

EDUDOC SERVICES: NEWSCLIPS



NEWSCLIPS

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News Clips for the Month of January

The Library and Documentation Division prepares News clips on monthly bases covering news item of school education, higher education and other related area of education.

These information product as a reference material for the benefit of our esteemed readers in their area of interest.

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Head, LDD

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Secure cyberspace for children

Long-term safeguards for online platforms that allow secure navigation for minors need to developed



OP SINGH AND BHAVYA YADAV

MULTIPLE LOCKDOWNS DURING Covid-19 forced children to turn to the internet for education, entertainment and everything in between. It led to an increase in their average screen time. This prolonged online exposure has increased threats to online safety for children. With the increasing popularity of social media platforms, utilisation of education apps and shift to online classes, children these days have a much higher chance of being exposed to harmful content. Hence, the need to secure children's welfare and safety online is more urgent than ever.

Online child sexual abuse and exploitation refers to activities such as the production and distribution of child sexual abuse material (CSAM), live streaming sexual assault of minors, obtaining sexually explicit material, exhibitionism and meeting the abuser in-person. This poses serious harm to children who experience psychological stress such as anxiety, trauma, and depression. It can also lead to behavioural changes like drug and alcohol abuse, self-harm, and lower motivation for academics. It doesn't end there, as the consequences of online sexual abuse in childhood are far-reaching and may well extend into adulthood — bringing forth issues with intimacy and affecting interpersonal relationships. Moreover, the danger to the child persists after the initial production and distribution of the recorded material, with each repeated viewing or sharing being a violation of the victim.

The rapidly evolving digital landscape and advances in information technology have given rise to better encryption services and the dark net, which provide a safe cover of anonymity to offenders, allowing them to engage in child sexual abuse. Needless to say, the danger and complexity of online abuse has escalated at an alarming rate and needs to be dealt with swiftly. Moreover, the ubiquitous nature of the internet and online interaction has made it so that almost all cases of child sexual abuse feature a virtual aspect. Therefore, a broad perspective and a systems-level approach should be considered when deciding on strategies to tackle online child sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA).

Broadly speaking, the main administrative challenges when dealing with OCSEA are limited law enforcement capacities, gaps in legislative framework, and a lack of awareness and urgency around the issue. Furthermore, the workforce in relevant social welfare organisations is understaffed. The need of the hour is close collaboration between non-traditional partners from the industry, government ministries dealing in technological communication, and law enforcement. Provisions should be in place to prevent future cases and safeguard the victims or survivors.

India has made a significant effort to tackle the wave of rising OCSEA cases in recent years. Not only has it improved the mechanism for reporting online offences against children, but it has also developed new tools and software to control and remove the presence of CSAM on social me-

dia and other platforms. Efforts have also been made to sensitise schools and boost the technological capacity of law enforcement agencies to further deal with the issue. Although this four-pronged model has shown some promising results, it is surpassed by the exponential rise in cases across the country.

According to the Model National Response, a joint review launched by UNICEF and WeProtect Global Alliance, there are six key domains for a country to focus on to effectively address this issue — policy and governance, criminal justice, industry, society and culture, research and victim support. Keeping these in mind, there are a number of ways India can better its response to child sexual abuse material. For starters, it is imperative to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of cross-sectoral governance mechanisms that are set up to systematise the national response to child sexual abuse material. The huge backlog for cases of OCSEA in India must also be fast-tracked. As for prevention, institutionalising the collection of national-level data on CSAM can also assist in strengthening children's online security. The recent Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2022 issued by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology can provide an opportunity to meet this exigency.

In addition, there should be further development of clear mandates and creation of a logical framework of roles and duties of all relevant stakeholders within standard operating procedures for investigation. Continuous dialogue between the industry, government and other collaborators, with a distinct agenda and division of responsibilities is necessary. Industry partners, in particular the IT industry, must be provided with suitable training and awareness of the magnitude of OCSEA, along with proper toolkits and guidance. Promoting a systematic and constant approach to training the judiciary and prosecution on CSAM can prove beneficial, if centred around child-sensitive protocols. In the same vein, comprehensive remedies or reparations for victims are just as important and need to be handled by a specialised workforce.

Furthermore, basic online safety measures, parental support initiatives and community awareness training can be integrated into existing education programmes for violence prevention, and sensitising the most vulnerable audience. Existing systems must be evaluated by monitoring and documenting their overall effectiveness and accessibility, including assessment of relevant hotlines and portals (checking to see if they are linked to relevant referral systems), and analysing context-specific reasons for limitations. Dedicated effort must be made to aid ethical and informed media reporting on relevant cases.

A collaborative effort of various institutions across the nation is required to build a safer cyberspace. The highest priority is assessment of current OCSEA response systems and reporting mechanisms, stricter implementation of prevention laws, and adequate resources to sustain these efforts. The end goal must be to ensure long-term safeguards for online platforms that allow secure navigation for minors and a disruption of the actions of offenders.

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Personal law vs child marriage prevention Act: issues before SC

APURVA VISHWANATH
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 15

THE SUPREME Court on Friday agreed to examine a decision of the Punjab and Haryana High Court that a Muslim girl could marry a person of her choice after attaining puberty. A Bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud said the HC's decision should not be relied on as a precedent in any other case.

In October 2022, another Bench of the Supreme Court had agreed to hear an appeal in the case and appointed senior advocate Rajshekhhar Rao as *amicus curiae*. The SC's intervention opens up the issue of regulating the minimum age of marriage for women, and the impact it has on personal law.

What was the HC's ruling?

In October last year, the Punjab and Haryana High Court while hearing a *habeas corpus* petition, ruled that a Muslim girl is free to marry a person of her choice after attaining

puberty, even if she is under the age of 18.

