas, will not only use the verbal forms of communication being conveyed by participants but would also put into consideration the surrounding of the participants. In this case, the social scientist researcher should be able to understand the context and culture in which the research is undertaken.

Hermeneuitic theory allows the researcher to interpret qualitative data and give vivid findings. Fairfield (2011:204) points out that the Hermeneuitic theory enables researchers to conduct research in a way that is mainly aimed at clearly interpreting data using non-verbal communication.

However it can be argued that, some researchers often fail to interpret the hidden feelings of respondents as a result of the environment. For instance, when conducting research in children's homes, the researcher is required to conduct interviews with institutionalized orphans

with the help of workers at the institution. This hinders the participants to clearly expose the verbal and non-verbal forms of communication such as posture, facial expression and body movements during the interviews.

Interpretation is based on how human beings experience life adventures in the world

The Hermeneutic theory views the fact that interpretation of languages that are conveyed by research participants are mainly based on how human beings experience various life experiences. In social science qualitative research, the central part of research is mainly aimed at understanding how values, norms and ethics should be put in place so as to curb various challenges faced by marginalized individuals. Interpretation of data helps the researcher to clearly analyze and interpret data. For example when conducting data on challenges faced by rural women in accessing maternal health services a qualitative data analysts should be able to interpret the data considering how they overcame such a challenge. On the same note, Smith and Osborn (2003) highlighted that when analyzing social experiences that are faced by individuals the Hermeneuitic theory seeks to curb perspectives that convey different meanings. Interpreting data is mainly aimed at analyzing moods, concerns and feelings of individuals.

Heidegger denotes that the Hermeneutic theory emanated in qualitative research with the aim of interpreting data in a social science perspective. He pointed out that researchers interpret data not only based on scientific or numerical data but rather through social lived experiences. Thus, the Hermeneutic theory is crucial when analyzing qualitative data.

However it can be argued that, in most cases some research pretend to behave in a certain way so as to please the researcher. For instance when conducting a research on maladaptive behavior among adolescents research participants are more likely to point out that they have never engaged in crime so as to satisfy the researcher. When using focused group discussions a few adolescents would admit that they have engaged in crime and delinquent activities. This becomes difficult for the researcher to interpret the given findings hence the researcher may end up generalizing.

Relationship between religion, scripture and biblical scriptures to society

In relation to interpreting biblical texts, the Hermeneutic theory is grounded on the assumption that there is a close relationship between biblical scriptures and societal values and norms. For instance when conducting a research towards cultural beliefs, the researcher should be able to understand various forms of communication that will be used by research participants to convey their messages. The Hermeneutic theory points out that religious beliefs and values are formed by communication and hence a relationship exists between religion and society. On the same note, Gadamer (2004) highlighted that"…textual analysis is crucial when conducting religious based research thus, the researcher should be able to consider the fact that when

analyzing texts especially during the interviews and focused group discussions is of importance…"

Language Universality

The Hermeneuitic theory proposes that the way in which individuals communicate using verbal and non-verbal communication is universal and broad. Gadamer (2004) points out that"….every dialogue has the potential to allow an individual to reason, project understanding and reading between the line…".In addition to that, Gadamer (1996) highlighted that language is the universal medium in which understanding occurs when interpreting. He highlighted that, '…..in order to be able to express a text's meaning and subject matter, we must translate it in our own language…..". Gadamer emphasizes verbal interpretation as the form of all interpretation, even when what is being interpreted is not linguistic in nature. In addition to that, dialogue is crucial in qualitative research due to the fact that it allows the researcher to produce realistic findings when interpreting data especially during interviews. For instance when conducting a qualitative research on drug abuse among adolescents. A researcher should be able to unfold the language being delivered due to the fact that most drug abusers use abusive language. Clearly showing the fact that, social science researchers should be able to apply various forms of languages that are portrayed by the research participants.

Phenomenological hermeneuitics in qualitative research

The focus of phenomenological Hermeneuitics is to inquire what people experience in regard to some phenomenon by interpreting the life experiences of individuals using contextual meaning. Bryne (1998) observed that the terms Hermeneuitics and phenomenology are usually confused in qualitative research. The two perspectives denote that interpretation of texts is mainly based on a certain phenomenon. In this case, the focus of phenomenological Hermeneuitics in qualitative research is to inquire what people experience in relation a particular phenomenon. For example a social science research concerned about studying autism, may conduct interviews. In this instance the phenomenologists is likely to inquire on the context and cultural beliefs surrounding the phenomenon. In this instance the social scientist is likely to interpret experiences surrounding the phenomenon of autism so as to come up with vivid findings in the research.

Phenomenology and hermeneutics are crucial modes of analysis used by qualitative researchers to interpret data. In support of this view proposed by the writer, Vanmanen (1990:140) factored out that the objectives of phenomenological hermeneutics is the direct understanding and interpretation of a phenomenon based on textual analysis. In this instance, qualitative research is mainly centred on conceptualising contexts and understanding people's perspectives and understanding of a particular situation or philosophy.

Hermeneuitics in qualitative data collection and analysis

In data interpretation and analysis, the Hermeneuitic theory is crucial as it allows qualitative researchers to clearly interpret findings and give sound data analysis. Ferraris (1996:102) pointed out that Hermeneuitics is an art of interpretation and understanding life experiences of individuals and how they relate to a particular issue. In qualitative research social scientists are mainly aimed at providing accurate data analysis by clearly interpreting the findings of research studies. On the same note, Ricoeur, (1992:122) argued that, "interpreting and understanding are not only ways of knowing, rather there are ways in which people deal with reality since explanation is a necessary step for understanding". Thus, in measuring information on targeted variables the social science qualitative researcher is likely to be competent enough when using Hermenuitics.

Hermeneuitics in interviews

The Hermeneuitic theory is essential in qualitative research as it equips qualitative researchers with proper interviewing techniques. Gadamer and Palmer (2007) observed that,"…. according to Gadamer, Hermeneuitics deals with inquiry in terms of question and answer, the question pre-shapes and determines the direction of the answer, so all assertions are answers to questions and we need to be careful what questioning we ask and fail to ask". For instance a social science researcher should avoid too direct questions to the interviewees due to the fact that they may be threatening to the research participants. The researcher should be competent enough to ask broad questions which would help the researcher to interpret the response of the research participants. Similarly, Byne (1996:103) content that an in depth interview is a qualitative research technique which involves carrying out intensive individual interview with a small number of participants in order to explore their views on a particular issue.

Conclusion:

The Hermeneutic theory is relevant in qualitative research as it explains that language, religious beliefs and cultural values are essential in conceptualising data. The writer has managed to discuss the importance of Hermeneuitics in qualitative research and how social scientists can probe data from participants using the Hermeneutic theory.

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EXPLORING NARRATIVE STRATEGIES IN THE WORKS OF J. M. COETZEE: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract:

This research delves into the intricate narrative strategies employed by Nobel laureate J.M. Coetzee in his literary oeuvre. Coetzee, renowned for his thought-provoking narratives, utilizes a myriad of techniques to engage readers and stimulate critical inquiry. This article examines Coetzee's use of narrative perspectives, structures, and devices across a selection of his notable works, shedding light on how these strategies contribute to the thematic depth and complexity of his fiction. J.M. Coetzee stands as one of the most prominent contemporary literary figures, known for his exploration of power dynamics, morality, and the human condition. His narrative prowess lies not only in the themes he tackles but also in the nuanced storytelling techniques he employs. Through a detailed analysis of select works, this research elucidates the narrative strategies that distinguish Coetzee's fiction and contribute to its enduring impact.

Keywords: Narrative Strategies, Power Dynamics, Morality, Storytelling Techniques

John Maxwell Coetzee is one of the foremost contemporary writers of South Africa. He has been conferred with various awards. He is the recipient of the Noble Prize for Literature in 2003. His writings depict the oppression and injustice prevalent in the society, though he avoids realistic fiction. Most of his stories take place in indefinite place and time but we can draw parallels with the South African situation of Apartheid and post- Apartheid period. His novels are meta-fictional and self-reflexive. Coetzee depicts historical moments but deliberately fictionalizes them. Coetzee used different narrative techniques in his novels such as inter-textuality, self-reflexivity, allegory, the stream of consciousness method, a shift in the narrative voice, the open-ended conclusions or double narration, the epistolary method etc.

J.M. Coetzee employs various narrative techniques and strategies in elucidating and establishing his themes. Coetzee uses the first person narrative technique in his novels. Coetzee uses monologue as another innovative literary device. He also makes use of flashbacks and reminiscences. The characters' complex inner thoughts are revealed through their dreams, which serve as a mirror. J.M. Coetzee explores with and alters the novel's traditional form in his

writing. He writes his novels in a variety of compositional forms, including historical chronicle, descriptive prose, monologue, and epistolary form.

In Coetzee's early fiction, the strategy of multiple narrative voices, parody, intertextuality, diverse versions of the same incident and the play of language is found. The textual strategy involves the use of meta-fictional methods to articulate the social and political issues in South Africa.

Julia Kristeva points out that:

> "each word (text) is an intersection of words (texts) where at least
> one other word (text) can be read. Any text …is constructed as a
> mosaic of quotations, any text is the absorption and transformation
> of another."[Kristeva 1986: 37]

Coetzee often employs unconventional narrative perspectives to destabilize reader expectations and challenge established norms. In "Disgrace," for instance, the shift from third-person to first-person narration offers insight into protagonist David Lurie's internal struggles and moral ambiguity. This narrative technique invites readers to inhabit Lurie's conflicted psyche, blurring the lines between right and wrong.

This novel *Age of Iron* is written in first person narrative as narrated by the protagonist Mrs. Curren. She gives a detailed, probing and precise narration of the events. But when John is shot down by the police, she is not there. Hence the technique of double narration is employed. Mrs. Curren closes her eyes and visualises what must have happened to John. Though she is in bed, lying down, her disembodied spirit wanders into Florence's room and hovers over the boy who is waiting for his death holding a pistol:

> He is readying himself for the smoke that will choke his lungs,
> the kick that will burst the door open, the torrent of fire that
> will sweep him away. He is readying himself to raise the pistol
> in that instant and fire the one shot he will have time to fire into
> the heart of the light. His eyes are unblinking, fixed on the door
> through which he is going to leave the world. His mouth is dry
> but he is not afraid. His heart beats steadily like a fist in his
> chest clenching and unclenching (AOI, 175).

Age of Iron is a novel that is written in an epistolary style and told through letters. One may argue that Coetzee's books are reworking of prior works rather than wholly original works. Intertextuality is clearly evident in in his novels. It involves incorporating concepts, ideas, and motifs from one work into another. When viewed in the context of the earlier material, the new text is easier to understand. Another example of intertextuality in Coetzee's novels is the repetition of specific concepts and topics. There are several references to Coetzee's other works

throughout the text. There are allusions to Tolstoy's The Angel Who Lived with a Shoemaker and Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice in the novel Age of Iron.

Coetzee uses inter-textuality to evolve his own perceptions of South African situation. He subverts traditional realistic novel forms as he makes use of inter-textual strategies and multiple narrative voices to self-reflexively comment on the nature of fiction and fiction writing. David Attwell describes Coetzee's writings as "situational meta-fiction"[Attwell 1993:]

In *Disgrace*, the voice of narration overlaps with the point of view of the focalizer. This blend is overcoded by the implied authorial voice which destabilizes the narrative. David Lurie is a character inside the story and can be regarded as an "internal focalizer" (DG, 189). The term 'focalizer' implies focus, which indicates the narrative choice to highlight a certain thing rather than another. Coetzee thus problematize the point of view presented in the novel. The narration progresses through free indirect discourse.

Coetzee employs psychological tactics in the narrative of *In the Heart of the Country*. Coetzee employs the odd technique of numbering the paragraphs in this novel. Stream of consciousness technique has been used by Coetzee to narrate the story of Magda, a troubled white woman who kills her own father because he was in affair with a young black woman.

In his novels, Coetzee uses fragmented narratives in place of the traditional one. The disjointed plots of his novels perfectly depict the scattered, usually dislocated lifestyles of his heroes.

In Coetzee's works, there is a clear sense of coherence between the characters and his ideas. He illustrates these through the use of a variety of formal devices, including the insertion of confessional sources like letters, diaries, and journals, the use of stream-ofconsciousness tales, and allegorical interpretations. Coetzee's stories are intertwined with those of the people who experience a similar shattered existence, making it challenging to consider them separately. Coetzee's works also can be categorized as postmodern. Coetzee's works are informed by various influences like the milieu, scholarship, his rootedness in linguistics and stylistics.

A hallmark of Coetzee's narrative style is his willingness to experiment with structure, disrupting linear chronology and conventional storytelling norms. In "Life & Times of Michael K," the fragmented narrative mirrors protagonist Michael's fragmented existence, echoing themes of displacement and disconnection. Coetzee's structural innovation serves to underscore the chaotic nature of human experience and the elusive nature of truth.

Coetzee frequently engages with intertextual references and metafictional elements, inviting readers to question the boundaries between reality and fiction. In *Foe*," Coetzee reimagines Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, foregrounding themes of authorship and colonialism. Through this metafictional lens, Coetzee prompts readers to interrogate the power dynamics inherent in storytelling and representation.

Central to Coetzee's narrative arsenal is his adept use of silence and subtext, conveying meaning through what is left unsaid. In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, the unspeakable violence of colonial oppression looms large, evoked through spare, understated prose. Coetzee's employment of silence serves to amplify the horrors of oppression while challenging readers to confront uncomfortable truths.

Coetzee's narratives are characterized by moral ambiguity and ethical complexity, prompting readers to grapple with profound questions of right and wrong. In *The Lives of Animals*, the juxtaposition of philosophical discourse and personal narrative underscores the fraught nature of moral decision-making. Coetzee's refusal to offer easy answers challenges readers to confront the moral complexities of contemporary life.

Conclusion:

Coetzee used different narrative techniques in his novels such as intertextuality, self-reflexivity, allegory, the stream of consciousness method, a shift in the narrative voice, the open-ended conclusions or double narration, the epistolary method etc. The use of narrative ambiguities, repetitions and allegorical settings is suitable for his thematic concerns.

Through an exploration of narrative perspectives, structural experimentation, intertextuality, silence, and ethical ambiguity, this research has illuminated the diverse narrative strategies employed by J.M. Coetzee across his body of work. Coetzee's fiction serves not only as a vehicle for storytelling but also as a rich tapestry of thematic exploration and philosophical inquiry. By engaging with Coetzee's narrative techniques, readers are invited to participate in a dialogue about the complexities of human existence and the moral dilemmas that shape our lives. As Coetzee continues to captivate readers with his thought-provoking narratives, his legacy as a master storyteller and literary innovator remains firmly cemented in the literary canon.

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A STUDY ON TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES AND ITS IMPACT ON BUSINESS

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Abstract:

The paper examines key technologies driving innovation, including artificial intelligence, big data analytics, cloud computing, and the Internet of Things (IoT). It analyses how these technologies empower businesses to gather and analyse vast amounts of data, gain customer insights, automate tasks, and develop data-driven strategies. By critically examining success stories and challenges faced by businesses adopting new technologies, the paper provides valuable insights for companies seeking to leverage technology for sustainable innovation. Organizations create, operate, and deliver value. This paper explores the profound impact of technology on business. innovation, encompassing its influence on product development, operational efficiency, customer engagement, and market expansion. Through an extensive review of current literature, case studies, and industry trends, it aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how technology is reshaping the dynamics of business innovation. By examining the multifaceted role of technology, the study offers valuable insights for businesses seeking to leverage technological advancements to foster innovation and gain competitive advantage in the modern marketplace.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Data Analytics, Cloud Computing.

Introduction:

In an era characterized by unprecedented technological advancements, businesses are continually compelled to innovate in order to stay competitive and meet evolving customer demands. The integration of technology has become an indispensable catalyst for driving innovation across various facets of business operations, fundamentally reshaping traditional business models and strategies.

Innovation is the lifeblood of any thriving business. It's the constant churn of ideas that leads to the development of new products, services, and processes, keeping companies ahead of the curve in a competitive landscape. But in today's rapidly evolving world, achieving true innovation rarely happens in a vacuum. Technology has become an indispensable force, acting as both a tool and a catalyst for ground-breaking advancements across every industry.

Literature review:

A significant impact of technology is the rise of automation. Studies by Brynjolfsson *et al.* (2016) highlight how automation streamlines production processes, reduces labor costs, and improves overall operational efficiency. However, Frey and Osborne (2017) raise concerns about potential job displacement due to automation, particularly in tasks with routine and repetitive elements. Businesses must navigate this balance, leveraging automation for efficiency while considering the need for reskilling initiatives and workforce adaptation.

Technological advancements foster globalization by facilitating communication and collaboration across borders. This, as Ghezzi *et al.* (2018) point out, allows businesses to reach a wider customer base and operate on a global scale. E-commerce platforms like Amazon and Alibaba exemplify this trend, enabling businesses to sell their products and services internationally. However, as Cavusgil *et al.* (2017) emphasize, cultural sensitivity becomes crucial when operating in diverse markets. Businesses need to adapt their strategies and marketing approaches to cater to local preferences and regulations.

The explosion of data offers businesses valuable insights into customer behavior and market trends. Big data analytics, as explored by Chen *et al.* (2012), allows businesses to gather and analyze vast amounts of data, leading to data-driven decision making. This, as Davenport *et al.* (2018) argue, improves marketing strategies, product development, and resource allocation. Businesses can leverage customer insights to personalize experiences, develop more targeted marketing campaigns, and create data-driven products that better cater to customer needs.

The growing reliance on technology presents new challenges for businesses. One major concern is cybersecurity, as McAfee (2022) reports. Businesses face an increased risk of cyberattacks on their data infrastructure. Robust security measures, as PwC (2023) recommends, are essential to protect sensitive data and maintain customer trust. Businesses must invest in cybersecurity solutions and employee training to mitigate cyber risks.

Case studies of businesses that have successfully leveraged technology for innovation

Amazon's cloud computing dominance:

- Innovation: Amazon Web Services (AWS) revolutionized cloud computing by offering scalable, reliable, and affordable cloud services.
- Key Strategies: AWS focused on providing a comprehensive suite of cloud services, investing heavily in infrastructure, and continuously iterating to meet customer needs.
- Impact: Businesses of all sizes can access computing power, storage, and other services on-demand, enabling innovation without heavy upfront investment.
- Success Factors: Amazon's deep technical expertise, commitment to customer-centricity, and aggressive pricing strategies have propelled AWS to dominate the cloud computing market.

Netflix's streaming revolution:

- Innovation: Netflix shifted from DVD rentals to streaming, transforming the entertainment industry by offering on-demand access to a vast library of movies and TV shows.

- Key Strategies: Netflix invested in content creation, personalized recommendation algorithms, and a seamless user experience across devices.

- Impact: Consumers can now binge-watch content anytime, anywhere, disrupting traditional TV networks and distribution channels.

- Success Factors: Netflix's data-driven approach to content creation and recommendation algorithms, coupled with its early investment in streaming technology, have cemented its position as a leader in the digital entertainment industry.

Both Amazon and Netflix demonstrate the power of leveraging technology for innovation, enabling them to disrupt traditional industries and create new markets. Their success underscores the importance of continuous innovation, customer-centricity, and strategic investments in technology infrastructure.

The impact of technology on product development

- **Rapid prototyping and design**

The integration of advanced technology in product development processes has revolutionized the speed and precision with which new products are conceptualized, designed, and brought to market. For instance, the utilization of 3D printing, computer-aided design (CAD) software, and virtual simulations has significantly accelerated the prototyping and iteration phases, leading to enhanced innovation and reduced time-to-market.

- **Enhance research and development**

The advent of big data analytics and machine learning has transformed the landscape of research and development (R&D), enabling organizations to harness vast amounts of data to drive innovation. By leveraging predictive analytics and advanced modelling techniques companies can optimize their R&D efforts, identify market trends, and develop breakthrough products tailored to meet specific customer needs.

Technology's influence on operational efficiency

- **Automation and robotics**

Automation technologies, including robotics and process automation, have redefined operational processes, enabling businesses to streamline workflows, minimize errors, and achieve unprecedented levels of efficiency. Through the deployment of robotic process automation (RPA) and autonomous systems, organizations can automate repetitive tasks, freeing up human resources to focus on more strategic and value-adding activities.

- **Supply chain management and logistics**

    The Integration of technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT), blockchain, and artificial intelligence (Al) has revolutionized. supply chain management and logistics operations. These innovations have empowered businesses to optimize inventory management, enhance transparency and traceability, and mitigate operational risks, ultimately fostering greater agility and responsiveness within the supply chain.

Customer experience and engagement

- **Personalization and data- driven marketing**

    Technology plays a pivotal role in enabling personalized customer experiences and data-driven marketing initiatives. By leveraging customer data and analytics, businesses can tailor their products, services, and marketing campaigns to resonate with individual customer preferences, thereby enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty.

- **Digital platform and e-commerce**

    The proliferation of digital platforms and e-commerce solutions has transformed the way businesses interact with and serve their customers. Through the adoption of user-friendly interfaces, seamless payment gateways, and personalized recommendation engines, organizations can innovate their customer engagement strategies, creating compelling digital experiences that drive customer acquisition and retention.

Market expansion and competitive advantage

- **Global research and digital transformation**

    Technology has facilitated global market expansion by enabling businesses to transcend geographical boundaries and access new customer segments. Through digital transformation initiatives, organizations can leverage e-commerce, digital marketing, and online platforms to establish a global presence, thereby unlocking new growth opportunities and diversifying their revenue streams.

- **Competitive differentiation through technology**

    Emerging technologies such as artificial Intelligence, augmented reality, and Internet of Things (IoT) present businesses with unique opportunities to differentiate their products and services in the market. By harnessing these cutting-edge technologies, organizations can innovate their offerings, deliver unparalleled value to customers, and carve out distinct competitive positions within their respective industries.

Potential challenges associated with adopting new technologies for business

Data security and privacy concerns:

- Adopting new technologies often involves collecting, storing, and processing large amounts of data, raising concerns about data security breaches, privacy violations, and regulatory compliance.

- Ensuring robust cybersecurity measures, data encryption, access controls, and compliance with relevant regulations such as GDPR or CCPA is essential to mitigate these risks.

Talent acquisition and skill gaps:

- Finding and retaining skilled talent with expertise in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, blockchain, or cybersecurity can be challenging due to high demand and limited supply.
- Investing in employee training and development programs, partnering with educational institutions, and implementing talent retention strategies are crucial to address skill gaps and attract top talent.

Integration and compatibility issues:

- Integrating new technologies with existing systems, processes, and infrastructure can be complex and time-consuming, leading to compatibility issues, data inconsistencies, and workflow disruptions.
- Conducting thorough compatibility assessments, implementing interoperability standards, and adopting scalable and flexible architectures can help mitigate integration challenges.

Costs and Return on Investment (ROI):

- Adopting new technologies often entails significant upfront costs, including investments in hardware, software licenses, training, and implementation services.
- Calculating the potential return on investment (ROI) and ensuring alignment with business objectives is essential to justify the investment and prioritize projects with the highest impact on innovation and competitiveness.

Resistance to change and organizational culture:

- Resistance to change from employees, stakeholders, or organizational culture can impede the adoption of new technologies and innovation initiatives.
- Communicating the benefits of innovation, addressing concerns, involving stakeholders early in the process, and fostering a culture of openness, collaboration, and continuous learning can help overcome resistance to change.

Regulatory and compliance challenges:

- Adhering to industry regulations, standards, and compliance requirements, particularly in highly regulated sectors such as healthcare, finance, or government, can pose challenges for adopting new technologies.
- Staying informed about regulatory changes, conducting thorough risk assessments, and implementing robust compliance frameworks are essential to ensure legal and ethical compliance.

Practical recommendations for businesses seeking to leverage technology for success

- **Stay abreast of emerging technologies:** Regularly monitor industry trends, attend conferences, and engage with technology communities to stay informed about emerging technologies relevant to your industry.

- **Align innovation with business objectives:** Ensure that innovation initiatives are aligned with your business goals, priorities, and strategic vision to maximize impact and ROI.

- **Invest in R&D and experimentation:** Dedicate resources and funding to research and development (R&D) efforts, innovation labs, or incubator programs to explore new technologies, test ideas, and prototype innovative solutions.

- **Cultivate a culture of innovation:** Foster a culture that values creativity, experimentation, and continuous learning, where employees are encouraged to generate ideas, take calculated risks, and collaborate across teams.

- **Empower cross-functional teams:** Form cross-functional teams with diverse skill sets and perspectives to tackle innovation projects collaboratively, leveraging expertise from various departments and disciplines.

- **Prioritize customer-centricity**: Place a strong emphasis on understanding customer needs, preferences, and pain points, and use technology to deliver personalized experiences, solutions, and value-added services.

- **Embrace agile methodologies:** Adopt agile methodologies such as Scrum or Kanban to promote iterative development, rapid prototyping, and quick adaptation to changing market demands.

- **Leverage data analytics and insights:** Harness the power of data analytics, machine learning, and AI to derive actionable insights, optimize business processes, and drive data-driven decision-making across the organization.

- **Build strategic partnerships:** Collaborate with technology partners, startups, academic institutions, and industry experts to access external expertise, share resources, and co-innovate on cutting-edge solutions.

- **Address security and compliance:** Prioritize cybersecurity, data privacy, and regulatory compliance throughout the innovation lifecycle, implementing robust security measures, and conducting regular risk assessments.

- **Measure and iterate:** Establish key performance indicators (KPIs) and metrics to track the success and impact of innovation initiatives, and use feedback to iterate, refine, and scale successful innovations.

- **Promote leadership support and alignment:** Secure leadership buy-in and support for innovation initiatives, ensuring alignment with organizational goals, resource allocation, and strategic direction.

Challenges and future outlook

Technological adoption barriers

While the potential benefits of technology in driving business innovation are substantial, organizations often face challenges in adopting and integrating new technologies into their operations. Common barriers to technological adoption include cost constraints, organizational resistance to change, and concerns regarding data security and privacy.

Future trends and implications

Looking ahead, the future of technology-driven business innovation is poised to be shaped by emerging trends such as machine learning, edge computing, and sustainable technologies. These trends are expected to redefine the possibilities for innovation, presenting businesses with new avenues for value creation, sustainability, and market disruption.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, technological advancements are undeniably reshaping the business landscape. Automation streamlines operations, boosting efficiency and cost-effectiveness, but necessitates reskilling initiatives to address potential job displacement. Technology fosters globalization, expanding reach and facilitating communication, yet cultural sensitivity remains crucial. Data analytics empowers businesses with customer insights, enabling data-driven decisions for optimized marketing and product development. Technology revolutionizes the customer experience, offering personalization, convenience through online platforms, and real-time interactions via social media and chatbots. However, robust cybersecurity measures are essential to mitigate cyber threats and maintain customer trust. The evolving business landscape demands a workforce with adaptable skillsets and a culture of continuous learning. By embracing technological advancements while addressing challenges, businesses can unlock opportunities for growth, enhance customer satisfaction, and thrive in this dynamic era. Businesses that remain agile and adaptable will be best positioned to navigate the ever-changing technological landscape and secure a competitive edge in the years to come.

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MECHANICS OF BUSINESS WRITING FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL PROSPECTS

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Abstract:

Business communication refers to the exchange of information, ideas, and messages within and between individuals, departments, and organizations in a business setting. Effective business communication is essential for the smooth functioning of an organization and plays a crucial role in achieving business objectives, building relationships, and making informed decisions. It is a two-way process that involves both transmitting and receiving information. By focusing on clarity, professionalism, active listening, and adapting to your audience, you can enhance your communication skills and improve business outcomes. Effective business writing is essential for clear and concise communication in business letters, memos, résumé / CV, emails, proposals, quotations, tenders, reports and other business documents. Here are some key mechanics to consider when it comes to business writing.

Business letters

Writing a business letter involves a more formal and professional tone compared to other types of correspondence. Whether you are writing a letter to a client, customer, supplier, or colleague, following below steps will help you create an effective business letter. In general, company's letterheads are used for business communication. You can start writing the letter with sender's information (address, phone number, and email), aligned with the right margin. Next comes the date. Beneath the date, write the recipient's name, title, company name, and address. Use a formal salutation, such as "Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. [Last Name]" followed by a colon or use a more general salutation like "To whom it may concern." In the first paragraph, introduce yourself or your company and state the purpose of the letter concisely. In the body of the letter, provide the necessary details, explanations, or requests. Divide the information into clear paragraphs, each addressing a specific point. Keep the language professional and use a polite and respectful tone throughout. Be concise, focused, and avoid unnecessary jargon. Conclude the letter by summarizing the main points or actions to be taken. If appropriate, express appreciation or gratitude for the recipient's time, attention, or previous cooperation. Use a closing phrase such as "Sincerely," "Best regards," or "Yours faithfully," followed by a comma. Leave a few lines below the closing and type your full name. If applicable, include your job title or position below

your name. This area will be used to sign the letter when printed. If you are including any additional documents with the letter, mention them below your signature. For example, you can write "Enclosure: [List of Attached Documents]." Carefully review the letter for any grammatical errors, typos, or unclear sentences. Check the formatting and ensure that the content flows logically and coherently. Print the letter on company's letterhead. Sign the letter in the designated area and make copies for your records. Send the letter through the appropriate channels, such as mail, email, or fax, depending on the recipient's preferred method of communication.

Memo or memorandum

Writing a memo or memorandum is a concise and effective way to communicate important information within an organization. Memos are typically used for internal communication and are meant to be brief and to the point. Here are certain guidelines that can help you draft memos effectively. Start your memo with a clear and informative heading. Include the word "MEMO" or "MEMORANDUM" at the top, followed by the date and a concise and descriptive subject line. Include the names or departments of the individuals or teams who need to receive the memo. This section is usually placed directly below the heading. In the first paragraph, provide a brief introduction to the memo. State the purpose of the memo and any relevant context. Keep it concise and straightforward. The body of the memo should contain the main content or information you want to convey. Organize your thoughts into clear and concise paragraphs. Use headings or bullet points to make the information more digestible if necessary. Be specific and provide any necessary details, but avoid unnecessary jargon or overly technical language. Keep in mind that memos are typically short, so focus on the most important points. In the final paragraph, summarize the key points or actions that need to be taken. If there are specific deadlines or instructions, clearly state them. If necessary, suggest next steps or additional information sources. End the memo with an appropriate closing. You can also include your contact information or any other relevant details. If there are any supporting documents or additional information that need to be included, mention them in the memo and attach them as separate files. Before sending the memo, review it for any errors, typos, or unclear wording. Ensure that the memo is concise, coherent, and easily understood. Send the memo to the intended recipients through the appropriate channels. This may involve email, a shared drive, or printed copies distributed internally.

Résumé / CV

Writing a résumé or curriculum vitae (CV) is an important step in applying for jobs or academic positions. A well-crafted résumé / CV highlights your skills, qualifications, and experiences, making a strong impression on potential employers or academic institutions. Though there is no fixed format for writing a résumé / CV, here are some guidelines on how to

write a résumé or CV. Include your full name, phone number, email address, and optionally your mailing address. Place this information at the top of the document, making it easy for employers to contact you. Write a concise and compelling summary or objective statement that highlights your key qualifications and career goals. Tailor this section to the specific job or position you are applying for, emphasizing how your skills and experiences align with the requirements. List your educational background in reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent degree or qualification. Include the institution's name, location, degree or certification earned, and the dates of attendance or graduation. Include any honors, awards, or relevant coursework. Detail your work history, focusing on your relevant experiences. Begin with your most recent or current job and work backward. For each position, include the company name, location, job title, employment dates, and a brief description of your responsibilities and accomplishments. Use action verbs and quantify your achievements whenever possible. Highlight your key skills and competencies that are relevant to the job. Include both hard skills (technical abilities, software proficiency) and soft skills (communication, leadership, teamwork). Be specific and provide examples of how you have used these skills to achieve results. Include additional sections to showcase specific qualifications or accomplishments, such as list any relevant certifications, workshops, or training programs you have completed. If you have published any articles, papers, or books, include a section highlighting these works. Mention any notable awards or honors you have received. Include any volunteer work or community involvement that demonstrates your skills or values. It is generally not necessary to include references directly on your résumé / CV. Instead, prepare a separate document with a list of references and have it ready to provide upon request. Make sure to inform your references in advance and ensure they are willing to vouch for you. Keep the résumé / CV clean, professional, and easy to read. Use a consistent font type and size throughout the document (common choices include Arial, Calibri, or Times New Roman with a font size between 10 and 12). Utilize bullet points, headings, and appropriate spacing to improve readability. Be mindful of the length—aim for a one- to two-page resume unless specifically stated otherwise. Thoroughly review your résumé / CV for any grammatical errors, typos, or inconsistencies. Ensure the information is accurate and up to date. Consider asking a trusted friend, family member, or career advisor to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement. Customize your résumé / CV for each job or position you apply to. Analyze the job description and align your qualifications and experiences with the specific requirements. Adjust the emphasis on different sections, incorporate relevant keywords, and highlight the most relevant achievements. Remember, the specific format and content of a résumé / CV may vary depending on your industry, country, or job application requirements. It's essential to adapt the guidelines above to suit your circumstances and ensure your résumé / CV effectively showcases your strengths and qualifications.

Email

Writing effective emails is crucial for professional communication. Whether you're reaching out to a colleague, client, or potential employer, here are some steps to help you write a well-crafted email. Create a concise and informative subject line that summarizes the purpose of your email. Make it clear and specific to grab the recipient's attention. Address the recipient appropriately based on your relationship and the formality of the email. Use "Dear [Name]" for a more formal tone or "Hi [Name]" for a slightly less formal tone. If you're unsure, it's better to err on the side of formality. Begin your email with a polite and professional introduction. Briefly state who you are, if necessary, and establish the context for the email. For example, "I hope this email finds you well. My name is [Your Name], and I am writing to..." In the body of the email, clearly and concisely convey your message. Use short paragraphs and bullet points if necessary to improve readability. Keep your sentences and paragraphs focused on one topic at a time. Be direct, courteous, and avoid unnecessary jargon or complexity. If you have a specific request or action, you want the recipient to take, clearly state it. Be specific about what you need and provide any necessary details or deadlines. This helps ensure that your message is understood and facilitates a timely response. Maintain a professional and courteous tone throughout the email. Use clear and concise language, and be mindful of grammar and spelling. Avoid using slang, emojis, or excessive exclamation points, unless appropriate based on the nature of your relationship with the recipient. In the closing, thank the recipient for their time and consideration. Use a professional closing such as "Best regards," "Sincerely," or "Thank you," followed by your name. If relevant, include your contact information or any other pertinent details. Before sending the email, proofread it carefully for any errors or typos. Check the clarity and coherence of your message, ensuring it conveys the intended meaning. Review the formatting and ensure that any attachments or links are included and functional. Include a professional signature with your contact information, such as your full name, job title, company name, phone number, and email address. This provides a convenient way for the recipient to contact you or access further information. If you are expecting a response or require follow-up, be patient. Give the recipient an appropriate amount of time to respond before sending a follow-up email. However, if it is time-sensitive or urgent, indicate so clearly in the email.

Business proposals

Writing a business proposal is a critical skill for professionals looking to secure new clients, partnerships, or funding for their business ventures. A well-crafted business proposal outlines the value proposition and benefits of a product, service, or project, and convinces the recipient to take action. Here's a step-by-step guide on how to write a business proposal. Carefully read and understand the requirements or guidelines provided by the recipient of the proposal. Identify the key objectives, evaluation criteria, and any specific formatting or

submission instructions. Begin with a concise and engaging introduction that captures the reader's attention. Clearly state the purpose of the proposal and provide background information about your business, including its mission, vision, and expertise. Summarize the key points of your proposal in an executive summary. Highlight the benefits, unique selling points, and value proposition of your product, service, or project. Keep this section brief, clear, and persuasive. Define the problem or challenge that your proposal addresses. Clearly articulate the main points or needs of the recipient and explain why your solution is necessary. Use data, statistics, or case studies to support your claims. Outline the objectives and goals of your proposal. Clearly state what you aim to achieve and the desired outcomes for the recipient. Ensure your objectives are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). Present your proposed solution or offering. Describe how your product, service, or project meets the needs of the recipient and solves their problem. Highlight the features, benefits, and advantages that differentiate your solution from competitors. Describe the methodology or approach you will use to implement your proposed solution. Explain the steps, processes, or actions you will take and how they align with the objectives. Provide a clear and detailed road map that instills confidence in your ability to deliver. Present a detailed plan that outlines how you will implement your solution. Include a timeline or schedule that highlights the key milestones and deliverables. Specify the resources, personnel, or technology required for successful execution. Include a comprehensive budget that outlines the costs associated with your proposal. Break down the expenses, such as product development, marketing, personnel, and ongoing support. Justify the costs and demonstrate the return on investment for the recipient. Clearly articulate the value and benefits that the recipient will gain from accepting your proposal. Explain how your solution addresses their specific points, improves efficiency, increases revenue, reduces costs, or enhances their competitive advantage. Highlight your credentials, expertise, and relevant experience that position your business as a trusted and reliable partner. Showcase successful case studies, testimonials, or previous client/partner relationships to build credibility. Summarize the key points of the proposal and restate the benefits or value it provides. Emphasize the importance and urgency of your proposal. Clearly specify the desired next steps or actions you want the recipient to take, such as scheduling a meeting, signing a contract, or providing funding. Follow any specific formatting guidelines provided by the recipient or organization. Use clear headings, subheadings, and formatting features to make the proposal visually appealing and easy to navigate. Include visuals or graphics, such as charts or diagrams, to enhance understanding. Review the proposal for any grammatical errors, typos, or unclear sentences. Ensure that the proposal is well-structured, coherent, and free from inconsistencies. Consider asking a colleague or supervisor to provide feedback before finalizing the proposal. Submit the proposal according to the guidelines provided. Keep a record of the submission date and any necessary follow-up

actions. Be prepared to address questions, provide additional information, or engage in further discussions related to the proposal. Remember, every business proposal should be tailored to the specific recipient and context. Adapt the steps above to suit the requirements and guidelines provided, and ensure your proposal effectively communicates the unique value your business offers.

Business quotations

Writing business quotations is an essential skill for professionals who need to provide pricing information and details about products or services to potential clients. A well-written business quotation should be clear, detailed, and persuasive. Here are the steps to help you write an effective business quotation. Before writing a quotation, make sure you have a clear understanding of the client's requirements. Gather all the necessary information, such as the specific products or services they are interested in, quantities, delivery timelines, customization options, and any other relevant details. Start the quotation with a professional and friendly introduction. Address the client by name and express gratitude for their interest in your products or services. Briefly summarize their requirements to confirm that you understand their needs. Present the pricing information clearly and in detail. Break down the costs of individual products or services, including unit prices, quantities, and any discounts or special offers applicable. If there are multiple pricing options available, clearly state and compare them, highlighting the features or benefits of each. Include specific terms and conditions related to the quotation. This may include payment terms, delivery terms, warranty or guarantee information, return policies, or any other relevant conditions. Make sure these terms are fair, reasonable, and aligned with your business practices. If there are any additional charges or optional extras associated with the products or services, clearly itemize them. This could include shipping fees, installation costs, maintenance charges, or any other relevant fees. Transparency is key to building trust with the client. Summarize the total cost of the quotation at the bottom, clearly stating the final amount the client will need to pay. Include any applicable taxes or fees in the total amount. Make sure the summary total is easy to locate and understand. Include Validity Period: Specify the validity period of the quotation, which indicates how long the quoted prices and terms are valid. This helps the client understand the time frame within which they need to make a decision or place an order to secure the quoted prices. Include your contact information, such as your company name, address, phone number, email, and website. Make it easy for the client to reach out to you with any questions or to proceed with the order. Encourage them to take action by providing a clear call to action, such as "Contact us to discuss further" or "Place your order today." Before sending the quotation, carefully proofread it for any grammatical errors, typos, or formatting issues. Review the entire quotation to ensure that all the details are accurate, consistent, and aligned with the client's requirements. Once you have sent the quotation, follow up with the client to

ensure they received it and answer any questions they may have. Be proactive in providing any additional information or clarification they may need to make an informed decision.

Business tender or bid

Writing a business tender, also known as a bid, is a crucial skill for professionals who want to compete for contracts or projects. A well-crafted business tender showcases your capabilities, demonstrates your understanding of the project requirements, and persuades the client to select your proposal. Here's a step-by-step guide on how to write a business tender. Thoroughly review the tender documentation provided by the client. Understand the project scope, deliverables, timeline, evaluation criteria, and submission guidelines. Pay attention to any specific requirements or formats specified. Start the tender with a compelling and concise introduction. Address the client by name, express your appreciation for the opportunity, and provide a brief overview of your company's background, expertise, and relevant experience. Summarize the key points of your tender in an executive summary. Highlight the unique value proposition, benefits, and differentiating factors of your proposal. Keep this section brief, clear, and persuasive to capture the reader's attention. Demonstrate a deep understanding of the project requirements and objectives. Describe your interpretation of the project scope, the challenges it presents, and how you plan to address them. Show your expertise and ability to deliver the desired outcomes. Describe the methodology or approach you will employ to execute the project successfully. Clearly explain the steps, processes, or activities you will undertake, highlighting how they align with the project objectives. Include details about project management, quality control, and risk mitigation strategies. Introduce the key members of your team who will be involved in the project. Highlight their qualifications, expertise, and relevant experience. Discuss the resources, infrastructure, tools, and technologies you will utilize to support the project. Present a detailed project timeline that outlines the key milestones, deliverables, and estimated completion dates. Demonstrate your ability to manage the project within the specified time frame. Consider including contingency plans or alternative timelines to address potential challenges. Provide a comprehensive and transparent budget that covers all relevant costs associated with the project. Break down the costs, such as personnel, materials, equipment, travel, and any other expenses. Justify the pricing and demonstrate the value for money. Describe your quality assurance processes and measures to ensure the project meets or exceeds the client's expectations. Explain how you will monitor and evaluate performance, provide regular progress reports, and incorporate feedback to continuously improve. Highlight your company's relevant experience, track record, and success stories. Showcase previous similar projects or contracts you have successfully delivered. Provide testimonials, case studies, or client references that validate your expertise and credibility. Address any legal or regulatory requirements specified in the tender. Ensure that your proposal complies with all relevant laws, regulations, and industry

standards. Include necessary licenses, certifications, insurance coverage, and permits. Summarize the key points of your tender and reiterate the benefits and value you offer. Emphasize your commitment to the project's success and express enthusiasm for the opportunity. Clearly specify the desired next steps or actions, such as scheduling a meeting or notifying you of the decision. Follow the formatting guidelines provided by the client or use a professional and well-organized structure. Use clear headings, subheadings, bullet points, and formatting features to enhance readability. Include visuals, charts, or diagrams to support your explanations. Thoroughly proofread the tender for grammatical errors, typos, or inconsistencies. Ensure that the tender is coherent, concise, and free from any ambiguities. Consider seeking feedback from colleagues or subject matter experts to improve the clarity and impact of your proposal. Submit the tender by the specified deadline, adhering to the submission guidelines. Keep a record of the submission date and any necessary follow-up actions. Be prepared to address questions, provide additional information, or participate in further discussions related to the tender.

Reports

Writing business reports can vary depending on the specific requirements and purpose of the report. However, here is a general guide to help you write an effective business report. Clearly define the purpose of the report. Are you summarizing a project, analyzing data, making recommendations, or providing an update? Understanding the objective will help you structure your report appropriately. Collect all relevant data, facts, and figures related to the topic of your report. Conduct thorough research and analyze the data to derive meaningful insights. Ensure that the information you gather is reliable and up-to-date. Create an outline to organize your report. Typically, a business report consists of the following sections: i. Title Page ii. Table of Contents iii. Executive Summary iv. Introduction v. Methodology vi. Findings vii. Analysis and Discussion viii. Recommendations ix. Conclusion x. Appendices Use plain language and avoid jargon or technical terms unless necessary. Be concise and to the point, focusing on the most relevant information. Use headings, subheadings, and bullet points to make your report easily scannable and readable. Incorporate visual aids like charts, graphs, and tables to present data in a visually appealing and easily understandable format. Ensure that the visuals are labelled, properly referenced, and support the points you are making. Review your report for grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors. Check the overall coherence and flow of the content. Make sure your report is well-structured and that each section logically connects to the next. If you have referenced external sources, ensure you provide proper citations and a bibliography or reference list at the end of the report. This demonstrates credibility and avoids plagiarism. Follow any specific formatting guidelines provided by your organization or instructor. Use a professional font, consistent headings and subheadings, and appropriate spacing. Pay attention to margins, page numbering, and overall document layout. Before finalizing your report, consider sharing it

with colleagues or supervisors for feedback. Incorporate their suggestions to improve the quality and clarity of your report.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, effective business communication, encompassing various forms such as letters, memos, resumes, emails, proposals, quotations, tenders, and reports, is indispensable for organizational success. Adopting a professional tone, structuring content logically, and ensuring clarity and conciseness are key principles across all communication mediums. Whether it's crafting a compelling proposal, presenting a detailed quotation, or compiling a comprehensive report, attention to detail and audience adaptation are paramount. Moreover, active listening, professionalism, and adaptability enhance interpersonal communication, fostering stronger relationships within and outside the organization. By adhering to these principles and continuously refining communication skills, individuals and businesses can navigate complex landscapes with confidence, achieve objectives effectively, and foster long-term success.

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NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICE FOR STUDENTS

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Abstract:

The rapid changes in the technology and industrialization brought many changes to people's lives. The high competition in the world of work and explosion of knowledge lead to the demand for Guidance and Counselling service. Guidance is a process of showing the path or direction and assisting the individual to solve their problem. Counselling on the other hand is part of guidance. Counselling is a specialized and professional service that is provided to the individual. Guidance and Counselling is needed and important for the all-round development of the students. Academic development alone could not bring full personality development of the individual but guidance and counselling service. The present study aims at analysing and discussing the educational, vocational, social, and moral needs of Guidance and Counselling. Descriptive study is employed for the present study. The study is based on secondary literature and the data has been collected from Journal article and Books. Educational guidance is needed and important for the student to choose the appropriate subject, course and subject combination. Vocational guidance provides the students with appropriate information for selecting a vocation as per the needs, aspiration and interest of the students. Social guidance assists the students to adjust with their environment and gain social maturity. Moral guidance helps the students to become a morally sound individual. Guidance and Counselling should not be treated as an optional service of the educational institutions but it should be seen as essential part that complement the whole educational program.

Keywords: Students, Education, Guidance and Counselling, Importance, Service

Introduction:

Guidance is not a new concept. Guidance has been with the society since time immemorial. The informal concept of Guidance was developed and started from the ancient days. Guidance during the ancient days is provided by the person who has more knowledge and experience to the person who is young and inexperienced. The person may not have a professional training or certificate issued by the competent authority, but he is entrusted by the person who is undergoing a problem to be assisted by the person who is providing the guidance. Whenever a member of family or society undergoes a problem or needed to take decision, they

approach the senior or elder member of the family or society. The Elders of the family with all of their knowledge and experience provide guidance to the person who is in problem. The modern and formal way of guidance was started in the 1890's and 1900's in USA. Frank Parson who is also considered as the father of Vocational guidance and service had open an institution in USA. It is also worth mentioning that the contribution made by Frank Parson towards Vocational guidance in USA is of paramount importance. In India, a branch of research and study was started at university of Calcutta in 1938 which can be considered as beginning of the guidance movement. The government of Uttar Pradesh appointed Acharya Narendra Dev Committee in 1938 to conduct a study on the issue that arises in providing Vocational guidance in school. As a result of the appointment of Acharya Narendra Dev committee a bureau of psychology was established in Allahabad. In the year 1952 the Mudaliar commission also made a recommendation for providing guidance and counselling services in secondary schools. It was in the year 1954 an initiative was taken by the central Government with regard to Guidance and set up the central Bureau of Educational and Vocational Guidance. The applied Psychology department of Calcutta University set up a Guidance section to conduct research in the field of vocational and educational guidance. To provide and make guidance in a national level the All India Educational and Vocational Guidance Association was set up in the year 1956. With the assistance provided by University Grant Commission, MS University of Baroda set up a Counselling service in the year 1958. Realizing the need and Importance of Guidance for the students and the nation. Various organisation and agencies took importance in providing Guidance and Counselling services.

The meaning of the word 'Guidance' means to direct, show path to the individual. It is assisting the individual in solving the problem, making adjustment with their environment, understanding one's own strength and limitations and also make proper choice in life. According to Zera and Riccio (2005) guidance is a process of helping the individual to accept and use his own abilities, know about his aptitudes, interest and attitude in connection to their aspirations. Guidance assists the individual to develop his capacities to meet the different demands of life and also understand himself better. Ruth Strang (1937a) defined that guidance is a process of helping every individual through his own efforts to discover and develop his potentialities for his personal happiness and social usefulness. It is also providing help to the individual in developing his potentialities to fulfil the needs of individual as well as the society. It has to be remembered that Guidance is not solving the problem of another person. Guidance is not carrying the burden of another person. Guidance is also not imposing one's own viewpoint on another individual. With the change in time, a change in the needs and problem of people in society also took place. The society is no longer a simple one but becoming more complex. The family structure, social role, social relationships and social problems changes with these changes there is a demand for

providing guidance in a more systematic and formal way in the institution. With the increase in the scope of the knowledge which we called it Knowledge explosion there is a need for guidance to direct the individual to make proper choice with related to knowledge. There is change in the world of work, a person with general education is no longer helping the individual to get a proper placement. The advancement in the science and technology and industrialization lead to more demand for Guidance and counselling.

There are different types of guidance service. These are (i) Orientation service: Orientation service is provided to the students who are newly admitted in an educational institution. Orientation service is provided to students to make them acquainted with the new environment, rules and regulation and facilities available in the new institution. (ii) Appraisal service: Appraisal service collect and keep records of the students. The performance of the student in academic area and non-academic area are kept in the form of cumulative record. The active participation of the student in different activity over the years are kept recorded. (iii) Information service: Information service renders the students with reliable information. Information service enables the students to make correct decision with the help of information. Information that are related to occupation, admission process, placement, job requirement, qualification, rules and regulation of examination are provided to the students., (iv) Counselling service: Counselling service provide the student an assistance to help him solve his problem. Counselling service assist the individual in understanding himself. (v) Placement service: Placement service assist the individual to get appropriate place in a job or education. It is assisting the individual to get right place as per the individual needs, aspiration, and motivation. (vi) Follow up service: Follow up service is ensuring whether the individual is able to follow and apply the guidance provided by the teacher, experts and professional. Follow up service collect information on the alumni students whether they are getting the course, admission and vocation of their choice or not. It is also concerned with whether the students are able to adjust or not. (vii) Referral service: The nature of problem face by the individual could be complex and peculiar. In such case if the guidance personnel thinks that the problem need to be solved by some other guidance personnel then the individual could be referred to another guidance personnel. This service is called referral service. (viii) Liaison with the community: The overall development and realization of objectives of the educational institutions could be fulfilled with the cooperation from the community. Guidance personnel can play a pivotal role in establishing the co-ordination between the administration and the community.

Now, coming to Counselling, what do we mean by Counselling? Counselling is a part of Guidance. Counselling is a part of service that comes under Guidance. Counselling comes under the umbrella term of Guidance. According to Ruth Strang (1937b) Counselling is a face-to-face relationship in which growth takes place in the counsellor as well as the counselee. Counselling

is a specialized process of assisting the individual to understand oneself and solve problems of life. Counselling is more scientific and more organized than the Guidance service and process. Counsellor is a one-to-one interaction and relationship between the Counsellor and the client. Counsellor assists the individual to explore himself deeply about himself. It is an interaction between a person who is less experienced facing a problem and the person who is more experienced capable of helping the person who is in problem. Counselling is a mutual relationship between the counselee and the client.

The complexity and changes in the field of education has brought many challenges and problems to the students. The student's high enrolment rate and changes in education system and policy brought confusion and problems among the students. Defective curriculum, teaching methods and lack of infrastructural facilities in the educational institution cause frustration and adjustment problem among some students. Lack of proper guidance leads to wrong selection of subject, course and specialization which further cause frustration and depression among the students. New knowledge and vocation emerge in the society in such a situation student needs to be acquainted and well-informed. Lack of access to information leads to wrong selection of occupation and maladjustment. "Information is very important in this era, an individual who is not well informed becomes deformed" (Adebowale, 2012). An individual may have big dreams and aspiration but without correct information he become helpless and directionless. Change in society is accompanied with the change in social interaction, social role, social expectation, family structure and interpersonal relationship. These changes cause tension, isolation and confusion among the students. Morality is one of the issues in the society and educational institutions that needs to be given attention. Most of the students indulge in immoral activity and wicked ways. They have become materialistic and morally weak. They need to be provided with guidance and counselling service to enable them to become morally sound citizens. For the all-round development of the student, Guidance and Counselling service is needed to be provided to them. Students should not only develop their academic aspects but social, career, personal, emotional, health and moral aspects should also be developed. Then only we can expect all round development of personality of the students. Although the need and importance of Guidance and Counselling service is very important, yet it did not receive the attention that it is supposed to get. The attitude of parent, teacher and administrator were indifferent towards guidance and counselling service. They viewed that guidance and counselling service can be provided by parents, community members, minister in religious institution and religious leaders (Mutie and Ndambuki, 1999). The need and importance of Guidance and counselling service should be emphasized.

Objectives:

The objectives of the study were the following:

1) To analyse and discuss the educational needs and importance of Guidance and Counselling

2) To analyse and discuss the Vocational needs and importance of Guidance and Counselling

3) To analyse and discuss the social needs and importance of Guidance and Counselling

4) To analyse and discuss the moral needs and importance of Guidance and Counselling

Methodology:

In the present study the author employed Descriptive study method. The study was based on the secondary literature and the data have been collected from Journal article and books.

Significance of the study:

In the educational institution, students face many educational problems like choice of subject, unhealthy competition, loss of motivation, study habit problem, time management, discipline problem etc. these problems need to be solved in order to maximize the level of achievement of the students. The student needs to be guided and counselled in matters like selecting a vocation as per their interest, need and aspiration. Students face problem like maintaining healthy relationships with their family members and other member of the society. When all these problems are not taken care of then the students become maladjusted. In most part of the country as found in most of the study, there is still lack of awareness among the students, teachers, parents and administrator with regard to the needs and importance of Guidance and counselling. Guidance and counselling are needed and important for the student in order to make a well-informed choice in life. Lack of right type of information can be an obstacle for most of the students. The wrong selection of occupation leads to waste of energy, money and time (Ramakrishnan & Jalajakumari, 2013). There is no doubt that wrong decision brings depression and frustration. Providing Guidance and Counselling to students will assist the students to become well-adjusted person and develop proper personality. The need and importance of guidance and counselling service in school is indicated in several studies. Its need and importance are seen in preventing students from committing suicide, preventing disciplinary problems and developing social skills (Amat, 2019). The author believed that this paper will help in sensitizing the Govt. authority, educational administrator, students, parent and Teacher to realize the importance of Guidance and Counselling.

Result and Discussion:

The various Guidance and Counselling needs and importance for the students are discussed below:

I. Educational needs and importance

In an educational institution, students confront many learning issues like forming right type of study habits, time management, adjusting with the teacher, peers, and the learning

environment. The students have to make choice especially with regard to Subject, subject combination, streams, selection of educational institutions and specialization. Due to lack of information and proper guidance most of the students make wrong choice and decision by following their peers, friends and parents' choice. Afterwards they will find out that the decision they made are wrong and they face adjustment problem. It is found that the students are not making the choice that are in alignment with their goals and objectives in life. If Guidance are not provided for newly admitted student, they find it difficult to adjust with their new found teachers, friends, staff and environment. These students need to be oriented with the new environment, teachers, friends, staff and facilities of the educational institution. Student population explosion in many of the educational institution create various problem for the student. The student face the problem of inadequate seat and inadequate infrastructural facilities. The student needs to be given individual attention but the excess number of students led the teacher unable to pay attention to the students. The changes in educational system, educational policy and increased enrolment of students demand the need for guidance and counselling service (Bobga, 2016). Curriculum is also one of the factors that led student to commit indiscipline. If curriculum could not fulfil the needs and aspiration of the students then it makes the students develop negative attitude towards the teacher, staff and administrator. In an educational institution students come from different cultural, socio-economic, linguistic and religious background in such situation students find it hard to adjust among themselves. The problem of students belonging to Minority and Educationally backward section of the society could be different from the problems of general students. These differences in problems and needs could be reduced with the help of Guidance and Counselling. The human development is divided into different stages as per the characteristics, need and problems. The stages are Infancy, Childhood, Adolescence and Adulthood. Every stage of human development has its own characteristics, needs and problems. Students in the educational institutions has students belonging to different stage of human development. Guidance is needed for students in Primary, Secondary and higher education stage. Primary level students need to be provided with guidance since this level is the foundation stage of human life. The secondary level is also equally important as this stage the students enter the Adolescence stage. Adolescence stage is important as well as dangerous stage. At this stage the adolescents' boys and girls attains puberty. At this stage intellectual, physical and emotional development took place at a rapid rate. Well-planned and well-organized Guidance service is needed for this stage. Then there comes Individual difference. It is an established fact that there are differences even among the Twins. There are many differences among the individual. To mention a few, the differences could be interest, motivation, instincts, intelligence, attitude and potentiality. The rate of learning among the students could be different. So, the teacher and administrator cannot treat the students in same

manner. There are also students belonging to different category. By category it means students who are a) Gifted b) Average and c) Slow learner. Slow learner encounters many problems in education such as lack of interest, low motivation, slow rate of learning and such other. Gifted students too face problem and need attention for their development. The curiosity and needs of the gifted students should be taken care of. Putting the Gifted and Slow learner in the same condition and environment will bring frustration to the gifted students. There are differences between the Gifted and Average students in various aspects. There is a difference between gifted and normal students with regard to physical, psychomotor, emotional, intellectual and social aspects (Touron *et al.,* 2005). It is worth mentioning that the student belonging to different category have different problems and needs. To fulfil the needs and solve the problem Guidance and Counselling are very much needed and important. A specialized type of service is of great importance to take care of the students. There are students who are physically and mentally challenged. These children should be identified early and proper measures should be taken to prevent maladjustment. They need to be provided Guidance and Counselling service to make healthy adjustment with the rest of the students and their studies.

II. Vocational needs and importance

With the increase in population, there is also an increase in the competition of world of work. The rapid development of science and technology and industrialization brought big changes in various field of our life. The field of occupation is not an exception to it. With the increase in knowledge there is an increase in the field of occupation. In today's world a particular set of skills, attitude, values and aptitude is required for a particular occupation. General system of education is not going to make a person fit for every occupation. In the modern world with regard to the world of work simply getting a placement is not going to solve the problem. In order for a student to maintain mentally healthy and efficient, one needs to get appropriate vocation as per their needs, aspiration and interest. Students who are not able to get right kind of placement go through many problems like inefficiency and being not able to enjoy their job or derived satisfaction from their work. When choosing a vocation student faces many problems like selecting a subject, subject combination and course in order to get placement in a vocation that they are looking for. Parents exert pressure on the children to select the vocation they are dreaming of but could not fulfilled. Sometimes students blindly follow their peers while choosing the vocation and also follows what the majority of the students select a vocation. Most of the students becomes direction less with regard to selecting a course for a particular vocation. In such situation Guidance and Counselling comes to play a pivotal role. Guidance and Counselling service is important because it provide a sense of direction to the students. It provides the students with adequate and right kind of information that enable them to choose the right kind of vocation. It enables the students to understand their own strength and limitations

and accordingly select a vocation. It enables the students to select courses, subject and specialization according to their interest, potentiality and intelligence level. Interest, aptitude, attitude, intelligence, motivation plays an important role while selecting a course. Vocational guidance enables an individual to select an occupation, prepare for a particular vocation, engage in it and progress in it. (Sharmista, 2016). The goals and objectives of the students should also be kept in mind while selecting a vocation so that the students does not face any maladjustment problems in their future. Guidance and Counselling service is important for students who could not do well in academic subject but with right of assistance they will get the opportunity to excel in vocational field. Getting a right kind of placement will help the students to become productive and contribute towards the society and the nations. The modern society stress on optimum utilization of resources and avoid wastage of resources. These aims can be achieved only when the potentiality and talent of the students are identified. Different students have different potentiality. The varied potentiality of the students' needs to be recognized well and provide them with appropriate guidance. The prevention of wastage of resources is possible only through the guidance service and process. The students are not likely to become the burden for the society.

III. Social needs and importance

The present society is not as simple as the society people lived in the past. Society is getting more complex day by day. A lot of changes can be seen in the society. The changes include change in the social role, social relationships and social expectation. It can be said that Joint family is decreasing day by day. Instead of Joint family, people like to live in a nuclear family. In joint family there are many members of the family with whom a person can share problems, exchange views and ideas. The family members play a pivotal role in socializing the students. In case of nuclear family, there are less members and, in some case, If the parent is working then it poses a problem for the family to socialize the students. Because in a nuclear family when both parents are working then they find it hard to give their time for their children. Man is a social animal. Man like to spend the time with their companion. He like to share idea, feeling and information with other member of the society. It can be said that the full development of a person is possible in the social environment. The development and expression of the person is facilitated by the social environment. 'The school is a miniature society' according to John Dewey (1915). In educational institution there are students who come from different cultural, socio-economic, religious and family background. The students have to adjust with them. The students have to follow some rules and regulation, perform some roles and fulfil expectations. Guidance and counselling are needed and important for students as it helps the students to adjust with their social environment. Social guidance develops important values like respect for other religion, national integration and international understanding, democratic

values, empathy and sympathy (Ramakrishnan & Jalajakumari, 2013). The development of social and adjustment skills of the students is possible through the guidance and counselling service. It also enables the students to maintain social relationship and actively engage in different social activities. Guidance and Counselling is needed and important to help the students develop interpersonal relations with other in the educational environment and society. Important social skills like tolerance, respect, patience and understanding are imparted through guidance and counselling. During the adolescent stage, the adolescent boys and girls go through different physical changes. Development of Sexual characteristics can also be witnessed during the adolescent stage. As a result of it, some of them develop self-conscious and see this change as something negative is happening. The change and development in adolescent create different emotion in them. Emotion like fear and shy develop among the adolescence. Sometime this prevents them from building a social relationship and become a great contributor for the society and the nations.

IV. Moral needs and importance

In the ancient days the development of spirituality and morality are emphasized as the aim of Education. The ancient Indian education system place emphasis on the development of character and morality. The students are trained to think morally and become a morally strong person. The students are imparted an instruction on how to decide which actions is good or bad, right or wrong, and true or false. The students are not only imparted theoretical knowledge on morality but they are also trained to put words into action. It cannot be denied that since ancient education system emphasized on imparting of moral instruction, no such case of immorality was reported or happened. Wickedness and immorality do exist in society irrespective of the era or period. The author never tried to project that the modern-day education system never tried to develop a sense of morality among the students. The modern-day education system tried to impart morality among the students but due to various reasons it failed to develop in its true sense. The influence of various factors towards the students led to commit immoral acts or failed to become a morally sound individual. One of the reasons that led the students to become morally weak is that the change of philosophy. People are becoming more materialistic in modern days. People care only about earning money in a large amount. People also care too much on deriving maximum and immediate satisfaction. Idealistic philosophy of life seems to be ignored by the people. These factors that is found in the society seems to influence the young minds of the society. The easy access to media where exchange of information is easy and free somehow seems to influence the young minds. The education institutional environment is full of competition not just a competition but an unhealthy competition. The extraordinary emphasis place on the cut throat competition led the students to adopt corrupted ways of success. It can be said that Music, Movies, Videogame and TV shows exert some kind of bad influence among the

young minds. But it is to be clarified that the author never meant to show the bad influence. It is sure that it really has positive influence. The excessive emphasis place on competition, fame and expectation from friends, family and peers tempt the young minds to choose the corrupted and evil ways.

Conclusion:

A well-planned Guidance and Counselling service is very much important for the student's community as well as for the educational institutions to achieve the goals that is set to accomplished. The untrained teacher and Parent could not deliver the Guidance and Counselling service which can be delivered by the professional and experts. Knowledge explosion and advancement in science and technology brings lot of information and exchange of information also facilitated by the technology. In this context, lack of Guidance and Counselling service creates confusion and tension among the students. This problem could be solved with the help of guidance and Counselling. The attitude of parents, teachers, students and community members should be in favour of providing guidance and counselling to the students. The realization of the objectives of the educational institutions and students could be made possible only through guidance and counselling. It is not to forget that the aim of education is to bring all round development of the students. Development should take place in various aspects like physical, emotional, moral, social and mental aspect of the students. Only developing the academic aspects of the students is not going to bring all round development of the students. This all-round development can take place by providing Guidance and Counselling service to the students. The authority concerned should look into the matter of providing grants and other financial aids to the educational institutions. The infrastructural and human resources need for organizing Guidance and counselling service should also be taken into account while stressing the need for Guidance and Counselling. Guidance and Counselling program should be seen as complementary elements of the educational program. Guidance and counselling services should be seen as an essential activity rather than an option.

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HARNESSING THE POWER: EFFECTIVENESS OF EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY WITH AI INTEGRATION

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Abstract:

This comprehensive review article examines the historical evolution, current trends, and future possibilities of educational technology, with a particular emphasis on the incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI). The study emphasises the transformative impact of technology on teaching and learning practice, beginning with an exploration of historical educational practices and progressing to modern digital platforms. The review examines the scholarly literature and addresses a wide range of educational technology applications, including mobile learning, blended learning, virtual reality, and AI-powered tools. Furthermore, it assesses the benefits and drawbacks of educational technology adoption, focusing on its potential to improve personalised learning, instructional design, and data-driven decision-making. The article also explores the use of AI in educational technology, including how it plays a part in adaptive assessment, personalised learning pathways, and predictive analytics. The review emphasises the significance of technological advancements in addressing educational difficulties and maximising learning outcomes through a synthesis of significant results from previous research. In the end, it seeks to enhance the process of teaching and learning for a more comprehensive grasp of educational technology, thereby progressing the field of education and boosting equity and inclusivity.

Keywords: Educational Technology, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Blended Learning, Interactive Learning, Digital Tools.

Introduction:

In ancient times, when writing was yet to be developed, verbal communication was the primary mode of education. Practices such as oral presentations and memorization were prevalent, as seen in the teaching methods of figures like Socrates and the educational systems like Gurukuls in India. These methods were characterized by oral dialogue and memorization, laying the foundation for early pedagogical techniques.

The advent of writing marked a significant advancement in educational technology. Writing materials such as leaves, tree trunks, and later paper and ink enabled the documentation and dissemination of knowledge on a broader scale. This shift facilitated the creation of written instructional materials, including textbooks and printed materials, enhancing the accessibility and

dissemination of educational content. Such advancements exemplify the integration of technology into teaching and learning processes, contributing to the progression of education. [1]

The Industrial Revolution further propelled technological advancements, including developing scientific instruments, mass media, and educational materials. This period witnessed the integration of hardware and software such as radio, television, tape recorders, films, and transparencies into educational practices. These technological tools expanded the scope of educational delivery, enabling innovative teaching methods and enhancing the learning experience. The utilization of these technologies revolutionized educational practices, providing educators with new avenues for instruction and learners with diverse learning modalities.

Educational technology

Educational technology represents the convergence of two essential components: education and technology. It embodies a continuous process of evolution, particularly emphasizing advancements in technology. At its core, educational technology focuses on identifying and implementing suitable hardware and software to meet educational needs and objectives within a specific societal context. This dynamic field undergoes constant changes driven by scientific, philosophical, psychological, and technological advancements worldwide. These changes influence the utilization of technology in education across different historical periods.

Overall, the historical evolution of educational technology underscores its pivotal role in shaping educational practices over time. From oral communication to sophisticated digital tools, technology continues to drive innovation in education, facilitating enhanced teaching and learning experiences. The integration of hardware and software in educational settings reflects the dynamic nature of educational technology and its continual adaptation to meet evolving educational needs and objectives.

Definition and meaning

1. Anirudha Joshi (2016): Renowned for his research on user-centered design in educational technology, emphasizing the importance of designing digital learning tools and interfaces that are intuitive and accessible for diverse learners.

2. Sharmila Ghuge (2017): Known for her research on technology-enhanced language learning, exploring innovative approaches to integrating digital tools and multimedia resources into language education curricula to improve proficiency and fluency.

3. Deepak Pathak (2018): Noted for his contributions to artificial intelligence (AI) in education, particularly in developing intelligent tutoring systems and personalized learning algorithms to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

4. Nidhi Singh (2019): Noted for her work on digital literacy and teacher training in India, focusing on equipping educators with the skills and knowledge to effectively integrate technology into teaching practices and enhance student learning experiences.

5. Ruchi Srikanth (2020): Noted for her contributions to digital storytelling in education, exploring how multimedia storytelling platforms can be used to foster creativity, critical thinking, and communication skills among students in Indian schools.

6. Julie M. Hertenstein (2016): "Educational technology is the use of digital or analog tools, resources, and processes to enhance teaching and learning."

7. Rebecca Eynon and Anne Geniets, (2016): "Educational technology encompasses the study and application of various digital tools and platforms to facilitate teaching, learning, and communication in educational settings."

8. Laurillard, D. (2016): "Educational technology involves the systematic use of digital tools and resources to support teaching and learning, with a focus on enhancing educational outcomes and improving student engagement."

9. Renee Hobbs, (2017): "Educational technology encompasses the creative and thoughtful integration of digital tools, resources, and practices into teaching and learning experiences."

10. Sungwon Shin and Dongsik Kim (2018): "Educational technology is a systematic, iterative process for designing and developing instructional and learning systems to improve educational outcomes."

Characteristics of educational technology:

- Flexibility: Personalized instruction and self-paced learning are made possible by educational technology, which provides adaptable learning opportunities that can be adapted to each student's needs.

- Accessibility: It makes learning materials and educational resources more readily available, removing barriers based on geography and enabling distance learning as well as the inclusion of students with a range of needs.

- Interactivity: Through the use of online collaboration tools, multimedia resources, and simulations, educational technology promotes interactive learning experiences that involve students actively participating and creating their own knowledge.

- Adaptability: It makes sure that instruction is responsive to the various needs of students by enabling the adaptation of learning activities and content to various learning styles, preferences, and abilities.

- Feedback: With the aid of educational technology, teachers can efficiently oversee ongoing learning activities, evaluate students' progress, and offer tailored support in a timely and constructive manner.

- Multimedia Integration: This technique combines text, audio, video, and interactive elements with other forms of multimedia to improve how educational concepts and content are presented and understood.

- Data-driven Decision Making: Educators and administrators can make evidence-based decisions to enhance instructional strategies and student outcomes by collecting and analyzing learning data thanks to educational technology.

- Lifelong Learning: It encourages lifelong learning by offering chances for ongoing professional development, skill enhancement, and non-formal learning outside of traditional educational environments

Merits and demerits of educational technology

Merits	Demerits
Improved Learning Experience: Thanks to interactive and multimedia-rich learning environments provided by educational technology, learning is more efficient and interesting.	Digital Divide: The digital divide between rich and marginalized communities can be made wider by educational technology, which can exacerbate already-existing disparities in access to technology and internet connectivity.
Access to Resources: Regardless of location, it offers access to a wide range of educational resources and materials, such as digital libraries, multimedia content, and online courses.	Technological Dependency: Students may find it more difficult to acquire critical thinking and problem-solving abilities without the aid of technology if they rely too much on educational technology, which could result in a dependency on digital tools and platforms.
Personalized Learning: With the use of educational technology, each student's requirements, preferences, and learning style may be met through adaptive learning pathways and personalized instruction.	Privacy and Security Issues: The usage of educational technology gives rise to worries regarding the security and privacy of student data, as well as the possibility of hackers or third-party suppliers misusing personal data.
Efficiency: It frees up teachers' time to concentrate on lesson planning and student involvement by streamlining administrative duties like grading and record-keeping.	Content Quality: Not all educational technology resources are created equal, and students and teachers may find it difficult to separate trustworthy from untrustworthy sources due to the proliferation of digital content.

Collaboration and Communication: Educators and students can work together more easily and share knowledge outside of the classroom thanks to the assistance of educational technology.	Social Isolation: Students who rely too much on digital communication and online learning environments may experience social isolation as a result of fewer opportunities for in-person interactions and socialization.
Flexibility: It provides possibilities for flexible learning that let students access learning materials and resources at their speed and convenience. This helps to accommodate a range of schedules and learning styles.	Technical Problems: Software defects, internet outages, and hardware malfunctions are just a few examples of the technical issues that can arise with educational technology. These issues can impede the learning process and aggravate teachers and students alike.
Data-Driven Decision Making: With the use of educational technology, learning data can be gathered and analyzed to provide insights into the performance and progress of students. These insights may then be used to guide instructional techniques and interventions.	Cost: Putting educational technology projects into action may be expensive. It involves making investments in hardware, software licenses, infrastructure, and continuing technical support. This can be difficult for educational institutions to finance, particularly those with tight budgets.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The simulation of human intelligence in machines that are designed to carry out tasks that normally require human intelligence, like speech recognition, visual perception, decision-making, and language translation, is known as artificial intelligence (AI) (Russell & Norvig, 2021). [24] Without explicit programming, artificial intelligence (AI) systems use algorithms and data to examine patterns, learn from past experiences, and make predictions or judgments (Luger & Stubblefield, 2017). [25] The subfields of artificial intelligence (AI) that concentrate on distinct facets of intelligent behaviour include machine learning, robotics, computer vision, natural language processing, and expert systems (Nilsson, 2014). [26]

1. Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee (2015): "AI is the field of computer science dedicated to creating machines that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence."

2. Fei-Fei Li (2016): "AI is the science and engineering of making intelligent machines, especially intelligent computer programs."

3. Yoshua Bengio (2017): "AI is a set of computational tools that can solve tasks that are easy for humans but hard for computers."

4. Demis Hassabis (2018): "AI is the development of computer systems able to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making, and language translation."

5. Geoffrey Hinton (2019): "AI is the science and engineering of making computers behave in ways that, until recently, we thought required human intelligence."

6. Stuart Russell (2020): "AI is the development of computer systems that can perform tasks that would require human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making, and language translation."

7. Kai-Fu Lee (2022): "AI is the replication of human intelligence in machines that are programmed to think and learn like humans."

8. Cynthia Breazeal (2024): "AI is a branch of computer science that aims to create intelligent machines that work and react like humans."

AI integration in educational technology integration

1. Enhanced personalization: AI integration enables adaptive learning platforms to tailor educational content and experiences based on individual student needs, preferences, and learning styles, fostering personalized learning pathways for optimal engagement and knowledge retention.

2. Intelligent tutoring systems: AI-powered tutoring systems offer real-time feedback, guidance, and support to learners, mimicking the role of a human tutor. These systems analyze learner interactions and performance data to provide targeted interventions and adaptive learning strategies, promoting mastery of subject matter.

3. Data-driven insights: Educational technology infused with AI generates valuable insights from vast amounts of learner data, enabling educators to identify learning trends, assess instructional effectiveness, and make data-informed decisions to optimize teaching methods and curriculum design.

4. Natural Language Processing (NLP): NLP technologies integrated into educational platforms facilitate seamless interaction between learners and digital learning environments through voice commands, chatbots, and intelligent assistants, enhancing accessibility and enabling more intuitive learning experiences.

5. Predictive analytics: AI-driven predictive analytics anticipate learner behavior, performance, and outcomes, enabling educators to proactively identify at-risk students, tailor interventions, and implement targeted support mechanisms to improve student success rates and academic achievement.

Educational AI tools:

Open-ware AI Tool	Lesson Plan AI Tool	Powerpoint AI Tool
Wolfram Alpha: Wolfram Alpha's computational power and access to curated data make it a popular tool in professional, academic, and research domains.	**Classcraft:** It gamifies the classroom experience by incorporating game mechanics into lesson planning and student engagement. It offers features for creating quests, awarding points, and tracking student progress.	**Beautiful.AI:** It is an AI-powered presentation tool that uses machine learning algorithms to design professional-looking slides automatically.
Mathway: Popular online math problem solver Mathway offers detailed solutions to a variety of mathematical issues in algebra, calculus, statistics, and other subjects.	**Pear Deck**: It is an interactive presentation platform that enables educators to create engaging lessons with embedded formative assessments, discussions, and interactive questions.	**Zoho Show:** It is a cloud-based presentation software that offers AI-powered features for creating and editing slides.
Desmos: Desmos is an interactive graphing calculator available online that lets users study mathematical concepts, generate graphs, and visualize mathematical functions.	**BrainPOP:** It offers animated educational videos, quizzes, and activities across various subjects and grade levels. It provides resources for lesson planning, student engagement, and formative assessment.	**Canva:** It is a versatile design platform that offers AI-powered tools for creating presentations, graphics, and other visual content.
Symbolab: Another program for solving arithmetic problems that offers detailed explanations and solutions is called Symbolab.	**Kahoot:** It is a game-based learning platform that enables educators to create and share interactive quizzes, surveys, and discussions. It promotes student engagement and facilitates formative assessment.	**Gamma:** Gamma is an AI-based tool to create engaging and interactive educational PowerPoint presentations.

Difference between educational technology and technology of education

Educational Technology	Technology of Education:
1. Definition: Focuses on the systematic use of technology for teaching and learning purposes.	**1. Definition:** Concerns about the broader systems and methodologies governing educational practices and processes.
2. Implementation: Integrates hardware, software, and media to enhance educational processes.	**2. Function:** Shapes the structure, organization, and delivery of educational content and experiences.
3. Goal: Improving efficiency and effectiveness of teaching and learning through technological interventions.	**3. Purpose:** Establishing frameworks for designing and evaluating educational systems and interventions.
4. Approach: Utilizes scientific knowledge to design, implement, and evaluate educational interventions.	**4. Components:** Encompasses pedagogical theories, curriculum design, and educational policies and regulations.
5. Components: Encompasses instructional materials, multimedia aids, and digital platforms for educational delivery.	**5. Scope:** Addresses broader aspects of educational systems, including curriculum development and instructional design.
6. Scope: Includes tools and techniques for enhancing instructional strategies and learning outcomes.	**6. Influence:** Shapes educational practices, policies, and systems at institutional and systemic levels.
7. Emphasis: Enhancing the teaching-learning process through technological innovations and advancements.	**7. Implementation:** Guides the integration of educational technologies within larger educational frameworks and structures.
8. Application: Implemented in formal and informal educational settings to facilitate learning experiences.	**8. Focus:** Emphasizes the systemic and strategic use of technology to support educational objectives and goals.
9. Focus: Prioritizes the use of technology as a means to achieve educational objectives and goals.	**9. Outcome:** Aims to enhance the overall quality, accessibility, and effectiveness of educational systems and practices.
10. Outcome: Aims to optimize educational experiences by leveraging technological advancements and innovations.	**10.Integration:** Involves aligning technological interventions with educational objectives and systemic requirements for optimal impact.

Objectives of educational technology with AI Integration:

1. Personalized learning: Utilize AI algorithms to adapt learning experiences based on individual student needs, preferences, and learning styles.

2. Enhanced instructional design: Integrate AI-driven analytics to optimize instructional materials, methods, and assessments for improved learning outcomes.

3. Efficient content delivery: Employ AI-powered platforms to automate content delivery, providing timely and relevant educational resources to students.

4. Adaptive assessment: Implement AI-based assessment tools to evaluate student progress dynamically and provide real-time feedback for personalized learning paths.

5. Data-driven decision-making: Utilize AI analytics to analyze large datasets and inform educational strategies, curriculum development, and resource allocation.

6. Virtual tutoring and mentoring: Introduce AI-driven virtual tutors and mentors to provide personalized guidance and support to students outside the classroom.

7. Automated administrative tasks: Utilize AI-powered systems to automate administrative tasks, allowing educators to focus more on teaching and student engagement.

8. Predictive analytics: Utilize AI algorithms to predict student performance, identify at-risk students, and implement targeted interventions to support their academic success.

9. Continuous improvement: Establish feedback loops using AI to continuously improve educational practices, content, and systems based on insights derived from student data and interactions.

Significance of the study

To maximize learning outcomes in contemporary educational environments, it is essential to comprehend how well artificial intelligence (AI) may be integrated with educational technology. Through assessing the effects of AI integration, teachers can modify their teaching strategies to improve student engagement, understanding, and retention. AI-powered educational technology also can expedite administrative procedures, tailor learning experiences, and get students ready for the needs of the workforce of the future. By addressing gaps in access to high-quality education, this research advances educational practices while also advancing equity and inclusivity. In the end, research on the efficacy of AI integration in educational technology encourages creativity, contributes to evidence-based practices, and equips teachers to address the many demands of students in a world driven by technology.

Review of literature

1. Smith and Johnson's (2014) review in the "Journal of Educational Technology Research" provides a comprehensive overview of the evolution of educational technology. Through meticulous examination, the review outlines significant advancements in educational technology and their profound effects on teaching and learning processes. By tracing this evolution, the

authors shed light on the transformative power of technology in education, from traditional classroom tools to innovative digital platforms. Their analysis underscores the importance of embracing technological advancements to enhance educational practices and meet the evolving needs of learners in the digital age.

2. Chen and Wang's (2014) review in the "International Journal of Mobile Learning" offers a critical assessment of the role of mobile learning in educational technology. Through meticulous analysis, the review explores the potential advantages and drawbacks of integrating mobile devices into educational settings. By evaluating the benefits, such as increased accessibility and flexibility, alongside challenges like device compatibility and distraction, the authors provide valuable insights into the complexities of mobile learning implementation. Their review highlights the importance of considering both opportunities and obstacles to effectively harness the potential of mobile technology for enhancing teaching and learning experiences.

3. Wang and Li's (2014) meta-analysis in the "Educational Technology Research Quarterly" systematically evaluates the effectiveness of blended learning methodologies. By synthesizing empirical studies, the review examines the outcomes of instructional approaches that integrate online and traditional classroom instruction. Through rigorous analysis, the authors assess the impact of blended learning on student engagement, achievement, and satisfaction. Their findings provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of blending online and face-to-face instruction, offering educators evidence-based guidance for designing and implementing blended learning environments. This meta-analysis contributes to the ongoing discourse on optimal instructional strategies and underscores the potential of blended learning to enhance educational outcomes.

4. Liu and Zhang's (2014) review in the "Journal of Learning Analytics" delves into the significance of learning analytics within educational technology. Through a comprehensive analysis, the review explores how learning analytics can illuminate patterns and trends in student data to enhance teaching and learning practices. By examining its potential applications and implications, the authors discuss the transformative role of learning analytics in providing actionable insights for educators. Moreover, the review identifies future directions for research and practice, highlighting opportunities for leveraging learning analytics to personalize instruction, optimize curriculum design, and support data-driven decision-making in educational contexts.

5. Yang and Huang's (2014) article in "Educational Technology & Society" provides a thorough examination of recent research focused on enhancing student engagement with educational technology. Through comprehensive review and analysis, the article explores various strategies and approaches aimed at maximizing student engagement in learning activities facilitated by technology. By synthesizing findings from recent studies, the authors offer insights into effective practices for leveraging educational technology to captivate students' interest, promote active

participation, and foster deeper learning experiences. Their review contributes to the ongoing discourse on optimizing instructional design and pedagogical approaches to cultivate student engagement in digitally mediated learning environments.

6. Park and Lee's (2014) review in the "Journal of Virtual Learning Environments" explores the integration of virtual reality (VR) technologies within educational technology. Through an examination of current trends and future directions, the review investigates the application of VR in educational settings and its potential to revolutionize learning experiences. By analyzing the implications of VR integration, the authors discuss the opportunities and challenges associated with leveraging immersive technologies for teaching and learning purposes. Their review offers valuable insights into the transformative potential of VR in education and outlines pathways for further research and development in this rapidly evolving field.

7. Chen and Zhang's (2014) meta-analysis in "Educational Technology & Society" rigorously assesses the effectiveness of flipped classroom models. Through synthesizing empirical studies, the review evaluates the impact of this innovative instructional approach on student learning outcomes and engagement. By examining various indicators such as academic achievement and student participation, the authors provide evidence-based insights into the benefits of flipped classrooms. Their meta-analysis contributes valuable findings to the educational technology field, offering educators evidence to support the implementation of flipped learning models as a means to enhance learning effectiveness and foster student engagement in educational settings.

8. Chen and Wang's (2014) article in the "Journal of Artificial Intelligence in Education" provides an extensive examination of the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in educational technology. Through a comprehensive review, the article explores the diverse applications and implications of AI in teaching and learning contexts. By discussing AI-driven tools, adaptive learning systems, intelligent tutoring systems, and other AI applications, the authors highlight the transformative potential of AI in enhancing educational experiences. Their analysis offers valuable insights into the integration of AI technologies, paving the way for innovative approaches to personalized learning, data-driven decision-making, and the optimization of educational outcomes.

Discussion:

The literature review offered includes a wide range of perspectives and insights regarding the evolution, application, and influence of educational technology, as well as the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in educational settings. To begin, Smith and Johnson (2014) present a historical outline of educational technology's evolution from traditional methods to digital platforms, emphasizing its transformative impact on educational practices. Furthermore, research into developing technologies such as virtual reality (Park & Lee, 2014) and artificial intelligence (Chen & Wang, 2014) sheds light on the future of education.

Overall, the literature assessment emphasizes educational technology's complex nature, as well as its ability to handle a wide range of educational difficulties and opportunities.

Conclusion:

The concept of educational technology extends beyond mere visual aids, such as those produced by Adobe, to encompass a broader array of tools and mediums employed in educational settings. Educational technology operates as a systemic approach aimed at enhancing the overall teaching and learning processes. This involves a comprehensive analysis of existing challenges and the efficient utilization of available resources to achieve optimal outcomes. Rather than being perceived as isolated components, educational technology encompasses various dimensions, including instructional methodologies, technological infrastructure, behavioral patterns, and resource management strategies. Integration of these diverse elements is essential to adapt educational technology to the specific needs and contexts of a given educational system, thereby facilitating the attainment of its objectives.

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ACADEMIC BANK OF CREDITS: A PILLAR OF TRANSFORMATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract:

This paper investigates the role of the Academic Bank of Credits in Indian higher education in light of expected changes to the educational system by 2040. It attempts to understand ABC in India, its benefits, and implementation challenges. With its emphasis on a multidisciplinary, holistic education that puts students' needs, interests, and possibilities first, ABC stands out for its learner-friendly methodology. The non-transferability of credits from non-traditional sources, such online courses and independent study, creates a significant challenge, however. Additionally, this paper explores ABC's transformational potential in higher education, bringing light on how it could bring substantial changes in the field of education.

Keywords: Academic Bank of Credits, Higher Education

Introduction:

India's education policy have changed several times in the past intending to raise educational standards. The University Education Commission (1948–49), the University Grants Commission (1966–66), the Kothari Commission (1966–66), the National Policy on Education (NPE) (1968), the Programme of Action (POA) (1992), and the National Policy on Education (1986) have all marked significant turning points in the country's gradual evolution of education policy.

The goal of the National Education Policy (2020), which was adopted on July 29, 2020, by the Union Cabinet of India, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is to completely transform the country's educational system by the year 2040. Kurien and Chandramana (2020) claimed that this policy offers a thorough framework for vocational education and training in rural and urban India, covering elementary school to higher education. It aims to build character, ethical and constitutional principles, intellectual curiosity, scientific temper, creativity, service spirit, and skills across a wide range of disciplines, including the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, languages, personal, technological, and vocational courses.

NEP 2020 and higher education

The National Education Policy (2020) anticipated to have favourable, enduring effects on the country's higher education system. According to National Education Policy (2020), the

following are the tenets that form the foundation of this policy for higher education: Institutionalisation, integration, and advancement; value education in higher education; vocational education; National Research Foundation for Academic Research; opposition to and cessation of the commercialization of higher education; efficient governance and leadership for HEIs; and optimal learning and support for students. The emphasis was laid on foreign institutions opening campuses in India, creating interdisciplinary schools, and employing a common entrance test (Kurien and Chandramana, 2020).

According to Kumar (2021) Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs) similar to IITs and IIMs would be formed, and 3.5 crore seats will be produced. Additionally, by 2035, the gross enrolment ratio will rise to 50%. Along with the establishment of the National Research Foundation and the Higher Education Commission of India, efforts will be made to develop a consistent set of guidelines, accreditation criteria, and academic requirements for public and private higher education institutions. Kurien and Chandramana (2020) pointed that along with this, a very significant endeavour was introduced called Academic Bank of Credits. This means that the academic credits gained by students enrolled in courses from several accredited higher education institutions can be wisely stored and transferred whenever required.

Objectives of Academic Bank of Credits

- To comprehend ABC in the higher education in the Indian context.
- To analyse the benefits of ABC in higher education in the Indian context.
- To trace the challenges in the implementation of ABC Policy.

Concept of Academic Bank of Credits

Origin and Development:

Parveen (2023) reported that several nations, including the UK, South Korea, and Canada, have already adopted the idea of Academic Bank of Credits in Education. ABC was proposed by the University Grants Commission in 2019 and subsequently adopted for debate in 2020. Afterward, in July 2021, the Academic Bank of Credits was published as a regulation in the gazette for the higher educational institutions in India.

ABC was proposed to be established in 2020 as part of India's New Education Policy to enhance access and reduce the cost of education in the country. According to The Gazette of India (2021), the commission was authorized by the central government to create ABC, which is an online, virtual, or digital organization that assists students in opening academic accounts. After creating an account, students will obtain a special identification and access to the standard operating procedure. Using an organized framework for credit recognition, accumulation, transfer, and redemption, facilitates smooth student movement between and among higher education institutions offering degrees.

Academic credit is a standardised unit of measurement for the amount of work required of students in an educational programme. It includes theoretical study, practical applications, and training, according to Majumder (2023).

Table 1: Academic Credit

Semester of (13-15 weeks)	Theory/Per week	Tutorial/Per week	Practical/Per week	Training/Per week
1 Credit	1 Hour	1 Hour	2 Hours	1 week of internship

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- **Credit Bank** denotes ABC's policy of allowing students to borrow academic credits to complete their degree requirements, Majumder (2023).
- **Credit Transfer** is the process of transferring earned credits from one institution to another, offering a smooth and effective way to transfer academic credit, Majumder (2023)
- **Credit Accumulation** enables students to compile credits from various institutions and courses, enabling them to create a more comprehensive academic record, Majumder (2023).
- **Credit Validation** is the process by which the ABC system verifies that the credits students have earned fulfil the necessary academic requirements, Majumder (2023).
- **Credit Repository** means that ABC acts as a central repository for all of the credits students have earned, facilitating their access to and sharing of their academic records with other educational institutions. The National Academic Depository (NAD) provides the underlying structure for the establishment of the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC), which is used to store student academic awards and related data, Majumder (2023).

There are 3As of ABC which refers to Allocation, process of assigning credits to individual elements; Accumulation, students earning credits for lifelong learning and; Awarding, credits are awarded after completion of required activities, Moolchandani *et al.* (2023)

Allocation	⇒	Accumulation	⇒	Awarding
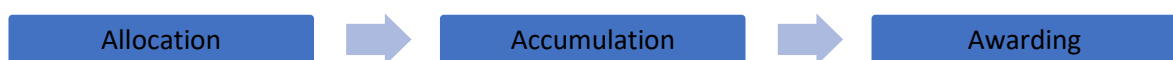
Figure 1: 3 As of Academic Bank of Credit

Flexibility and incentives in the ABC scheme: To be eligible to pursue higher education at any accredited institution, learners must earn credit points through the completion of courses or other activities in a variety of areas. This is the goal of the ABC scheme. An individual who has finished a web design course, for example, can choose to take a programming or software development course, which would provide them with more in-depth information and abilities connected to the IT industry. According to Mandale and Killedar (2023), students have gained

freedom in terms of the pace and duration of their studies. This enables students to enrol in more classes and activities in less time or to complete them at their own speed.

Execution and reach: Around 290 colleges will begin implementing the ABC for students starting in the 2021-2022 academic year (The Hindu, 2021). The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) top 100 ranking institutions and the National Assessment and Accreditation Council grade "A"- achieved institutions are among the higher education institutions taking part in the credit transfer program, Jebaraj (2021). Academic Bank of Credits will make it possible to integrate several higher education disciplines, which will result in the desired learning outcomes, such as improved critical thinking, creativity, and innovation. In order to give students, the flexibility to complete their education at their own pace, a variety of fields and HEIs can be connected through mobility for degree or diploma programmes, postgraduate diploma or certificate programmes, or coursework towards a PhD, Moolchandani *et al.* (2023)

Mobility and flexibility: Academic Bank of Credits (Parveen, 2023) recognizes both online and offline courses like NPTEL, SWAYAM, and V-Lab. Credits can also be earned by students who seek education as freelancers (Pathak, 2022). Deka (2021) pointed that academic banks of credit function similarly to bank accounts in that each student will have a personal account where the credits they have earned are deposited and kept. The blended style of learning, which combines online and offline instruction, is supported by the ABC model. Students will also have access to traditional classes, advanced courses, and skill-based education. Within a set seven-year term, ABC will let UG/PG course participants withdraw and re-enter, Phulari *et al.* (2022).

Validation of courses and accreditation: Mandale and Killedar (2023) stated that institutions must be informed about the advantages ABC provides, the conditions they must fulfill to be included, and the kinds of information that may be stored in the database. Institutions may quickly assess applicants' qualifications by using ABC, which makes it simple for them to obtain and validate student credit records.

Eligibility criteria for registration of HEIs with respect to ABC

- Universities and autonomous colleges that have received accreditation with a minimum "A" grade from the National Assessment and Accreditation Council, or with a minimum score of 675 from the National Board of Accreditation for at least three programmes,
- The Top 100 National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) or any other comparable Assessment and Accreditation body(ies) that the GOI may from time to time establish,
- Indian HEIs that rank among the top 1000 globally according to Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)/Times Higher Education (THE) and Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)/Times Higher Education (THE) rankings and,
- Institutions of Eminence or Institutions of National Importance as designated by the GOI. At the time of enrolment for ABC, the accreditation or ranking status must be valid.

Before registering with ABC, HEIs need to get permission from their respective statutory authorities, which may include the Syndicate, Board of Management, Academic Council, Governing or Executive Council, and others. In addition to admitting students to full degree programs, recognized higher education institutions must also admit students to individual courses.

A registered higher education institution must have the audio-visual resources, online resources, virtual classrooms and studios, high-speed internet access, and other infrastructural resources for in-person theory, practical, or training classes, according to the applicable University Grants Commission regulations (Gazette of India, 2021). Every registered institution's website needs to provide a page explaining the ABCs facility, a list of all HEIs that are registered, guidelines for students to use the facility effectively, and a link to the ABCs webpage (Naveen, 2021).

Majumder (2023) stated that the following procedures must be followed for HEIs to register on ABC's official website: Register on the official ABC website, the ABC website will regularly publish student credit data, HEIs' websites will include links to the ABC URL, a nodal officer will be designated for ABC procedures, student awareness and participation, credit criteria for qualifications, and qualification categories to be addressed.

Process of enrolling with Academic Bank of Credits for students

Students who enrolled after 2021-2022 can register with ABC; however, when the results are announced, parent institutions will upload the credits rather than ABC accepting documents directly from registered students. When enrolled in a university or other higher education institution, students need to get at least 50% of the credits from their parent institution. The remaining credits may be obtained from any other university that captures their interest, Parveen (2023). Here is how ABC operates as a whole, according to Parveen (2023):

The process for opening an academic account with ABC involves filling out all the required information and receiving a unique ID and password. The government will then create a credit structure based on the courses completed, and the parent institution will upload the students' credits after exams in the digital portal. ABC will then evaluate and verify the credits, allowing them to be transferred to other courses and institutions. Additionally, ABC will regularly authenticate the credits and allow the students to redeem their credits within seven years of finishing their courses. The image below illustrates this:

Figure 2: Process of ABC. Source: The Gazette of India (2021)

As per the official website of Academic Bank of Credits, total 1874 higher education institutions onboarded, where the institution types onboarded are- AICTE: 312, autonomous college: 378, Central higher education institution: 121, Central University: 54, college 6, Deemed to be university: 121, Private University: 415, Skill: 23, State University:422 and others: 22 till date. Total no. of students/learners registered: 29.25 Cr, total no. of AIs (Universities, INIs) registered on ABC: 1874, total no. of AIs that have uploaded credit data (2021, 2022, 2023): 590, unique students credit awards seeded with APAAR/ABC ID: 22.93 lacs, and total no. of academic records with credit data mapped with APAAR/ABC ID: 47.33 lacs till date. (Source: https://www.abc.gov.in/)

Monitoring, support, quality assurance by universities

Monitoring the growth and implementation of ABC programme at the university and associated autonomous college levels would fall within the purview of Registered Higher Education Institutions. Programs for Faculty Development, Quality Improvement, Professional Development, or Technology Inculcation will offer mentorship, administrative and academic audits, staff or teacher training, and other initiatives to improve the quality of performance and its promotion. The Registered Higher Education Institution will choose the most suitable organised system to develop this, which may include the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC).

Every Registered Higher Education must file an annual report detailing its operations and the steps taken to ensure, sustain, and improve quality, according to The Gazette of India (2021). To handle student grievances and appeals at the levels of ABC, the Central Government, the University Grants Commission, and every HEI registered with ABC, there will be an ABC-Grievance Redressal Mechanism.

Impact of ABC in higher education

ABC brought consistency and quality control to higher education. Positive effects of ABC adoption include increased accessibility, improved quality, and ongoing learning. ABC's distinctive feature is its ability to provide students flexibility by offering several points of entry and departure based on their choices and speed. The flexibility and learner-centric approach ingrained in the ABC framework are reflected in the special feature that permits students to withdraw at any time and collect earned credits in the form of certificates, diplomas, or degrees, Majumder (2023).

Benefits of ABC

- ABC will deposit credits granted by accredited HEIs for courses taken therein into the student's account which can be redeemed for a degree, diploma, or postgraduate certificate, with a seven-year maximum redemption period (The Gazette of India, 2021).
- It is learner-friendly and supports multidisciplinary, holistic education as it prioritizes the needs, interests, and opportunities of the student.

- To make higher education institutions more globally focused, ABC is a step towards internalizing and globalizing the system.

- It decreases dropout rates as student mobility becomes more flexible, raises the HIE gross enrolment ratio, and advances national development by encouraging sustainable growth, Parveen (2023).

- As ABC is globally accepted, it facilitates the use of earned credit towards international study abroad (Raj & Aithal, 2019)

- The ability for students to transfer course credits between universities saves them time, money, and energy.

Limitations of Academic Bank of Credits

- There's a chance that not all universities will be able to accept credits obtained at one university because of system compatibility issues.

- Credits from non-traditional sources including online courses and independent study could not be transferable for students.

- The system could ask students to provide more documentation before allowing credits to transfer (Mandale and Killedar, 2023).

- According to the Delhi University Teachers Association (DUTA), Academic bank of credits would merely dilute degrees and overlook the important concepts of equity, quality, access, and efficacy, (Phulari *et.al*., 2022).

- Moreover, a negative impact on teachers due to variable workloads that cause job losses, low compensation, and even a rise in contract work, Kumar (2022).

Conclusion:

There is still much need for improvement in the Indian higher education system, despite its dynamic and growing nature. There's a good chance that the national credit transfer system will become one of the higher education portals that are internationally recognised (Raj & Aithal, 2019). The Academic Bank of Credits marks a revolutionary turn in the direction of higher education, offering a road forward for both institutions and students. This new frontier represents a time when education will no longer be limited, creating doors to limitless options and reshaping the educational environment to make it better and more approachable for future generations (Majumder, 2023).

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GRIGORI PERELMAN: THE ENIGMATIC MATHEMATICIAN WHO SOLVED THE POINCARÉ CONJECTURE AND CHOSE SILENCE

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Abstract:

This article delves into the intriguing life of Grigori Perelman, a brilliant mathematician who gained worldwide acclaim for solving the Poincare Conjecture, one of the most challenging problems in mathematics. Despite his groundbreaking achievement, Perelman's life is characterized by enigma, reclusion, and a deliberate withdrawal from the mathematical community.

Introduction:
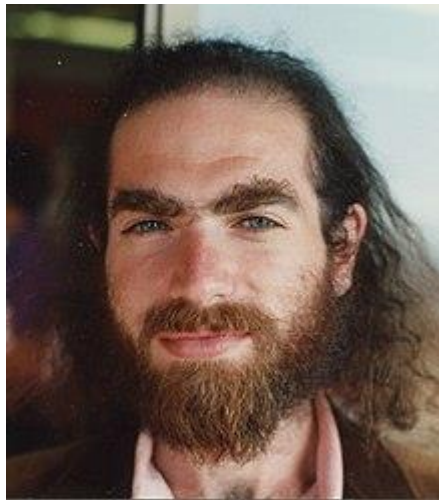
Grigori Perelman is a Russian mathematician known for his groundbreaking contributions to the field of geometry and topology, particularly for solving the Poincare conjecture, one of the seven Millennium Prize Problems in mathematics. The Poincare conjecture, formulated by the French mathematician Henri Poincare in 1904, posited that every simply connected, closed 3-manifold is homeomorphic to a 3-sphere. In 2003, Perelman posted a series of three preprints outlining his proof of the Poincare conjecture. His work was widely acclaimed and subjected to intense peer review. In 2006, the mathematician was awarded the Fields Medal, one of the highest honors in mathematics, for his outstanding contributions.

However, Grigori Perelman declined both the Fields Medal and the million-dollar prize, citing a lack of interest in fame and financial rewards. His decision to reject these honors added an element of mystery to his personality and contributed to the enigma surrounding him. After

solving the Poincare conjecture, Perelman withdrew from the mathematical community and public life, choosing a reclusive lifestyle.

While his mathematical achievements are widely recognized and celebrated, Perelman's unwillingness to engage with the traditional academic and professional systems has made him a somewhat mysterious figure in the mathematical world. Despite his withdrawal, Grigori Perelman's contributions to mathematics continue to have a lasting impact, and his work remains a testament to the power of human intellect and perseverance in the pursuit of knowledge.

Early life and education:

Grigori Perelman, a Russian mathematician born on June 13, 1966, in Leningrad (now Saint Petersburg), became widely known for solving one of mathematics' most complex problems, the Poincare conjecture. His childhood was influenced by a family of mathematicians. His mother was a mathematician, and his father was an electrical engineer. This family background likely played a role in shaping his interests and early exposure to mathematics. Perelman showed exceptional talent in mathematics from a young age. He attended the Specialized Mathematics School at Leningrad State University, known for nurturing gifted young mathematicians. His expertise in mathematics continued to flourish during his academic years.

In 1990, he earned his Ph.D. from the Leningrad State University, now called Saint Petersburg State University, under the guidance of Sergei Rukshin. His thesis focused on Riemannian geometry and Alexandrov spaces, demonstrating his early inclination towards geometry and topology, which later became crucial in his work on the Poincare conjecture. Following his doctorate, Perelman made significant contributions to mathematics, particularly in the field of geometric analysis. His work and insights paved the way for his groundbreaking proof of the Poincare conjecture in 2003.

Mathematical contributions:

1. Poincare Conjecture Proof (2003): Perelman's most famous achievement is his proof of the Poincare conjectures. The conjecture stated that every simply connected, closed 3-dimensional manifold is homeomorphic to a 3-dimensional sphere. Perelman's proof involved the use of Ricci flow, a process that smoothes out the geometry of a manifold. His work was groundbreaking, and he was awarded the Fields Medal in 2006 for this achievement.

2. Ricci Flow and Geometric Topology: Perelman's work on the Poincare conjecture was based on the Ricci flow, a technique in differential geometry introduced by Richard S. Hamilton. Perelman's contributions extended beyond the Poincare conjecture to include advancements in the understanding of Ricci flow and its applications in geometric topology.

3. Geometric Analysis: Perelman's work involved deep insights into geometric analysis, a branch of mathematics that combines techniques from differential geometry and partial differential

equations. His ability to navigate complex mathematical structures and manipulate geometric objects played a crucial role in his proof of the Poincare conjecture.

4. Hamilton-Perelman's Theory of Ricci Flow with Surgery: Perelman's approach to the Poincare conjecture involved a combination of Ricci flow and a process called surgery. This led to the development of the Hamilton-Perelman's theory of Ricci flow with surgery, which has broader implications in understanding the topology of 3-manifolds.

Controversy and recognition:

Despite the significance of his work, Perelman's contributions were surrounded by controversy. He declined several prestigious awards and did not seek the million-dollar prize offered for a solution to the Poincare conjecture. Perelman withdrew from the mathematical community, and his decision to decline recognition raised questions about the nature of mathematical fame and the pressures within the field.

Perelman's proof of the Poincare conjecture was initially published in a series of papers in 2002 and 2003. His proof was met with skepticism and scrutiny from the mathematical community. It took several years for mathematicians to thoroughly review and confirm the validity of his work. Eventually, in 2006, Perelman was awarded the Fields Medal and the Clay Millennium Prize for his proof of the Poincare conjecture. Fields Medal, which is awarded every four years to mathematicians under 40 for outstanding achievements. He turned down the medal and the accompanying prize money, totaling $1 million. Perelman stated that he was not interested in recognition or material rewards for his work.

Following the confirmation of his proof and the awards, Grigori Perelman withdrew from the mathematics community. He resigned from his position at the Steklov Institute of Mathematics in St. Petersburg and ceased his involvement in academic and research activities. Perelman's decision to withdraw and live a reclusive lifestyle sparked speculation and discussion within the mathematical community.

He was quoted as saying, *"'I'm not interested in money or fame; I don't want to be on display like an animal in a zoo. I'm not a hero of mathematics. I'm not even that successful; that is why I don't want to have everybody looking at me.'"*

Reclusion and personal life:

Following this achievement, Perelman withdrew from the mathematics community and academic life. He returned to St. Petersburg, living a reclusive and reportedly modest lifestyle. He turned down job offers and invitations to prestigious conferences, choosing to live with his mother and dedicating his time to his own mathematical pursuits. In 2010, it was reported that Perelman was living in relative seclusion and had taken up a position at the Steklov Institute of Mathematics in St. Petersburg. However, he resigned shortly afterward, and little has been known about his professional activities since then. Perelman has been known to avoid the media

and has granted very few interviews. Many people believe that he simply wanted to pursue mathematics on his own terms without the distractions of fame and external pressures. Overall, Grigori Perelman's personal life remains private, and he has chosen to distance himself from the public eye and the academic world.

Conclusion:

Perelman's proof, completed in 2003, was a monumental achievement that had eluded mathematicians for over a century. However, Perelman's journey took a unique turn when he chose to reject both the prestigious Fields Medal and the accompanying monetary award, leading to increased public scrutiny and a desire for privacy. He withdrew from the mathematics community and chose to live a simple and secluded life in St. Petersburg. Despite the recognition and acclaim, Perelman's story is one of enigma and solitude, as he opted for a life away from the limelight, leaving the mathematical world to ponder the complexities not only of his theorems but also of his personal choices. Perelman's case remains a unique and intriguing chapter in the history of mathematics.

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NAVIGATING THE LANDSCAPE OF ONLINE LEARNING

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Abstract:

This chapter delves into the multifaceted realm of online learning, exploring its components, challenges, and opportunities. It investigates key aspects such as technological infrastructure, pedagogical approaches, accessibility, engagement strategies, assessment methods, support services, quality assurance, professional development, adaptation to change, and global perspectives. By comprehensively understanding and effectively navigating these elements, educators, administrators, and stakeholders can craft engaging, inclusive, and high-quality online learning experiences for students. The chapter emphasizes the significance of flexibility and accessibility in online education, highlighting their role in breaking down barriers to learning. It discusses strategies for ensuring quality education and skill development in online settings, including immersive learning interfaces, strategic curriculum mapping, expert facilitation, tailored learning journeys, collaborative knowledge exchange, continuous evaluation, and inclusive design practices. Furthermore, it addresses the challenges posed by the digital divide and proposes techniques for overcoming them, such as infrastructure improvement, digital literacy initiatives, equity enhancement, and provision of social and emotional support services. Overall, the chapter underscores the transformative potential of online learning in meeting the evolving needs of learners worldwide.

Keywords: Online Learning, e-Learning, Digital Education, Landscape.

Introduction:

The rapid advancement of technology and the growing integration of digital tools into daily life have fueled the rise of online learning, one of the most significant developments in education in recent decades. The traditional boundaries of education have been transcended by the internet and the widespread use of digital devices, creating new opportunities for learning and the dissemination of knowledge. Online learning, commonly referred to as e-learning or distance education, has emerged as a key component of contemporary education, providing never-before-seen chances for students to access learning materials and take part in classes from a distance.

Since its inception, the field of online learning has grown exponentially due to a confluence of factors including technological innovation, evolving societal demands, and shifting educational paradigms. Online learning has its origins in the early trials of computer-assisted

instruction conducted in the middle of the 20th century. But it wasn't until the internet became widely used in the 1990s that online learning started to become recognized as a competitive option to traditional classroom-based education.

The flexibility that traditional learning environments frequently lack is offered by online learning (Cadavid *et al.,* 2022). It entails online communication between educators, learners, and course materials. Owing to this modification, the number of students enrolled in online courses has increased significantly, outpacing the overall growth in enrollment during the preceding ten years (Allen & Seaman, 2014).

The growth of virtual learning offers a plethora of prospects for educators and learners alike. Barbour *et al.* (2020) argued that a comprehensive understanding of content, technology, and pedagogy is necessary for successful online teaching. The efficiency of online learning is jeopardized in the absence of a cohesive understanding of these components. However, the majority of faculty members are not adequately trained to switch to an online format. Johnson *et al.* (2020) emphasized that when creating and executing online learning experiences, it is crucial to draw from pre-existing training and classroom expertise. When switching from in-person to online instruction, faculty members must adjust their pedagogical practices to reflect technological advancements. This calls for learning new skills and adjusting to an alternative educational paradigm.

What is e-learning

Online learning, a mode of learning facilitated by digital technologies, enables people to acquire knowledge and skills remotely. It makes use of interactive tools, multimedia resources, and internet-based platforms to promote learning and educate people. Online learning accommodates a wide range of learner needs and preferences by providing scheduling and location flexibility, in contrast to traditional classroom settings. It includes a broad variety of formats, such as self-paced study plans, informal tutorials, and structured online courses and virtual classrooms. With online learning, students can receive a top-notch education regardless of their location, encouraging opportunities for lifelong learning and giving them the freedom to pursue their academic objectives at their own speed. Ratheeswari (2018) asserts that in the digital age, students can acquire and apply the skills they'll need for the 21st century by using information and communications technology (ICT). Additionally, online education is the most effective way to guarantee the continuation of

Components of online learning

The potential for more efficient self-learning makes online learning crucial. The amount of time spent, the subjects covered, and the course of study are all up to the students. Additionally, until they are satisfied with their understanding of a difficult topic, students have

the chance to review it. Additionally, studying in a "safe" setting without feeling embarrassed to ask questions is made possible by online learning.

Students can discover new material through websites and digital libraries through interactive online learning. Hasifah (2020) asserts that distance learning enables the worldwide distribution of knowledge and information, particularly with the introduction of new technologies in the educational domain.

Online learning often consists of the following essential elements:

Content delivery platforms: The websites, programs, or Learning Management Systems (LMS) that house course materials are known as content delivery platforms. Text, audio files, interactive simulations, video lectures, and other multimedia resources can all be a part of them.

Course materials: These are the instructional tools that instructors give their students. They include textbooks, lecture notes, slideshows, videos, assignments, tests, and additional readings.

Communication tools: A variety of tools for collaboration and communication are frequently included in online learning, including email, messaging apps, discussion boards, chat rooms, and video conferencing software like Zoom and Microsoft Teams. These resources make it easier for students to communicate with one another and with their teachers.

Assessment and evaluation: Peer assessments, essays, projects, tests, exams, quizzes, and discussions are a few examples of assessment techniques used in online learning. These tests aid in determining how well students comprehend the subject matter and how far along they are in the course.

Feedback mechanisms: In order to give students direction and support during their online education, feedback is essential. Teachers can provide feedback to students through grading assignments, leaving remarks on discussion posts, and giving individual comments on their work.

What is online education

Online education, also referred to as e-learning or digital learning, is a method of teaching that makes use of the internet and digital technologies to deliver learning materials and support remote learning opportunities. Online education, at its core, allows students to access educational materials and participate in learning activities from any location with an internet connection, thereby overcoming the constraints of traditional classroom settings. In order to accommodate different learning styles and needs, this mode of instruction offers a wide variety of formats, such as interactive modules, virtual classrooms, self-paced tutorials, and structured courses.

There are many advantages to online education for both students and institutions. It offers learners convenience and flexibility, allowing them to manage their studies alongside obligations to their families, jobs, and other commitments. Furthermore, self-directed learning is encouraged

by online education since it gives people the freedom to pursue their learning objectives at their own convenience and speed. Teachers gain access to a variety of educational tools and resources through online learning, which helps them engage students in creative ways and improve teaching effectiveness. Organizations can use online education to broaden their student body, reach more people, and adjust to the changing demands of the digital age.

Online education does, however, come with drawbacks, including the requirement for a strong technological foundation, digital literacy abilities, and methods to guarantee inclusivity and accessibility for all students. Online learning is still revolutionizing the educational landscape in spite of these obstacles. It makes learning opportunities more accessible to all, encourages lifelong learning, and pushes the boundaries of teaching and learning methodologies. Online education will continue to play a major role in determining the direction of education as long as technology keeps improving and societal demands change.

Difference between online education and online learning

Aspect	Online Education	Online Learning
Delivery Method	Formal instruction given with the help of internet	wide range, encompassing in-formal learning
Scope	organized certifications, degrees, and courses	Any kind of learning that makes use of the internet
Focus	academic and institutional	Individual, personalized
Interaction	Instructor-led, peer collaboration	Varied: self-paced, instructor-led, peer
Assessment	Formal assessments, grading	Diverse assessments, often self-paced
Examples	Online courses, virtual classrooms	YouTube tutorials, self-paced study programs

The foundations of online learning

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of flexibility and accessibility in the ever-changing world of e-learning, especially in a nation as diverse as India. The next section explores how e-learning solutions are essential in breaking down socioeconomic and geographic barriers and creating an environment that is more welcoming and inclusive for learning.

Flexibility and accessibility are the guiding concepts of online learning in the constantly changing field of education. These fundamental components have become potent enablers as technology continues to upend conventional paradigms, democratizing education and changing how students interact with teachers, content, and one another.

Accessibility: Dismantling obstacles

Online accessibility breaks down geographical barriers to education, providing opportunities for those who might find it difficult to access traditional educational settings. Online learning makes education accessible to everyone, regardless of socioeconomic status, geographic limitations, or physical impairments. No matter where they are or what their circumstances are, students can access a multitude of educational resources thanks to digital platforms. Furthermore, people can customize their learning experiences to fit their own needs and preferences thanks to the flexibility that comes with online learning.

Moreover, accessibility encompasses a range of learning styles, languages, and cultural backgrounds in addition to physical and geographic barriers. Different learning modalities can be accommodated by customizing online learning environments, which guarantees that content is presented inclusively and in a way that meets the diverse needs of learners. Moreover, culturally sensitive content and multilingual support improve accessibility by encouraging engagement and a sense of belonging among students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Flexibility: Empowering learners

Flexibility lies at the heart of online learning, empowering learners to take control of their educational journey. Unlike traditional classroom settings, online learning offers unparalleled flexibility in terms of time, pace, and mode of learning. Learners have the freedom to access educational resources at any time and from anywhere, allowing them to balance their studies with work, family, or other commitments. This flexibility not only accommodates the busy lifestyles of learners but also promotes self-directed learning and autonomy. To accommodate a range of learning preferences, online learning platforms make use of a number of instructional formats and delivery techniques. Learners can interact with content in ways that suit their unique learning styles through a variety of mediums, such as asynchronous discussions, virtual simulations, and interactive multimedia presentations. Furthermore, because online courses are modular, students can move through the content at their own speed, going over ideas again as needed and concentrating on topics that interest them or are challenging.

The transformative potential of online learning is underpinned by fundamental principles, namely accessibility and flexibility, rather than being incidental features. Online learning has completely changed education, making it more flexible, personalized, inclusive, and dynamic by removing barriers to entry. Prioritizing these fundamental components will help us navigate the rapidly growing field of online learning and keep education accessible and flexible enough to meet the changing needs of students all over the world.

Quality education and skill development

In the current digital era, the importance of high-quality education and skill development in online learning has increased, particularly with the widespread adoption of remote learning as

a result of numerous factors like the COVID-19 pandemic and technological advancements. In order to guarantee high-quality instruction and skill development in online learning, keep the following points in mind:

Immersive learning interfaces: Employ dynamic learning platforms that boast immersive content, multimedia resources, and avenues for active engagement. These platforms should feature interactive elements like videos, simulations, quizzes, and discussion forums to captivate learners and deepen their grasp of the subject matter.

Strategic curriculum mapping: Craft meticulously structured curricula delineating clear learning objectives, milestones, and evaluation criteria. Modularizing content facilitates seamless navigation for learners while ensuring steady progression towards proficiency and achievement of learning objectives.

Expert facilitation: Recruit proficient instructors with deep domain expertise and adeptness in online pedagogy. Instructors should adeptly convey intricate concepts, furnish timely feedback, and orchestrate discussions conducive to profound comprehension and knowledge retention.

Tailored learning journeys: Customize learning experiences to cater to individual learner needs and preferences. Leveraging adaptive learning technologies, such as algorithms that calibrate content complexity and pacing based on learner progress, alongside opportunities for self-assessment and introspection, ensures personalized growth trajectories.

Collaborative knowledge exchange: Cultivate environments conducive to peer collaboration and interaction through collaborative assignments, online discourse, and group projects. Peer-to-peer learning not only fosters social connectivity but also facilitates knowledge dissemination and cultivates teamwork competencies.

Continuous evaluation and feedback loop: Implement a robust system for ongoing assessment and feedback to monitor learner advancement and furnish constructive critique. This encompasses regular quizzes, assignments, and peer evaluations, alongside avenues for self-assessment and reflective analysis.

Inclusive design practices: Ensure equitable access to online learning materials and platforms, accommodating learners of all abilities and backgrounds. This entails providing alternative content formats, captioning multimedia resources, and crafting intuitive interfaces that cater to diverse learning modalities and preferences.

Real-world contextualization: Infuse curricula with real-world illustrations and case studies to elucidate practical applications of theoretical concepts. Bridging theory with practicality imbues learners with a nuanced understanding of how acquired knowledge and skills translate to real-life scenarios, fostering adeptness in application and adaptability.

Iterative enhancement strategy: Continuously refine and enhance the online learning experience through rigorous evaluation and stakeholder feedback mechanisms. This involves

conducting surveys, analyzing learning analytics, and soliciting input from learners, instructors, and stakeholders through focus groups or advisory panels.

Challenges of online learning

a. Technology accessibility: Not every student has equal access to computers, tablets, or dependable internet connections, among other essential technologies. Their inability to fully participate in online learning activities may be caused by this lack of access.

b. Digital literacy: A student's ability to use online learning platforms effectively may be hindered if they lack the digital literacy skills necessary.

c. Equity issues: Because students from low-income or marginalized communities are disproportionately impacted by the lack of access to technology and dependable internet, the digital divide exacerbates already-existing equity issues.

d. Isolation and engagement: Students who learn online may experience feelings of isolation, especially if they don't have access to opportunities for peer interaction or if their home environment isn't conducive to learning.

e. Assessment challenges: It can be difficult to ensure a fair and equitable evaluation of students' learning in an online setting, especially when there are questions about academic integrity or when students have unequal access to resources.

Prospects on online learning:

a. Creative solutions: The creation of creative ways to broaden access to technology and internet connectivity has been sparked by the digital divide. Examples of such innovations are programs like mobile learning applications, subsidized devices for low-income families, and community Wi-Fi networks.

b. Flexible learning: Students can access instructional materials and engage in activities at their own pace and convenience thanks to the flexibility that online learning offers in terms of both time and location.

c. Development of digital skills: As students interact with a variety of digital tools and technologies as part of their educational journey, online learning can provide a platform for the development of digital literacy skills.

d. Global collaboration: Students and teachers from various geographical locations can collaborate and share knowledge more easily when learning online, which creates a global learning community.

e. Personalized learning: By utilizing technology-enabled learning platforms, educators can tailor lessons to each student's needs and preferences, accommodating a range of learning tempos and styles.

Techniques for overcoming obstacles:

a. Infrastructure improvement: To increase access to technology and internet connectivity, especially in underserved areas, governments and educational institutions should invest in upgrading their infrastructure.

b. Digital literacy initiatives: Put in place digital literacy initiatives to give students the abilities they need to use online learning environments sensibly and successfully.

c. Equity initiatives: Create focused programs to address issues of equity, like giving needy students devices or offering internet access subsidies.

d. Social and emotional support: To lessen feelings of loneliness and encourage participation in online learning, provide students with social and emotional support services.

Recommendations and suggestions

Investment in technological infrastructure: It's imperative for governments and educational institutions to allocate resources towards enhancing technological infrastructure, particularly in areas with limited access. By improving internet connectivity and providing necessary devices, such as laptops or tablets, more students can engage in online learning. For instance, implementing community Wi-Fi networks in rural areas or offering subsidized devices for low-income families can significantly bridge the digital divide.

Promotion of digital literacy: Robust digital literacy initiatives should be implemented to ensure that students possess the necessary skills to navigate online learning platforms effectively. This could involve offering workshops or online tutorials on how to use learning management systems, conduct research online, and critically evaluate digital content. For example, educational institutions could collaborate with tech companies to provide free online courses on digital literacy skills tailored to different age groups.

Equity enhancement: Targeted programs and policies are essential to address equity issues in online learning and guarantee equal access for all students. This might include providing subsidies for internet access or offering scholarships for students from low-income backgrounds to purchase necessary technology. Additionally, ensuring that online learning platforms are accessible to students with disabilities by providing features such as screen readers or captioning services is crucial for promoting inclusivity.

Social and emotional support services: Providing social and emotional support services is vital for helping students overcome feelings of isolation and maintaining engagement in online learning. Educational institutions could establish online counseling services or peer support groups where students can connect with others facing similar challenges. For instance, organizing virtual social events or study groups can help foster a sense of community among online learners.

Professional development for educators: Offering comprehensive professional development programs is essential to equip educators with the skills and knowledge necessary for effective online teaching. This might involve training sessions on using educational technology tools, designing engaging online activities, and fostering virtual classroom interaction. For example, institutions could organize virtual workshops led by experienced online instructors to share best practices and strategies for engaging students in remote learning environments

Culture of continuous improvement: Cultivating a culture of continuous improvement is crucial for enhancing the quality of online learning experiences. This involves regularly soliciting feedback from students, instructors, and stakeholders, and using data analytics to identify areas for improvement. For instance, conducting surveys at the end of each online course to gather feedback on course content, delivery methods, and overall satisfaction can help identify areas for enhancement. Analyzing learning analytics data to track student progress and identify patterns of engagement can inform instructional design decisions and improve learning outcomes.

Conclusion:

Online learning has become increasingly important in the digital age, when information is easily accessible at our fingertips and technological literacy is becoming more and more important. The ability to quickly adopt new technologies and develop new skills is essential for people to stay competitive in the job market as the world economy grows more knowledge-based and linked.

Higher education has undergone a significant transition as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, with a swift transition from traditional in-person instruction to online instruction required. Faculty members now have a great deal on their plates, needing to quickly adjust to new pedagogical environments. With higher education institutions across the globe struggling to adapt to this revolutionary shift, the necessity of thorough faculty preparation for efficient online instruction has become apparent.

Regardless of location or time constraints, online learning provides a flexible and convenient way for students to acquire knowledge and skills at their own pace and schedule. Additionally, it offers chances for customized learning, enabling people to adjust their educational path to suit their unique needs, interests, and learning preferences. Also, in a world that is changing quickly, online learning is essential to meeting the growing demand for continuing education and lifelong learning. Online learning enables people to start a journey of lifelong learning and personal development, whether it's for intellectual curiosity, professional development opportunities, or upskilling to stay relevant in a changing job market.

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DEALING WITH HIDDEN CURRICULUM: PRACTICES AND ISSUES

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Abstract:

In this fast-paced world, the value crisis is casting its evil shadow in all the corners of our life. Even if our society has witnessed various kinds of developments in different fields of life, corrosion in values is still a problem that is visible everywhere, irrespective of generations. Problems with values can adversely affect the education system in which direction we are progressing. This situation reflects the importance of value-based education. Both society and schools are equally important and have responsibility in developing values. This paper provides you with a complete view on Hidden Curriculum, its needs and importance, evolution, sources, prevalent practices of value-based education and its issues in the context of India.

Keywords: Curriculum, Formal Curriculum, Hidden Curriculum

Introduction:

Curriculum is a collection of subjects or lessons comprising a course of study in a school or college. It is an outcome based sequence of planned and academic experiences where students master various learning content and skills. It is essential for the teaching learning process as it is a central guide for teachers. Curriculum can be both formal and informal.

Formal curriculum: Formal curriculum consists of courses, lessons, learning activities in which teachers and students are involved intentionally. Formal Curriculum is also known as Explicit curriculum, Overt Curriculum, Written curriculum and Official curriculum. It is the formal instructions or learning activities offered by schools which are planned with objectives, learning experiences and assessments to be met. It is not only written but also documented properly which serves as a framework or guideline to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Hidden curriculum: The Hidden curriculum is not formal as it is unwritten. It is generally called the informal curriculum. Hidden curriculum is an unintended curriculum. It is related to values, norms, attitudes, perceptions and all the things that students achieve or get throughout their academic career that is not explicitly taught as part of the formal curriculum. Like formal curriculum, hidden curriculum is also a fundamental component of educational experience. It consists of those learning experiences, both negative and positive, that are not part of the explicit curriculum. It results in changes in the attitudes, beliefs and values of students.

Need and importance of hidden curriculum

Education has a major role in the social, intellectual and political transformation of the world. Values and education are very interrelated and integrated. According to Socrates, education is to produce virtuous humans. Socrates' strong commitment to virtue reflects his belief in the value of a soul. But in today's fast paced competitive world, the value crisis is booming in all facets of life. And school systems function with the naive idea of official course offerings by which schooling is defined. This approach has changed the entire outlook of students, teachers and parents towards education and has affected its real purpose. Society always expects schools to develop students who could positively contribute to the society. But ignoring the fact, with a role played by parents, education system, society and administration, schools are always dominated by its one-sided interest in the formal curriculum. Many have failed to understand the purpose of schooling and education beyond its instructional outcomes. Awasthi (2014) stated that providing value-based education from early childhood and collaborative efforts can help in overcoming the problem of deteriorating moral values in youths.

In today's scenario, as most of the people have identified the gradual degradation of values, the need for quality or values have increased, along with the increase in the quality of education. Even if the number of educated people has increased, it alone cannot be identified as the overall development of an individual. Patil (2013) observed that today's education system has changed into an examination system and an information system pushing back the value system. It also stated that today's education system has lost its luster and relevance because of western influence. For the overall development of a person, apart from academics, quality or values of life are a necessity. Indrani (2012) emphasized that it is very important to learn the basic principles of value education, as values have been discarded by the new generation in the coming of the new fashion. Therefore Value education or Value based education which is a threefold development of an individual i.e, physique, mentality and character, irrespective of any gender and age, has to be given much attention. It is an approach to teaching that works with values. By creating a strong learning environment through value-based education, individuals acquire not only academic achievement but also develop a positive attitude towards the purpose of life. Mondal & Majumder (2019) asserted that for the sustainable human development as well as for the social growth, there is a need for value-based education and the teachers and teacher education institutions may think over the erosion of moral values among pupils and its actual restoration which might be difficult but not impossible.

Evolution of hidden curriculum: From colonial period to the New Education Policy 2020

During the British period, the aim of education was to impart instructions in subjects which function to enlighten social, intellectual and economic fields. And also, there were attempts to inculcate secular moral education, that deals with morality outside of religious

traditions such as humanism, free thinking, consequentialism etc. But after independence, several educational initiatives have been taken giving emphasis on value-based education which gave more importance on character and moral education with a main role played by spirituality. From the Kothari commission of 1964- 66 to the National Education Policy of 2020, significant recommendations were given for the implementation of education on social, moral and spiritual values. The Kothari Commission recommended "Education on Social, Moral and Spiritual values" and teaching of human values. According to The Curriculum for ten year school- A Framework, there is a need for character building and cultivation of human values. The National Curriculum Framework of 1986 suggested the inculcation of social and moral values for the strengthening of national identity and unity. As per Chavan Committee's Report, Satya, Dharma, Shanti, Prema and Ahimsa which are core universal values are to be considered as the foundation stone of Value-based education. Education about religion or Sarwa Dharma Sambhav as the major source of knowledge according to the National Curriculum Framework of 2000. Value-based education is now an integral part of New Education Policy 2020. As per this new policy, curriculum in schools have to develop key qualities like punctuality, regularity, cleanliness, sense of duty, desire to serve, responsibility, creativity etc. Through value-based education, the learner equips values which can help them to lead a satisfying life and what they cherish will be their vision. By inculcating values in education, students will have the willpower to face the outer world with the right attitude and values. This can play a major role in the overall development of an individual.

Sources of hidden curriculum

Following are some key sources of Hidden Curriculum:

- Teacher behaviour: Teachers behavior affects students' attitudes and perceptions in different ways. It can be in both negative and positive ways. Positive or negative behaviors displayed by the teacher will not only affect students' academic performance but also mold their behaviors, attitudes, personality and perceptions for the future. According to Barron (2023), Students are perceptive so they are going to pick up on the feelings of their teachers. Teachers are the second highest determining factor in the development of individuals, after parents. It must not be forgotten that children take on role models while learning and that is why perhaps the behavior and attitude of teachers, which they spend the most time with apart from their parents, has an effect on their personality development and thus whether they will be successful or not.

- School policies and rules: School Policies and Rules are essential documents which are required for the effective management of the school system. It helps to create a healthy environment where students can learn, teachers can guide and work and non-teaching staff can function effectively. School Policies and Rules can have both positive and

negative effects on children. It can either promote good behaviors and attitudes or can lead to negative outcomes such as rebellion or resentment. Students tend to break school rules when it is rigid and not child-friendly. This can hamper their growth and development. Thonberg (2008), stated that the school rules define way of thinking of oneself and the world.

- Social interactions: Classroom is a replica of society. What students get from classrooms are applied in the outer world. A Classroom will have students from different cultural backgrounds, sexes, religions etc. As students interact with their peers, they prepare themselves for a healthy social relationship outside the classroom or school. In a classroom setup, the interaction takes place under the guardianship of teachers. It is this social interaction that prepares one to interact with the outer world where no guardians are provided. Therefore, it is the duty of teachers to guide students on how to have a healthy and meritorious interaction without any fallacies.

- Discipline and punishments: Discipline is necessary in schools as it helps students to build their character and to achieve academic goals. Schools often consider punishments as a major way to bring discipline among students. Mostly in school setups, punishments are all about force, coercion and control. According to Paediatr Child Health (2004), 'Effective and positive discipline is about teaching and guiding children, not just forcing them to obey. Effective discipline methods when implemented in schools, will make students more responsible and accountable. Harsh punishments will result in negative behaviors like resentment, controlling by instilling fear etc. Schools should make sure to follow punishments that are respectful and promote the growth of students. It should not create harm to their growth. If punishments given are harsh, students will learn and replicate them by demonstrating the same.

- Extracurricular activities: Extracurricular activities are those activities in which students perform and participate outside the classroom. These activities do not count towards academic credit. According to Okoro & Samuel (2016), Teachers as agents and moral role models are capable of developing a rational acceptance of standards of behavior in their students, as well as infuse in them the ability to differentiate between wrong and right, through integration of extracurricular activities can imbibe in the students such values as self respect, generosity, respect for constituted authority, self-confidence, perseverance etc. that can shape their life.

- Physical environment: Physical environment of a school is generally described as the education facilities, land, building, furnitures etc that are provided. People often connect the physical environment with aesthetic beauty, safety and security. The physical environment of a school can plays a vital role in shaping values among students. For

example, artworks and resources that reflect certain messages, well designed classrooms for collaborative learning, eco-friendly practices etc inspire students and generate a sense of trust and stability among students.

● Cultural influences: Schools offer various cultural exposures to students. It can be through textbooks, curriculum, classrooms with multicultural setups, extracurricular activities, peers from different cultural backgrounds, celebrations etc. Portillo (2023), opinionated that students should be included in classrooms in an equitable way that allows students to learn from one another, but that doesn't segregate the students.

● Assessment methods: Assessment methods followed in schools have a significant impact on molding values in students. Before the introduction of CCE (Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation) in 2009 mandated by the Right to Education, all aspects of students were not assessed. Assessment was mainly on the basis of academic criteria where not every child can grow. CCE promoted a learner friendly environment by giving students opportunities to improve again from mistakes and to show their interests. It ensured a stress-free environment in classrooms which gradually foster a supportive teacher-student atmosphere.

Common practices in terms of India

Some of the common Practices of Hidden Curriculum or Value Education in India are as follows:

● Respect elders and authority figures: Schools generally motivate students to respect elders and authority figures like parents, teachers, doctors, police officers etc. This is done through moral education provided to students from very small classes itself and through interactions where students are taught to respect teachers and elders. The most common respect shown in schools is by standing and wishing teachers when they enter classrooms.

● Accentuate discipline and punctuality: Dzivhani (2000) stated that Effective teaching and learning cannot take place where there is no discipline. Learning objectives can only be achieved if proper discipline is maintained in schools. There are certain rules and regulations that students are abided to follow and obey. Proper discipline helps to create a healthy atmosphere for effective teaching and learning and for the better advancement of students for the future.

● Strengthening bonds of family and community: The Indian education system has always given more emphasis on prioritizing family, family relations and community involvements. These values are taught to students as important factors to lead a harmonious social life. Discussing social issues in classrooms, textbooks, advice given by

teachers and from morning assemblies play an important role in inculcating these values among students.

- Cultural and religious tolerance: Schools in India have always been a perfect social institution where secularism has been promoted. Being a secular nation, it is necessary to imbibe in students the ideas of tolerance and harmony between different cultures and faiths. Students are motivated to be secular and tolerant by making them participate in activities and celebrations that embrace diversity. Santhosh (2022), has opinionated that schools are an ideal platform to inculcate tolerance and educate children of different faiths, traditions, and cultures through the celebrations of festivals and special days. This has developed open-mindedness among students.

- Emphasis on values such as honesty, integrity, hardwork and perseverance.

- Promotion of gender equality: Nowadays gender equality is promoted in Indian schools in a comparatively efficient way than before. Teachers are trained in such a way to create an inclusive classroom environment. Gender equality is promoted in schools through different ways such as by including gender-sensitive content in textbooks and instructions, by holding discussions on gender issues within schools or classrooms, by implementing gender neutral policies to provide equal opportunities and participation to all, by inculcating gender awareness activities etc. Students learn values of cooperation, fairness and respect.

- Social and civic responsibility: Schools often make students aware of various social issues to make them more responsible as a citizen of a nation. Teachers assign projects case studies and assignments where students get opportunities to learn, see and observe various social issues with a first hand experience. This helps students to be more sympathetic and empathetic towards issues happening around. It enhances students' civic knowledge and participatory skills by developing critical and problem solving skills. School teaches students various constitutional rights, responsibilities and duties which help students develop ethical values and social responsibility.

Issues of practicing Hidden Curriculum

- Practices of traditional gender roles and gender stereotypes: The practice of traditional gender roles and gender stereotypes are prevalent in Indian schools for a long time. Pm & Jayaraman (2019), proposes that there is gender disparity in education. Also opinionated that gender stereotypes, patriarchal systems and the culture, in this regard, play crucial roles in promoting gender disparity in education. The tasks which teachers give both girls and boys reflects the traditional practices of traditional gender roles. Girls are often asked to do decorating work and the duty to keep the class tidy. On the other hand, boys are asked to do work like moving furniture, or where more cognitive applications are needed.

According to the study of Stanford University, Gender stereotypes are promoted by parents and teachers. Girls are generally considered as beings with no innate abilities to learn mathematics. According to UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russel, 'Girls have an equal ability to learn mathematics as boys- what they lack is an equal opportunity to acquire these traditional skills. These practices of traditional gender roles and stereotypes can affect the self-confidence of girls and they gradually start to estimate themselves as failures in various fields. On the other hand, boys will start to develop a negative attitude towards girls' talents and gradually develop superiority complexes that lack good values in them. It should be the responsibility of teachers to have equal expectations from all genders rather than categorizing and putting in boxes on the basis of gender.

Even if most of the schools work on gender equality, the discussions and efforts to implement it merely gets confined to the equality only of boys and girls. Schools in India are not yet completely ready to incorporate and facilitate teaching and learning environments for transgenders. Very few schools in India have introduced gender neutral uniforms and terms which actually welcomes an egalitarian setup.

- Failure in addressing social hierarchical issues in classrooms: India is a country with deep rooted social hierarchies such as caste system, gender, economic status etc. This is often reflected in classrooms as well. Chowdhury & Kaene (2021), stated that India's graded educational system mirrors the country's stubbornly rigid hierarchies. The education received in India mainly depends upon the economic status of a family which is directly or indirectly determined by the so-called caste system. Most of the underprivileged sections attend government schools where proper instructions and facilities are not yet properly given. The most privileged sections on the other hand, have opportunities to attend international and other elite schools. This certainly creates a gap of quality education received between the haves and have nots. This gap creates two extremes where the privileged and the underprivileged get no opportunity to know, learn and interact with each other. This also alienated the two sections from each other. This in addition creates schools with no diversity. Reading examples of social issues from textbooks will not provide students a real awareness on hierarchical issues. Only a diverse classroom can provide real life learning on such issues.

Even today in many schools in India, the caste system is strictly followed. According to Chowdhury & Keane (2921), Dalit and Adivasi students seldom make it to the front rows. They are often forced to do menial work at school, such as cleaning the toilets, and are subject to humiliation from both teachers and other students. This discrimination results in marginalization, inequality, verbal and physical abuse, affects self-esteem,

academic performance etc. The strict following of caste and class system will eventually lead individuals to be crueller and more harmful towards each other. It is very necessary for schools to directly address these issues which have the capacity to set a negative attitude in human behavior.

- Encouraging subservience over independent thoughts: Schools in India always promote rite learning, memorization and blind compliance on elders or authority figures. In fact it has resulted in the bringing down of the critical and thinking skills of students. Students should be motivated to learn by themselves. They should be encouraged to think, analyze and question. These processes can improve the learning of an individual and prepares students to live in a society. Rote learning can hamper students' intellectual growth and problem solving skills. This will gradually transform students into beings with no skills to handle their own life situations or to contribute as a social being.

  Students often question age-old norms, traditions and practices in society. Some of its extensions are practices in schools as well. When students question, teachers or the school authorities discourage them and expect subservience. This results in negative behaviors and attitudes from students like disregard, disrespect, unanticipated responses, violation of rules and various other misconducts.

- Limited focus on life skills: Singh & Menon (2015), defined life skills as a range of psycho-social and cognitive abilities that equip children to make informed decisions and choices, manage their emotional well-being & communicate effectively. Indian schools generally do not give much emphasis on the development of life skills in students. Schools are always prepared towards students' academic excellence and examinations. Students are not taught about basic skills such as time management, proper communication with others, decision making, interpersonal communication etc. These basic skills are not overlooked properly. Lack of these skills can potentially hamper personal as well as professional lives of students in their future. Students will always feel dependent on others for problem resolution or to make their own life decisions due to lack of values such as self-esteem and self-confidence.

Conclusion:

There is degradation of values in the present scenario. To build and develop a complete system with responsible and productive humans, value education has to be considered seriously with all its importance and should be incorporated into the education system. Values help to shape human behavior. Values should be ingrained in one from the very starting stage of schooling. It should be developed and molded through the process of growth and development that can finally result in better education that is useful for society.

When it comes to the implementation of value-based education in educational institutions lack of knowledge, problems with students' readiness, challenges due to workload, family's lack of knowledge regarding value education, student's inability to transfer what they learn, and gap between the policy makers and teachers relating to the poor understanding of the concept of 'values in education' sets shackles of barriers. These barriers can be broken only if policy makers and teachers set an equal space for both formal and hidden curriculum. Apart from that, Hearing what's in a student's head is important as a teacher. Their opinions should never be discouraged. Because teachers will have many things to learn from students as well. Teachers should be trained to create classrooms more democratic and to accept constructive criticisms and opinions. The practicing of tolerance from both parties in a classroom will improve values among the upcoming generation. Because all what is learnt in the formal curriculum is applied in society. This can be done properly only if values are imbibed in one in the right way.

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EXPLORING MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

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Abstract:

This study aimed to evaluate middle school students' perceptions of environmental education, providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of its implementation. Utilizing a survey methodology, data was collected on students' environmental knowledge and attitudes. Findings indicated that urban students showed a deeper grasp of environmental education concepts. Additionally, students from diverse school backgrounds, such as private, government, and missionary institutions, exhibited comparable levels of knowledge and a significant degree of concern regarding environmental issues. These results underscore the importance of examining environmental education across different student demographics and school types to ensure its equitable delivery and impact. Moreover, the study highlights the need for tailored approaches to enhance environmental literacy and awareness among middle school students, fostering a generation more attuned to environmental challenges and solutions.

Keywords: Attitude, Environmental Education, Middle School Students

Introduction:

In recent times, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of environmental education in tackling global environmental challenges. Middle school students are a key demographic whose attitudes and behaviors towards environmental issues can significantly impact our collective response to these challenges. Understanding their perspectives on environmental education is crucial for effectively implementing educational strategies that promote environmental stewardship. This chapter delves into middle school students' attitudes towards environmental education, exploring the factors that shape their perceptions and discussing the implications for educational practices.

The environment and its associated concerns have emerged as major priorities worldwide. Advancements in science and technology have transformed humanity's interaction with the environment over time, from ancient civilizations to our modern era. The rapid changes brought about by industrial and scientific progress have necessitated the development of new environmental values, particularly among student populations. It is imperative to cultivate a more sustainable and harmonious relationship between humans and natural resources, a goal that can

only be achieved through adopting a new lifestyle approach. Education plays a central role in shaping human attitudes and behaviours, underscoring the importance of integrating environmental understanding, awareness, planning, and management into educational curricula and practices.

Environmental education is a powerful tool within academia, designed to educate individuals about maintaining ecological balance through awareness, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and a commitment to improving environmental quality. The origins of environmental education can be traced back to influential thinkers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Louis Agassiz, who emphasized nature-focused education in their works. The concept of nature study, emerging in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, laid the foundation for structured environmental education programs.

Middle school students are a crucial target for environmental education due to their stage of cognitive and emotional development. This period is characterized by heightened curiosity and creativity, making it an ideal time to instill awareness and responsibility towards environmental issues. Cultivating positive environmental attitudes is vital for fostering environmental stewardship, achievable through hands-on experiences like outdoor activities such as planting and nurturing plants. Research indicates that such outdoor learning experiences enhance intrinsic motivation, satisfaction of psychological needs, and overall engagement and academic performance.

Environmental education transcends theory, aiming to cultivate attitudes of concern and responsibility towards the environment. By imparting knowledge, raising awareness, and providing necessary skills, environmental education equips students to tackle environmental challenges and become responsible stewards of the planet. Given the pressing global environmental threats like global warming and climate change, fostering environmental awareness among students, especially in middle school, is critical for securing a sustainable future for humanity and the Earth. This chapter delves into middle school students' attitudes towards environmental education, explores influencing factors, and discusses strategies to promote positive environmental stewardship in this age group.

Meaning of environmental education

Environmental education encompasses a diverse array of educational initiatives geared towards fostering awareness, understanding, and engagement with environmental issues. It encompasses teachings on the natural world, the interdependence of ecosystems, and the repercussions of human actions on the environment.

Aim of environmental education

The primary aim of environmental education, as defined by organizations like the United Nations (UN) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

(UNESCO), is to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to make informed decisions, adopt sustainable behaviours, and advocate for environmental stewardship.

Objectives of EE

- Awareness: Environmental Education aims to raise awareness among individuals about the various environmental issues facing the planet, including pollution, deforestation, climate change, and loss of biodiversity.

- Understanding: It seeks to promote a deeper understanding of the interconnections between human activities and the environment, emphasizing the impact of individual and collective actions on ecosystems and natural resources.

- Empowerment: Environmental Education empowers individuals to make informed decisions and take responsible actions to protect and conserve the environment. It equips them with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to become environmentally responsible citizens.

- Promotion of Sustainable Practices: It advocates for the adoption of sustainable practices in daily life, such as reducing energy and water consumption, practicing waste reduction and recycling, and supporting environmentally friendly products and technologies.

- Conservation of Natural Resources: Environmental Education aims to instill a sense of stewardship and appreciation for the Earth's natural resources, encouraging individuals to actively participate in conservation efforts and preservation of ecosystems.

- Promotion of Environmental Ethics: It fosters the development of environmental ethics and values, promoting respect for all living beings and the recognition of the intrinsic value of nature beyond its utilitarian benefits to humans.

- Fostering Environmental Citizenship: Environmental Education cultivates a sense of environmental citizenship, encouraging individuals to engage in environmental advocacy, activism, and community participation to address local and global environmental challenges.

- Interdisciplinary Learning: It promotes interdisciplinary learning by integrating concepts and principles from various fields such as science, economics, ethics, sociology, and politics to provide a holistic understanding of environmental issues.

- Cultural and Social Perspectives: Environmental Education acknowledges the cultural and social dimensions of environmental issues, recognizing the diverse ways in which different communities interact with and perceive their environment.

- Long-term Sustainability: Ultimately, the overarching objective of Environmental Education is to contribute to the achievement of long-term sustainability by fostering a harmonious relationship between humans and the natural world, ensuring the well-being of present and future generations.

These points encapsulate the multifaceted goals and objectives of Environmental Education, highlighting its importance in addressing contemporary environmental challenges and promoting a more sustainable future.

Characteristics of Environmental Education

- Interdisciplinarity: Environmental Education integrates knowledge and perspectives from various disciplines such as biology, ecology, sociology, economics, and ethics to provide a comprehensive understanding of environmental issues.

- Action-oriented: It emphasizes active learning and encourages individuals to take practical actions to address environmental problems, promoting hands-on experiences, fieldwork, and community engagement.

- Holistic Approach: Environmental Education adopts a holistic approach that considers the complex interactions between ecological, social, cultural, and economic factors shaping environmental issues and solutions.

- Place-based Learning: It emphasizes learning experiences that are rooted in the local environment, community, and culture, recognizing the importance of place-based knowledge and fostering a sense of connection to one's surroundings.

- Key characteristics of environmental education include its interdisciplinary nature, emphasizing the interconnectedness of social, economic, and environmental systems.

- Moreover, it often incorporates hands-on learning experiences, outdoor activities, and community engagement to facilitate meaningful connections with nature and foster a sense of environmental responsibility among learners.

Need of Environmental Education

- Sustainability: In the face of growing environmental degradation and resource depletion, there is an urgent need to promote sustainable practices and lifestyles. Environmental Education equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to make informed decisions and take responsible actions for a sustainable future.

- Biodiversity Conservation: With the alarming rate of species extinction and habitat loss, there is a critical need to conserve biodiversity and ecosystems. Environmental Education fosters an appreciation for the value of biodiversity and promotes conservation efforts to protect endangered species and habitats.

- Resource Management: Effective management of natural resources such as water, air, soil, and energy is crucial for maintaining ecosystem health and human well-being. Environmental Education educates individuals about the importance of resource conservation, efficient use, and sustainable management practices.

- Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation: Climate change poses significant challenges to ecosystems, economies, and societies worldwide. Environmental Education plays a

vital role in raising awareness about climate change, its causes, impacts, and mitigation strategies, as well as in promoting adaptation measures to cope with its effects.

● The necessity for environmental education has become increasingly critical as middle schools grapple with urgent environmental issues like climate change, deforestation, pollution, and biodiversity loss.

● The Pressing challenges emphasize the vital importance of environmental literacy and stewardship, prompting schools to integrate environmental education into their curricula more than ever before.

For example, middle schools may implement interdisciplinary projects that incorporate environmental themes into various subjects. Science classes might explore climate change through experiments and discussions on greenhouse gases, while English classes might analyze environmental literature to deepen students' understanding of ecological issues. Additionally, schools may organize field trips to local parks or nature reserves, providing students with firsthand experiences of ecosystems and biodiversity.

Moreover, middle schools can establish sustainability initiatives within their facilities. This could include composting programs to reduce organic waste, installing energy-efficient lighting and appliances to conserve resources, and implementing recycling programs to minimize landfill waste. Students can actively participate in these initiatives by organizing recycling drives, monitoring energy usage, and advocating for environmentally friendly practices within their school community.

Furthermore, extracurricular activities such as environmental clubs or eco-teams offer students opportunities to engage in environmental advocacy and activism. These clubs may organize tree-planting events, coordinate beach clean-ups, or campaign for policy changes to address local environmental issues. By participating in such activities, students develop leadership skills and a sense of empowerment, realizing their capacity to make a positive impact on the environment.

Through these diverse initiatives, middle schools play a crucial role in nurturing students' environmental awareness, knowledge, and activism. By integrating environmental education into their curricula and fostering a culture of sustainability, schools prepare students to become informed and responsible stewards of the planet.

Importance of EE for students

Environmental education plays a pivotal role in shaping a sustainable future, as evidenced by various studies and real-life examples. Gratiela and Sinan's (2019) survey at North Center University in Baia Mare revealed that students across different education levels perceive environmental education as equally important, highlighting the universality of its significance. Moreover, higher education was found to enhance individuals' abilities to address environmental

challenges effectively, underlining the transformative impact of education on environmental stewardship.

Research-based learning, as explored by F. A. Ikhsan *et al.* (2019) at the University of Jember, offers a powerful tool for fostering environmental awareness and activism among students. By engaging in research projects to understand environmental issues and propose solutions, students develop a deeper understanding of environmental care and are empowered to take meaningful action. This approach not only cultivates critical thinking skills but also instils a sense of responsibility towards the environment.

In primary schools, environmental education has demonstrated positive effects on student's attitudes and behaviours towards the environment. Mustafa *et al.* (2020) found that students exposed to environmental education in the Gungoren District of Istanbul exhibited enthusiasm for environmental themes, as evidenced by their artwork and overall outlook towards environmental issues. This indicates the effectiveness of environmental education in cultivating a sense of environmental responsibility and fostering a connection with nature from a young age.

Looking ahead, Nicole *et al.* (2013) highlighted emerging trends in environmental education research, emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinary approaches and collaboration between researchers, educators, and practitioners. By leveraging diverse methodologies such as content analysis, interviews, surveys, and meetings, researchers can gain insights into effective strategies for promoting environmental literacy and sustainability.

These studies underscore the critical role of environmental education in addressing pressing environmental challenges and nurturing a generation of informed and empowered individuals. By integrating environmental themes into curricula, promoting research-based learning, and fostering collaboration across disciplines, educational institutions can equip students with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to become effective stewards of the environment, ensuring a more sustainable future for all.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and environmental education

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations serve as a comprehensive framework for addressing global challenges, particularly concerning environmental sustainability. Within these goals, several are intricately tied to environmental education, highlighting the imperative of integrating environmental principles into educational curricula and fostering environmental awareness and advocacy. **SDG 4** emphasizes the need for inclusive and high-quality education for all, emphasizing the incorporation of sustainable development and environmental literacy into learning programs. Additionally**, SDG 13** stresses the urgency of climate action, emphasizing the necessity for education and awareness initiatives focusing on climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.

In practical terms, this translates into various initiatives and programs implemented globally. For instance, in schools across different countries, educators are integrating environmental topics into their teaching materials, ensuring that students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to understand and address environmental issues. This might involve incorporating sustainability themes into science, geography, or social studies lessons, as well as organizing extracurricular activities such as environmental clubs or community clean-up events. Moreover, universities and higher education institutions are increasingly offering specialized courses and degree programs focused on environmental studies, sustainability, and climate science. These programs not only provide students with in-depth knowledge but also equip them with practical skills to contribute meaningfully to environmental conservation efforts.

Beyond formal education settings, community-based organizations and non-profits often spearhead environmental education initiatives. For example, environmental awareness campaigns, workshops, and outreach programs are conducted to engage people of all ages in learning about environmental issues and adopting sustainable practices in their daily lives. Furthermore, digital platforms and online resources play a crucial role in disseminating environmental education materials to a wider audience. Websites, apps, and online courses offer accessible and interactive ways for individuals to learn about topics such as renewable energy, waste management, and biodiversity conservation.

Overall, the alignment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals with environmental education underscores the global commitment to fostering a more sustainable future through informed action and collective effort. By integrating environmental principles into education systems and promoting awareness and advocacy, societies can empower individuals to contribute meaningfully to environmental sustainability and address the challenges facing our planet.

Strategic goals related to environmental education

1. Advancing environmental literacy: Environmental education serves as a crucial vehicle for advancing environmental literacy among students. This involves not only imparting factual knowledge about environmental issues but also fostering a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of ecological systems and human activities. For instance, middle school science curricula may include lessons on topics such as biodiversity loss, climate change, and ecosystem dynamics. Hands-on activities like water quality testing or wildlife observation further enhance students' comprehension of environmental concepts by providing tangible experiences. By building a strong foundation of environmental literacy, students are better equipped to analyze environmental problems critically and propose effective solutions.

2. Cultivating environmental stewardship: Central to environmental education is the cultivation of environmental stewardship among students. This entails instilling a sense of responsibility and care for the natural world. One way to achieve this is through experiential learning opportunities, such as participating in environmental restoration projects or volunteering at local conservation organisations. For example, students might collaborate with community groups to plant trees in urban areas or restore native habitats in nearby parks. Students develop a personal connection to the environment and a commitment to its preservation by actively engaging in hands-on stewardship activities.

3. Encouraging sustainable practices: Environmental education aims to inspire sustainable behaviours and habits among students, empowering them to make environmentally responsible choices in their daily lives. Schools can integrate sustainability principles into various aspects of campus life, from waste reduction initiatives to energy conservation efforts. For instance, implementing recycling programs, composting organic waste, and promoting alternative transportation options like biking or carpooling can reduce the school's environmental footprint while also teaching students the importance of resource conservation. Additionally, incorporating lessons on sustainable food systems and ethical consumption practices encourages students to consider the environmental impacts of their dietary choices.

4. Empowering civic engagement: Environmental education plays a pivotal role in empowering students to become active participants in environmental advocacy and civic engagement. Through classroom discussions, service-learning projects, and participation in youth-led environmental organizations, students learn how to effectively communicate their concerns about environmental issues and advocate for change. For example, students may organize campaigns to raise awareness about local pollution problems or petition policymakers to support environmentally friendly policies. By fostering a sense of agency and civic responsibility, environmental education empowers students to become agents of positive change in their communities and beyond.

Factors influencing attitudes towards environmental education

1. Socioeconomic background: The socioeconomic status of middle school students can greatly impact how they perceive environmental education. Students from more privileged backgrounds often have better access to resources, exposure to environmental concepts, and chances for environmental involvement compared to those from less privileged backgrounds. Addressing socioeconomic disparities is crucial to ensure fair access to environmental education opportunities for all students.

2. School environment: The environment within schools plays a pivotal role in shaping students' attitudes toward environmental education. Schools that prioritize environmental initiatives such as sustainability practices, outdoor learning experiences, and environmental clubs

can nurture a culture of environmental awareness and activism among students. On the other hand, schools lacking resources or not emphasizing environmental issues may struggle to foster positive attitudes toward environmental education.

3. Personal values and beliefs: Individual values and beliefs regarding nature, conservation, and sustainability significantly influence how students perceive environmental education. Students who value nature highly and feel a sense of responsibility toward the environment are more likely to have positive attitudes toward environmental education. Therefore, it's important to cultivate these values through hands-on experiences and meaningful environmental education activities.

4. Community and peer influence: Peer interactions and community norms also play a crucial role in shaping students' attitudes toward environmental education. Positive experiences within peer groups or community initiatives can encourage environmental awareness and activism among students. Conversely, negative peer influences or apathetic community attitudes may hinder students' engagement with environmental issues. Creating supportive environments both in schools and communities can positively impact students' attitudes and actions regarding environmental education.

Implications for educational practices

1. Experiential learning: Integrating experiential learning components into the curriculum enhances students' engagement and understanding of environmental education. Activities such as field trips, outdoor exploration, and hands-on projects offer students opportunities to interact directly with their environment, leading to a more profound connection with nature. For example, middle school students might participate in a river clean-up project where they collect and analyze water samples to assess water quality. This hands-on experience not only teaches them about pollution and its impacts but also instils a sense of responsibility for protecting local waterways.

2. Interdisciplinary approaches: Embracing interdisciplinary approaches to environmental education enriches students' learning experiences and emphasizes the interconnectedness of environmental issues. By incorporating environmental themes across various subject areas, educators can demonstrate the relevance of environmental education to students' everyday lives. For instance, a middle school science class studying ecosystems might collaborate with a language arts class to write persuasive essays advocating for the conservation of a local habitat. This interdisciplinary project not only reinforces scientific concepts but also develops students' communication skills and critical thinking abilities.

3. Community engagement: Involving students in community-based environmental initiatives empowers them to make a tangible difference in their local communities. By partnering with community organizations and participating in service-learning projects, students develop a sense

of agency and civic responsibility. For example, a middle school might collaborate with a local conservation group to plant native trees in a nearby park. Through this hands-on activity, students learn about the importance of biodiversity conservation while contributing to the improvement of their community's green spaces.

4. Teacher training and support: Providing professional development opportunities for educators is essential for the successful implementation of environmental education programs. Training teachers in environmental pedagogy, outdoor education methodologies, and inquiry-based learning strategies equip them with the tools and knowledge needed to effectively engage students in environmental learning experiences. For instance, a school district might offer workshops on integrating environmental education into the curriculum or provide resources such as lesson plans and teaching materials. By investing in teacher training and support, schools can ensure that educators are equipped to deliver high-quality environmental education that inspires and empowers students to become environmental stewards.

Conclusion:

The main objective of the study was to examine how middle school students perceive environmental education. The findings revealed that students could identify various factors contributing to environmental issues, with deforestation emerging as a significant concern. Interestingly, as students became more aware of environmental problems, they faced challenges in proposing solutions and actively participating in conservation efforts. The study emphasized the role of schools in shaping environmental attitudes through both academic teachings and extracurricular activities. While some schools prioritize environmental awareness, others do not, including English medium schools which also emphasize environmental consciousness. Early cultivation of environmental attitudes during students' academic journey is recommended to instil eco-friendly habits in the future.

Further research is recommended to delve into different learning models and students' awareness levels regarding environmental attitudes at the middle school and elementary levels. Exploring the impact of environmental education across school, home, and community environments on students' academic performance is also crucial. The study noted a positive correlation between increased awareness of environmental issues and willingness to engage in environmental programs, highlighting the potential effectiveness of such initiatives. However, despite the global urgency of addressing climate change, only a small percentage of students demonstrated awareness of its causes and impacts, with variations based on gender and educational background.

Regarding sustainability, the study found no significant disparities in perceptions of the importance of environmental education among students. Notably, there was strong agreement between middle school students and teachers' perspectives on environmental education. The

study recommends prioritizing environmental education in primary schools to establish positive environmental attitudes in students early on, which can carry over into middle school years.

The research underscored the effectiveness of hands-on activities in enhancing students' understanding of environmental education. Self-assessment tasks and reflective thinking empower students to evaluate their environmental knowledge and behaviours. Incorporating outdoor learning experiences, scenario-based learning, photography, and video analysis can further deepen students' comprehension and engagement with environmental issues. Ultimately, educational approaches with an outdoor focus were found to have a more significant impact compared to traditional knowledge-based instruction alone.

Significance

The concept of environmental education prompts individuals to seek methods to conserve the environment that can be adopted by everyone. Presently, there is widespread awareness of the urgent need to preserve the environment. However, many individuals hesitate to take action due to a common question: "Why should I do this?" This hesitation stems from a lack of understanding about our fundamental connection with the environment from an early age. Young people are brimming with creativity and energy, making it crucial for them to recognize that since nature supports our growth and existence, it is our primary responsibility to reciprocate by preserving it. Although environmental education is integrated into most schools today, it still falls short of providing comprehensive awareness about environmental issues. Through this research, I aim to highlight the significance of environmental education in students' lives, particularly focusing on middle school students.

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TOWARDS A GREENER HORIZON: DECODING SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES AND CONSUMER DYNAMICS IN MARKETING

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Abstract:

Green marketing, the promotion of environmentally friendly products and practices, is gaining traction as environmental consciousness grows globally. This paper presents a comprehensive exploration of green marketing, covering definitions, consumer behavior, benefits, challenges, and strategies for success. Key elements such as sincerity, consumer education, and engagement are highlighted as crucial components of effective green marketing campaigns. The discussion encompasses the characteristics of green products and the behaviors of environmentally conscious consumers, emphasizing the importance of transparency and third-party verification to combat greenwashing and build consumer trust. Furthermore, the paper examines the application of green marketing across various domains, including product development, packaging, corporate social responsibility, and consumer education initiatives. It underscores the evolving landscape of sustainability in marketing, stressing the moral and strategic imperatives for businesses to adopt environmentally responsible practices. By providing insights into consumer preferences, strategic initiatives, and environmental responsibility, this paper aims to guide businesses in navigating the challenges and opportunities presented by green marketing. Ultimately, it emphasizes the importance of integrating sustainability into marketing strategies to enhance brand reputation, foster consumer loyalty, and contribute positively to the global environmental agenda.

Introduction:

The term "green marketing" refers to the promotion of environmentally friendly products worldwide. "Any activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchange intended to satisfy human needs or wants such that satisfying these needs and wants occur with minimal detrimental input on the national environment" is the definition of "green marketing," according to Polonsky MJ (1994). Green marketing, as defined by the American Marketing Association, is the promotion of goods that are thought to be environmentally safe. As a result, green marketing

encompasses a wide range of actions, such as altering advertising, packaging, production process, and product modifications.

Green marketing is becoming more and more popular as more people are willing to support their environmental consciousness with their money, but it can also be risky. When companies say they sell eco-friendly products, the public wants proof. In other words, people are generally dubious about green claims, and businesses risk damaging their reputations and sales if a green claim turns out to be untrue or at odds with their other offerings.

The most crucial element for any startup company is to stand out from the competition and fill a gap in the market. Put differently, there hasn't been a major environmentally friendly shift in the Lebanese market as a whole, with the exception of two aspects: the first is related to green or healthy foods, and the second is related to green energy alternatives. Furthermore, the only significant campaigns aimed at reviving Lebanese regular consumers' environmental consciousness were "keeping Lebanon green" campaigns. Then, one might note that in order to develop and expand upon customers who are inherently environmentally sensitive and committed to any aspect of environmental social responsibility, a focused green marketing campaign is required.

In order for green marketing to be successful, consumers need to be given the chance to participate, educated, and one must be sincere (Boztepe and Aysel, 2016).

1. Being sincere entails two things: a) carrying out the green marketing campaign as you say you will, and b) ensuring that other business policies align with environmentally friendly initiatives. For a company to build the kind of environmental credentials necessary for a green marketing campaign to be successful, both of these requirements must be satisfied.

2. Teaching the clients why environmental protection is important is just as important as informing them that you're doing whatever you can to preserve the environment. If not, a sizable segment of your target market will ask themselves "So what?" and your green marketing campaign will fail.

3. Providing the customers with a chance to engage entails personalizing the advantages of eco-friendly activities, usually by allowing them to take part in constructive environmental activities.

1. **Green Product:**

A green product is generally defined as one that is minimally packaged, nontoxic, long-lasting, and made of recycled materials. No product can be considered entirely green because during its entire life cycle—including production, storage, use, and disposal—it requires energy, consumes resources, and produces byproducts and emissions. A green product is judged relative to its counterpart, meaning that its environmental impact is smaller (Ottman, 1993, p. 89).

Figure 1: Properties of Green products

2. Green marketing:

The late 1980s and early 1990s saw the rise in popularity of the phrase "green marketing." The first workshop on "Ecological Marketing" was organized by the American Marketing Association (AMA) in 1975 (Watts *et al.,* 2007). One of the first books on green marketing, "Ecological Marketing," was produced from the workshop proceedings Henion, K. E., & Kinnear, T. C. (1976). A further step toward integrating sustainability into daily life was taken in 1987 when the World Commission on Environment and Development produced the Brundtland Report, which defined sustainable development as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own need" (World Bank, 2001). Published books bearing the same name, Green Marketing, represented two concrete turning points. They were created in 1992 by Ken Peattie in the United Kingdom and in 1993 by Jacquelyn Ottman in the United States.

Although consumers still prioritize quality, price, and convenience when making purchases, being environmentally friendly is quickly becoming a need in and of itself. Consequently, marketers are coming to understand that creating environmentally friendly products not only offers a chance to do the right thing, but also improves corporate and brand image, reduces costs, and creates new markets for goods meeting the needs of customers to maintain a high standard of living.

3. Benefits to marketers

Sustainability is being incorporated by many businesses not only as a way to increase their bottom line but also as a way to grow and be responsible members of the global community. For businesses, sustainable consumption lowers operating expenses, boosts employee engagement through public relations (PR), and improves the company's corporate image.

Figure 2: Benefits of Green Marketing to marketers

4. Benefits to consumers

Even though customers consistently express a desire to protect the environment, there is always a disconnect between their intentions and their behavior. Many customers think that businesses support green initiatives mainly for commercial gain. Customers must gain a better understanding of how sustainable practices benefit them in order to adopt environmentally conscious purchasing habits. According to Young *et al.,* 2009, some advantages of sustainable consumption that consumers perceive include cost savings and value, improved personal health, and emotional and spiritual benefits that make them feel better about themselves in light of protecting the environment for future generations.

5. The green consumer

While "green consumers" may not all be the same, business owners can analyze the market for environmental goods and services by knowing some of the traits that they have in common, according to Ryan (2006, November).

"Green consumers" are people who make sustainable and eco-friendly products and services their top priorities when making purchases. These customers are frequently driven by a desire to reduce their environmental impact, promote eco-friendly behavior, and aid in environmental preservation. When making decisions about what to buy, green consumers take

into account a number of factors, including the product's effect on the environment, ethical sourcing, its capacity to be recycled, and the general sustainability policies of the businesses they support.

Figure 3: Benefits of Green Marketing to Customers

Important traits and actions of environmentally conscious consumers include:

1. **Environmental awareness:** Green consumers usually have a good understanding of environmental issues and are aware of how their consumption decisions affect the environment. They keep up with the latest developments in sustainable practices and understand the significance of climate change, biodiversity, and conservation.

2. **Preference for sustainable products:** These customers actively look for goods and services that come from sustainable production methods. Products with energy-efficient features, organic and ethically sourced materials, and eco-friendly packaging may fall under this category.

3. **Support for eco-friendly brands:** Consumers who are environmentally conscious frequently decide to back businesses and brands that exhibit a dedication to ethical and sustainable business practices. They might give preference to companies that use fair trade, renewable energy, and corporate social responsibility.

4. **Waste reduction:** Products with minimal packaging or those made of recyclable and biodegradable materials may be preferred by environmentally conscious consumers who are aware of the need to reduce waste. They might also select goods that support a circular economy and take part in recycling initiatives.

5. **Energy efficiency:** To lessen their overall energy consumption and environmental impact, these consumers might give priority to energy-efficient goods and services, such as cars, homes, and appliances.

6. **Preference for ethical and local sourcing:** In an effort to lower emissions associated with transportation and boost regional economies, green consumers may favor locally sourced goods. Additionally, they search for moral sourcing methods like paying workers fairly and treating them humanely.

7. **Engagement with environmental issues:** Eco-conscious consumers can take an active role in supporting or joining environmental organizations, take part in eco-friendly projects, and push for laws that are sustainable.

8. **Educational initiatives:** To increase public awareness of sustainable living practices, green consumers frequently take part in educational initiatives. This could be posting content on social media, taking part in neighborhood gatherings, or encouraging eco-friendly decisions among their social networks.

Environmental concerns are becoming more and more prevalent among Americans. Between 2004 and 2006, the proportion of Americans who worry about the environment "a great deal" or "a fair amount" rose from 62% to 77%. Moreover, three out of ten American adults are now regarded as "green consumers," according to Green Futures, a UK organization that promotes sustainable development. In 2005, these customers contributed $229 billion in purchasing power to the US market. Energy Star appliances, eco-friendly home goods, energy-efficient electronics, energy-efficient windows, and alternative modes of transportation are just a few examples of successful products. Organic foods, fair trade coffee, clothing made of cotton and hemp, natural skin care products, and organic foods are also included.

The primary motivation for green consumers is the desire to protect themselves and their loved ones from harm. In actuality, green buyers are distinct from their peers in a significant purchasing aspect. These customers are more discerning, well-informed, and inclined to act in the community's best interests. Generally, they look for products that are minimally packaged, long-lasting, and constructed from recycled materials. They are typically well-educated, prosperous, and driven by simple, affordable environmental solutions. In conclusion, it is critical to research and examine the sociological and psychological aspects that influence their purchasing choices.

6. Motives of a green consumer

Green consumers are driven by universal needs, which can be translated by marketers into new purchasing strategies that have an impact on how products are developed and marketed, even though individuals express their concerns in different ways.

Peattie (1995) expounded in his book "Environmental Marketing Management" on the various needs and expectations of consumers, which are deemed essential in shaping their expressions and perceptions subsequent to their experience with the value-added features and benefits of desired products. But in order to validate the customer experience, it is necessary to pinpoint the factors that influence the decision to make a green purchase.

a. The information gap: buying products that are viewed as environmentally friendly is how green consumers primarily contribute to environmental preservation and cleanup. They seek information on where to find green products and how to identify them in order to make an informed decision. Reading product labels and taking note of advertisements from radio, TV, newspapers, magazines, and other media are a few examples.

b. The need for control: Because today's consumers perceive the world as dangerous, they feel intense responsibility for maintaining control over it. As a result, their approach involves focusing on environmental aspects and adopting proactive steps when making purchases. For instance, they only purchase recyclable, environmentally friendly products that use natural cleaning agents.

7. The marketing perspective

Many management schools are already making the case, according to Baker and Sinkula (2005), that few economic, organizational, and marketing principles can endure for very long because they are just not environmentally sustainable. Many businesses can nevertheless strike a balance between market opportunities and societal concerns. "Leverage environmental issues as marketing propositions for transactional exchanges" is something they can do. This kind of behavior is sometimes just a calculated reaction to outside pressure. In other instances, it represents cultural ideals such as responsible global and corporate citizenship.

In the latter scenario, the need to act morally tempers the desire for profit. Managers in these companies could be considered environmental advocates and entrepreneurs. According to the author, genuine "Enviropreneurial Marketing" (EM) is demonstrated by a dedication to creating marketing strategies that strike a balance between organizational and societal concerns, rather than just acknowledging the significance of environmental issues and/or the need to address them.

1. Sustainable consumption

The Canadian Center for Pollution Prevention (2009) states that Sustainable Consumption (SC) calls for consumers to take into account matters that may not be as personal, like how products or services affect the environment and other people's well-being. Additionally, according to Young *et al.,* (2009), marketers must develop cutting-edge products and inform customers about the benefits of sustainable consumption. The consumer needs to understand that sustainable consumption is about consuming in new ways, using resources more wisely, and enjoying a higher quality of life rather than consuming less or going without.

A consumer who is conscious of environmental issues will only change their behavior if it is convenient and affordable. This gives marketers the chance to position their environmentally safer goods and services to meet this consumer need. Marketers may be able to influence consumers to change their purchasing habits and purchase ecologically safer products if they positively portray a sustainable lifestyle. In order to encourage consumers to adopt more frugal

consumption habits, marketers must demonstrate to them how this lifestyle aligns with and fulfills their existing set of values.

The green movement has moved its emphasis from being a way to "save the world" to being a way to save money. The importance of green products is now emphasized. Green behavior, like taking fewer flights or recycling more, has historically been sold to consumers as a compromise and a requirement to do with less. Customers are motivated to change their behavior by the shift to "green + value," as evidenced by the rise in oil prices that has led to an increase in sales of hybrid and smaller cars. Marketers must convince customers that by choosing more environmentally friendly goods and services, they are making wise decisions. More attention ought to be paid to the things that consumers can do at home to save money and the environment.
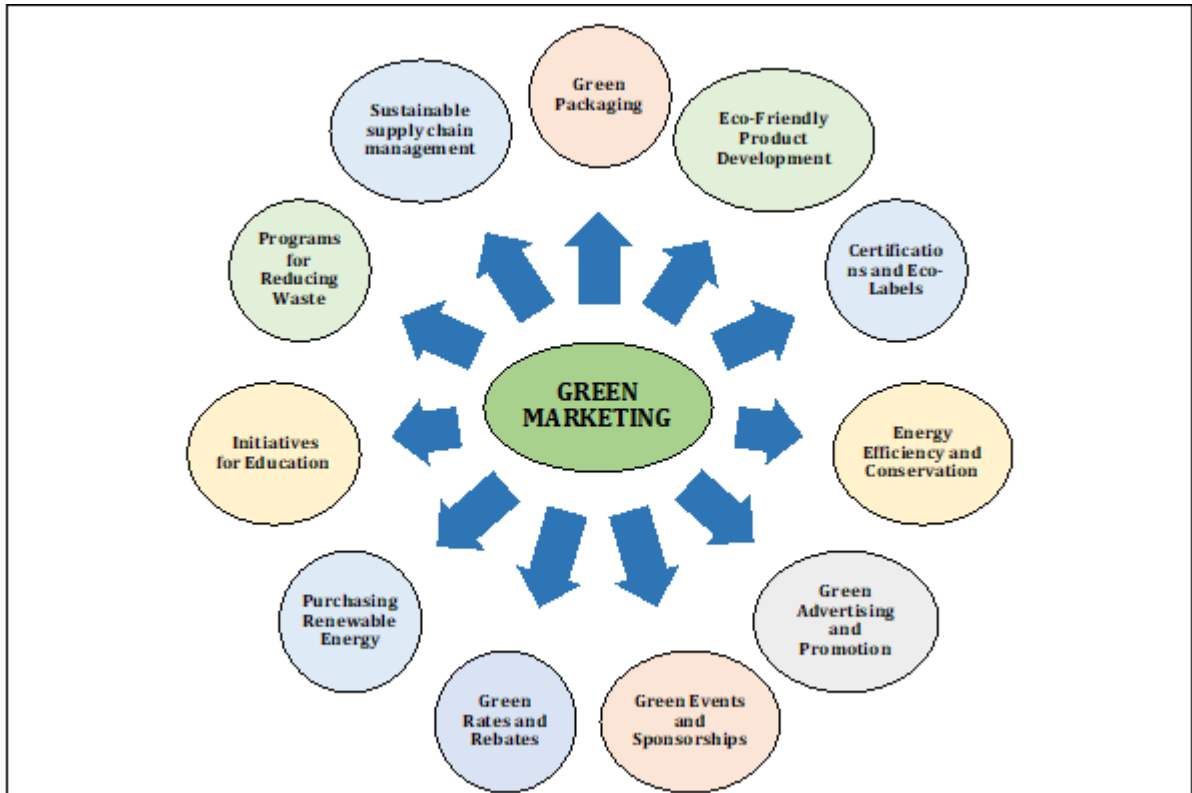
2. Application of green marketing

Ottman (1998) asserts that in the course of a product's production cycle, it is occasionally possible for the product's ostensibly greener attributes to have an adverse effect on the environment as a whole. For instance, the cost of the packaging or the shipping may increase, which would have the opposite effect. A comprehensive approach to "greening" is necessary for this reason, as well as to stave off criticism from stakeholders, environmental organizations, and customers who may be quick to point out the shortcomings of goods and packaging that are marketed as green. Life cycle inventory (LCI) is a useful tool. Many organizations have carried out life cycle inventories over the last 25 years in a wide range of industries, such as building materials, transportation products, paper, paperboard, glass, steel, aluminum, and plastic beverage containers and delivery systems.

Using marketing techniques that prioritize sustainability, social responsibility, and eco-friendliness is known as "green marketing applications." These applications seek to promote beneficial effects on the environment and society while satisfying the growing demand for environmentally friendly goods and services.

- **Eco-friendly product development:** Businesses can create products that, over the course of their lives, have a smaller environmental impact. This entails making sure products are recyclable or biodegradable, utilizing sustainable materials, and consuming as little resources as possible.
- **Green packaging:** Implementing environmentally friendly packaging strategies, like utilizing recycled materials, cutting down on packaging waste, and creating packaging that is easily compostable or recyclable.

Figure 4: Applications of Green Marketing

- **Certifications and eco-labels:** Pursuing and promoting reputable certifications and eco-labels, such as Fair Trade, USDA Organic, or Energy Star, to offer independent verification of a product's ethical and environmental qualities.

- **Energy efficiency and conservation:** Showcasing the energy-saving qualities of goods and services and adding energy-saving elements to the design and production processes.

- **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) campaigns:** Using green projects to show support for social and environmental causes in corporate social responsibility campaigns.

- **Green advertising and promotion:** Green marketing and promotion include developing campaigns that highlight the advantages that products or services have for the environment, coming up with catchy slogans, and showcasing sustainable practices in collateral.

- **Initiatives for education:** Running educational campaigns to increase consumer knowledge of sustainable living, environmental issues, and the advantages of selecting eco-friendly products.

- **Programs for reducing waste:** Putting in place waste reduction programs to minimize landfill waste and lessen the environmental impact of products, such as take-back programs or product recycling initiatives.

- **Sustainable supply chain management**: is making sure that every step of the supply chain, from obtaining raw materials to production and delivery, follows environmentally friendly procedures.
- **Green rates and rebates:** providing rewards to consumers who care about the environment, like discounts or green pricing, to promote the purchase of eco-friendly goods.
- **Purchasing renewable energy:** switching to renewable energy sources to power operations and production, demonstrating a dedication to lowering carbon emissions.
- **Transparency and traceability:** building trust with customers who value sustainability by being open and honest about a product's sourcing, production methods, and environmental impact.
- **Customer engagement platforms:** establishing websites or reward schemes that encourage users to take part in environmentally friendly activities like planting trees or conserving the environment.
- **Green events and sponsorships:** Sponsoring or organizing events that promote environmental awareness, sustainability, and conservation.
- **Innovation in sustainable technologies:** making investments in and advocating for cutting-edge technologies, like eco-friendly materials or green manufacturing techniques, that support environmental sustainability.

3. Strategies for success

It is difficult for marketers to create environmentally friendly products that consumers will purchase because these products are meant to eventually replace non-green ones; they should taste better, last longer, and, if at all possible, be less expensive. As a result, marketers ought to take their time in investigating and putting into practice strategies that meet the needs of consumers and provide the greatest environmental benefits. Ottman (1998) proposed the following strategies, which are used to develop new or improved profitable products and packaging that strike a balance between the needs of consumers and environmental considerations.

- Reduce the immediate impact on the environment
- Utilize raw materials from sustainable sources.
- Reduce the source of goods and packaging
- Preserve wildlife, habitats, and natural resources.
- Employ recycled materials
- Make the product more energy-efficient.
- Boost environmental and consumer safety
- Increase the durability of the products

- Make goods and containers refillable and reusable.
- Create goods that can be recycled, remanufactured, and repaired.
- Make products secure and dispose of them properly.
- Make goods and their packaging biodegradable. Ottman (1998), pages 61–81

Many marketers will grow by focusing on particular environmental issues that are most important to their target audience with the aid of the previously mentioned tactics or recommendations. By employing this procedure, businesses will ensure future sales of their products, improve corporate and brand images, and save money.

4. Challenges & barriers

"The act of misleading consumers regarding the environmental practices of a company or the environmental benefits of a product or service" is what the Terra Choice Group Inc. (2009) defines as "green washing." Every purchase has a covert effect on society, the environment, and public health through the supply chain. Although most products have some element of sustainability, this does not automatically make them so. It's mostly about the different shades of green and how to identify them; most "green products" have some sort of potentially unproven product or make false claims. Claims like "ozone friendly," "recyclable," "organic," "nontoxic," and "environmentally safe" are hard to define and can be misunderstood without evidence that a standard has been met. The only way to trust products is through third-party verification (Wroblaski, Penny, and Morton, 2011).

Conclusions:

In conclusion, research on green marketing reveals a dynamic environment where social expectations, corporate strategies, and consumer behavior all converge with environmental consciousness. The first step in the process is to define green marketing as a comprehensive strategy that covers a range of business operations. The content underscores the significance of transparent and substantiated green claims in fostering trust and mitigating skepticism, given the growing trend of consumers seeking eco-friendly products. The story shifts its focus to the Lebanese market, highlighting particular sectors where environmental awareness is growing. It emphasizes how targeted green marketing campaigns have the power to influence consumer behavior, especially among those who are naturally sensitive to the environment.

Most importantly, the article lists the requirements for an effective green marketing campaign, placing a strong emphasis on sincerity, consumer education, and purposeful interaction. The topic of conversation also includes green products, their characteristics, and the advantages they offer to marketers in terms of market expansion and differentiation. An investigation into the characteristics and behaviors of environmentally conscious consumers highlights specific behaviors that highlight the significance of awareness, preference for sustainable products, and active involvement with environmental issues. The content addresses the problems caused by greenwashing and emphasizes the need for authenticity and third-party

verification as it moves through green marketing applications and success strategies. The final section of the content emphasizes how crucial corporate social responsibility (CSR) is to building stakeholder support and a positive brand image. Sustainability is becoming not only a strategic need but also a moral obligation in this dynamic environment, as it affects consumer loyalty, brand perception, and overall company reputation. The combination of consumer insights, strategic initiatives, and environmental responsibility becomes increasingly important for businesses to succeed in the long run as they navigate the challenges of green marketing.

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MORAL VALUES - ACTIVITY-BASED LEARNING EDUCATION IN PRACTICAL WAY

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Abstract:

Value education plays a major role in the development of a nation, a child should get the values along with his or her academic subjects education builds future generations. To achieve this goal, we can apply different methods and a teacher has a very important role in making education fruitful. Activity based Learning is one of the best tools for all round development of a child.

Introduction:

Swami Vivekananda, a great patriot monk, once said that education is the manifestation of perfection already within man, means our education should make a child manifest his or her perfection which is there inside them. He said that education is not information which is going inside of their minds and education means not just our marks or grades which are beneficial for getting a job or livelihood. Shraddha is the watch word it means possessing tremendous faith in ourselves. Swamiji said long back "what we want is shraddha, unfortunately it has vanished from India, and this is why we are in our present state. What makes the difference between man and man is the difference in this shraddha and nothing else. What makes one man great and another weak and low is this shraddha. Great philosophers emphasized many times about the development of over all personality of a child. Swami Vivekananda mentioned in his talks about this man making education and character-building education. Great philosophers included the concept of educare instead of education by including education with human values Swami Vivekananda's idea of education lies in over all development of a child education and human values is known as educare. When the moral values in practice is seen, the education will turn into educare physical development, mental development, character and spiritual strength.

1. Physical strength: Physical strength means the strong body, from the very childhood, we must make child physically strong by teaching them yogasanas, which removes health problems and makes them physically strong.

2. Mental strength: Along with the physical strength, mental strength should be developed in a child concentration, determination, intellect are the qualities of a strong mind. Concentration games will help a child to increase their mental abilities to perform well in their education or extracurricular activities. Character has a very important role in our ancient education system. Lord Rama and King Harischandra are the best examples of character. Swami Vivekananda, JC Bose, Eshwara Chandra Vidyasagar, are the modern examples of character. In our scriptures, the

concept of education is mentioned as gurugriha vasa, which means living with guru. According to our scriptures especially Upanishads narrated the importance of education at gurukula, as they believed that education is for liberation (Sa vidya yaa Vimukthaye). In Thithiriyaa Upanishad, there is part which is called shiksha valli, in which it is mentioned that acharya purva roopam anthevasyuthara roopam vidya sandhi. A teacher is primary person who gives knowledge and a student is a secondary person who receives knowledge. And vidya, the education is the connection between teacher and student who shares knowledge. Another famous saying in our scriptures is vidya dadaathi vinayam, which means education should give humility. To attain this, gurukula system is started in sanathana dharma so that the disciples used to be with guru and learn shastraas along with humility. They learn self reliance and respecting food, water and nature which make them ideal citizens. In gurukula, disciples used to do all sorts of works which make them sensitive. We had so many great gurus in our ancient times like Vasistha and Viswamitra for Ram and his brothers. Sandeepani Maharshi for Krishna and Balaram. Dronacharya for Kauravas and Pandavas. We have examples of child devotees and warriors who were examples of determination, morality and character Dhruva, Prahlada, Lava and Kusha, Nachiketha, Hanuman, Arjuna, Ekalavya etc. But unfortunately, present day education system concentrates on bombarding children with information or facts in the textbooks. But not making them intellectually strong before giving them facts. And day by day students losing their sensitivity because of unnecessary competition from the peers and pressure from parents, teachers and educational institutions, and this competition is becoming like rat race and the students are losing ability of resilience, acceptance and courage, finally it leads to suicides of students, youth, if they get failures. We have seen some incidents about intolerance towards others because of marks or grades. What is the solution? There are different ways to overcome this problem. We have so many lessons from scriptures, lives of great people but the implementation should be done by a teacher. A teacher should be able to understand the true essence of values and practice it in his or her life and teach the students along with academics. As role of education is beyond the circle of grades, jobs and livelihood. Education should make a person inclusive Education should make a person break their own limitations Education should make a man grow in every term of his life. But unfortunately, our education system does not make us grow. So, here is an idea for character building education.

3 I's idea inclusiveness: Inclusiveness is a quality every child needs to imbibe. They should have that feeling of belonging, only then they feel for the people around them and place they live in.

Example: Our great freedom fighters fought and gave up their lives for the nation, because they had that sense of inclusiveness which drove them to fight. In modern world, children have limitless inclusive only in their family, which only makes them to take care of their own family, they end up in earning the money and don't think to do furthermore for the world. Great leaders

have an attitude of responsibility of the world, they feel the whole nation is theirs and work for them.

Implementation: Giving an opportunity to each child one hour per week to work for the school, like removing the waste from the ground, watering plants, etc. By doing these activities they feel it's their school and think they should keep it clean. In longer way, if these activities conduct in the city, they start thinking about the city and feel responsible. By teaching them "Om" chant which helps them to be more focused and Inclusive. Parents and teachers should know the value of inclusiveness and make them understand the importance of it.

Inspiration: Early childhood plays a vital role in a person's life; their influences and their surroundings play a crucial role. So, it's education system that should mould them into a great being. Our education system is completely about informative and there is no scope to get inspired and break their limitations. By saying/ showing how great leaders, sports champions, Business leaders worked and achieved by breaking their own invisible walls, children will definitely starts thinking in the same direction which in-turn makes them great.

Example: Shivaji Chatrapathi when he is child her mom used to say Ramayana stories and Mahabharatam stories which made him great king. Abdul Kalam grown up by listening great leader's stories.

Implementation:

1. By conducting online sessions where great personalities come and share their experiences to the children

2. We provide them animated stories of Renowned leaders.

3. By giving them Inspiring novels.

Inclination: A person can do his best only when he loves his work. Our nation is filled with many unemployed engineers and failed doctors, if these people would have pursued their interest work, then they would have succeeded. Each child should involve in every activity art, music, dance, acting, sports, etc. so that they can find out their passion lies and accordingly plan their career. Example: Steve Jobs loves to manufacture gadgets; he found out his passion and worked for it. There are so many examples like Kalpana Chawla who faced many difficulties to become first Indian woman astronaut. She loved what she did completely without any doubt. Implementation: We can put sports competition for schools and arts competition once in 4 months. These boost their confidence and sportiveness which is very important for today's students. Sports teaches a person how to lead a life. Suicide rate has been increased as there is lack of upliftment in children by Education system and parents.

Inclusiveness+ Inspiration= Does know what to start and what he loves which leads to no action Inspiration+ Inclination= He succeeds but fails as a person, he only enjoys his money but do nothing for the nation voluntarily.

Inclusiveness+ Inclination= He feels for the people, and love what he does, but stay in

limits. He doesn't break his walls and work for greater good. So, it's extremely important these 3I's to imbibe in child's life. And we as a team has a good support and coordination to take this up, above all we all love to work for children as they are future. We would love to take this forward by implementing it in schools by giving a whole one week of time once in two months. We teach them in a more fun way and conduct games and engage them in many activities.

Parents' role: Mother and father are the main pillars of a child's life. So parents should understand the over all personality development of child and bring this by nurturing them all these values. Spending time with children is very much important for inculcating values because nowadays parents are failing to do so. In our scriptures, Rani Madalasa was the perfect example for modern mothers, for how to nurture children. Parents must take their children to orphanages, old age homes, slum areas, moral values sessions by experts, as well as villages where farmers work to make them know how difficult it is, to get food, make them talk with all these people to expand their minds from narrowness.

Teacher's role: Teachers have a major role after parents. Because children spend most of the time in school after home. Teacher should not encourage unnecessary competition among students. Instead they should encourage healthy competition, friendliness and appreciating others and teacher should teach lessons on various topics in a practical way. Teacher should plan some activities which will encourage children to learn values practically. What we did practically?? Experiences of inculcating moral values in children are amazing. We, at Vivekananda institute of human excellence Ramakrishna math Hyderabad, had a great experience of imparting moral education in children. Every Sunday, there was a session called Vivekananda bala Vikasa Kendra from morning till afternoon, where they had undergone training in physical, mental, moral and spiritual enlightenment. There was yoga sessions by experts in the beginning, moral stories sessions and bhajans sessions by experienced teachers. Children had undergone lot of churning and they transformed into wonderful individuals under this camp. Different activities were planned.

Fruit bowl activity: The students who enrolled in the camp, used to cut vegetables and fruits by themselves, make them into small bowls and sell them, the money which was collected was used for purchasing blankets, which were to be distributed to poor and needy people by students. Inspired by this idea, we selected a government school, in a village, imparted all these ideas of Swami Vivekananda and self reliance, students started practicing the fruit bowl activity in their school. And the collected money was used for the betterment of school infrastructure. Students started enjoying the process of learning values, they understood the difficulties of vendors, farmers and others they started developing sensitivity towards different situations.

Sensitivity towards nature: We planned another activity called water pit making in the surroundings of the school for birds and animals in summer students form groups and they will make water pits, in different sides of the school corridors. And they put food and water everyday.

Each group should do the activity for one week narrate their experiences in front of all students and teachers. Students developed sensitivity towards nature students understood animals, birds cannot talk but they too have pain of hunger and thirst. Students have understood the importance of nature and environment for our life. Students have understood the importance of food, the wastage of food is reduced.

Words of students: V. Pardhi Sri Vaishnavi - 5th class - camp made me polite and respectful towards others. Word of a teacher: There is no stop for inspiration, children must take a stand to bring about some change that Vivekananda always envisioned. Yes, every child in its own right can aspire to become a Vivekananda. A. Akhila 7th class My parents are happy to see a change in my attitude. Future plans: Our idea is to inculcate the values in children, but the learning is not unidirectional. We have understood so many things and we transformed into different individuals than before. The process helped us to become more sensitive and adoptable to situations. We have a plan to make students perform composting in their school and make manure to grow plants. We are at our starting stages and including Yoga, morals, bhajans sessions in the school is our primary goal. A lot of things are to be done by the inspiration of Swami Vivekananda.

Conclusion:

As children with clear, elevated, purposeful and practical ideas shall create a better future for this country. And "man making education and character building education "is the requirement for nation, so activities based learning will help students to learn the things practically, and more youth should take up responsibility to educate children in this area as future of the nation depends on our work.

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RESERVATION AS A PILLAR OF TRANSFORMATIVE CONSTITUTIONALISM IN UPHOLDING SOCIAL JUSTICE

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Abstract:

Transformative constitutionalism is an instrument which the Supreme Court uses to ensure a more equitable society. Just like societal laws, our Constitution is a dynamic entity. It's grounded in an ever-evolving reality, both factual and social. At times, a modification in the law can be a precursor to, and even a catalyst for, societal transformation. Conversely, changes in the law can also be a consequence of shifts in social reality. The transformative aspect of the Indian Constitution wasn't confined to the fight against colonial rule. It also encompassed the quest for equality within India among women and backward classes of people. One of the key aspects of transformative constitutionalism is the reservation policy of the government, which is a form of affirmative action designed to uplift marginalized sections of society. The objective is to rectify historical injustices and socio-economic disparities, thereby promoting equality and social justice. Reservation is a testament to the transformative nature of the Indian Constitution and it's commitment to creating a more equitable society, where opportunities are not monopolized by a privileged few but are accessible to all. In independent India's history no government policy has invoked as much debate and tussle as reservation has done. These debates involves around either redundant ideas that are either devoid of fact or trivial issues constructed without looking at the larger narrative. These paper delves into the transformation reservation policy has undergone starting from State of Madras v. Champakam Dorairajan to Janhit Abhiyan v Union of India and discuss in detail the intellectual debates that have graced the floors of Parliament, the Supreme Court and Constituent Assembly.

Introduction:

The transformative nature of the constitution of India can be traced from the contrasting point of view of two judges. One based on continuity and another in transformation.[1] One of the last princely states to join the Republic of India was Sant, a Rajput state with over 700 year long history. In its last act it gave rights to many of its forests to a few jaigirdars which were repealed by the State of Bombay. When the matter was taken to apex court the State argued that it had the

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[1] Gautam Bhatia, The Transformative Constitution: A Radical Biography In Nine Act (HarperCollins Publishers India, 2019)

right to decide what to do with the land and people when it acquires new territory and it can choose whether to ignore the grants given by a state. Political decision are an 'act of state'. The respondents strongly disagreed stating their rules are based on an old and unfair British legal system, which has no place in our constitutional setup.[2] The SC responded in favour of the State and Justice Shah in his concurring opinion stated that all pre-existent political setup didn't disappeared on the midnight of 25th January, 1960 and in the very next moment arose a new set of institution completely unrelated to the past. "The process was not of destruction but of evolution". In a similar case in 1954[3] dealing with the doctrine of 'act of state' Justice Vivian Bose argued that with one sweep the constitution removed all stench of arbitrariness over its land and people and a new order arose based on the sovereign will of the people. One can find the stark contrast between these two opinions and it is in these differences the soul of our transformative constitutionalism endures. The Supreme Court's landmark decisions have bolstered the ethos of tranformative constitutionalism through judgments like Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala, where the concept of basic structure was established. In Maneka Gandhi v Union of India the court held that procedure under article 21 can't be arbitrary, unfair and unreasonable. In Justice Puttaswamy v Union of India the Court held Right to privacy is a fundamental right and several other landmark judgment paved way for transformative constitutionalism.

Reservation in India is a form of affirmative action which provides for equality of opportunity in political offices, government services and educational institutions. Here we'll study how Supreme Court through the instrument of transformative constitutionalism has upholded social justice and reservation has been it's strongest pillar. Starting from Champakam Dorairajan in 1951 to Janhit Abhiyan in 2022 the Supreme Court have been pivotal as guardians of the transformation, handing down landmark decisions that affirm a resolute commitment to equality and justice.

A history of discrimination

Justice requires removal of discrimination, which can be attained through the reduction of disparities among individuals through affirmative state action. It is acknowledged that the pursuit of equality is essentially a protest against unjustified inequalities. Inequality can be found in our society in form of caste system. The state thus adopted compensatory discrimination policy as an effective machinery to uplift the deprived people and to ensure their participation in construction of a modern India.[4]

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[2] State of Gujrat v Vora Fiddali Badruddin Mithibarwala (1964) 6 SCR 461
[3] Virendra Singh v State of UP (1955) 1 SCR 415
[4] Rajinder Kumar Marwah, Reservation Law and Policy: An Analytical Study of Its Criteria (Guru Nanak Dev Univerity 2011)

Inequality has its root in the scriptures and tradition of Hindu religion from the time of Rig Veda. The society constituted 'varna' and 'jati' which had their own set of hierarchy. The society was divided into four varnas, the Brahmins were priests and keepers of sacred knowledge and were placed at the top. The Kshatriyas were kings and warriors and were next in rank. Third came the Vaishyas, farmers and artisans and the Shudras came last. They were in service of the above three classes. Then came the untouchables who were not part of the varna system and were often referred to as ati-shudras.

During the Mughal rule the rulers patronize the upper castes and the caste system remained as rigid as ever. When the British came the caste system had a huge blow from their capitalistic policy but the British maintained their policy of non-interference and the vices of the system were left intact. The Mysore government first introduced communal reservation in 1874 and in 1918 they introduced reservations in favour of depressed class of people. The government of Travancore and Cochin soon followed suit. They too started reservation in government job. Then came the Government of India Act, 1919 which for the first time recognised the depressed class as a separate group for the purpose of political representation. Based on the report of the Lothian Committee the Communal Awards created separate electorates based on religion and the depressed class were also given seventy eight representative seats. The Congress rejected the awards and on 1932 Madan Mohan Malviya and B R Ambedkar signed the historic Poona Pact which had a two fold objectives, firstly to keep the depressed class within the Hindu community and secondly they will get political representation according to their numeric strength. The Poona Pact formed the basis of the Government of India Act, 1935 and the act used the term Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes based on the recommendation of the Simon Commission.[5]

In 1942 Ambedkar joined the Viceroy's Executive Council and demanded reservation in services and financial aid in education for the Scheduled Castes. In 1943 the government gave reservation upto eight and a half percent and assured for more in the up coming months.

Special provisions under the constitution

The constitution of India recognizes five beneficiary groups, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward classes, economically weaker sections and Women. Historically reservations have been provided to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and were mentioned in the Government of India Act, 1935. These class of people have been referred to by the British as 'depressed classes'. The scheduled castes or dalits consists of over 1200 castes and figures around 16.6 percentage of the Indian population. Scheduled tribes on the other hand consists of over 700 tribes and constitutes 8.6 percent of the population are referred as adivasis.

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[5]   id.

Religion remains a criterion for schedules castes as only Hindu, Sikhs and Buddhists qualify whereas scheduled tribes can be of any religion.[6] Though the word religion doesn't exist in article 341(1) the ban on Muslims and Christians is founded in Para 3 of Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order 1950.[7] The Other Backward Classes unlike the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes aren't a homogeneous group. Though the constitution use the word class but caste remains the sole criterion for defining backwardness.[8] The caste groups are also identified differently by the Union and States.

Article 15(4) of the Indian Constitution states that the State has right to make special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.[9] Article 15(5) of the Constitution creates provisions for the reservation of SC, ST, Backward classes in private educational institutions.[10] Article 15(6) provides reservation for economically weaker section of the society in educational institutions.[11]

Article 16(4) of the Indian Constitution states that the State is entitled to implement reservations to ensure sufficient representation of backward classes in government employment.[12] Article 16(6) makes provision for employment of economical weaker sections of citizen in various posts.

The Constitution's Articles 330 and 332 reserves seats for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in Parliament and legislative assembly respectively. The government brought the 106th constitutional amendment in 2023 to reserve one-third of the seats in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies for women for a period for 15 years after coming effect.

The other backward classes

In 1960 the Mysore government set up a committee lead by Dr. Nagan Gowda to look into the criteria to decide socially and educationally backward classes.[13] For social backwardness the criteria selected was low status in society. For educational backwardness the criteria was that for every 1000 students less than 6.9 students for that caste was admitted in high

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[6]   Vinay Sitapati, The Oxford handbook of the Indian Constitution (Sujit Choudhry *et al.,* Oxford University Press 2016)
[7]   The Hindu Bureau, Supreme Court to hear plea to make Scheduled Caste status 'religion-neutral', The Hindu, July 4, 2023
[8]   Vinay Sitapati, supra note 4
[9]   INDIA CONST. Art 15, cl 4
[10] INDIA CONST. Art 15, cl 5
[11] INDIA CONST. Art 15, cl 6
[12] INDIA CONST. Art 16, cl 4
[13] Abhinav Chandrachud, These Seats Are Reserved: Caste, Quotas and the Constitution of India (Penguin Random House India Private Limited, 2023)

school. The committee divided the other backward classes into two groups – backward and more backward.

In 1979 Morarji Desai, the then Prime Minister of India appointed the former Chief Minister of Bihar, B P Mandal to head a commission whose objective was to identify the Other Backward Classes. The Mandal Commission formulated 11 criteria for deciding who OBC were.[14] The commission divided the degree of backwardness based on the three indices of social, educational and economical.

For social backwardness four criteria were followed- (i) those whose preliminary income comes from manual labor. (ii) those who were married before 17 (iii) castes in which woman are 25% higher than state average and finally (iv) castes which are backward in terms of societal view.[15]

For educational backwardness there were three criteria- (i) certain castes had children aged 5 to 15 who never attended school at a rate 25 percent higher than the state average (ii) those whose students in that age range dropped out of school at the same rate, (iii) castes with a percentage of individuals completing high school 25 percent lower than the state average were considered educationally disadvantaged.[16]

For economical backwardness there were four criteria – (i) such castes whose family assets were below 25% of state average (ii) family who lived in kuccha houses (iii) castes who had to travel more than half kilometer for procuring drinking water and (iv) family whose personal loans were 25% higher than state average.[17]

Though there were 11 criteria for selection the highest number of points were kept for social backwardness category. Thus caste who would be socially backward were considered irrespective of their economic or education situation.

The Mandal Commission reported that 52% of the Indian population was other backward classes. Thus keeping in mind the M R Balaji judgment which fixed 50% ceiling for reservation, the commission recoomended 27% reservation for the OBC. Fifteen percent for scheduled castes, seven and a half percent for scheduled tribes and twenty seven percent for other backward classes brings the reservation to 49.5%. But due to change in the government the report got shelved until VP Singh became the Prime Minister and implemented OBC reservations.

As there are thousands of castes it becomes impossible to assess who is better of than who. The Supreme Court thus used the term creamy in it's judgment in State of Kerala v N M Thomas to de-group the affluent member among the backward classes. In 1993 the creamy layer

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[14] id.
[15] id.
[16] id.
[17] id.

ceiling was introduced, wealthy individuals who are better of and do not require the benefits of affirmative action of the government. However, the constitution doesn't use the word affirmative action instead used 'special provisions' and 'preferential treatments'. The ceiling was 100,000 rupees annually back in 1993, today it stands over 800,000 annually. The creamy layer concept is only used for the OBC where the government has set various to parameters to measure how well off an individual is. The Courts in India have often talked about creating sub groups and categories for revision of castes from the list but there has been few if at all been removed instead more are added every year.

Other beneficiaries under the constitution

The constitution under article 15(3) allow the legislature to make law (special provisions) for children and women. If we take the other backward classes into account which makes up around 52% according to Mandal Commission report, women are the next biggest political vote bloc with 50% of the population. Madhya Pradesh and Bihar each have 35% reservation in government jobs. The Parliament in 2023 passed the 106th amendment which reserved 1/3 seats for women in Parliament and State Legislatures including the Delhi Legislative Assembly.

While courts have allowed reservation based on caste, there are restraints when it comes to religion. There are several states in which Muslims are classified as 'backward castes' and thus qualify for reservations. The caste hierarchy runs deep and extends to other religions well. Hindus who have converted to Christianity or Islam has refused to shed their caste identity.[18] Among converted christians of the South Nadars, Mudaliars and Reddiars remain dominant castes. Muslim in Bengal, historically are divided among three large castes, Ashraf at the top, Atraf at the middle and Arzal at the bottom.[19]

The framers of our constitution were witness how separate electorate were responsible for a divided India thus they remain reluctant to have reservation on ground of religion. But some state government have introduce reservation for muslims, who are under represented in government services and are worse of than the SCs and STs.[20]

Reservation in education

Article 46 under the Directive Principles of State Policy of the Constitution direct the state to ensure 'special care and education and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people'.[21] The DPSPs are nonjusticiable and thus the state derives its power from article 15 of the constitution. Article 15(4) which talks of special provisions for socially and educationally

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[18] https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/watch-caste-discrimination-in-christianity/article67731571.ece

[19] Iftekar Uddin Chowdhury, Caste Based Discrimination in South Asia: A Study of Bangladesh (Indian Institute of Dalit Studies 2009)

[20] Vinay Sitapati, Supra Note 4

[21] INDIA CONSTI. Art. 46

backward classes and SCs and STs protects reservation from equality clauses mentioned in art 15(1) and (2). The amended article stood in response to the judgment of the Supreme Court in in State of Madras v Champakam Dorairajan. Justice Das opined that Directive Principle can never override Fundamental Rights. It was in response to this judgment of the court that parliament brought the first amendment. There have been three caveats to the principle of reservation in education. 1. This will not apply to minority education institution. 2. Limiting reservation in superspeciality education. 3. Gradual extension of reservation in public education.[22]

Reservation in employment

Government salaries at the lower group level remains much higher than their private counterparts. Constitutional provisions also makes it difficult to terminate a government employee while private jobs don't come with such stability. This makes government jobs more lucrative and object of redistributive justice.

Article 16(4) provides for reservation in public employment for SC, ST and OBCs and article 335 permits the state for lowering standards of evaluation for sc and st in public service. Unlike article 15(4) which was a later introduction via the first amendment, article 16(4) was part of original constitution. Article 16 of the constitution is an enabling provision which empowers the state to make laws for the benefit of the SCs and STs.[23]

Reservation in employment though have certain caveats to it. Jobs that require highest level of intelligence and skill are kept away from the ambit of reservation. The Supreme Court and High Courts have safeguarded independence of judiciary by limiting the provisions of affirmative action in higher judiciary. Though political parties have tried but the apex court had made it clear reservation can not be provided for private sector employment.

Reservation in promotion

A nine-judge panel ruled that Article 16(4) does not provide for reservation in promotions, only in appointments. This decision jeopardized all promotions granted to SCs/STs in public employment. However, the Court allowed reservation in promotions to continue for five years after November 16, 1992. In 1995, the Government countered the impact of Indra Sawhney by introducing Article 16(4A) through the 77th Amendment of the Constitution, which permitted the State to provide reservations to SC/STs in promotions if it they were not adequately represented.

This led to a situation where reserved category candidates, promoted earlier than their general class counterparts, became their seniors. This was addressed by the Virpal Singh (1995) and Ajit Singh (1996) judgments, which introduced the Catch Up Rule. This rule stated that senior general candidates promoted after SC/ST candidates would regain their seniority. In 2000,

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[22] Vinay Sitapati, Supra Notes 4
[23] id.

two amendments were introduced to facilitate reservation in promotion for SC/STs. The 81st Amendment introduced Article 16(4B), allowing reservation in promotion to exceed the 50% limit set on regular reservations. This amendment allowed the State to carry forward unfilled vacancies from previous years, known as the Carry Forward Rule. The 82nd Amendment added a proviso to Article 335, stating that nothing in Article 335 would prevent the State from relaxing qualifying marks or lowering evaluation standards for reservation in promotion for SC/ST members. In 2001, Parliament negated the Catch-Up Rule through the 85th Amendment, which amended Article 16(4A) and introduced the principle of Consequential Seniority to promoted SC/ST candidates. In Nagaraj, the petitioners challenged the 77th, 81st, 82nd, and 85th Amendments. The Court upheld these amendments as constitutionally valid, affirming the constitutional validity of Reservation in Promotion to SCs/STs, the Consequential Seniority Rule under Article 16(4A), the Carry Forward Rule under Article 16(4B), and the Proviso to Article 335.

The Court stated that for reservation in promotion to be valid, the State must demonstrate the backwardness of the SC/ST, prove that the SC/ST is inadequately represented in relevant public employment, and maintain overall administrative efficiency. Following Nagaraj, various High Courts and the Supreme Court invalidated Statutes and Rules extending reservation in promotion policies, as the State failed to provide sufficient data to meet these conditions. The courts particularly criticized the State for failing to demonstrate backwardness and/or insufficient representation.

Several states have appealed to the Supreme Court for a review of its Nagaraj judgment. The Nagaraj judgment introduced three controlling conditions that made it challenging to implement reservation in promotion policies. A five-judge bench of the Supreme Court unanimously decided that the Nagaraj judgment from 2006, which pertains to reservations in promotions for SC/ST individuals, does not require reconsideration by a larger seven-judge bench. The bench also removed the criterion of demonstrating further backwardness from Nagaraj. While the Court removed the further backwardness criterion, it introduced the principle of excluding the creamy layer. The Court ruled that the creamy layer exclusion applies to SC/STs, and therefore, the State cannot grant reservations in promotion to SC/ST individuals who belong to the creamy layer of their community. In 2019, the Supreme Court upheld a policy of reservation in promotion. The Supreme Court supported the 2018 Karnataka Reservation Act because the State provided sufficient data to show that SC/STs are underrepresented and that the policy would not negatively impact efficiency. The 2018 Act introduces consequential seniority for SC/STs in State Government Services. In its ruling, the Court presented a fresh, inclusive interpretation of administrative efficiency under Article 335 of the Constitution. This novel interpretation strikes a balance between merit and the assurance of adequate representation.

Interestingly, the Court endorsed the Act even though the State did not implement the creamy layer test, which was introduced in Jarnail Singh. The Court justified this by stating that the test is only applicable at the reservation in promotion stage, not at the consequential seniority stage.[24]

An economic perspective

The demand for reservation grows drastically owing to various factors among the socially backward people. This includes agricultural crisis in Haryana, Gujrat and Andhra Pradesh where Jats, Patels and Kapus leads the agitation. Unemployment among the youth and a stagnant job market.

Advantages of reservation include narrowing the income disparity between the affluent and the economically disadvantaged backward classes. Reservation ensures social equity to the most marginalised and disadvantaged group of people. In 1978-79, the proportion of the backward classes living in poverty was 51.32%, which decreased to 35.97% by 1993-94. The participation of Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) in undergraduate, postgraduate, technical, and professional courses has seen a rise. The enrollment percentage of SC in these categories, which was 7.08% in 1978-79, experienced an increase to 13.30% by 1995-96. A study indicated that reservation policies have not compromised administrative efficiency, but rather improved the quality. A prime example is the Indian Railways, where the workforce includes a significant number of SC/ST employees, and the outcomes have been more favorable.[25]

While reservations have its benefits, it also has certain drawbacks. As it aids individuals from the backward classes, it proportionately impacts those from the non reserved class in matters of service and education. It's important to note that not all individuals from backward classes are financially disadvantaged or lack influence, and not all from forward classes are affluent. Hence, the concept of caste-based reservation has many flaws.

A national survey reveals that a mere 0.7% of the population is awarded scholarships based on merit, while the rest are reserved. One of the major drawbacks of the reservation system is its focus on caste rather than merit, especially in competitive exams. Ideally, a candidate's selection should be based on their merit, but the reservation system contradicts this principle by prioritizing caste. It seems the time is ripe for a review and modification of the existing rules for the greater good.

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[24] SCO Team, Reservation in Promotion: Court in Review https://www.scobserver.in/journal/reservation-in-promotion-court-in-review/ (last visited 18 March 01:08)

[25] Manika Chopra, Reservation System in India: Advantages and Disadvantages (International Journal of Economic Perspectives, 15(1), 30–37, 2021)

The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, was enacted by the Parliament to prevent atrocities against scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The mistreatment of individuals from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is not just a historical issue, it persists in our society today. Therefore, it's crucial that the legal measures established by the Parliament to safeguard the constitutional rights of these communities are diligently adhered to and enforced. However the SC/ST act have been used to section 3(1)(x) have been misused very often and penalises anyone who insults anyone belonging to SC/ST community at a public place and is a cognizable offence leading to atleast 10 percent false cases.

Role of judiciary

In the Punjab Rao v. D.P.Meshram[26] and Others case, the initial Presidential Order did not recognize Buddhists as Scheduled Castes, thus a Buddhist could not claim to a Scheduled Caste status. The tribunal found no proof of foul play and stated that the elected Legislative Assembly member, who had adopted Buddhism, was no longer a Scheduled Caste member, resulting in the cancellation of the contested election. Testimonies were given by individuals who had either chaired the meeting where mass conversion occurred or who had themselves embraced Buddhism at that gathering. Nevertheless, the High Court overturned the Tribunal's verdict due to a lack of substantial evidence, given that all the witnesses for the prosecution were affiliated with political parties in opposition to the party and the Legislative Assembly member in question.

In the case of State of Madras v. Champakam Dorairajan[27], the court was tasked with determining the constitutionality of the Madras Government's Communal G.O. This order, aimed at aiding the Backward Classes, established a quota system for student admissions into State Medical colleges based on community affiliation. The court ruled that the Directive Principles of State Policy must align with and operate as a subsidiary to the chapter of fundamental rights. Furthermore, the court declared that the right to admission into an educational institution is a right that an individual citizen possesses as a citizen of India, not as a member of any community or class of citizens. The Supreme Court did not allow the fundamental right declared in Article 29(2) to be undermined by Article 46 and deemed the order void for violating the fundamental right under Article 29(2). This decision underscored the primacy of fundamental rights over the Directive Principles of State Policy. The court also ruled that caste-based reservation as per the Communal Award infringes Article 15(1). This led to a literal interpretation of the constitutional provisions, resulting in the addition of Clause (4) to Article 15. This clause enables the State to make special provisions for the advancement of the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, or any socially and educationally Backward Classes of

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26   AIR 1965 SC 1179
27   AIR 1951 SC 226

citizens. However, this clause does not impose any obligation on the State to take any action under it.

The R. Chitralekha v. State of Mysore[28] case involved a challenge to the University of Mysore's admission criteria, which included an interview accounting for 25% of the marks. The Supreme Court upheld this system. The Government of Mysore determined the classification of socially and educationally Backward Classes based on economic conditions and occupations, not caste. The Supreme Court ruled that while caste could be a relevant factor in determining social backwardness, it couldn't be the sole or dominant test. The court also clarified the M.R. Balaji v. State of Mysore[29] case, stating that a determination wasn't void if it ignored caste but was based on other relevant criteria. The key issue was the determination of Backward Classes, and the criteria used by the Mysore Government were accepted in this case.

In the case of State of Kerala v. Jacob Mathew, the Kerala High Court had previously followed a similar reasoning. However, in P. Rajendran v. State of Madras, the Supreme Court upheld a backwardness test based solely on the beneficiary's caste. The court ruled that while a reservation of seats based solely on caste would be invalid, caste was not irrelevant to determining backwardness. This judgment in Rajendran's case seems to indicate a retreat from efforts to find a secular and rational criterion for determining backwardness.

In the case of P. Sagar v. State of Andhra Pradesh[30], a rule was challenged that required 1/3rd of total seats to be allocated to Higher Secondary Course, Multipurpose I.S.C., and Multipurpose candidates, and at least 50% of seats to Pre-University Course candidates. The High Court upheld this provision. Notably, there was no common entrance test for these candidates. This point wasn't contested when the case was appealed to the Supreme Court. However, in the same case, the court invalidated an Andhra Pradesh notification based solely on caste, noting that the term 'class' in Article 15(4) refers to a homogeneous group with common traits, and caste cannot be completely excluded in its determination.

In the case of State of Uttar Pradesh v. Pradeep Tandon[31], the Uttar Pradesh Government made reservations for candidates from rural, hill, and Uttarakhand areas for admission into state medical colleges, considering them as socially and educationally backward classes. The Supreme Court, however, held that under Article 15(4), the focus is on classes of citizens, not areas, and backwardness should be both social and educational. The court upheld the reservation for hill and Uttarakhand areas, recognizing the lack of facilities and remote conditions contributing to

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[28] AIR 1964 SC 1823

[29] AIR 1963 SC 649
[30] AIR 1968 SC 1379
[31] AIR 1975 SC 563

their backwardness. However, the court ruled that providing reservation for rural areas was unconstitutional. It argued that not all rural residents are educationally backward, poverty is prevalent across the country, and rural population lacks homogeneity. Thus, they cannot be treated as a class for reservation under Article 15(4).

Conclusion:

The Indian society has been one of political authority and social conservatism. Sparks of liberty and equality were visible in pockets but that too as a reaction. The judiciary in it's role of checks and balances has interpreted the constitution in ways that it becomes constitution of all not just constitution of a few. The constitution is an organic document that course corrects itself according to the times and necessity. Only be recognising the rights of others can societal transformation can ever be complete. The Supreme court has used transformative constitutionalism to chisel out a path that serves the broader interest of the society and crucial for social transformation.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA – ISSUES AND MEASURES

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Infrastructure is one of the most important productivity pillars in every economy. The most difficult problem in emerging countries has been pushing infrastructure development and coordinating financing for infrastructure projects (1). India is rapidly urbanizing, and city financial requirements are growing in lockstep. To enable economic growth, improve quality of life and livability, and create resilience to the projected effects of climate change, persistent increases in urban infrastructure investment are required. Cities, on the other hand, confront other challenges (2). In the 15 years until 2036 (in 2020 prices), India's cities would require an estimated capital investment of USD 840 billion in urban infrastructure and municipal services, equivalent to 1.18% of anticipated GDP (3).

The increased urbanization is putting a strain on existing infrastructure. According to the 2011 Census, around 31% of people resided in urban areas, which produced 63% of GDP. It is expected that by 2030, urban areas would house 4/10th of the entire population and contribute 3/4th of India's GDP (4).

India's population expansion and economic development necessitate investments in trans port infrastructure, including as roads, trains, aircraft, shipping, and inland waterways (5). Capital investment in infrastructure is being boosted by 33% in Budget 2023-24 to Rs.10 lakh crore (US$ 122 billion), or 3.3% of GDP and nearly three times the spending in 2019-20 (6).

Infrastructure development is critical to India's goal of becoming a $5 trillion economy by 2025. To boost the expansion of the infrastructure industry, the government has developed the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP), in conjunction with other programmes such as 'Make in India' and the production-linked incentives (PLI) plan. Historically, more than 80% of infrastructure expenditure in the United States has gone towards transportation, energy, and water and irrigation. While these industries remain the primary emphasis, the government has begun to shift its attention to other areas as India's environment and demography change (7).

Issues

- ULBs have limited absorption and implementation capabilities for urban infrastructure delivery (8).

- PPP transactions for urban infrastructure have declined significantly in terms of both monetary value and transaction volume during the previous decade (9).

- Even if money is available for economically feasible projects, the main problem will be to complete projects on time and under budget (10).

- India's transport infrastructure continues to experience capacity restrictions, we anticipate execution capabilities will continue to be the most difficult hurdle for transportation infrastructure projects (11).

- Land acquisition is another major issue in huge infrastructure projects due to which projects are hampered as well as delayed

- The commercial banking industry's ability to offer long-term loans to the infrastructure sector is constrained (12).

- Inadequate regulatory framework for various sectors

- The supply-demand mismatch in power affects both industrial and general growth. Another source of worry is the transportation sector; while road transportation is the backbone of Indian transportation infrastructure, it is insufficient in terms of quality, quantity, and connection. Furthermore, civil aviation and ports require urgent modernization (13).

- Some of the issues of Infrastructure in India are inadequate funding, inadequate project planning and selection, Poor management.

- Insufficient upkeep.

- Infrastructure in conflict-affected and fragile states like Jammu and Kashmir, Leh – Ladakh, North Eastern states

- Natural disasters and climate change like the recent floods in the state of Himachal and Uttarakhand.

- In physical infrastructure-land acquisition is a herculean task. Acquiring land is one of the most difficult aspects of creating physical infrastructure since it frequently entails displacement of people and compensation difficulties.

- The urban infrastructure development problems in India can be broadly classified as urban residence; business premises power usage, urban transport, water supply, sewerage disposal, access to airport/railways/seaport/roads and bridges; development of tourism infrastructure; solid waste management; development of roads and bridges.

Measures

- Reviewing budgetary allocation

- Providing adequate regulatory framework in all the sectors to review and avoid monopoly of one player

- Public Private Partnership models to be enhanced

- Reviewing tariff policies for various sectors

- To provide fiscal incentives
- Encouraging foreign investors and FDIs

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IMPACT OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT ON THE BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF CUSTOMERS

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Introduction:

Celebrities are the personalities that are well known in public either because of their credibility or of their attractiveness or because of both of these. To leverage this, advertisers use celebrities in their advertisement to increase the effectiveness and heighten the believability of commercials.

Celebrity is a person involved with film industry, television, sports, politics, business, or who is an artist or a person from the military. In this modern age of marketing, celebrity may also be an animated character. Celebrity endorser is an individual who is known by the public for his or her achievements in areas other than that of the product class endorsed and who uses this public recognition on the behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement.

Statement of the problem

The main aim of this research is to find out the impact of celebrity endorsement on the buying behavior of customers. This study points out that Celebrities can make mistakes and when they do, they can affect the brands they endorse. Consumers may focus on the celebrity, not on the product**.**

Objectives of the study

- To analyze the perception of customers about the celebrity endorsement.
- To find out the relationship between celebrity endorsement and customer buying behavior.
- To analyze which factor of the celebrities attracts the public.
- To arrive at meaningful conclusion of study.

Reserch methodology

The study is designed as an exploratory one based on sampling methods. Both primary and secondary data have been used in this study.

Primary data

The primary data has been collected through structured questionnaire on convenience sampling and the primary data was collected from 60 respondents.

Secondary data

The secondary data used for the study has been collected from different sources of literature like journals, magazines, textbooks, and internet.

Sample size

In this survey the sample size decided was 60 respondents. The sampling technique used for the study is convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a type of non- probability sampling which involves the sample being drawn from that part of the population which is close to hand.

Limitation of the study

- The respondent's opinion might be influenced by personal bias.
- Many respondents were very critical about the social system so they are very biased toward using any celebrity in the advertisement at all.
- The sample size was limited.
- Responses were taken majorly from young people only.

Analysis and data interpretation

Table 1: Factors influencing purchase decisions

Particulars	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Expertise	13	22
Attractiveness	15	25
Trustworthiness	18	30
Likability	9	15
Over shadowing effect	2	3.3
Expertise	3	5
Total	60	100

(Source-Primary data)

Interpretation

Table 1 shows the factors that influence the purchase decision of the respondents. The study shows that 30% thinks trust worthiness, 25% attractiveness, 22% expertise, 15% likability, 3.3% overshadowing effect and Expertise 5% as the factors that influence their purchase decision.

Table 2: Satisfaction level of respondents

Particulars	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Agree	14	23.3
Neutral	42	70
Disagree	4	6.7

Interpretation

Table 2 shows the satisfaction level of respondents while purchasing products or services advertised by celebrities. The study shows that 70% of the respondents feel neutral, 23.3% agree and 6.7%disagree.

Findings

- The study shows that 30% thinks trust worthiness, 25% attractiveness, 22% expertise, 15% likability, 3.3% overshadowing effect and Expertise 5% as the factors that influence their purchase decision.
- The study shows that 70% of the respondents feel neutral, 23.3% agree and 6.7% disagree.

Suggestions

- Celebrity endorsements will be more effective when used consistently over time to increase the strength of the link between the celebrity and the endorsed brand.
- Celebrity endorsements will be more effective when the ad execution is simple, clean and understandable.
- Celebrity endorsement through media should be encouraged rather than non- media advertising.
- Celebrity endorsements will be more effective when it is done through television and internet.
- Celebrity endorsements will be more effective when using a celebrity who is not already strongly associated with another product or service.
- Celebrity endorsers will be more effective for brands for which consumers have limited knowledge/facts.

Conclusion:

This study was based on the impact of celebrity endorsement on the buying behavior of customers. From this study it is concluded that Celebrity endorsement does have a positive impact on the buying behavior of customers. Celebrity endorsement has totally changed the nature of advertising in recent years, and has become one of the most important tools of advertising. Such endorsements can help the marketer to understand consumer reactions towards a particular celebrity. Since majority of the respondents of the present study consists of students, the result is slightly skewed towards youngsters who support celebrity endorsements more than the elders do. Both male and female respondents supported celebrity endorsements

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A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF CREATIVE THINKING ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract:

This review paper analyses the impact of creative thinking among adolescents and its impact on academic performance. The study has been conducted using systematic literature review method. The search areas were the title and the abstract, and the article search was restricted to the journal articles that were peer-reviewed and published from 2005 onwards. The study found that there is a significant relation between creative thinking and academic performance, i.e. creative thinking is one of the factors that determine the academic performance of a student.

Keywords: Creative Thinkisg, Academic Performance, Adolescents

Introduction:

"Jeevan Kaushal" is a curriculum framework issued by University Grants Commission (UGC). Jeevan Kaushal and life skills are essential aspects of personal development and readiness for the challenges of life. It encompasses a wide range of abilities and competencies that enable individuals to effectively navigate various situations and achieve their goals. These skills include critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, decision-making, emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, and resilience. While there might not be a direct definition of creative thinking provided within the concept of "Jeevan Kaushal," the essence of creative thinking within the context of life skills can be understood as the ability to generate innovative ideas, solutions, and approaches to various challenges and situations encountered in life. Creative thinking within the framework of "Jeevan Kaushal" encompasses the capacity to think critically, problem-solve creatively, adapt to change, and communicate effectively, all of which are essential skills for navigating the complexities of daily life and achieving personal and professional success.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes fostering creative thinking among students by promoting experiential learning, critical thinking, and multidisciplinary approaches. It encourages a shift from rote memorization to hands-on, inquiry-based learning methods. NEP 2020 also advocates for the integration of arts, music, and other creative disciplines into the curriculum to nurture holistic development and innovation. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of cultivating problem-solving skills, creativity, and entrepreneurial

mindset from an early age to prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century (Dr. K. Kasturirangan *et al.,* 2020).

In the realm of education, the synergy between creative thinking and academic performance has emerged as a compelling subject of research. Creative thinking, characterized by the ability to generate novel ideas, approach problems innovatively, and think outside conventional boundaries, is increasingly acknowledged as a crucial skill in today's dynamic and complex world. As educators strive to prepare students for the challenges of the future, understanding the impact of creative thinking on academic performance becomes paramount.

Creative thinkin, as per the PISA framework, is the capacity to conceive fresh and unique ideas, establish connections between disparate concepts, and devise inventive solutions to challenges. It hinges on cognitive abilities like fluency in idea generation, flexibility in adapting thinking approaches, originality in conceptualizing, and elaboration in expanding upon thoughts. This framework underscores the importance of nurturing students' creativity by assessing their aptitude to think innovatively and problem-solve creatively, preparing them for the demands of an ever-evolving world that values adaptive and inventive thinking. (PISA Creative Thinking Framework, 2021)

At its core, academic performance traditionally focuses on standardized assessments and quantitative metrics. However, there is a growing recognition that a more holistic approach, incorporating creative thinking, can enhance learning outcomes. Creativity not only fosters a deeper understanding of academic content but also cultivates critical skills such as problem-solving, adaptability, and effective communication. This broader skill set contributes to a student's ability to navigate real-world challenges beyond the confines of standardized testing.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), an adolescent is defined as an individual between the ages of 10 and 19 years old. This period is characterized by significant physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development. (WHO,1999)

Nevertheless, the relationship between creative thinking and academic performance is nuanced. While creativity can empower students to excel, it may not always align seamlessly with traditional educational structures. Educators face the challenge of striking a balance between encouraging creative expression and adhering to established academic frameworks. This research seeks to unravel these complexities, exploring how educators can leverage creative thinking to bolster academic achievement while addressing potential obstacles.

In summary, this research endeavors to shed light on the multifaceted relationship between creative thinking and academic performance, providing insights that can inform educational practices and policies. By unraveling the intricacies of this connection, we aim to cultivate an educational landscape that not only values creativity but also harnesses its transformative potential to elevate academic achievement.

Significance of the study

Understanding the impact of creative thinking on the academic performance of adolescents is of paramount importance in contemporary education. This review paper seeks to illuminate the significance of exploring this topic within the academic community.

Firstly, creative thinking stands as a cornerstone of 21st-century skills essential for success in the rapidly evolving global landscape. In today's knowledge-based economy, where innovation and problem-solving are prized assets, nurturing creative thinking abilities among adolescents is critical. By examining how creative thinking influences academic performance, educators and policymakers can gain insights into fostering a generation of innovative thinkers poised to tackle complex challenges and drive societal progress.

Secondly, adolescence represents a crucial developmental stage marked by significant cognitive, emotional, and social transformations. This period offers a unique window of opportunity to nurture and cultivate creative thinking skills. Understanding the interplay between creative thinking and academic performance during adolescence can inform targeted interventions and educational strategies aimed at harnessing the full potential of students during this formative stage of life.

Moreover, the exploration of creative thinking in relation to academic performance holds implications for educational equity and inclusivity. Research suggests that fostering creative thinking skills can benefit students from diverse backgrounds and learning styles, leveling the playing field and reducing achievement gaps. By identifying effective practices for promoting creative thinking in education, this review paper aims to contribute to the creation of more equitable and inclusive learning environments where every adolescent has the opportunity to thrive academically.

Furthermore, the findings from this review have practical implications for curriculum design, pedagogical approaches, and teacher professional development. By integrating creative thinking skills into the educational framework, educators can cultivate a learning culture that prioritizes inquiry, exploration, and innovation. Such an approach not only enhances academic achievement but also cultivates essential competencies for lifelong learning and success in the digital age.

In conclusion, conducting a review of the role of creative thinking on adolescent academic performance holds immense significance for advancing educational practice, promoting student success, and fostering societal innovation. By shedding light on this critical relationship, the statement of the present study can be calculatedin a way, this review paper aims to inform evidence-based interventions, inspire pedagogical innovation, and empower educators to nurture the creative potential of every adolescent learner.

Objectives of the study

1. To provide comprehensive overview on the role of creative thinking in the academic performance ofadolescents.
2. To review the relationship between creative thinking and academic performance.
3. To examine implications of the role of creative thinking on academic performance of adolescents.

Research gaps

1. Longitudinal studies: There is a need for longitudinal studies that track the development of creative thinking skills in adolescents over time and examine how these skills relate to academic performance. Long-term investigations could shed light on the trajectory of creative thinking abilities during adolescence and their predictive power for future academic success.

2. Mediating and moderating mechanisms: There is a lack of research elucidating the mediating and moderating mechanisms underlying the relationship between creative thinking and academic performance in adolescents. Further investigation is needed to identify the cognitive, motivational, and socio-emotional processes that mediate or moderate this relationship, providing a more nuanced understanding of the pathways through which creative thinking influences learning outcomes.

3. Domain-specific creativity: Most research on creative thinking and academic performance has focused on general measures of creativity, overlooking domain-specific variations. Future studies should explore how creative thinking manifests in different academic domains (e.g., STEM disciplines, humanities, arts) and investigate whether the relationship between creative thinking and academic performance varies across domains.

4. Digital and technological influences: With the increasing integration of digital technologies in education, there is a growing need to examine how digital tools and online environments impact creative thinking and academic performance in adolescents. Research should explore the role of technology-mediated learning experiences, such as digital creativity platforms and online collaboration tools, in fostering creative thinking skills and improving academic outcomes.

Addressing these research gaps will not only advance our theoretical understanding of the relationship between creative thinking and adolescent academic performance but also inform evidence-based interventions and educational practices aimed at promoting student success in diverse learning contexts.

Review of related literature

Wang (2012), study conducted to understand if personal reading or writing practices are related to personal theatre performance. The study explores if there is any corelative link of

creative thinking to reading and writing.The tool used to measure creative thinking was a questionnaire and a creativity test (ATTA).The study found that there is significant correlations between creativity and reading and writing.

Zirak and Ahmadin (2015), study conducted to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence & academic performance emphasizing on students' creative thinking. The statistical society included all fifth grade male and female students of Torbat Heidarie state schools from 2012 to 2013. The sample size is 337out of 2800 existed students based on the Cochran Formula. The results indicate that there is no positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence & academic achievement, but there is a positive and significant relationship between creative thinking & academic performance.

Ketabi (2013), study conducted to explore the extent to which extensive practice in academic and personal reading and writing would be related to high creative thinking. A sample of 300 intermediate EFL learners in Iran participated in this study by filling out a questionnaire and completing the Abbreviated Torrance Test for Adults (ATTA). The study found that learners who spent more time on reading and writing had a significantly better performance on the creativity test i.e. creative thinking scores (fluency, originality, elaboration, flexibility, and the Creativity Index) showed significant correlations with the amount of time spent on reading and writing.

Kim (2011), conducted a meta-analysis which provides valuable insights into the relationship between creativity and academic achievement. By synthesizing findings from numerous studies, Kim demonstrates a strong positive correlation between creative thinking and academic performance across various subjects and grade levels. This study contributes to our understanding of the importance of creativity in education and underscores the need to foster creative thinking skills to enhance students' academic success. Kim's research serves as a foundational piece in the literature on creativity and academic achievement, providing a comprehensive overview of the existing evidence and highlighting avenues for future research.

Runco (2014), conducted a study which offers compelling evidence for the predictive power of creative thinking in academic success. By emphasizing the role of creativity in promoting flexibility, originality, and resourcefulness, Runco highlights the importance of cultivating creative thinking skills in educational settings. His research underscores the value of creativity as a predictor of academic achievement and provides insights into how educators can leverage creative thinking to enhance learning outcomes. Runco's contributions to the field of creativity and education pave the way for innovative approaches to teaching and learning that prioritize creativity as a core component of academic success.

Sawyer (2012), conducted a longitudinal study which provides valuable empirical evidence for the impact of creative learning experiences on academic achievement. By tracking

students' progress over time, Sawyer demonstrates that participation in creative activities leads to higher levels of academic success compared to traditional instructional methods. His research underscores the importance of integrating creativity into the curriculum and highlights the benefits of fostering a creative learning environment. Sawyer's findings offer practical insights for educators seeking to enhance student engagement, motivation, and academic performance through creative pedagogical approaches.

Amabile *et al.,* (2018), study sheds light on the motivational and engagement benefits of integrating creative activities into the curriculum. By exploring the effects of creativity on students' academic success, motivation, and overall well-being, the research underscores the importance of fostering a supportive learning environment that values and encourages creativity. Their findings have significant implications for educational practice, emphasizing the importance of creating opportunities for creative expression and exploration in the classroom. Amabile et al.'s work highlights the transformative potential of creativity in education and offers actionable recommendations for educators seeking to promote academic success through creativity.

Craft (2005), conducted a comprehensive review which provides a nuanced understanding of the role of creativity in education. By synthesizing research from various disciplines and educational contexts, Craft highlights the multifaceted nature of creativity and its impact on academic achievement. His work underscores the importance of fostering creative thinking skills to promote deeper learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities. Craft's insights into the educational value of creativity pave the way for innovative approaches to teaching and learning that prioritize creativity as a fundamental aspect of academic success.

Plucker *et al.,* (2004), conducted a longitudinal study which offers compelling evidence for the relationship between creative thinking and academic achievement. By tracking students' academic progress over time, the research demonstrates that higher levels of creative thinking are associated with greater academic success. Their findings highlight the importance of nurturing creative thinking abilities to enhance learning outcomes and prepare students for success in the 21st century. Plucker *et al.*'s work contributes to our understanding of the role of creativity in education and underscores the need for educational practices that support the development of creative thinking skills.

Beghetto and Kaufman (2013), research provides valuable insights into the effects of creative activities on academic achievement. By investigating the relationship between engagement in creative activities and learning outcomes, the study demonstrates the positive impact of creativity on academic success. Their findings underscore the importance of providing students with opportunities for creative expression and problem-solving to enhance learning outcomes. Beghetto and Kaufman's work offers practical implications for educators seeking to promote academic achievement through creative pedagogical approaches.

Runco and Jaeger (2012), emphasizes the role of creativity in fostering deeper levels of understanding and mastery of academic content. By exploring the cognitive processes underlying creative thinking, the research highlights how creativity promotes exploration, experimentation, and innovation in learning. Their findings underscore the importance of creating a supportive learning environment that values creativity and encourages students to approach learning tasks with flexibility and originality. Runco and Jaeger's insights offer practical implications for educators seeking to enhance academic achievement through the promotion of creative thinking skills.

Overview of the related literature:

The reviews discuss various studies and research conducted by different authors on the topic of creativity and its impact on academic performance. Each review evaluates the contributions of the respective authors and their findings in the field of education.

Kim's meta-analysis explores the relationship between creativity and academic achievement, highlighting a positive correlation between the two factors across different subjects and grade levels. Runco's work emphasizes the predictive power of creative thinking in academic success, emphasizing its role in fostering flexibility, originality, and resourcefulness. Sawyer's longitudinal study demonstrates the positive impact of creative learning experiences on academic achievement, suggesting that participation in creative activities leads to higher levels of academic success compared to traditional instructional methods. Amabile et al.'s research focuses on the motivational and engagement benefits of integrating creative activities into the curriculum, highlighting the importance of fostering a supportive learning environment that values creativity. Craft's comprehensive review provides insights into the multifaceted nature of creativity and its impact on academic achievement, emphasizing the importance of fostering creative thinking skills to promote deeper learning and problem-solving abilities. Plucker et al.'s longitudinal study offers empirical evidence for the relationship between creative thinking and academic achievement, demonstrating that higher levels of creative thinking are associated with greater academic success over time. Beghetto and Kaufman's research explores the effects of creative activities on academic achievement, highlighting the positive impact of creativity on learning outcomes. Runco and Jaeger's work emphasizes the role of creativity in fostering deeper levels of understanding and mastery of academic content, suggesting that creativity promotes exploration, experimentation, and innovation in learning.

Overall, these reviews provide a comprehensive overview of the research on creativity and its impact on academic performance, highlighting the importance of fostering creative thinking skills in educational settings to enhance learning outcomes and prepare students for success in the 21st century.

Conclusion:

The exploration of creative thinking and its impact on academic performance among adolescents is a multifaceted endeavor that requires careful consideration of various factors. Through a systematic literature review, this study has shed light on the significance of understanding the relationship between creative thinking and academic achievement, drawing insights from diverse research studies and frameworks.

The findings of this review underscore the critical role of creative thinking in shaping students' academic success. Creativity is not only a predictor of academic achievement but also a key driver of innovation, problem-solving, and adaptability – essential skills for navigating the complexities of the modern world. The Jeevan Kaushal framework and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 highlight the importance of fostering creative thinking skills among adolescents to prepare them for the challenges of life and work.

The PISA Creative Thinking Framework provides a valuable framework for assessing and nurturing creative thinking abilities, emphasizing the importance of fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration in ideation and problem-solving. By integrating creative thinking into educational practice, educators can cultivate a learning environment that promotes inquiry, exploration, and innovation, enhancing students' academic achievement and holistic development.

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of creative thinking in education, there remain several research gaps and challenges that warrant further exploration. Longitudinal studies tracking the development of creative thinking skills over time, investigations into mediating and moderating mechanisms underlying the relationship between creative thinking and academic performance, and domain-specific examinations of creativity are needed to deepen our understanding of this complex phenomenon.

In conclusion, this review underscores the significance of creative thinking in shaping adolescents' academic performance and holistic development. By embracing creativity as a fundamental aspect of education and leveraging evidence-based interventions and practices, educators can empower students to thrive academically, creatively, and personally, preparing them to tackle the challenges and opportunities of the future with confidence and resilience.

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IN THE SEARCH OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES: ANALYZING THE STATUS OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN INDIA

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Abstract:

Despite advancements, India's gender equality in education is still lacking because of a variety of complex issues. The literature on obstacles to females' education, such as socio-economic inequality and cultural norms, is compiled in this review. Significant gender differences in enrolment and literacy rates are found in census data. Studies like Zakir (2010) and Neena (2016), as well as government initiatives and community-based projects, provide insight into the interventions and enduring obstacles. But there are still gaps in the data, thus in order to make well-informed policy decisions, more investigation of the intersectional influences on women's education and its long-term implications on empowerment and socioeconomic status is required.

Introduction:

Gender equality in education is still a work in progress in India, a country renowned for its rich cultural legacy and swift economic expansion. Even with notable advancements in recent times, girls from diverse geographic locations and socioeconomic backgrounds still encounter several obstacles that hinder their ability to get high-quality education. These difficulties stem from a complex interaction of historical, cultural, and socioeconomic reasons, which vary from economic limitations and inadequate infrastructure to traditional gender roles and societal standards.

The most recent census statistics and publications from institutions like the World Bank and UNESCO provide evidence for this claim, showing glaring differences in literacy rates across genders. According to the latest data, women's literacy in India is around [65%], a proportion that is lower than that of men, who have a rate of [82%]. This stark discrepancy emphasizes the gender gap in educational achievement that still exists and the pressing need for focused measures to raise the national percentage of female literacy.

The difference in enrolment rates between boys and girls at different educational levels contributes to the issue even further. Girls tend to enrol in schools at a lower rate than males despite significant efforts to encourage education for everyone. The net enrolment rate for females at the primary level is [94%], whereas it is [97%] for boys, according to Ministry of Education (GOI), UNESCO institute of statistics (UIS), World Bank EdStats, National sample

survey organisation (NSSO), With just [81%] of females enrolling compared to [84%] of boys at the secondary level, this disparity grows considerably. These numbers illustrate the structural impediments that females must overcome in order to continue their education beyond the basic grades, hence maintaining gender differences in educational attainment.

This is vital that these issues be dealt with as education is essential to societal advancement, economic growth, and personal empowerment. The effects of depriving women from equal educational opportunities are extensive, impacting not just their own personal development and potential but also the overall prosperity and well-being of their local communities and the nation as a whole. The purpose of this study paper is to shed light on the structural difficulties that support gender differences in educational achievements by delving further into the numerous obstacles that Indian girls experience when trying to pursue and obtain an education. By thoroughly comprehending these issues, we may open the door for well-informed policy changes and community-based programs that seek to improve the inclusive and egalitarian nature of education for all.

Review of literature:

Satri, (2017). examines women's education in India historically and currently, with a particular emphasis on the pre- and post-independence periods. It examines how women's educational chances have changed throughout time and the ongoing obstacles they still confront, especially in light of India's dedication to universal education. In order to provide insight on the obstacles that have prevented women from participating in public life and obtaining an education, the study will look at historical patterns of exclusion and discrimination based on gender, race, and religion. In the end, it hopes to further our understanding of the intricate issues pertaining to women's education in India and to support legislative initiatives that advance inclusive education and gender equality.

Zakir, (2010): *gender disparities in completing school education in India: Analyzing regional variations*. This study looks at regional variations in gender-based school completion probabilities in India in an attempt to address this subject. To investigate the premise that gender disparity is higher in the North of India than in the rest of the country, a Gender Disparity Index is computed using unit level data from the 61st Round of the National Sample Survey Organization. Regional differences in this index are then investigated. The results of the descriptive study are then confirmed through an econometric exercise using a logit model, which accounts for socio-economic correlates of finishing schooling. Lastly, the contribution of explanatory variables to the regional variations in the odds of finishing school is estimated using the Fairlie decomposition approach. The findings show that there are more gender differences between the total and rural populations in North India and the urban populations in Eastern India.

Nevertheless, regardless of domicile, the "residual effect" (also known as the "discrimination effect") after taking into account the impact of explanatory variables is larger in Eastern India.

Naaz & Rajesh. (2022) emphasized on India's literacy rate. For men literacy rate is 77.70 percent, while for women it is 71.50 percent, according to the census of 2021. This paper reflects on the sincere efforts of the government and various volunteer organizations to raise women's educational achievement. The Government of India's initiatives towards girl education are evident in the policy reforms and infrastructural assistance for primary, secondary, and higher education. This paper also illustrates how, Globalization, rapidly evolving technology, and improving family living standards all suggest that effective education and training are now crucial for the nation's economic growth and the long-term sustainability of society. According to this review, for significant contribution to the eradication of poverty, to guarantee sustainable growth, and to increase human capacity for the advancement of society, the need for education for girls must be prioritized at the top of the development agenda. Education is the means by which girls' minds are set free. The education of girls in literacy is essential for their financial freedom and reasonability. One of the requirements for human development is the acquisition of knowledge. All development organizations today concur that women's education is essential to preserving and advancing family education, overall wellbeing, nutrition, and health. The primary goal of education should be to prepare girls to use the knowledge they acquire in their day-to-day quest for life.

Sanjukta (2016) discusses the historical significance, current state, government initiatives, and obstacles associated with girls' education in India in her study Girls' education in India: Status and Challenges, published in International Journal of Research in Economics and Social Sciences (IJRESS). To show patterns in enrollment and retention at different educational levels, statistical data is provided. The government's programs and efforts to support girls' education are described, along with enduring issues like poverty, cultural norms, and safety worries. There are recommendations for removing obstacles, such as enhancing stakeholder alliances, implementing awareness campaigns, and making infrastructure upgrades. In general, the significance of girls' education for the advancement of society and economy is emphasized, and joint endeavors are recommended to tackle current obstacles.

Neena, (2016). substantial evidence of the transformative effect of education in empowering women across multiple domains can be found in the material reviewed in this paper. Education is a key factor in women's empowerment, since it contributes to their psychological well-being, social equality, economic independence, and political engagement. Nonetheless, obstacles like unequal educational opportunities, curriculum biases against women, and deeply ingrained sociocultural norms impede the advancement of gender equality. Thus, in order to fully

realize women's potential as social change agents, gender-sensitive policies and investments in girls' education must be prioritized.

Namita, (2014). highlights the intricate relationship that exists between education and women's empowerment, emphasizing both the transforming power of education and the ongoing obstacles that stand in the way of its achievement. To fully realize the promise of education as a catalyst for women's empowerment, it is imperative to address concerns related to socio-cultural norms, economic hurdles, quality, and access. A multifaceted strategy that tackles these issues holistically is required for both grassroots and policy interventions in order to guarantee that every woman and girl has the chance to achieve her educational goals and make a positive contribution to the progress of society.

Shakeel, & Malika, (2010). explores the relationship between contemporary education and socio-economic change in the setting of Muslim women living in Pune, in their study "Modern Education and Socio-Economic Change: A Case Study of Muslim Women in Pune City, India". It looks at issues including access to education, difficulties in school and the workplace, and the intersections of gender, religion, class, and caste in order to investigate how education affects Muslim women's socioeconomic mobility and empowerment. Through the analysis of these dynamics, the paper aims to clarify the intricacies surrounding the socio-economic development and educational empowerment of Muslim women in Pune. Additionally, it promotes the implementation of inclusive policies and community-based initiatives to mitigate current obstacles and foster fair opportunities for socio-economic advancement.

Khushboo, (2016). examines at the critical role that education plays in empowering women in India in a variety of fields, in her study, "Importance of Education in Empowerment of Women in India". It aims to determine the relationship between education and women's empowerment, examine the role that education plays in women's socioeconomic growth, pinpoint obstacles to women's education, and offer policy suggestions for advancing gender equality in the classroom. By addressing these goals, the paper hopes to further the conversation on women's empowerment in India and promote inclusive policies that support women's socioeconomic growth and increase their access to education.

Anu, & Patrick, (2018). using information from the 2011–12 Indian Human Development Survey–II (IHDS–II) and the 2007–8 District Level Household and Facility Survey (DLHS–3), this study investigates gender differences in education in India. Research indicates that as economies grow, gender differences in educational attainment close, with wealthier areas sending more females to school than poorer ones. However, the empirical results show that patrilocal exogamy decreases outcomes for women's education, especially in Northern India.

Surbhi, (2018). seek to explore the complex relationship that exists in India between women's educational attainment and their engagement in the workforce. Its objectives include

identifying any trends or discrepancies between women's employment and educational attainment as well as analyzing the factors influencing women's decisions about their careers and educational paths. It also looks into the impact of educational attainment on women's employment prospects and outcomes. This analysis attempts to offer light on the relationships between education and employment among women in India, with implications for policy and programs aiming at developing gender equality and women's empowerment.

Conclusion:

The thorough literature analysis emphasizes the gains women have achieved in India's educational system, but it also clearly points out the ongoing obstacles that stand in the way of more advancement. Women's empowerment is consistently impeded by systemic impediments, established cultural norms, and socio-economic disparities that prevent them from accessing education. In spite of this, there are signs of hope in the form of many efforts and solutions that are emerging to address these issues. Nonetheless, it is critical to acknowledge the urgent need for additional study to fully explore the complex intersections of variables affecting women's educational paths. Furthermore, there is a dearth of knowledge regarding the long-term effects of education on women's empowerment and socioeconomic status. In order to promote more inclusive policies and initiatives that may actually uplift women and promote gender equality in India's educational landscape, it is essential that these research gaps be addressed.

Research Gap:

- There remain a few voids in the field of study on women's educational opportunities in India, despite its abundance.

- Insufficient research on the links of caste, religion, and geography as variables influencing women's access to education.

- An absence of understanding concerning the long-term impacts of education on women's economic independence, empowerment, and household decision-making.

- Inadequate evaluation of specific government programs and initiatives aimed for improving women's education, including the challenges and outcomes of their implementation.

- Insufficient research has been conducted on how technology and innovative approaches could assist in eliminating barriers to women's education, particularly in isolated and neglected areas.

- Insufficient research comparing India's women's education system to that of other nations in order to pinpoint best practices and potential improvement areas.

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A NARRATIVE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON ACADEMIC SELF-EFFICACY CONSTRUCT

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Abstract:

Understanding academic self-efficacy is crucial for enhancing academic success and fostering positive educational outcomes. As a cornerstone of educational psychology, academic self-efficacy refers to a student's belief in their capacity to succeed in academic tasks. This concept not only influences their academic performance but also determines their level of commitment, effort, and perseverance in the face of challenges (Ali Asghar Hayat, 2020). The present study was conducted to present the various facets of this vital academic variable by conducting a detailed literature review of the same in recent times. For this purpose, articles were selected from SAGE Open, Pub Med Central, and Springer databases along with Ph.D. theses from various universities. Articles containing the variable of interest in the title were directly selected for the review. Articles about the study of academic self-efficacy at undergraduate levels were included in the study irrespective of the discipline, whereas article where secondary school students were the population were excluded from this study. These resources mostly were published from 2014 to 2024, except for certain time immune seminal papers. The analysis extends to examining its impact on learning outcomes, its manifestation across diverse educational settings, and the strategies that can bolster students' self-efficacy. With an emphasis on the intrinsic connection between self-efficacy and various dimensions of student performance, such as goal setting, self-regulation, and metacognition, the review aims to underscore the integral role of academic self-efficacy in fostering academic achievements and overcoming educational hurdles (Ali Asghar Hayat, 2020), (Anthony R. Artino, 2012).

Keywords: Academic Self-Efficacy, Undergraduates, Springer, Narrative Literature Review

Introduction:

Self-efficacy is an important aspect of academic goals that is sometimes overlooked. It refers to a person's belief in their ability to complete tasks and achieve goals. According to Bandura (1977), a person's confidence in their ability to carry out the actions required to achieve particular performance goals is known as their self-efficacy.

In the context of education, self-efficacy relates to a student's conviction in their ability to learn, understand difficult subjects, and overcome obstacles in their academic journey. Self-

efficacy is a measure of one's confidence in their capacity to influence their own motivation, actions, and social surroundings. All aspects of the human experience are influenced by these cognitive self-evaluations, including the objectives individuals pursue, the quantity of effort they put forth to achieve their objectives, and the probability that they will reach specific behavioral implementation levels. In contrast to rooted psychological concepts, self-efficacy beliefs are hypothesized to differ based on the operational domain and the environment in which the behavior occurs.

As Bandura (1977) proposed, self-efficacy provides a useful lens through which to view human motivation and success. A high feeling of self-efficacy can help people reach their full potential and succeed in various spheres of life. With determination and the above-discussed tactics, anyone may cultivate a growth mindset and accomplish their objectives. Perceived self-efficacy, defined as individuals' beliefs in their ability to influence events and achieve desired outcomes, is a crucial construct studied extensively in psychology since Bandura introduced it. Within academic contexts, self-efficacy, or confidence in one's ability to attain academic goals, significantly influences students' choices and actions. Academic self-efficacy encompasses students' judgment of their capacity to set and pursue learning objectives, impacting their motivation, learning strategies, and ultimately, academic success. Numerous studies have underscored the positive correlation between academic self-efficacy and achievement, with motivational variables such as expectancy, subject value, and satisfaction playing mediating roles. External factors like family, friendships, and teacher support, as well as internal factors like self-regulation and resilience, also shape academic self-efficacy. While gender differences have been observed in some studies favoring either female or male students, the multifaceted nature of academic self-efficacy underscores its significance in college success.

This narrative review paper aspires to explore the complex relationship between self-efficacy and academic performance. It explores the basics of self-efficacy and how it affects learning techniques, motivation, and academic success in students. The review also looks at various factors that impact a student's self-efficacy, including pedagogy, social support, and personal experiences. The research and review articles on the related keyword, delay of gratification, were ignored barring a few vital papers of a seminal nature.

Review of literature of academic self-efficacy

According to Hayat (2020), Academic self-efficacy is a person's belief in their ability to accomplish academic tasks. It differs from broader constructs like self-esteem as it's task-specific, assessing a student's confidence in their capabilities in specific academic contexts. It influences a student's approach to academic tasks and impacts their performance and overall academic success.

Influence on task perceptions and emotional responses: A student's self-efficacy level can change their perception of academic tasks. High self-efficacy leads to calmness and problem-solving, while low self-efficacy can cause anxiety and stress, limiting problem-solving options.

Impact on academic performance

Enhancing capability beliefs: Self-efficacy fosters an individual's belief in their capability to organize and execute the courses of action required to achieve specific academic performances. This belief is instrumental in motivating students to engage effectively with their academic tasks (Artino, 2012).

Perception and performance: The belief in one's abilities, as defined by self-efficacy, influences academic performance by shaping how tasks are perceived and approached. Effective handling of academic challenges is often a result of a strong belief in one's capabilities, underscoring the importance of nurturing this attribute in educational settings (Yokoyama, 2019).

Historical and theoretical foundations: The concept of self-efficacy was extensively developed by Albert Bandura, who described it as a determinant of how people think, behave, and feel. Bandura's definition emphasizes self-efficacy as a critical factor in determining one's ability to face challenges competently and persistently. (Artino, 2012)

By understanding and defining academic self-efficacy clearly, educators and learners can better target interventions and strategies to enhance this crucial psychological resource, thereby improving educational outcomes and fostering greater academic resilience.

Theoretical foundations

Sources of academic self-efficacy

Mastery experiences: Students build academic self-efficacy when they complete tasks, enhancing their belief in their abilities. These experiences are crucial for reinforcing self-confidence in academic settings (Yokoyama, 2019).

Vicarious experiences: Observing peers succeed in tasks can significantly boost a student's belief in their own abilities. This indirect experience plays a pivotal role in the development of self-efficacy.

Verbal persuasion: Encouragement from teachers, peers, and parents can increase students' confidence in their academic capabilities. Positive feedback is a powerful source of self-efficacy.

Emotional and physiological states: Students' emotional responses and physical states also influence their self-efficacy. Positive emotions and reduced stress contribute to higher self-efficacy, impacting academic engagement and success (Yokoyama, 2019).

Impact of self-efficacy on academic functioning

Academic self-efficacy influences students' choices, efforts, and persistence, affecting a broad spectrum of educational activities. It determines how students approach different academic challenges and persist in overcoming obstacles (Artino, 2012) ,(Yokoyama, 2019)

The belief in one's capabilities, as shaped by self-efficacy, directly correlates with academic performance, motivating students to engage more deeply with their academic tasks.

Theoretical perspectives on academic self-efficacy

Social cognitive theory: This theory, developed by Bandura, emphasizes the role of self-efficacy in regulating personal behavior through interactions among personal, behavioral, and environmental factors.

Theoretical frameworks: Self-Efficacy Theory, the Self-System Model of Motivational Development, and Expectancy-Value Theory each suggest different mechanisms through which self- efficacy affects educational outcomes. These frameworks provide a comprehensive understanding of the pathways through which self-efficacy operates within academic contexts.

Measuring academic self-efficacy

Overview of measurement tools

Measuring academic self-efficacy (ASE) is crucial for understanding students' beliefs about their academic capabilities and is a strong predictor of performance in university contexts (Zyl, 2022). Various psychometric instruments have been developed for this purpose, although they often vary in length and demonstrate different levels of reliability and factorial structures (Zyl, 2022).

Key instruments for academic self-efficacy

General Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (GASE): This scale is adapted into a concise five-item measure that assesses the global belief in one's ability to perform and plan academic tasks. It has been proven valid and reliable in various studies and is invariant between genders, although further validation is required outside Scandinavia (Zyl, 2022).

General self-efficacy scale: Widely recommended, this validated scale measures general self-efficacy by assessing confidence levels in task performance and overall task accomplishment capabilities (Yao, 2023).

Educational Self-Efficacy Scale: Specifically designed for educational contexts, this scale measures a student's general belief in their academic outcome achievements and has been validated for reliability (Yao, 2023).

Significance of metacognitive strategies in self-efficacy

Metacognitive learning strategies play a crucial role in self-regulated learning, enabling learners to plan, monitor, and regulate their cognition effectively. These strategies are directly

linked to academic success as they help students develop better study plans, monitor their learning process efficiently, and engage deeply in their educational activities (Hayat, 2020).

Factors influencing academic self-efficacy

Key psychological and environmental influences

Mental health and academic progress: Students experiencing severe mental health issues are significantly more likely to report lower academic self-efficacy and delayed study progress. This indicates a crucial interplay between psychological well-being and self-efficacy in academic settings (Grotan, 2019).

Past academic performance: Students' previous academic achievements play a pivotal role in shaping their self-efficacy beliefs, which in turn influence their future academic performance. This relationship underscores the importance of positive academic experiences in building self-confidence (Iqbal, 2019).

Learning environment: The type of academic program (regular vs. self-supporting) can affect a student's academic self-efficacy, with those in regular programs generally displaying higher levels of self-efficacy (Iqbal, 2019).

Social and physiological factors

Social influences: Academic self-efficacy is significantly shaped by social interactions, including positive reinforcement from peers, teachers, and family. Verbal persuasion and vicarious experiences through observing successful peers can enhance a student's belief in their academic capabilities (Salehiniya, 2018).

Physiological states: Physical and emotional states also impact self-efficacy. For instance, stress and anxiety can negatively affect self-efficacy, while positive emotional states can enhance it. Physiological cues like sweaty hands or a dry mouth during exams can diminish a student's confidence in their academic abilities (Salehiniya, 2018)

Technological and motivational aspects

Blended learning environments: In blended learning scenarios, factors such as instructor support, peer connectedness, and the technological infrastructure play significant roles in influencing academic self-efficacy. These elements help shape students' engagement and confidence in handling academic tasks (Wei, 2022).

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, is a critical determinant of academic self-efficacy. Students who are intrinsically motivated are likely to develop stronger self-efficacy beliefs, which are crucial for academic success (Wei, 2022).

Role of academic self-efficacy in learning outcomes

Impact on learning outcomes and academic performance

Academic self-efficacy (ASE) is a crucial factor that determines a student's academic success. Research consistently shows that students with high ASE are more likely to achieve

better academic results across different educational levels and cultural contexts (Hayat, 2020), (Artino, 2012) (Yokoyama, 2019). Longitudinal studies suggest that enhanced ASE leads to improved academic performance over time (Yokoyama, 2019).

Mediating role of learning-related emotions and metacognitive strategies

ASE has significant impact on learning-related emotions, metacognitive learning strategies, and academic performance of students, especially medical students. Emotional and cognitive components play a crucial role in the educational process. Learning engagement acts as a mediator between ASE and academic achievement, especially in Chinese college students. (Hayat, 2020; Luo Q, 2023; Qadri, 2024).

Influence in specific academic contexts

ASE is important in shaping student engagement and commitment to learning tasks, both in online and traditional classroom settings. It has been shown to improve academic performance, and instructional practices that focus on developing ASE can enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

Academic self-efficacy in diverse educational settings

Impact of educational-research environment on academic self-efficacy

Research shows that students' perceptions of their educational research environment are correlated with their academic self-efficacy. Improving the quality and perception of these environments could benefit students' confidence in their academic abilities. (Salehiniya, 2018) (Jian, 2022).

Diverse populations and academic self-efficacy

Exploring academic self-efficacy across diverse student populations reveals unique challenges and opportunities. Understanding these differences is essential to implementing effective educational strategies tailored to diverse needs, ensuring all students have the opportunity to succeed academically (Hayat, 2020).

Strategies to enhance academic self-efficacy in diverse settings

Educators can foster academic self-efficacy by implementing guided practice, providing constructive feedback, encouraging self-regulated learning, creating a supportive classroom environment with mixed-ability groupings and celebratory rituals.

Interventions to enhance academic self-efficacy

Strategies for enhancing academic self-efficacy

Goal setting and feedback mechanisms: Encouraging students to set clear, specific, and challenging proximal goals is essential. Providing honest and explicit feedback helps in the accurate calibration of self-efficacy. Additionally, employing peer modeling can significantly foster self-efficacy in educational settings, particularly in medical education (Artino, 2012).

Comprehensive support programs: Institutions of higher education should implement counseling and training programs designed to cultivate positive self-beliefs among students. These programs should ideally cover a period of eight to twelve weeks and include psychoeducation on positive mental health and behavioral strategies such as muscle relaxation, breathing exercises, meditation, and guided imagery. Homework assignments are also recommended to reinforce learned strategies (Iqbal, 2019) (Balderrama Gueroni, et.al 2024).

Classroom and teaching strategies: Employing specific teaching strategies such as question and answer sessions, inquiry-based lab activities, and problem-solving tasks can create a positive climate in the classroom. This environment is conducive to enhancing self-efficacy. Collaborative learning and the application of electronic tools have also shown a positive correlation with increased self-efficacy (Kirk, 2007).

Key intervention components

Mastery experiences: Facilitating experiences where students achieve success can significantly boost their confidence in their abilities. Observing peers succeed and receiving verbal encouragement are also powerful methods to enhance self-efficacy (Celestine, 2019).

Physiological and affective state management: Interventions should address both physiological and emotional states, as these can greatly influence self-efficacy. Techniques that manage stress and evoke positive emotional states are particularly beneficial (Kirk, 2007).

SMART goal framework: Encouraging students to use the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goal framework can help in breaking down large goals into manageable tasks. This approach not only facilitates a clearer path to achievement but also helps in maintaining a high-level perspective and reframing obstacles as challenges to overcome (Celestine, 2019).

Research and development of interventions

Developing and evaluating interventions that aim to enhance academic self-efficacy is crucial. Assessing the effectiveness of these interventions can provide valuable insights into the best practices and strategies that significantly impact students' academic confidence and performance (Hayat, 2020).

Challenges and limitations in academic self-efficacy research

Measurement and longitudinal study challenges

Development of measurement tools: One of the primary challenges in researching academic self-efficacy is the development of valid and reliable instruments. The subjective nature of self-efficacy makes it difficult to assess through standardized measures (Foulstone, 2019).

Conducting longitudinal research: Longitudinal studies, which are essential for understanding the development of self-efficacy over time, require substantial resources and meticulous design.

These complexities make such studies both costly and challenging to execute effectively (Foulstone, *et al.,* 2019).

Intervention and cultural variation issues

Designing effective interventions: Intervention studies that aim to enhance self-efficacy must account for various factors including the students' motivation, prior knowledge, and the learning environment. These elements are critical to the success of the interventions but pose significant challenges in their design and implementation (Foulstone, *et al.,* 2019).

Cultural and individual differences: Academic self-efficacy research often struggles with the generalization of findings across different cultural and individual contexts. Since self-efficacy beliefs can vary widely among different populations, this variability can limit the applicability of research outcomes (Foulstone, *et al.,* 2019).

Interdisciplinary collaboration and meta-analysis limitations

Establishing interdisciplinary approaches: While interdisciplinary collaboration could greatly benefit academic self-efficacy research, establishing and maintaining such collaborations is often challenging. Different academic disciplines may have varying methodologies and priorities, which can complicate collaborative efforts (Foulstone, *et al.,* 2019).

Systematic meta-analysis: Previous studies have explored the relationship between academic self-efficacy and online academic performance. However, the findings are too limited to allow for a comprehensive meta-analysis, which is crucial for synthesizing research outcomes and drawing broader conclusions (Yokoyama, 2019).

Future directions-

Exploration of learning environments

Comparative analysis of learning environments: Future research should delve into the similarities and differences between traditional and online learning environments. This exploration is crucial to understanding how academic self-efficacy manifests and can be nurtured in varying educational settings (Yokoyama, 2019).

Predictive analytics in education: The application of machine learning algorithms to predict academic self-efficacy presents a promising avenue. Such technological approaches can offer deeper insights into the factors influencing self-efficacy and potentially guide personalized educational interventions (Karatas, *et al.,* 2023).

Longitudinal and cross-disciplinary studies

Developmental perspectives: Investigating how academic self-efficacy develops over time across different educational stages can provide valuable insights into its evolution and the critical periods for intervention (Hayat, 2020).

Cross-disciplinary research: There is a need for interdisciplinary studies that integrate concepts from psychology, education, and technology to provide a holistic view of academic self-efficacy.

Such research could enhance the effectiveness of educational strategies and support systems (Hayat, 2020).

Focus on teacher candidates

Self-directed learning and future perspectives: Understanding the impact of self-directed learning and future time perspective on teacher candidates' academic self-efficacy is essential. This focus will help in designing better training programs that prepare future educators to foster a positive learning environment (Karatas, et.al, 2023).

Comprehensive educational tools: Utilizing comprehensive evaluation tools like the Imperial Learning Well Project's toolkit could be expanded to assess not only self-efficacy but also other related constructs such as agency and self-evaluation in educational settings (Jian, 2022).

Conclusion:

Academic self-efficacy is crucial for successful educational outcomes. It influences engagement, persistence, and academic achievements. It's task-specific, and nurturing strong self-efficacy beliefs is important for a conducive learning environment. Educators, policymakers, and researchers must prioritize initiatives to enhance academic self-efficacy, including targeted interventions that leverage mastery experiences, social modeling, and verbal persuasion. By adopting a multifaceted approach, stakeholders can improve educational achievements and equip students with the resilience needed to navigate academic challenges.

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THEMES OF BRAJENDRA KUMAR BRAHMA'S POETRY

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Abstract:

Brajendra Kumar Brahma is a leading figure in Boro literature, celebrated for his evocative poetry that explores themes of spirituality, humanism, nationalism, social justice, and cultural identity. This paper investigates the central themes in Brahma's poetry, offering a comprehensive analysis of his work's cultural, philosophical, and social underpinnings. By examining his use of symbolism, poetic experimentation, and the interplay between Western and Eastern influences, the study seeks to understand Brahma's unique literary style and its broader implications. The analysis begins by identifying the key themes that recur throughout Brahma's poetry, such as mysticism and spirituality, where he delves into the search for divine understanding and the complexities of faith. Humanism and compassion are equally central, with Brahma advocating for a more inclusive and empathetic approach to social issues. Nationalism and cultural identity are explored through Brahma's focus on the Boro community's struggles and aspirations, highlighting the journey from marginalization to cultural revival. The paper also addresses Brahma's critique of the caste system and other social injustices, emphasizing the need for a more equitable and inclusive society. His poetic experimentation and use of private symbols add depth and complexity to his themes, demonstrating a modernist approach that draws from both Western and Eastern traditions. Through this analysis, the study contributes to the recognition and appreciation of Boro literature, elevating its status within contemporary Indian poetry. It underscores the significance of Brahma's work in promoting social justice, fostering cross-cultural understanding, and providing a poetic voice for the Boro community. Ultimately, the paper demonstrates that Brahma's poetry serves as a compelling testament to the enduring importance of compassion, humanism, and cultural identity in a rapidly changing world.

Keywords: Brajendra Kumar Brahma; Boro Poetry; Spirituality; Social Justice; Cultural Identity; Nationalism

Introduction:

Brajendra Kumar Brahma is a prominent voice in Boro literature, a genre that has traditionally been overshadowed by more established Indian literary traditions. His poetry stands out for its exploration of a wide array of themes, ranging from mysticism and spirituality to humanism, nationalism, social justice, and cultural identity. Brahma's work is not only an artistic expression but also a reflection of the socio-political landscape in which the Boro community resides. The Boro people, an indigenous ethnic group in Assam, have faced historical

marginalization and struggle for recognition, both culturally and politically. Through his poetry, Brahma seeks to give voice to these experiences, offering a lens into the aspirations and challenges of his community.

Problem statement:

Despite the richness of Boro literature and its cultural significance, it remains relatively underrepresented in academic discourse and mainstream literary analysis. This gap has led to a limited understanding of the themes and influences that shape the work of Boro poets like Brajendra Kumar Brahma. His poetry, with its focus on critical social issues, human compassion, and cultural identity, deserves greater attention and recognition. This study addresses this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of the themes in Brahma's poetry, exploring how his work contributes to the broader context of contemporary Indian literature and offers insights into the Boro community's cultural identity and struggles for social justice.

Objectives of the study:

The primary objective of this study is to examine the central themes in the poetry of Brajendra Kumar Brahma. The study aims to understand the cultural and philosophical influences that underpin his work, explore the symbolic elements he uses to convey his messages, and assess his impact on Boro literature and beyond. Specific objectives include:

a) Identifying Key Themes: Explore the themes that recur throughout Brahma's poetry, such as mysticism, spirituality, humanism, nationalism, cultural identity, social justice, and poetic experimentation.

b) Contextualizing Brahma's Work: Situate Brahma's poetry within the broader framework of Boro literature and examine how it reflects the cultural heritage and aspirations of the Boro people.

c) Assessing the Role of Social Justice: Analyze Brahma's critique of social injustices, particularly the caste system, and explore his advocacy for a more inclusive society.

d) Examining Symbolism and Experimentation: Investigate Brahma's use of symbolism and his experimental approach to poetic structure, assessing how these techniques contribute to the depth and complexity of his themes.

Importance of the study:

This study is important because it brings to light the unique contributions of Boro literature, focusing on a poet who has made significant strides in expressing the identity and aspirations of his community. Brahma's poetry serves as a bridge between traditional Eastern philosophies and modern Western literary influences, creating a unique space for cultural dialogue. By examining his critique of social injustices, the study also contributes to the ongoing discourse on social justice, caste critique, and humanism in Indian literature.

Additionally, the study's exploration of Brahma's themes can foster greater cross-cultural understanding, emphasizing the need for compassion and inclusivity in a world often divided by rigid social structures and discrimination. By recognizing Brahma's work, this study seeks to elevate the status of Boro literature and encourage further research into the cultural and literary significance of the Boro people.

Data and Methodology:

1. Data collection:

For this research on the themes in the poetry of Brajendra Kumar Brahma, data collection involved a comprehensive analysis of Brahma's published works, including his poetry collections, prose writings, and critical essays. The following sources were used to gather the primary data for this study:

a) Poetry Collections: The primary data set consists of Brajendra Kumar Brahma's poetry collections, including "Okhrang Gongse Nangau" (In Search of a Sky), "Ang Phwiphingwn" (I'll Come Back), and "San Mwkhangari Bibar Jananwi" (Being a Sun-Facing Flower). These works provide a direct examination of Brahma's poetic themes and styles.

b) Prose Writings and Essays: Brahma's prose collections, such as "Thunlai Arw Sanshri" (Literature and Philosophy), "Raithaimala" (Prose-Collections), and "Nwjwr Arw Swrji" (Views and Creations), were reviewed to gain additional insights into his views on literature, philosophy, and culture.

c) Critical Analyses: Secondary sources, including critical essays and articles on Brahma's work and Boro literature, were used to contextualize his poetry within the broader framework of Boro culture and contemporary Indian poetry. These analyses also helped identify key themes and influences in Brahma's work.

2. Methodology:

The methodology for this research was based on a qualitative approach, emphasizing thematic analysis and literary critique. The following steps outline the methodological framework used to analyze the data:

A. Thematic Analysis:

a) Identification of Themes: The initial step involved identifying recurrent themes in Brahma's poetry through close reading and textual analysis. This process included examining key motifs, symbols, and metaphors used by Brahma to convey his messages.

b) Categorization: The identified themes were then categorized into broader thematic groups, such as mysticism and spirituality, humanism and compassion,

nationalism and cultural identity, social justice and caste critique, and symbolism and poetic experimentation.

B. Literary Critique:

    a) Contextualization: The themes in Brahma's poetry were contextualized within the broader scope of Boro literature, modern Indian poetry, and relevant philosophical and cultural influences. This step involved comparing Brahma's work with other Indian and Western poets to understand his unique approach to poetry.

    b) Intertextual Analysis: The study examined intertextual references and influences in Brahma's poetry, exploring connections with Western poets like T.S. Eliot and Eastern philosophies such as Hinduism and Buddhism. This analysis helped to uncover the depth and complexity of Brahma's themes.

The data and methodology section outlines the approach taken to analyze the themes in Brajendra Kumar Brahma's poetry. Through a combination of thematic analysis, literary critique, and comparative analysis, this study explores the rich tapestry of themes in Brahma's work, emphasizing his exploration of spirituality, humanism, nationalism, social justice, and poetic experimentation. This methodological framework allows for a comprehensive examination of Brahma's poetry and its significance within the broader context of Boro literature and modern Indian poetry.

Structure of the paper:

This paper is organized into several key sections to comprehensively explore the themes in Brahma's poetry. Following the introduction, the paper discusses the data and methodology used in the study, detailing the sources and approach taken to analyze Brahma's work. The main body of the paper examines the themes in detail, covering topics like mysticism, spirituality, humanism, nationalism, social justice, and symbolism. The findings section provides a summary of the study's results, while the conclusion offers broader reflections on the significance of Brahma's poetry. Lastly, the references section lists the primary and secondary sources used throughout the study.

Through this approach, the study aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of Brajendra Kumar Brahma's poetry, emphasizing the themes that resonate with the Boro community's experiences and the broader context of contemporary Indian literature. Ultimately, the study seeks to promote greater recognition and appreciation of Boro literature and contribute to the ongoing conversation on social justice and cultural identity.

Mysticism and spirituality:

Brajendra Kumar Brahma's poetry often delves into themes of mysticism and spirituality, offering readers a contemplative journey through the complexities of faith, the search for divine understanding, and the exploration of existential questions. His approach to these themes reflects

a rich tapestry of religious and philosophical influences, leading to a nuanced and multifaceted exploration of spirituality.

1. The Infinite and the divine:

In poems like "Biyw Thayw Eyun Bidinthayao" (He Lives in Posterity), Brahma addresses the concept of infinity and the divine. He explores the idea that while the universe itself seems endless, the search for a tangible representation of divinity can be elusive. The lines "There is no end of time in the womb of the year" suggest an understanding of time as cyclical, with a continuous flow that resonates with many spiritual traditions.

Brahma's depiction of divinity is often shrouded in mystery, with an inherent sense of longing and exploration. In the same poem, he admits that despite searching, he has yet to find a concrete manifestation of the divine: "I've not found Him though I scanned thoroughly as He has not appeared." This uncertainty reflects the broader human condition, where the journey to find meaning and connection with the divine can be filled with uncertainty and ambiguity.

2. The search for spiritual awakening:

The theme of spiritual awakening is central to Brahma's mysticism. His poetry frequently examines the inner journey towards understanding and enlightenment. Unlike some religious narratives that focus on rigid structures or doctrines, Brahma's approach is fluid and open, suggesting that the path to spiritual awakening is personal and unique to each individual.

In "Biyw Phwiyw Jug Jug" (He Comes for Ages), Brahma articulates a vision of the divine as a central force in the universe, one that emerges in different forms across time and space. This idea resonates with the notion of spiritual renewal and the cyclical nature of spiritual experiences. When Brahma writes, "He emerges again and again with different forms and figures," he underscores the fluidity and adaptability of spirituality, acknowledging that the divine can be experienced in various ways depending on one's perspective and context.

3. Critique of organized religion and social injustice:

Brahma's mysticism also carries a critique of organized religion and its associated social injustices. In "In Search of a Sky," he explores the caste system's negative impact on Hindu society, suggesting that rigid religious structures can lead to tension and conflict. The poem critiques the way religion has been used to justify social hierarchies and discrimination, advocating instead for an open heart and a more compassionate approach to spirituality.

This critique aligns with Brahma's broader vision of spirituality, which emphasizes inclusivity and humanism. By questioning the rigidity of religious doctrines, Brahma seeks to create a space where spirituality can be a force for unity and understanding rather than division.

4. Nature as a spiritual symbol:

Brahma frequently uses nature as a symbol for spirituality, employing imagery that connects the natural world to the divine. This approach aligns with many mystical traditions that

see nature as a reflection of the spiritual realm. In "Ang Phwiphingwn" (I'll Come Back), Brahma uses natural imagery to convey the cyclical nature of life and rebirth, suggesting that spirituality is deeply rooted in the natural world.

The symbolism of nature in Brahma's poetry serves as a bridge between the physical and spiritual realms, indicating that the journey to spiritual understanding often involves connecting with the natural world. This approach creates a sense of harmony and balance, reinforcing the idea that spirituality is not separate from the everyday experiences of life.

Humanism and compassion:

Brajendra Kumar Brahma's poetry is deeply rooted in themes of humanism and compassion, reflecting a profound understanding of the human condition and an unwavering belief in the intrinsic value of life. His poetic vision embraces the full spectrum of human experience, emphasizing the importance of empathy, love, and solidarity among people. This section delves into Brahma's exploration of humanism and compassion, illustrating how these themes inform his work and contribute to his enduring appeal.

1. Embrace of the human experience:

Humanism in Brahma's poetry is grounded in a broad appreciation for the human experience, even with all its imperfections and struggles. He rejects the notion of Nirvana, which represents an escape from the cycle of life and rebirth, favoring instead an engagement with the full breadth of human existence. In the poem "Ang Phwiphingwn" (I'll Come Back), Brahma expresses his desire to return to this world despite its challenges, suggesting that even in the midst of suffering, there is beauty and meaning to be found.

This perspective aligns with humanist ideals that prioritize human values and experiences, focusing on the potential for growth and transformation through adversity. Brahma's choice to remain connected to the human condition, rather than seeking escape, underscores his belief in the inherent worth of life and the significance of human relationships.

2. Compassion as a guiding principle:

Compassion is a central theme in Brahma's poetry, reflecting his deep empathy for others and his commitment to fostering understanding and unity. He often portrays compassion as a force that can bridge divides and heal wounds caused by prejudice, discrimination, or conflict. This theme is closely related to Brahma's critique of rigid religious doctrines and social structures that perpetuate inequality and suffering.

In the poem "In Search of a Sky," Brahma addresses the caste system's negative effects, calling for an open heart and a rejection of conflict based on religious differences. His emphasis on compassion serves as a counterpoint to the divisiveness that can arise from rigid societal norms. Through his poetry, Brahma advocates for a more inclusive and compassionate society,

where individuals are valued for their humanity rather than their social status or religious affiliation.

3. Love and interconnectedness:

Brahma's exploration of love and interconnectedness is another key aspect of his humanism. He often uses natural imagery to convey the deep bonds that connect all living beings, suggesting that love is a fundamental force that unites humanity. In "Ang Phwiphingwn," he uses metaphors like "the silent language of Ellora and Ajanta" to symbolize the shared experiences of love and compassion that transcend cultural boundaries.

This sense of interconnectedness extends beyond romantic love to encompass a broader sense of solidarity with all people. Brahma's poetry implies that by embracing our shared humanity, we can overcome the divisions that separate us. This perspective aligns with the principles of humanism, which emphasize the potential for collective growth and understanding.

4. The role of the poet in promoting humanism:

As a poet, Brahma sees himself as a conduit for promoting humanism and compassion. His poetry reflects a sense of responsibility to use his voice to inspire others and foster positive change. In "Mwdwijwng Swrjinai" (Creation by Tears), he acknowledges the challenges of creating meaningful art but emphasizes the importance of using his creativity to contribute to a better world.

This sense of duty to promote humanism is a recurring theme in Brahma's work. He often addresses the role of the poet as a visionary who can guide others towards a more compassionate and just society. By using his poetry to explore the complexities of human experience, Brahma encourages readers to embrace empathy and work towards a more harmonious and inclusive world.

Nationalism and cultural identity:

Brajendra Kumar Brahma's poetry is deeply imbued with themes of nationalism and cultural identity, reflecting the complex historical and socio-political context of the Boro people in Assam, India. His work explores the aspirations, struggles, and resilience of the Boro community, providing a poetic voice that speaks to their collective identity and nationalistic sentiments. This section examines how Brahma's poetry navigates the intricate terrain of nationalism and cultural identity, drawing on the broader context of the Boro people's history and their ongoing quest for recognition and cultural preservation.

1. Boro identity and cultural preservation:

Brahma's poetry is intrinsically linked to the cultural identity of the Boro people, an indigenous community in Assam. His work captures the essence of Boro culture, traditions, and beliefs, providing a platform for expressing their unique identity. In poems like "Dubri Hagra" (Carpet Grass), Brahma uses metaphorical imagery to represent the resurgence of the Boro

community, illustrating their journey from near-extinction to a revitalized cultural presence. The poem reflects the collective memory and heritage of the Boro people, serving as a reminder of their historical roots and the importance of cultural preservation.

Brahma's emphasis on cultural identity is not only a celebration of the Boro heritage but also a call to action for its preservation. Through his poetry, he advocates for the recognition of the Boro language, traditions, and customs, challenging the dominant narratives that have marginalized the Boro people. This sense of cultural identity is intertwined with a broader sense of nationalism, as Brahma seeks to affirm the Boro people's place within the larger context of Indian society.

2. Nationalism and political struggle:

Brahma's exploration of nationalism goes beyond cultural identity to encompass the political struggles faced by the Boro community. His poetry reflects the historical challenges and conflicts that have shaped the Boro people's quest for political rights and autonomy. In "Dubri Hagra," Brahma addresses the period of near-extinction and the subsequent revival of the Boro people, symbolized by the line "the body in the process of fossilization / has taken a new life today." This imagery signifies the transformation and renewal of the Boro community, paralleling their journey towards greater political recognition.

The poem "Valmiki" further explores the theme of nationalism, drawing on classical Indian mythology to illustrate the struggle between good and evil. Brahma uses the story of Valmiki and the transformation from dacoit to sage to symbolize the Boro community's evolution from a marginalized group to one that is gaining recognition and asserting its rights. This narrative reflects the political struggles faced by the Boro people, as they fight for their place in the broader Indian context.

3. Critique of social and political structures:

Brahma's nationalism is not uncritical; his poetry often critiques the social and political structures that have marginalized the Boro people. In "In Search of a Sky," he addresses the caste system's impact on Hindu society, suggesting that rigid social hierarchies contribute to the exclusion and discrimination faced by the Boro community. This critique is tied to Brahma's broader vision of an inclusive society, where cultural diversity is celebrated, and political structures are reformed to accommodate all groups.

The critique of social and political structures is also evident in Brahma's exploration of religious themes. He questions the interpretation of religious texts and the role of organized religion in perpetuating social injustices. This critical approach to existing power structures aligns with his nationalistic sentiments, as he advocates for a society where the Boro people and other marginalized groups are afforded equal rights and recognition.

4. The role of language and literature in nationalism:

Language plays a crucial role in Brahma's exploration of nationalism and cultural identity. His poetry is a vehicle for promoting the Boro language and literature, highlighting the importance of linguistic recognition in the broader context of cultural preservation. Through his work, Brahma contributes to the growing body of Boro literature, demonstrating the richness and depth of the Boro language.

The Boro Sahitya Sabha, an organization dedicated to the promotion of Boro literature and culture, is a testament to the importance of language in the Boro community's nationalistic aspirations. Brahma's involvement with the Bodo Sahitya Sabha and his contributions to Boro literature underscore his commitment to advancing the Boro language as a means of asserting cultural identity and political rights.

Social justice and caste critique:

Brajendra Kumar Brahma's poetry often addresses themes of social justice and offers a critical perspective on the caste system, which has historically created divisions and discrimination within Indian society. His work challenges the rigid social structures and examines the consequences of caste-based discrimination, emphasizing the need for compassion, equality, and human dignity. This section explores Brahma's critique of the caste system and his call for social justice in detail.

1. The caste system and its impact:

The caste system, with its deep historical roots in Indian society, has long been a source of social inequality and discrimination. Brahma's poetry directly addresses the negative impacts of this system, highlighting how it perpetuates injustice and marginalization. In "In Search of a Sky," Brahma examines the poisonous effects of the caste system, suggesting that it leads to division and conflict. He describes it as the "ugly countenance of the four varnas of history," indicating that this structure has caused significant harm and has contributed to social unrest.

Brahma's critique of the caste system aligns with his broader vision of a more inclusive and compassionate society. By pointing out the system's detrimental effects, he underscores the importance of breaking down these barriers and fostering a more equitable social structure.

2. Critique of organized religion and social hierarchies:

Brahma's poetry also critiques the role of organized religion in perpetuating social hierarchies. He suggests that religious texts, when misinterpreted or used to justify discrimination, can reinforce caste-based divisions. In "In Search of a Sky," he notes that sacred texts like the Upanishads, the Bible, and the Koran have lost their influence because of wrong interpretations, leading to a decline in spiritual consciousness. This decline, in turn, contributes to the persistence of caste-based discrimination and social injustice.

Through his poetry, Brahma calls for a reinterpretation of religious teachings, advocating for a more compassionate and inclusive approach. He criticizes the politics associated with religion, where lower classes often bear the brunt of discrimination, and emphasizes the need for a more open and accepting society.

3. The role of compassion and humanism in social justice:

Brahma's critique of the caste system is complemented by his emphasis on compassion and humanism. He believes that social justice can be achieved through a shift in perspective, where individuals are valued for their humanity rather than their social status or caste. This focus on compassion and empathy is a recurring theme in Brahma's poetry, reflecting his commitment to promoting a more just and equitable society.

In his call for social justice, Brahma emphasizes the importance of recognizing the shared humanity that connects us all. By challenging the caste system and advocating for equality, he seeks to create a society where people are judged by their character and actions rather than their birth or social position.

4. The quest for equality and social change:

Brahma's poetry reflects the broader struggle for social justice and equality in Indian society, particularly for marginalized communities like the Boro people. His work captures the sense of injustice and discrimination that has historically affected these groups, highlighting the need for social change. In "In Search of a Sky," Brahma's critique of the caste system is part of a larger narrative that seeks to address social inequalities and advocate for a more inclusive society.

Through his poetry, Brahma calls for a society where social hierarchies are dismantled, and all individuals are afforded equal rights and opportunities. His critique of the caste system serves as a powerful reminder of the work that remains to be done in achieving social justice, while his emphasis on compassion and humanism provides a pathway towards a more just and equitable world.

Symbolism and poetic experimentation:

Brajendra Kumar Brahma is renowned for his use of rich symbolism and innovative poetic experimentation, which contribute to the depth and complexity of his poetry. His work reflects a blend of traditional and modern elements, incorporating various symbols and experimental techniques to create a unique literary voice. This section explores how Brahma employs symbolism and poetic experimentation to convey his themes and establish his distinctive style.

1. The use of symbolism:

Symbolism plays a crucial role in Brahma's poetry, allowing him to communicate complex themes and ideas through vivid imagery and metaphor. His use of symbols is both

intricate and varied, drawing from a wide range of sources, including nature, religion, and mythology.

In "Ang Phwiphingwn" (I'll Come Back), Brahma employs natural imagery to symbolize the cyclical nature of life and rebirth. He uses metaphors like "the silent language of Ellora and Ajanta" to represent the depth and universality of human experiences, suggesting that these connections transcend cultural boundaries. This symbolic approach allows Brahma to convey complex ideas in a way that resonates with readers on an emotional and intuitive level.

Similarly, in "Biyw Phwiyw Jug Jug" (He Comes for Ages), Brahma uses the recurring imagery of a divine figure who emerges in different forms throughout time. This symbol represents the continuity and adaptability of spirituality, highlighting the idea that the divine can manifest in various ways depending on one's perspective. By using symbolism, Brahma creates a sense of fluidity and openness, encouraging readers to find their interpretations within his poetry.

2. Private symbols and experimental techniques:

Brahma's use of private symbols and experimental techniques reflects his search for a unique literary distinction and voice. He is influenced by Western poets like T.S. Eliot, known for their innovative approaches to poetry. In "Carpet Grass," Brahma employs experimental imagery to represent the renewal and transformation of the Boro people, symbolizing their journey from near-extinction to a revitalized cultural presence. The metaphor of "the body in the process of fossilization" turning into new life captures this sense of transformation and renewal.

Brahma's poetic experimentation extends to his use of unconventional structures and forms. He often employs free verse and varied line lengths, allowing for greater flexibility in his expression. This experimental approach aligns with the modernist tradition, where poets sought to break away from traditional forms and explore new ways of conveying meaning. By embracing these techniques, Brahma creates a distinctive style that reflects the complexities and contradictions of modern life.

3. Interplay between western and eastern influences:

Brahma's poetic experimentation is informed by a rich interplay between Western and Eastern influences. While he is inspired by Western poets like T.S. Eliot, he also draws from Eastern philosophies and religious traditions. This blend of influences allows Brahma to create a poetic style that is both unique and resonant with a broader cultural context.

In "In Search of a Sky," Brahma explores themes of social justice and caste critique, drawing on Western literary traditions to challenge rigid social structures. He critiques the caste system and organized religion, using symbolism to convey the need for a more inclusive and compassionate society. This approach reflects the modernist tradition of questioning established norms and seeking new perspectives.

At the same time, Brahma's poetry is deeply rooted in Eastern spirituality and symbolism. He often uses imagery from Hindu mythology and religious texts to convey his themes. In "Valmiki," he draws on the myth of Ram and Ravan, suggesting that even in the face of adversity, transformation and renewal are possible. This interplay between Western and Eastern influences adds depth and complexity to Brahma's poetry, allowing him to explore a wide range of themes and ideas.

Conclusion:

Brajendra Kumar Brahma's poetry is a profound exploration of a diverse array of themes, reflecting the complex tapestry of human experience, spirituality, cultural identity, and social justice. Through his work, Brahma crafts a unique literary voice that resonates with readers from different backgrounds, while specifically providing a platform for the Boro community's stories and struggles. The themes that emerge from his poetry serve as a testament to his creative and experimental approach, as well as his commitment to exploring deeply rooted cultural and philosophical questions.

One of the key findings from Brahma's poetry is his focus on mysticism and spirituality. He presents spirituality as an evolving journey rather than a fixed set of beliefs, inviting readers to engage with the uncertainties and mysteries of existence. His critique of rigid religious structures aligns with his broader vision for a more inclusive and compassionate society, emphasizing that spirituality should foster unity rather than division.

Humanism and compassion are equally central to Brahma's poetic philosophy. He embraces the entire range of human emotions and experiences, advocating for empathy and a rejection of social hierarchies. Through his critique of the caste system and his emphasis on human dignity, Brahma encourages a more equitable approach to social justice, where individuals are valued for their intrinsic worth rather than their social status.

The theme of nationalism and cultural identity runs deeply through Brahma's poetry, reflecting the Boro community's journey towards recognition and autonomy. His work celebrates the cultural heritage of the Boro people while addressing the broader struggle for political rights and linguistic preservation. Brahma's exploration of these themes showcases his role as a voice for the Boro community and his commitment to advancing their cultural and political interests.

Symbolism and poetic experimentation are defining features of Brahma's style. He employs a wide range of symbols and metaphors, drawing from both Western and Eastern influences, to convey complex themes and ideas. This experimental approach allows him to create a distinct poetic identity that resonates with modernist traditions while maintaining a strong connection to his cultural roots.

Brajendra Kumar Brahma's poetry offers a rich and compelling examination of themes that touch on spirituality, humanism, nationalism, and social justice. His work serves as a

powerful reminder of the enduring importance of compassion, empathy, and cultural identity in a world often divided by rigid social structures and discrimination. Through his poetry, Brahma invites readers to embrace a broader vision of humanity, one that values diversity and seeks to bridge divides through understanding and compassion. Ultimately, his poetry inspires us to explore the complexities of existence while striving for a more just and inclusive society.

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GENDER AND CASTE BY WOMEN WRITERS: DAS, ROY, KAMBLE, AND PAWAR

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Abstract:

Caste and gender dynamics are deeply intertwined in Indian society, with the caste system perpetuating hierarchies that intersect with patriarchal norms to marginalize and oppress certain groups, particularly Dalit women. This intersectionality exacerbates inequalities, leading to compounded forms of discrimination and violence. Women writers with their unique writing and narratives often confront the intersections of caste and gender oppression, shedding light on the unique struggles faced by women in the society. Through their works, these writers challenge traditional patriarchal norms and caste-based hierarchies, amplifying the voices of marginalized women and advocating for social change. Their narratives are powerful tools for dismantling oppressive structures, fostering solidarity among marginalized communities, and envisioning more equitable futures. The significant contributions of Baby Kamble and Urmila Pawar, two influential voices in Dalit literature through their personal experiences advocate for a fairer society. In Baby Kamble's autobiographical work "The Prisons We Broke" and Pawar's seminal text "The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs," both the women writers aimed to explore the multifaceted experiences and perspectives of Dalit women in the patriarchal society. Whereas the autobiographical works of two prominent Indian women writers, Kamala Das, and Arundhati Roy, dissect the intricate intersections of caste and gender within their lived experiences. By closely examining Das's "My Story" and Roy's "The God of Small Things," this study aims to unravel the nuanced portrayal of caste and gender dynamics embedded within their narratives.

Keywords: Women Writing, Gender, Caste, Dalit Literature, Indian Literature, Autobiography, Patriarchy, Society.

Introduction:

In literature, the narratives penned by women from diverse backgrounds in India offer much-needed insights into the complexities of caste and gender dynamics. Among these voices are Baby Kamble, Urmila Pawar, Kamala Das, and Arundhati Roy, whose autobiographies provide glimpses into their lived experiences. These narratives are not just stories; they are windows into the challenges and struggles of individuals navigating through the intersections of

caste and gender inequalities. Baby Kamble and Urmila Pawar, hailing from the Dalit community, share their journeys in books like "The Prisons We Broke" and "The Weave of My Life," respectively, shed light on the unique struggles faced by Dalit women. Similarly, Kamala Das's "My Story" and Arundhati Roy's "The God of Small Things " offer insights into the broader societal structures that perpetuate caste and gender discrimination. Through a careful examination of their autobiographies, this paper aims to unravel the complexities of their experiences, highlighting the resilience and agency of women in challenging systemic injustices. These narratives serve as powerful testimonies to the resilience and spirit of women, inspiring women to reflect on the need for collective action toward a more just and equitable society.

In this, we will talk about the lived experience of women writers in the context of gender and caste. In India, the complex relationship between caste and gender is deeply ingrained in its societal structure. The caste system, a hierarchical arrangement dividing individuals into social groups based on birth and occupation, has profound implications for gender dynamics. Women's status and rights vary significantly across caste lines, with those from lower castes often experiencing greater marginalization and oppression. This intersectionality of gender and caste manifests in various forms of discrimination, limiting access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities for women from marginalized communities. Dalit women, positioned at the bottom of the caste hierarchy, are particularly vulnerable to violence and exploitation, including sexual assault, verbal abuse, and forced labor. Despite years of independence, Dalits are still struggling for equality, and Dalit women in the 21st century are still struggling to get basic human rights. According to Dr. B.R. is not merely a division of labor. It is also a division of laborers."(Ambedkar, 1936). Ambedkar has been quite vocal about the equality and caste discrimination that prevailed in India back then especially Dalits or the Ambedkar, The caste system Untouchables. According to Indian Sociologist Sujata Patel "Gender, caste, and class intersect to produce complex forms of oppression and privilege within Indian society."(Patel, 2002).

Understanding Gender from Kamala Das's Writings

Kamala Das plays an incredibly significant role in her poetry to inform people about the social situation of that time. By doing this research work we found the helplessness of women as they are half of our population. We come to this world by the great sacrifice of a woman who is known as a mother. So, we should respect them, and every religion gives women very importance and respect. But, women are used as a product during "My Story". At the time of the twentieth century when the writer protested this kind of silly things by her writing it was exceedingly difficult to publish the thought. Women are also human beings. They also have the right to do the work that they like to do. Men were represented as the rulers of the society with disgusting thoughts about women. Women were oppressed by men in society. She writes in My

Story: Poets die many times their deaths. They die especially repeatedly in the obituaries. They live again, so they do not when their poems are printed after their deaths. Uniqueness and individuality of each woman's preoccupations, there is a common ground upon which women could share their views and express their o Kamala Das offers a deeply personal exploration of gender that reflects her journey of self-discovery and defiance against societal expectations. She candidly recounts her experiences growing up as a woman in a conservative Indian society, where gender roles are rigidly defined and women are expected to conform to traditional norms. Das challenges these norms through her candid discussions of sexuality and desire, refusing to be confined by societal taboos or expectations.

Throughout the autobiography, Das grapples with the complexities of her own identity, navigating the intersections of gender, sexuality, and cultural expectations. She confronts the limitations imposed on women by patriarchal structures, while also asserting her right to autonomy and self-expression. Das's narrative is marked by a sense of rebellion against the constraints of gender norms, as she seeks to carve out a space for herself outside of traditional roles and expectations.

"My Story" serves as a powerful exploration of gender identity and the struggle for self-determination in the face of societal pressure. Das's honest and unapologetic portrayal of her own experiences challenges readers to reconsider their assumptions about gender and to recognize the diversity and complexity of human identity. Opinions, whether good or bad. There are dangers inherent in the mere exploration of the female self.

Understanding Caste from Kamala Das's Writings

We are born as humans and want to live peacefully as humans in this beautiful world. But alas! It was to possible at that time because there was a tagging system going on. The people who had higher tags could live luxurious lives by taking all the facilities from society, but the lower-tagged ones could not get them. This so-called tagging system is known as caste. The people who are from the higher cast like Brahman get treatment as humans from the society but on the other hand, the lower ones cannot get through or she also human beings. In the twentieth century mostly, the women were agonizing a lot for the casting system and in the male-dominated world. There were a lot of writers, poets, and novelists, who wrote against casting and women's freedom. Kamala Das is one of the Indian authors of the twentieth century who wrote about the casting system of society at that time.

Understanding Gender from Arundhati Roy's Writings

Gender discrimination was one of the principal issues in the experiences of the two characters and how the criminal justice system differences applied laws based on their status, gender, and society. Long way their conjugal status was connected to the Ammu and her brother Chacko established themselves in an identical situation. Ammu and Chacko were treated other

by her community and family. Ammu did not get a blooming education. Even her people believed that blooming education damages a woman. Ammu wants to discard training, and even then again Chacko and her sibling are sent to Oxford to think further. Be that as it may, he did not do considerable there. Chacko is allowed to examine further training because he is a male section. Since, where Ammu is a female disallowed to receive training. This issue may be found in a traditional family.

"The God of small things"- positively represents women's quandary in a male-dominated traditional substructure, their fight and attempt to explore for a sense of identity in society. In India, the social structure of women was full of many flips and flops. Roy probes the quandary of the women characters- Ammu, Rahel, Mammachi, and Margret who represent their descent in an Ayemenem family. She conducts to the onward the mess in the lives of these women who struggle to relate to their husbands in a significant way. While Rahel, Ammu, and Margret did not agree with their male equivalent and directly separated ways, they abandoned the occasion to produce an independent identity in their matrimonial married life. An abdicated woman such as Ammu, the protagonist, hardly desired gratification, enjoyment, and a life free from self-control. The narrator conveys a complete portrait of Ammu's growth from childhood to adolescent age, her experiences of matrimony, her part as a sympathetic and affectionate mother, and her change into a thoroughgoing wife who challenges the caste limits of the Indian social system and male chauvinism.

Arundhati Roy shows a dreadful image of a husband and wife relationship in a conservative family where the male acts as the suppressive head of the house.

Pappachi was a Westernized Indian who contemplated himself as headman to others and nurtured irrational objections against his wife Mammachi. Mammachi clearly quarry to the fickle aptitude of her male partner. She was a miserable character, quite woeful and her marital life was brutal, and she was treated like a doll in the fist of pappachi. She suffers the male domination of submissively and passively. Even, at an old age, he continuously dominated his wife Mammachi and imposed his male chauvinism by punishing her violently with an iron flower vase, he beat her every night. One night, he ruined the bend of Mammachi's violin and threw it in the river. Pappachi wanted to direct abuse and insults to show his male domination over a compliant, observant, generous, and everlasting wife. The view of pappachi towards mammachi was born of frustration and envy after the teacher reported that she was especially talented at playing the violin. Pappachi didn't want to look at his wife to develop her art, suddenly quit her lessons and every night he beat her. Their relationship was dominated by jealousy, violence, and dislike. What Arundhati Roy wanted to reveal the other novelists such as Toni Morrison, Anita Desai, and Alice Walker was that punishment was a usual practice in a male-dominated society.

In the novel- "The God of Small Things" – Arundhati Roy depicted the female characters were all the more true and gave an actual description of the cruel realities. Mammachi searches deeply into the spiritual world of her female characters. Her perception of Mammachi's crying over the death of the pappachi explains the delicacy of her explanation of female mentality. At Pappachi's burial, mammachi weeps, and her contact lenses slip around in her eyes. Ammu told the twins that Mammachi was weeping more because she was used to him than because she loved him, Mammachi was used to having him bend around the pickle factory and was used to being abused from time to time. Roy ridicules the dissimulation of society, portrays the impact of class and prejudicial laws on females, and shows how the male behaves as an autocratic leader in a traditional family.

Understanding Caste from Arundhati Roy's Writings

"The God of small things" is all over manifested. The state of Kerala said central socio-developments and socio-political accompanied war for land rights and the removal of standoffish. The novel demonstrates annals in Kerala. This novel focuses on Kerala's social, and social discrimination, social climate, social-political, and caste relations. In this novel, almost every one of the questions that she comes up with stems from law-making issues, women, caste, and the condition of Kerala. In the novel, Arundhati Roy's analysis of social politics mainly focuses on the three-cycle gender issues, caste questioning, and condition issues.

This novel extricates a complicated maze of chauvinism and casteism of women and the apart are the two districts of Indian culture. Its society has suffered the most through the ages of India. It's a nibble account of the unseen sentences of a male pivotal culture. A widespread public, which jurisdiction of the pecking order in the family sub-structure. In the caste sub-structure and gender deeds by untouchables, women are treated as the second sex. The persuasive behind the scrutiny is the way these two types of social and cultural chains of consequences work in "The God of Small Things" novel, to empty people of their usual passion, sexual rights, and protection. The fate of a strained woman and a convicted untouchable. The differentiations of the single in the public stadium in the names of class, caste, and gender issues

Understanding Gender from Baby Kamle

Baby Kamble (1929-2012), a member of the Mahar Caste in Maharashtra, stands as the pioneering woman within her community to pen her autobiography, "The Prisons We Broke." In her profound narrative, she sheds light on the plight of Dalit women in the Mahar community, unveiling the triple marginalization they endure due to their gender, caste, and class. Kamble vividly portrays the societal beliefs ingrained within her community, emphasizing the notion that a woman's worth is intrinsically tied to her marital status, perpetuating the dependency of Mahar women on their husbands for societal validation and acceptance.

Throughout her autobiography, Kamble unveils the oppressive customs prevalent within the Mahar community, where women are confined to the domestic sphere, their worth measured by their adherence to stringent societal norms. She recounts personal anecdotes, such as her mother's confinement within the four walls of their home, highlighting the suffocating nature of patriarchal restrictions imposed upon Mahar women.

Kamble delves deeper into the systemic oppression faced by Dalit women, exacerbated by the Brahminical patriarchal ideologies adopted by Dalit men. She exposes the triple-fold discrimination endured by Dalit women, stemming from their gender, lowest status within the caste hierarchy, and economic deprivation. Kamble shares poignant accounts of discrimination faced by Dalit women, including instances of verbal abuse and physical violence, underscoring the pervasive nature of their suffering.

In her autobiography, Kamble not only reflects on her personal experiences but also amplifies the collective voice of Mahar women, shedding light on their enduring struggles against patriarchal dominance, caste-based discrimination, and societal marginalization. Through her narrative, she challenges the entrenched norms perpetuating the subjugation of Dalit women, advocating for societal change and the recognition of their inherent dignity and rights.

Understanding Caste from Baby Kamble's Writings

According to Baby Kamble, caste represents more than a mere social hierarchy; it embodies a pervasive system of oppression that permeates every facet of life for Dalit communities in India. In her autobiography "The Prisons We Broke," Kamble vividly depicts caste as a confining prison where discriminatory social norms and practices restrict the freedoms of Dalits. Drawing from her own experiences, Kamble recounts instances of humiliation, exploitation, and violence inflicted upon Dalits by dominant castes, highlighting the harsh realities faced by Dalit women who are often neglected, suppressed, and relegated to secondary positions in male-dominated Indian society.

The suffering of Dalit women, Kamble argues, stems not only from their low caste status but also from their gender and economic position in society. They endure exploitation both outside and inside their homes, subjected to brutal treatment by husbands, mothers-in-law, and others. Kamble exposes the intersectional nature of oppression, where caste and class exacerbate the dishonor and humiliation faced by Dalit women at every turn.

Additionally, Kamble sheds light on the patriarchal norms that further compound the suffering of Dalit women. Expected to submit to men and adhere to societal norms, Dalit women are forced to navigate a patriarchal social order that demands their subservience. Kamble illustrates how power dynamics within familial and societal relationships pit women against one another, exacerbating their misery.

Throughout her narrative, Kamble emphasizes that the plight of Dalit women cannot be equated with that of women from upper castes. Mahar men, she notes, treat Mahar women similarly to how upper-caste men treat Dalits, highlighting the distinct challenges faced by Dalit women that necessitate a unique approach to addressing their suffering. Ultimately, Kamble argues that Dalit women are victims of intersecting forms of oppression — caste, class, and gender — which must be addressed collectively to achieve meaningful changes.

Understanding Gender from Urmila Pawar's Writings

In her memoir "The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoirs," Urmila Pawar offers a vivid portrayal of the everyday lives of Dalits, intertwining the narratives of her family, her husband's family, neighbors, and classmates to illuminate the multifaceted struggles faced by Dalit communities. Pawar highlights the pervasive oppression experienced by Dalit people, who endure discrimination based on caste, class, and gender. The intersectionality of caste, class, and gender inequality is particularly acute for Dalit women, whose experiences Pawar candidly exposes in her autobiographical writing.

Pawar's narrative lays bare the harsh realities of Mahar women, depicting their suffering, exploitation, and relentless efforts to assert their identity. Through her own life experiences, Pawar underscores the marginalization of women within both the family and the broader community. She confronts the gender discrimination entrenched within Dalit households, citing the dehumanizing perception articulated by Tulsidas in Ramcharitmanas, which deems women as deserving of beatings alongside animals, the illiterate, and lower castes. This perception, Pawar argues, further diminishes the already limited space allotted to Dalit women in society and literature, compounding their marginalization.

In her memoir, Pawar unflinchingly addresses the issue of sexual exploitation endured by Dalit women, both within their own homes and by men of higher social strata. Despite their resilience and endurance in the face of hardship, Dalit women are relegated to a position of insignificance within their families, their value and worth disregarded by husbands and relatives alike. Pawar paints a stark picture of life in the Konkan region of Maharashtra, where women are subjected to constant mistreatment and abuse, often bearing the brunt of their husbands' alcohol-fueled violence.

Pawar highlights the clear gender roles enforced upon Dalit women from childhood, roles they are expected to adhere to throughout their lives without deviation. Their existence is marked by relentless toil and suffering, their identities overshadowed by the oppressive forces of caste, class, and gender discrimination. Through her memoir, Pawar amplifies the voices of Dalit women, shedding light on their resilience and courage in the face of adversity, while also calling attention to the urgent need for societal change and gender equity within Dalit communities.

Understanding Caste from Urmila Pawar's Writings

It's a well-known fact that Hindu society is divided into different strata based on Caste, where some are upper or higher whereas some are lower caste and then there is the Dalit community or Untouchables— the centuries-old division of Indian society into four varnas relegated these castes. Caste and Gender Issues in Dalit Women's Autobiographies groups talk about the lowest community of the social hierarchy, without any independent means of living, and therefore, they are most often landless peasants doing menial jobs. Because of this caste hierarchy, many youngsters struggle to find jobs that do not matter if they are even well qualified. Pawar herself struggled to find a job and even after getting one, she struggled in the office to get promotions. Pawar in her autobiography shares personal anecdotes and stories of other Dalit women, highlighting the unique challenges they face in asserting their rights and dignity within a deeply entrenched caste system. Moreover, Pawar reflects on the internalization of caste-based oppression and how it affects self-esteem and agency among Dalit women. She discusses the importance of education and empowerment which can help women challenge caste hierarchies and reclaim dignity and rights. Throughout her autobiography, Pawar emphasizes the resilience and resistance of Dalit women against caste discrimination. She emphasizes the significance of solidarity and collective action in advocating for social justice and equality. By sharing her own story and by shedding light on the voices of Dalit women, Pawar's autobiography serves as a powerful testament to the ongoing struggle against caste-based oppression and the quest for dignity and liberation.

Comments:

In "My Story" by Kamala Das, the author intricately examines the patriarchal norms that govern her life, navigating the tensions between societal expectations and personal desires. Through her candid portrayal of her experiences as a woman in mid-20th century Kerala, Das sheds light on the gendered constraints imposed on women's autonomy and self-expression.

Arundhati Roy's "The God of Small Things" intertwines the themes of caste and gender within the intricate tapestry of familial relationships in Kerala. Roy masterfully portrays the oppressive caste system and its impact on individuals, particularly through the lens of the forbidden love affair between Ammu, a Syrian Christian woman, and Velutha, a Dalit man. Their story highlights the devastating consequences of crossing caste boundaries in a deeply stratified society.

In "The Prisons We Broke" by Baby Kamble, the author provides a raw and unfiltered account of her life as a Dalit woman in Maharashtra. Kamble exposes the intersecting oppressions of caste, gender, and poverty, offering readers a firsthand glimpse into the systemic injustices faced by Dalit women in rural India.

Urmila Pawar's "The Weave of My Life" delves into the complexities of caste and gender in Maharashtra, particularly within the context of her upbringing in a Dalit family. Pawar reflects on her journey of resilience and empowerment, challenging caste-based hierarchies and patriarchal norms through her narrative.

Together, these autobiographies offer readers a nuanced understanding of the intersectionality of gender and caste in India, inviting them to critically engage with the multifaceted realities of oppression, resistance, and resilience. Through personal narratives that span different regions and periods, these authors illuminate the complexities of social identity and power dynamics, urging readers to confront and dismantle systems of injustice.

Conclusion:

In examining the autobiographies and literary works of Kamala Das, Arundhati Roy, Baby Kamble, and, Urmila Pawar through the lens of caste and gender, we are confronted with a tapestry of narratives that transcend the boundaries of time, geography, and social hierarchies. Each of these voices, shaped by their unique experiences and perspectives, offers profound insights into the intersecting dynamics of oppression and resilience within Indian society. In conclusion, the autobiographies and literary works of Kamala Das, Arundhati Roy, Baby Kamble, and Urmila Pawar offer invaluable insights into the intersecting dynamics of caste and gender in Indian society. Through their narratives, they challenge entrenched systems of oppression and amplify the voices of marginalized communities. Their stories compel readers to confront uncomfortable truths about social inequality and injustice, prompting a critical revaluation of prevailing power structures. As testimonies to resilience and resistance, their works stand as powerful contributions to the ongoing struggle for social justice and equality. Ultimately, they remind us of the importance of solidarity and collective action in dismantling systems of oppression and building a more inclusive and equitable.

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN EDUCATION ASSESSMENT

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Abstract:

One big advantage of using AI in education is how it helps assess and improve students' performance. Thanks to AI advancements, schools can now predict how well each student might do in their studies. They look at things like social background, behaviour, and other factors to understand each student better. By using data mining techniques, schools can figure out what might help students succeed or struggle. AI also helps in sorting students into groups based on how they're doing. This let's schools identify who might need extra help and who's doing well. With this info, they can give students personalised attention. AI tools can even create custom learning plans for each student, based on what they need and what they're interested in. This not only boosts performance but also keeps students engaged and less likely to drop out, which is great for building a strong, educated community.

Abstract: Artificial Intelligence, Education, Assessment

Introduction:

In the vast realm of education, assessment stands as a cornerstone, shaping teaching strategies, measuring student progress, and ultimately guiding educational outcomes. Traditionally, assessments have been conducted through standardised tests, essays, and assignments, often limited by time constraints, human bias, and the inability to provide real-time feedback. However, the dawn of the digital age has ushered in a new era of assessment, powered by artificial intelligence (AI), promising to revolutionise the educational landscape.

Artificial intelligence with its capacity for data analysis, pattern recognition, and machine learning algorithms, presents an unprecedented opportunity to reimagine the assessment process. From grading assignments to evaluating comprehension levels, AI technologies offer a myriad of possibilities to enhance efficiency, accuracy, and personalization in educational assessment. As educators and policymakers seek ways to adapt to the demands of an increasingly digital world, the integration of AI in assessment emerges as a promising avenue for innovation and improvement.

This comprehensive exploration of AI in education assessment aims to delve into the multifaceted dimensions of this transformative technology. By examining its applications, benefits, challenges, and ethical considerations, this study seeks to provide insights into the potential impact of AI on educational assessment practices. Through a critical analysis of current

trends, emerging technologies, and best practices, this research endeavours to chart a course toward a more effective, equitable, and student-centred approach to assessment in the digital age. With the global education landscape evolving at a rapid pace, fueled by technological advancements and changing pedagogical paradigms, the integration of AI in assessment represents a pivotal moment in the history of education. As stakeholders across the educational spectrum navigate the complexities of this digital transformation, it is essential to critically evaluate the role of AI in shaping the future of assessment and its implications for teaching, learning, and educational equity. By fostering dialogue, collaboration, and innovation, we can harness the transformative potential of AI to create a more inclusive, adaptive, and effective assessment ecosystem for learners worldwide.

Artificial Intelligence in education

Education serves as the foundation of society and when we zoom out the entire global human race can be seen as an expanded version of that same societal framework. When we talk about the development or growth of the human race in every field, education cannot be left behind. Data Mining (DM), as a primary branch or tool within AI, analyses instances to uncover valuable patterns, subsequently utilising them to enhance the targeted system.. Similarly, data mining helps educational institutions to assess previous records in their student database, and even merge databases with other stakeholders to make required changes towards improvement (Chatterjee & Bhattacharya, 2020). Within the realm of Educational Data Mining (EDM), a focal area of investigation revolves around student performance assessment. Ongoing research endeavours seek to unveil potential correlations between diverse social factors and academic outcomes. economic, and environmental factors and academic performance. Additionally, Diverse AI tools, including recommendation systems (Yadav *et al.,* 2016) and educational gaming applications (Zirawaga *et al.,* 2017), significantly enhance the learning experience for students across a wide spectrum and make education easy and interesting for all. Further exploration of these topics will be delved into in the subsequent section. Moreover, within the domain of Educational Data Mining (EDM), significant efforts are dedicated to tasks beyond student performance assessment. For example, one such task involves student profiling, wherein learners are categorised based on their diverse hard skills, such as academic histories and grades achievements, etc.) and soft skills (communication, behaviour, attitude, hobbies, etc.

The benefits of AI in education have caught the attention of researchers, leading to the integration of various AI tools into today's educational systems. This move aims for significant improvements not only in student performance but also across different aspects of education. According to Verified Market Research, the Global Artificial Intelligence in Education Market was worth $521.03 million in 2018 and is expected to reach $10,381.70 million by 2026,

growing at a rate of 45.12% from 2019 to 2026. UNESCO has recently published its first-ever guidance on using AI in education to promote excellence.

UNESCO

UNESCO recently released the Beijing Consensus on AI and Education, the first-ever guidance document on using AI to achieve the Education 2030 Agenda. It was adopted during a conference in Beijing in May 2019, with participation from over 50 government ministers, representatives from 105 Member States, and various other stakeholders. The Consensus highlights how integrating AI in education can address key challenges, promote innovative teaching and learning methods, and help advance SDG 4. It recommends governments and stakeholders to:

1. Develop AI in education policies that involve multiple sectors, allowing for local priorities to meet SDG 4 targets.
2. The use of AI models for education and training, ensuring benefits outweigh risks and promoting personalised learning opportunities.
3. Use relevant data for evidence-based policy planning.
4. Empower teachers with AI tools instead of replacing them, providing training programs for working alongside AI.
5. Equip the future workforce with skills relevant to the AI era.
6. Ensure fair and inclusive AI use regardless of background, with a focus on gender equality, and ethical and transparent data practices.

Students' performance assessment

It is believed that students are the future of a country. The progress of every nation relies heavily on the students from that nation. Therefore, Educational Data Mining is primarily focused on students. EDM addresses numerous issues within the education sector, including "evaluation and forecasting of students' academic performance," as mentioned earlier is of utmost importance. Before delving into an in-depth analysis of the functioning of EDM. We need to first establish a clear understanding of what we are truly referring to 'academic achievement' of students

Students' performance

When we discuss student performance, it typically refers to their academic achievements within a specific course or class. However, it's important not to limit ourselves to just academic success, as societal contributions extend beyond mere grades. A student's value to society isn't solely determined by academic prowess; factors like personality traits, attitude, and behaviour also play significant roles. Thus, a student's personality is a crucial aspect to consider, alongside their academic performance. While this chapter primarily focuses on using AI to assess and

enhance academic performance, we'll also touch upon how AI can contribute to personality development in students.

Need for students' performance assessment

In the era preceding artificial intelligence, assessing a student's academic performance relied primarily on a few factors from their academic history, such as previous scores. However, advancements in AI techniques and research have broadened our understanding. We now recognize that besides these traditional factors, social, demographic, behavioural, and non-behavioral aspects also significantly influence a student's performance. With AI, we can anticipate how students might fare in upcoming exams or competitions, enabling institutions to categorise students effectively and take proactive measures to enhance performance.

The ability to predict student performance in advance allows institutions to identify those at risk of underperforming or failing. Special attention and support can then be provided to help them improve. Conversely, AI also facilitates the identification of high-potential students, allowing for tailored opportunities to further excel. In the following sections, we'll delve into the various factors influencing student performance

Utilising AI for evaluating student progress in digital learning platforms

In the previous section, it was mentioned that assessing or analysing various behavioural characteristics is challenging in a traditional face-to-face classroom setting. Yet, recent significant advancements in technology have allowed us to offer current students a range of online learning options, including online tutoring sites, websites providing online courses, and user-friendly tutoring apps. Thanks to advancements in Artificial Intelligence techniques and research, evaluating behavioural characteristics on online learning platforms has become more streamlined. The primary resource used is the student's clickstream data on the online learning platform. They are also known as "Micro Level data" in the field of Educational Data Mining. In this part, we talk about these characteristics and different research on the involvement of AI in evaluation.

Metacognitive and self-regulatory learning ability of students

Educational data mining researchers have conducted numerous studies investigating the connections between metacognitive skills and self-regulated learning (SRL) students' capacity to perform as demonstrated by Roll & Winne in 2015. These constructs assess a student's capability to control and manage their learning process. This is particularly important in more loosely organised platforms such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and similar platforms. Exploring this area requires creating models that represent the steps and activities carried out by students in the given context. Exploring the learning environment to discover potential support structures for promoting learning. Developers and engineers can utilise it to create improved interfaces and systems events (Roll & Winne,

2015; Aleven *et al.,* 2016). Micro Level clickstream data provides detailed insights into how students behave over time in online learning environments, capturing specific actions and system components they use. For instance, Park and colleagues (2017) examined how students interacted with course materials to create and validate a measure for effort regulation. They discovered that students who consistently reviewed course materials were more likely to pass compared to those with irregular review habits. Similarly, in a study by Park et al. (2018), clickstream data was used to develop and validate a measure for time management, revealing a connection between higher time management skills and better grades. Specifically, " A-grade students exhibited superior skills compared to 'B' grade students, who, in turn, surpassed 'C', 'D', and 'F' grade students.

How can AI be useful for online exams?

Artificial intelligence (AI) stands as a formidable force revolutionising numerous sectors, and education stands as no exception to its transformative power. Within the realm of online exams, AI's influence is palpable, offering a myriad of benefits for both students and educators alike.

The trajectory of AI's integration into education heralds a future where learning transcends conventional boundaries, reaching unprecedented heights. Despite apprehensions surrounding potential negative repercussions, the realisation dawns that AI possesses the capability to augment efficiency in the realm of online examinations, thereby propelling educational institutions towards greater efficacy and innovation.

AI's advent in the domain of online examinations underscores its capacity to enhance the overall experience for students and educators. By leveraging advanced algorithms and data analytics, AI streamlines the examination process, offering personalised feedback and insights to students, thereby fostering a more conducive learning environment.

One of the pivotal advantages of AI in online exams lies in its ability to mitigate issues of bias and subjectivity. Through machine learning algorithms, AI can assess responses objectively, ensuring fairness and equity in evaluation, regardless of individual differences or demographic factors.

Moreover, AI facilitates adaptive learning pathways, tailoring assessments to suit the unique needs and aptitudes of each student. By analysing performance data in real-time, AI can identify areas of strength and weakness, allowing educators to devise targeted interventions and personalised learning strategies.

Furthermore, AI's integration into online examinations catalyses innovation in assessment methodologies. From automated grading systems to virtual proctoring solutions, AI-driven technologies pave the way for the development of novel approaches to evaluation, fostering greater inclusivity and accessibility in education.

While concerns persist regarding the ethical implications and potential drawbacks of AI in education, proactive measures can be implemented to safeguard against misuse and ensure responsible deployment. By fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and upholding principles of transparency and accountability, stakeholders can harness the transformative potential of AI while mitigating associated risks.

In conclusion, the advent of AI in online examinations heralds a new era of educational advancement, offering unprecedented opportunities for innovation and efficiency. By embracing AI-driven technologies thoughtfully and responsibly, educational institutions can unlock new horizons in learning, empowering students and educators alike to thrive in the digital age.

Participatory research on proctoring

Certainly! In addition to the initial training, the researcher underwent continuous learning and support to enhance their proctoring skills. Regular workshops and refresher sessions were organised to keep them updated on the latest techniques and tools in proctoring technology.

The researcher also had access to a comprehensive guidebook that provided step-by-step instructions on various aspects of proctoring, from setting up the examination environment to handling technical glitches during the exam. This guidebook served as a valuable resource, offering practical tips and troubleshooting solutions for common challenges encountered during proctoring sessions.

Moreover, the researcher participated in collaborative discussions with fellow proctors and experienced supervisors to exchange best practices and insights. These interactions fostered a supportive environment where knowledge sharing and peer learning were encouraged, ultimately benefiting the quality of proctoring services provided.

Furthermore, the university administration regularly conducted evaluations and feedback sessions to assess the effectiveness of the proctoring process and identify areas for improvement. This feedback loop allowed the researcher to receive constructive criticism and refine their proctoring techniques accordingly, ensuring continuous enhancement of their skills and proficiency in the field.

Overall, the researcher's involvement in proctoring at the university was not just a task but a journey of continuous learning and development, supported by comprehensive training, resources, and collaborative engagement within the proctoring community. This approach underscored the university's commitment to maintaining academic integrity and providing a fair and secure examination environment for all students.

Proctoring

Proctoring online exams is crucial to maintaining fairness and exam integrity. With AI technology, proctoring becomes more efficient and effective. For instance, at Lovely

Professional University, AI-powered proctoring software is employed to monitor distance education students during exams.

This software utilises various technologies like facial recognition and eye tracking to keep a close eye on students. If a student looks away from the screen or tries to access another device during the exam, the AI system can detect it. Similarly, suspicious behaviours such as rapid mouse movements or copying and pasting can also be flagged by the AI proctoring software.

Example:

Initial Message to Students in written through chat and verbal communication

a. This is a proctored examination, please sit properly.

b. Kindly face towards the camera.

c. Do not talk with anyone and don't look here and there

d. Your camera and microphone should be working throughout.

e. You should never be out of the frame of the camera.

f. You should not use any unauthorised gadgets like smartwatches, earphones, etc.

g. If any student is having the subjective question and answer then they should get permission from the proctor then upload their file

h. Make sure after uploading the file students can ensure from the proctor about their file

Final warning to the student (3ʳᵈ warning)

You have already been issued warnings to stop the use of malpractice. Now you are being issued a final warning to stop using unfair means otherwise legal action may be taken against you

Observation:

General instruction student has started the test, and the student is giving the test properly. In suspicious activity: student is giving the test properly. Student microphone isn't working. Student seems to be set with some other student. Student is surely sitting with someone, the student is giving a gesture to someone, lightning in the student room is not proper.

Confirmed malpractice someone is surely sitting with the student (another person can be seen in the frame), someone is dictating the answer to student, student is copying from some other device /notebook /book, impersonation someone else is giving exam instead of the actual student

Example:

Imagine you're in class, and instead of just hearing your teacher's instructions, there's a smart computer quietly watching and listening to everyone. But this computer isn't snooping – it's there to help make learning better for you and your classmates.

Gestures: If you raise your hand to ask a question or use hand signals to show you're puzzled, the computer notices. It can tell when you're eager to participate or when you need some extra guidance. So, even if the teacher doesn't see you right away, the computer might give them a heads-up that you're waiting to speak or need some help.

Sounds: When you're discussing a topic or someone dictating the answer, the computer pays attention to the sounds in the room. If it hears someone struggling or sounding excited, it can let the teacher know. For example, if you're friend is dictating to you an answer to a math problem, or history problem, some someone is helping the answer in the exam and sounds frustrated, the computer might give an alert notification to the teacher or proctor who is sitting on the window to observe the students and marked them suspicious activity.

Facial expressions: Sometimes words can't tell the whole story. That's where facial expressions come in. The computer can look at your face and see if you're giving a facial gesture to your friend and mark the multiple-choice question answers according to your friend. The AI helps to observe the student through the web and provides the notification to the proctor to ask after observe their facial expression whether someone is sitting there or not why the student is sending the gesture messages to someone else

Internet issue: AI can detect the internet issues of students as well as help the proctor to refresh the window automatically

Imagine you're in an online class or taking a test, and suddenly the internet connection starts acting up. It's frustrating for both students and teachers.

Detecting internet issues: AI technology can keep an eye on the internet connection for everyone in the class. If it notices any problems, like a slow connection or sudden disconnection, it can quickly alert the teacher. This way, the teacher knows there's an issue and can take steps to fix it.

Automatic refreshing: Sometimes, when the internet connection is glitchy, the student's window might freeze or become unresponsive. The AI can detect when this happens and automatically refresh the student's window. This helps prevent students from missing out on important information or falling behind in the lesson or exam.

Assisting the proctor: Not only does AI help students, but it also assists the proctor or teacher. If there's a problem with the internet, the AI can notify the proctor and provide suggestions on how to resolve it. For example, it might suggest troubleshooting steps or switching to a different network.

In online learning environments or during exams, ensuring academic integrity is paramount, and artificial intelligence (AI) plays a pivotal role in maintaining fairness. One of the primary functions of AI in this context is detecting suspicious behaviour, such as whispering among students to solicit answers from peers. By monitoring audio inputs, AI systems can

swiftly identify instances of whispering or unauthorised communication and promptly alert the proctor. Subsequently, the AI system can take action by temporarily blocking the student in question from further participation in the exam or learning activity. This immediate intervention helps mitigate the potential for cheating and maintains the integrity of the assessment process. Following the alert and temporary block, the proctor can conduct further investigation, potentially involving confirmation through communication with the student and examination of the surrounding environment. If it turns out that the student was not engaged in dishonest behaviour, the proctor can unblock them, allowing them to resume their participation. By employing AI technology in this manner, educational institutions can uphold academic honesty while simultaneously leveraging advanced monitoring capabilities to ensure a fair and equitable learning environment for all students.

Alongside its monitoring abilities, AI systems also allow for direct communication through microphones, letting teachers talk to students individually or as a group. This means teachers can give instructions or answer questions in real time, making sure everyone understands what's going on. Whether it's helping one student privately or addressing the whole class together, the microphone feature makes teaching online more interactive and effective. Plus, it lets teachers provide extra help without disrupting the rest of the class. This way, teachers can adapt their approach to each student's needs, making sure everyone feels supported and included. Overall, the microphone feature in AI systems makes online learning more engaging and accessible for everyone involved.

Super proctor

Super Proctor **i**s an advanced examination proctoring platform that utilises cutting-edge technology, including artificial intelligence (AI) and computer vision, to monitor and invigilate exams securely and efficiently, particularly in online or remote settings. It offers comprehensive monitoring capabilities to detect and prevent cheating behaviours, real-time observation of multiple test-takers, robust authentication and identity verification features, and seamless integration with existing learning management systems (LMS) or exam platforms. Overall, Super Proctor aims to ensure the integrity and security of the examination process while providing a user-friendly and scalable solution for educational institutions and testing organisations.

Super proctor assigned the duty to 10 to 15 students

Under the watchful eye of the proctor, 12 out of the 15 students are given tasks to assist during the exam. These tasks might include duties like keeping an eye on the exam room, handing out test materials, helping with any technical problems that arise, ensuring everyone follows the rules of the exam, and making sure the environment remains calm and conducive to testing. Each student with assigned duties will have specific responsibilities to help ensure that the exam runs smoothly, all under the guidance and supervision of the proctor.

Proctors wield significant authority in managing the exam process, including assigning duties and overseeing student behaviour. They have complete control over every student taking the exam, ensuring compliance with exam rules and maintaining a secure testing environment. If a student lacks a partner for observation, the super proctor can seamlessly transfer them to another student's screen for closer monitoring. This proactive approach ensures thorough supervision and upholds the integrity of the examination, contributing to a fair and standardised testing experience for all participants.

Conclusion:

This chapter extensively discusses the diverse applications of AI tools and techniques in assessing and improving students' performance. In recent studies, there has been growing interest in 'blended learning', combining both offline and online learning environments. This emerging concept in education requires further exploration and research to benefit student performance optimally.

It's important to note that AI applications not only enhance students' academic performance but also contribute to their overall personality development, as mentioned earlier in this chapter. For example, various AI-enabled co-curricular activity tools have been developed to encourage students to pursue hobbies and interests beyond traditional studies. These tools promote a well-rounded approach to learning, fostering qualities like social responsibility and responsiveness.

Furthermore, AI-integrated platforms such as quizzing apps and educational games like chess and puzzles enhance students' knowledge and cognitive abilities beyond textbook learning. Despite increasing research on student performance analysis, the full potential of AI in education to enhance student performance has yet to be fully realised. Therefore, academic institutions and online course providers should actively adopt these AI-driven innovations and tools to further improve students' performance.

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INFLUENCERS OF B-SCHOOL SELECTION CRITERIA: A CASE STUDY

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Synopsis

MIMED, a leading B-School in central India, offers a prestigious AICTE-approved two-year Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) program across various streams. Consistently ranked among the top 50 B-Schools in the country, MIMED attracts significant interest from prospective management students. Despite numerous studies exploring the factors influencing B-School selection, Ajith Rajan, a second-year PGDM student from the 2013–2015 batch, decided to investigate the specific factors that influenced her juniors (PGDM Batch 2014–2016) to choose MIMED for their management education. As part of her Business Analytics elective project, Vijaya began with an extensive literature review to identify common determinants for selecting a B-School. Using insights from her review, she designed a questionnaire, refining it through multiple iterations before finalizing it. The survey, hosted on Google Docs, was shared with the first-year PGDM students. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Respondent Profile: Included questions about the respondents' name, age, educational background, work experience, and other demographic details. Influential Factors: Focused on key elements that motivated students to pursue management education and their specific reasons for selecting MIMED. Students were asked to rate 16 factors, such as placement records, tuition fees, scholarships, approvals, and accreditations, on a five-point scale ranging from least important (1) to most important (5). Additionally, Vijaya sought students' preferences regarding well-known B-School rankings. Out of the 360 students in the batch, 233 responded, achieving a response rate of approximately 65%. This case study serves as a practical example of applying descriptive and inferential statistics to real-world data analysis. It highlights the factors influencing students' decisions to pursue management education and, more specifically, their choice of a highly rated B-School. The dataset collected was further used to demonstrate statistical methods, including analyzing the impact of gender on the selection factors.

Learning objectives

1. Understand the factors influencing the decision to pursue management education.
2. Analyze and categorize factors critical to the selection of a premier B-School like MIMED.
3. Examine the role of demographic factors, such as gender, in influencing B-School selection criteria.

Assignment questions

1. What are the key factors that influence students to pursue management education?

2. Which factors were most critical in the selection of MIMED as a B-School for the PGDM program?

3. Does gender influence the selection criteria for a B-School? If so, how?

Suggested teaching plan and objectives

Teaching objectives

- Provide insights into the practical application of statistical tools in management research.
- Engage students in understanding how survey data is collected, analyzed, and interpreted.
- Demonstrate the application of SWOT analysis for a B-School selection framework.

Teaching plan

Activity	Instructional Strategy	Duration (Minutes)
Q1: Class Discussion	Guided discussion on factors influencing management education and MIMED selection.	45 minutes
Q2: Group Discussion	Group analysis of the data to determine key influencing factors for B-School selection.	45 minutes
Q3: Group Discussion	Analyze and debate the role of gender in B-School selection criteria using statistical tests.	45 minutes

Roadmap for discussion

1. Introduction and Context Setting

Objective:

Introduce the case and ensure all participants understand the background, objectives, and methodology of Vijaya's study.

Discussion Points:

Brief overview of MIMED as a premier B-School and its AICTE-approved PGDM program.

Vijaya's project objective: To identify factors influencing B-School selection, with a focus on MIMED.

Overview of the survey process, respondent demographics, and data collection methodology.

Facilitator's Role:

Summarize the background succinctly.

Highlight the importance of using data for strategic decision-making in education.

2. Identifying Key Factors Influencing Management Education

Objective:

Examine why students opt for management education.

Discussion Points:

What motivates students to pursue a PGDM? (Career growth, networking opportunities, interest in management skills, etc.)

Compare and contrast intrinsic factors (personal ambition) with extrinsic factors (market demand, salary prospects).

How do rankings and accreditations influence perceptions?

Facilitator's Role:

Encourage students to connect these motivations with their own educational journeys.

Highlight how such insights can shape marketing strategies for educational institutions.

3. Identifying Factors Critical to Selecting MIMED

Objective:

Analyze the specific factors that made MIMED an appealing choice.

Discussion Points:

Examine the 16 factors identified in the questionnaire (e.g., placement record, fees, scholarships, faculty, location, rankings).

Rank the factors based on their relative importance using survey findings.

Discuss the implications of these findings for MIMED's positioning and strategy.

Facilitator's Role:

Guide participants in interpreting survey results through descriptive statistics.

Use visualization aids (e.g., bar charts or pie charts) to illustrate factor rankings.

4. Analyzing the Impact of Gender on B-School Selection

Objective:

Investigate whether gender differences influence the selection criteria for a B-School.

Discussion Points:

Discuss the potential impact of gender on preferences for factors like placements, fees, or scholarships.

Explore cultural or societal influences that may affect gender-based decision-making.

Examine the results of inferential statistical tests (e.g., t-tests or chi-square tests) conducted on the data.

Facilitator's Role:

Explain statistical concepts and results in a simplified manner.

Highlight actionable insights for MIMED, such as tailored marketing approaches for different demographics.

5. SWOT Analysis for B-School Selection

Objective:

Perform a SWOT analysis to understand the broader context of B-School selection criteria.

Discussion Points:

Strengths: What makes MIMED or any B-School stand out? (e.g., placements, rankings, accreditations)

Weaknesses: Where can MIMED improve to attract more students? (e.g., digital presence, alumni engagement)

Opportunities: Emerging trends in management education (e.g., specialized courses, online programs).

Threats: Competition from new institutions or alternate education models.

Facilitator's Role:

Encourage creative brainstorming.

Relate SWOT analysis to actionable recommendations for MIMED.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations (10 minutes)

Objective:

Summarize the key learnings and propose strategic actions for MIMED based on the discussion.

Discussion Points:

What is the most influential factor for pursuing management education?

Which factors should MIMED prioritize to maintain its competitive edge?

How can MIMED address gender-specific preferences or concerns?

Facilitator's Role:

Ensure all perspectives are synthesized into a cohesive conclusion.

Highlight the importance of data-driven decisions in refining B-School offerings.

This roadmap ensures a comprehensive and engaging discussion while reinforcing learning objectives. Let me know if you'd like additional prompts or tools to enhance the activity!

SWOT Analysis for MIMED

A detailed SWOT analysis provides insights into the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats faced by MIMED as a premier B-School, helping it understand its current positioning and areas for improvement.

1. Strengths

a. Placement Records

Consistently strong placement statistics with high-profile recruiters attract students.

Diverse industry connections ensure a wide range of job opportunities.

b. Accreditation and Approvals

AICTE-approved programs and recognized accreditations establish credibility and trust among aspirants.

c. Rankings

Consistently ranked among the top 50 B-Schools in India, creating a strong brand reputation.

d. Central Location

Strategic location enhances accessibility for students from across the country, reducing logistical barriers.

e. Scholarship Opportunities

Scholarships and financial aid programs make education affordable for students from diverse economic backgrounds.

f. Faculty and Infrastructure

Qualified faculty and state-of-the-art infrastructure provide a conducive learning environment.

2. Weaknesses

a. High Competition

Competing with other premier B-Schools that have similar strengths, making differentiation challenging.

b. Limited Outreach

Reliance on rankings and traditional marketing may limit reach to new or underserved student demographics.

c. Fee Structure

While competitive, fees may still be considered high for certain student segments compared to public institutions.

d. Alumni Engagement

Scope for improving alumni network integration to enhance brand visibility and mentorship opportunities.

3. Opportunities

a. Rising Demand for Specialized Programs

Growing interest in niche areas like Business Analytics, Digital Marketing, and Sustainability Management.

Opportunity to introduce more industry-relevant electives and certifications.

b. Technological Advancements

Use of AI and data analytics for targeted marketing and understanding student preferences.

Integration of technology in teaching and learning methods (e.g., hybrid or online courses).

c. Global Collaborations

Partnerships with international universities for exchange programs and dual degrees can enhance appeal.

d. Emerging Markets

Potential to attract students from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities with affordable education and outreach initiatives.

e. Industry-Academia Collaboration

Enhanced collaboration with industries for live projects, internships, and placements can further improve the program's attractiveness.

4. Threats

a. Increasing Competition

Emergence of new B-Schools with competitive fee structures and specialized programs.

b. Economic Factors

Economic downturns or uncertainties may affect the willingness of students to invest in management education.

c. Alternative Learning Models

Rise of online education platforms and certifications (e.g., Coursera, edX, Google Career Certificates) offering affordable and flexible learning options.

d. Changing Preferences

Shifts in student preferences towards institutions with global exposure or highly specialized programs.

e. Regulatory Challenges

Changes in government policies or regulatory standards could impact operations and accreditations.

Key Takeaways from the SWOT Analysis

- Leverage Strengths: MIMED should capitalize on its placement record, rankings, and accreditations to maintain its competitive edge.
- Address Weaknesses: Enhance digital outreach, strengthen alumni connections, and explore fee-related solutions for better affordability.
- Seize Opportunities: Develop specialized programs and partnerships while expanding outreach to underserved regions.
- Mitigate Threats: Stay agile in adapting to competition, economic shifts, and evolving educational models through innovation and strategic planning.

This SWOT analysis provides a foundation for MIMED to refine its strategies and sustain its position as a leading B-School in India.

Conclusion:

Ajith Rajan's investigation into the factors influencing the selection of MIMED for management education offers valuable insights into the decision-making processes of prospective students. By analyzing data from her juniors in the PGDM 2014–2016 batch, the study sheds light on the key determinants that drive students to choose a B-School. The research, which combined both descriptive and inferential statistics, successfully identified several influential factors such as placement records, tuition fees, scholarships, and accreditations, which students ranked as critical in their decision-making. The results not only highlight the importance of these factors but also underscore the role that well-established rankings play in shaping students' perceptions of a B-School's value. The response rate of 65% (233 out of 360 students) provides a strong sample for the analysis, giving the findings a solid basis for generalization. The study also took a step further by incorporating gender analysis, examining whether there were any differences in how male and female students prioritized the selection factors. This added dimension deepened the understanding of how demographic factors could influence the decision-making process in the context of B-School selection. In terms of practical implications, the findings emphasize the need for B-Schools like MIMED to focus on the factors that students find most compelling, such as strong placement records, affordability, and scholarships. Additionally, maintaining a good standing in well-regarded B-School rankings can have a significant impact on attracting prospective students. Furthermore, the study highlights the growing importance of data-driven decision-making in understanding student preferences and aligning institutional offerings with market demands. Ultimately, Vijaya's project demonstrates the powerful role that business analytics can play in educational decision-making. The study not only provided

actionable insights for MIMED but also gave her an opportunity to apply statistical methods to a real-world scenario, showcasing the practical utility of analytics in addressing business challenges. By utilizing an empirical approach, Vijaya was able to uncover nuanced patterns in student preferences, which could serve as a guide for MIMED to enhance its recruitment strategies and improve its competitive positioning in the dynamic landscape of management education.

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VOLTECH INDIA LTD. REVIVAL STRATEGY: A CASE STUDY

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Synopsis:

Voltech India Ltd., a prominent manufacturer of LED bulbs dedicated to promoting energy conservation, found itself grappling with severe financial losses due to rising operational costs and intense market competition. To address these challenges, the management undertook a bold and controversial decision to relocate its production unit to a backward area. This move was driven by the strategic objective of reducing costs by utilizing the availability of low-cost labor in the region. The relocation was not without its hurdles. Workers were required to adapt to new conditions and were asked to work overtime to meet production demands. Despite the lack of immediate financial incentives, the management assured the workforce that their sacrifices would be rewarded with wage increments once the company achieved profitability. This mutual understanding between management and labor laid the groundwork for a cohesive and determined effort to revive the company. The initial phase post-relocation was challenging, with workers struggling to cope with extended hours and limited resources. However, the management's transparent communication and consistent encouragement played a crucial role in maintaining morale. Regular updates on the company's progress kept the workforce motivated, instilling a sense of shared purpose. Over time, the collaborative effort began yielding results, with improved productivity and reduced operational costs driving the company toward profitability.

Within a short period, Voltech India Ltd. witnessed a remarkable turnaround in its financial performance. The company not only overcame its losses but also established a robust foundation for sustainable growth. True to their promise, the management implemented wage hikes for the workers, further strengthening the bond of trust between the two parties. The success of Voltech India Ltd. underscores the importance of strategic adaptability, ethical labor practices, and the power of collective effort. While the decision to relocate raised ethical concerns about exploiting low-cost labor, the company's transparent approach and fulfillment of commitments set an example of balancing profitability with social responsibility. Looking ahead, Voltech must focus on embedding sustainability and innovation into its operations to stay competitive and uphold its commitment to energy conservation.

Learning objectives

1. Understand the ethical implications of business decisions during financial crises.

2. Analyze the role of effective management and teamwork in organizational recovery.

3. Assess the impact of relocation and cost-cutting strategies on profitability.

4. Evaluate the balance between short-term sacrifices and long-term gains for stakeholders.

5. Develop a SWOT analysis to understand strategic decision-making.

Discussion questions

Q1: Was the management's decision to relocate the unit to a backward area justified? Discuss the ethical implications.

Q2: What factors contributed to the company's turnaround? Evaluate the role of teamwork and mutual commitments.

Q3: How should Voltech India Ltd. ensure sustainable growth while maintaining ethical practices?

Teaching plan and objectives

Activity	Instructional Strategy	Duration (Minutes)	Objective
Q1: Class Discussion	Facilitate an open discussion on ethical and strategic decisions made by the management.	45 minutes	Evaluate the ethical and strategic justification of the relocation decision.
Q2: Group Discussion	Divide students into groups to analyze the role of teamwork in the company's recovery.	45 minutes	Understand the impact of mutual commitments on organizational success.
Q3: Group Discussion	Groups to brainstorm on sustainable practices for Voltech's future.	45 minutes	Develop strategies for long-term growth while maintaining ethical standards.

Roadmap for the discussion

1. **Introduction:** Provide a brief overview of the case, focusing on the challenges faced by Voltech India Ltd.

2. **Relocation Decision:** Debate the ethical and strategic implications of moving to a backward area.

3. **Worker-Management Collaboration:** Discuss the mutual sacrifices and commitments that led to success.

4. **Long-Term Strategy:** Explore how Voltech can maintain profitability and ethical integrity.

5. **Conclusion:** Summarize key takeaways and lessons learned.

SWOT analysis – Brief e xplanation

Strengths

Energy-efficient product (LED bulbs):

Voltech specializes in manufacturing LED bulbs, a product with high demand due to global emphasis on energy conservation. This positions the company as a key player in a growing market.

Availability of low-cost labor:

Relocating to a backward area enabled Voltech to reduce production costs significantly, giving it a competitive advantage.

Strong worker-management collaboration:

Mutual trust and shared commitments between workers and management facilitated the company's rapid recovery and established a productive workplace culture.

Weaknesses

Initial financial instability:

Severe financial losses before the turnaround weakened the company's market position and threatened its sustainability.

Dependence on unpaid overtime initially:

The company relied on workers' willingness to put in extra hours without immediate compensation, which could have demotivated employees if not handled carefully.

Ethical concerns in labor practices:

The decision to relocate and the lack of immediate overtime pay raise ethical questions that could harm the company's reputation.

Opportunities

Expanding market for LED products:

The increasing awareness of energy conservation provides Voltech with opportunities to grow its market share and cater to a diverse customer base.

Increased brand reputation through CSR:

By investing in corporate social responsibility initiatives, Voltech can build a positive image and gain customer loyalty.

Support from government incentives:

Operating in a backward area may qualify Voltech for subsidies or incentives, further reducing costs and boosting profitability.

Threats

Potential labor unrest if promises unmet:

Failure to fulfill promises of wage increments or improved conditions could lead to dissatisfaction among workers, resulting in strikes or decreased productivity.

Competition from established players:

Established competitors with greater resources could challenge Voltech's market share, particularly in pricing and innovation.

Negative publicity from unethical practices:

Ethical concerns, such as unpaid overtime or exploitation of low-cost labor, could damage Voltech's reputation and attract regulatory scrutiny or customer backlash.

Conclusion:

Voltech India Ltd.'s remarkable turnaround following its relocation of the production unit highlights several key lessons in strategic adaptability, effective labor management, and corporate responsibility. Faced with financial losses due to rising operational costs and fierce market competition, the company's decision to move its production unit to a backward region, while initially controversial, proved to be a pivotal strategic move. The utilization of low-cost labor in the new location successfully reduced operational expenses, offering Voltech an opportunity to regain its financial footing. However, this decision was not without its challenges. The workforce had to endure extended working hours, adapt to a new environment, and operate under constrained resources. Despite these hardships, the management's transparent and consistent communication played a crucial role in maintaining morale and motivating the employees. By offering regular updates and assurances about future wage increments upon achieving profitability, the company fostered a sense of shared purpose and trust.This mutual understanding between management and labor became the cornerstone of Voltech's recovery. Over time, the workers' increased commitment and the company's strategic actions led to improved productivity, reduced costs, and ultimately, a significant recovery in financial performance. True to their word, the management rewarded the workforce with wage hikes once the company reached profitability, solidifying the bond of trust between the two parties and fostering a culture of loyalty and dedication. The success story of Voltech India Ltd. serves as a powerful example of how strategic decision-making, when coupled with ethical labor practices and transparent communication, can lead to both financial recovery and long-term sustainability. While the decision to relocate raised ethical concerns about labor exploitation, Voltech's approach in honoring its commitments and treating workers fairly helped mitigate these concerns. Looking forward, the company must continue to innovate and embed sustainability into its operations, ensuring that it remains competitive while upholding its core values of energy conservation and social responsibility. By maintaining this balance, Voltech can continue to thrive in the evolving market while being a responsible corporate entity that values its workforce and contributes positively to society.

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CASE STUDY ON THE WORK-OUT PROCESS AT GENERAL ELECTRIC

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Synopsis:

In the early 1990s, General Electric (GE) faced challenges of bureaucratic inefficiencies and slow decision-making, which hindered its ability to respond swiftly to market demands and innovate effectively. To tackle these issues, GE introduced the Work-Out process, a bold initiative designed to break down organizational silos and foster a more collaborative, problem-solving culture. The core idea of the Work-Out process was to empower employees and managers at all levels to come together in informal, interactive sessions, where they could openly challenge existing processes and propose new, actionable solutions. The process was structured around a three-day meeting format, during which small teams of employees worked intensively on specific issues or challenges within the company. These teams were encouraged to think critically about current norms, identify inefficiencies, and come up with concrete recommendations for improvement. At the end of each session, the teams presented their findings at a "Town Meeting," which was attended by senior managers and executives. In these meetings, senior leadership committed to making on-the-spot decisions regarding the proposed changes, ensuring that valuable ideas were not lost in the bureaucratic red tape but rather quickly put into action. Over time, GE realized the effectiveness of the Work-Out process in addressing immediate inefficiencies, and the company expanded the initiative's scope to include broader strategic thinking and long-term planning. This evolution allowed GE to use the process not just for solving operational issues, but for driving innovation and adaptability within the organization. The Work-Out became a cornerstone of GE's organizational culture, encouraging open dialogue, cross-functional collaboration, and continuous improvement. It also fostered a sense of empowerment among employees, as they saw that their ideas were valued and could directly influence the company's direction. Through this initiative, GE was able to streamline decision-making, reduce unnecessary bureaucracy, and create a more dynamic and responsive organizational structure. The Work-Out process proved to be a key driver of GE's ability to innovate, adapt to changes in the market, and maintain its competitive edge in an increasingly fast-paced business environment. The success of the Work-Out process demonstrated the power of employee engagement, transparency, and cross-level collaboration in transforming organizational culture and performance.

Learning objectives

- Understand the Work-Out process and its impact on organizational culture and decision-making.
- Analyze how participatory problem-solving fosters employee empowerment and accountability.
- Evaluate the strategic benefits of integrating collaborative processes into organizational planning.
- Examine the role of leadership in facilitating rapid decision-making and execution.

Discussion questions

1. What were the primary goals of the Work-Out process at GE, and how were they achieved?
2. How does the Town Meeting format contribute to the effectiveness of the Work-Out process?
3. What are the potential challenges of implementing the Work-Out process in a large organization?
4. In what ways has GE evolved the Work-Out process to incorporate strategic thinking and long-term planning?
5. How can other organizations adapt the Work-Out process to suit their specific needs and challenges?

Teaching plan and objectives

Activity	Instructional Strategy	Duration (Minutes)	Objectives
Q1: Class Discussion	Instructor-led discussion	45 minutes	Understand the goals and execution of the Work-Out process.
Q2: Group Discussion	Team-based activity	45 minutes	Analyze the effectiveness of the Town Meeting format in decision-making.
Q3: Group Discussion	Peer-driven brainstorming	45 minutes	Explore challenges and adaptations for implementing Work-Out in other firms.

Roadmap for the discussion

1. **Introduction (10 minutes):** Brief overview of GE's Work-Out process and its historical context.
2. **Case analysis (15 minutes):** Focus on the specific features of the process (e.g., team-based problem-solving, Town Meeting).
3. **Strategic evolution (10 minutes):** Highlight how the process expanded to include strategic thinking.

4. **Challenges and solutions (10 minutes):** Discuss potential obstacles and how they can be mitigated.

5. **Q&A and summary (10 minutes):** Recap key learnings and address any remaining questions.

Roadmap for applying the work-out process in other organizations

Step 1: Identify Key Challenges

Engage stakeholders to pinpoint critical organizational issues.

Step 2: Assemble Diverse Teams

Include employees from various functions and hierarchical levels.

Step 3: Facilitate Open Dialogue

Conduct informal meetings to encourage creativity and out-of-the-box thinking.

Step 4: Ensure Immediate Decision-Making

Use Town Meetings to provide clarity and direction on recommendations.

Step 5: Monitor and Execute Rapidly

Assign clear accountability and track implementation progress.

Step 6: Evaluate Outcomes and Iterate

SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
Employee empowerment and engagement.	Requires significant managerial commitment.
Quick decision-making through Town Meetings.	Potential resistance to cultural change.
Promotes cross-functional collaboration.	Risk of oversimplifying complex issues.
Opportunities	**Threats**
Adaptable to other organizational contexts.	Risk of poor implementation in decentralized setups.
Supports strategic thinking and planning.	Reliance on leadership alignment and buy-in.

Conclusion:

The introduction of the Work-Out process by General Electric (GE) in the early 1990s marked a significant shift in how the company addressed organizational inefficiencies and decision-making delays. By focusing on empowering employees and fostering a collaborative, problem-solving environment, GE effectively dismantled bureaucratic barriers that had hindered innovation and progress. The structured three-day meetings, where small teams worked together to identify issues and propose solutions, encouraged employees at all levels to contribute ideas and challenge existing norms. The inclusion of senior managers in the process, who made on-the-spot decisions during the Town Meetings, ensured that the recommendations were not only heard but acted upon quickly, creating a culture of accountability and responsiveness. As the

Work-Out process evolved, GE expanded its scope beyond operational improvements to include strategic thinking and long-term planning, embedding the process deeply within the company's culture. This transformation played a key role in fostering an environment of continuous improvement and adaptability, allowing GE to stay competitive in an increasingly dynamic business landscape. The success of the Work-Out process highlighted the power of employee engagement, cross-functional collaboration, and the importance of rapid decision-making in driving organizational success. In conclusion, GE's Work-Out initiative demonstrated that when organizations empower their employees, encourage open communication, and streamline decision-making processes, they can overcome inefficiencies and drive meaningful change. The process not only led to improved operational performance but also established a foundation for long-term innovation, making it a cornerstone of GE's approach to organizational development. The Work-Out process serves as a model for other companies seeking to enhance their adaptability and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

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