A 26-year-old Muslim man who had married a 16-and-a-half-year old girl had moved the High Court seeking custody of his spouse. The Punjab Police had taken custody of the girl since she was a minor.

Justice Vikas Bahl examined the girl's statement and noted in the judgment that "she had run from the house along with the present petitioner out of her own will as the detinue is fond of the petitioner and wished to marry him."

The girl, referred to as the detinue, also told the Panchkula magistrate in her statement under Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure that she "had run away from her house along with the present petitioner out of her own will and has stated that her family members forcefully engaged her with her maternal uncle and she has performed *nikah* with the present petitioner on 27.07.2022 in a mosque at Manimajra and she does not want to stay with her family and in fact, is married to the petitioner and wishes to reside with him".

Under these circumstances, the HC allowed the marriage of the girl as per her free will, especially since under Muslim law, a girl can be married after attaining puberty.

What is the Muslim law on the age of marriage for a woman?

The HC ruling quoted the *Principles of Mahomedan Law* by Sir Dinshaw Fardunji Mulla, on the capacity for marriage. It states:

Capacity for marriage:

(1) Every Mahomedan of sound mind, who has attained puberty may enter into a contract of marriage.

(2) Lunatics and minors who have not attained puberty may be validly contracted in marriage by their respective guardians.

(3) A marriage of a Mahomedan who is of sound mind and has attained puberty, is void, if it is brought about without his consent.

Explanation: Puberty is presumed, in the absence of evidence, on completion of the age of fifteen years.

What is the challenge to the HC order?

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) had moved the Supreme Court against the HC ruling. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta appearing for the child rights' body argued that the High Court's ruling essentially allows child marriage in violation of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006.

The plea argued that the Child Marriage Act is a secular legislation and would apply to all religions, overriding their personal law.

And what is the law on child marriage?

Under the 2006 Act, any marriage below the prescribed age of 18 years for women and 21 for men is illegal, and the perpetrators of a forced child marriage can be punished. However, child marriages, though illegal, are not void. They are voidable at the option of the minor party. This means the marriage can be declared void by a court only if the minor party petitions the court.

The NCPCR also argued that since the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 also does not recognise consent for sexual activity by minors, marriages on attaining puberty only cannot be allowed.

How have courts ruled on this issue?

Several High Courts have ruled differently on this matter.

The Karnataka High Court, in the case of *Seema Begum D/O Khasimsab vs State Of Karnataka* (2013), said that "no Indian citizen on the ground of his belonging to a particular religion, can claim immunity from the application of the P.C.M. (Prevention of Child Marriage) Act".

In February 2021, the Punjab and Haryana High Court granted protection to a Muslim couple (a 17-year-old girl married to a 36-year-old man), holding that theirs was a legal marriage under personal law. The HC examined provisions of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act but held that since the special law does not override

personal laws, Muslim law will prevail.

In 2021, the Centre introduced a Bill to increase the age of marriage for women and ensure harmony in the age limit across religions.

What is the proposed law?

Union Minister for Women and Child Development Smriti Irani had introduced a Bill in Lok Sabha to amend the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act to increase the age of marriage for women, and to ensure harmony in the age limit across religions. The Bill was subsequently referred to Parliamentary Standing Committee.

"All women from all faiths, under Hind Marriage Act or the Muslim Personal Law should get equal rights to marry," Irani had said while introducing the Bill. During the debate, E T Mohammed Basheer of the Indian Union Muslim League had said the Bill was unconstitutional and violative of Article 25, which guarantees the freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion.

EXPLAINED LAW

The Hindu, 3 January 2023, Pg-6 (3)

When degrees lose their worth

A student of law who was keen to start practising in a court decided to do a Master's course instead. Her decision was not based on second thoughts about joining the bar; she wants to do that after completing her Master's degree. She decided to postpone legal practice as she felt that the LLB degree had not given her a sufficient grip on the basics. This, she hopes, she will gain from the Master's course. Another factor guided her decision to pursue a higher degree. If she does not succeed in legal practice, she thought, a higher degree would give her an edge in the competitive exams held for jobs in the field of law.

An educational bazaar

Her decision reminds me of the classic book, *The Diploma Disease*, written by British economist Ronald Dore and first published in 1976. In 2001, a special volume was published to celebrate the continued relevance of Dore's book 25 years later. It is a rare book in that it offers a structural explanation for a widely prevalent phenomenon, namely the urge to gather more and more degrees. Instead of focusing on the behavioural aspect, as most scholars do, Dore links the phenomenon with the devaluation of qualifications. Dore noticed that the desire to accumulate more and more degrees and diplomas was gaining rapid popularity in many countries. He selected three of them in order to examine the phenomenon: Sri Lanka, South Korea and Japan. Although India was not a part of his sample, the insights Dore presented are equally pertinent to India, where their applicability is growing rapidly. Certificates,



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The driving force of the urge to collect degrees is located both in the education system and in the economy

diplomas and degrees are in great demand in what is literally an educational bazaar.

Dev Lahiri had chosen this title for his book narrating his experience as a renowned teacher and principal: *The Great Indian School Bazaar*. The title is just as relevant to higher education now, where a vast and varied market of qualifications has grown since the mid-1990s. Its growth feeds on itself, in the sense that the greater the variety of qualifications on offer, the faster grows the demand for them. A young candidate enrolled in one course wants to enrol in other courses. Permission for dual degree admission has further boosted the urge.

The driving force of this urge is located both within and outside the system of education. Internally, the system encourages students to gather additional qualifications by defining course content and its aims narrowly. Known as specialisation, this phenomenon is a response to the mystification of skills as distinct from knowledge. The phrase 'job ready' captures the attraction of sliver thin courses that cut the scope of learning so fine that one certificate can only lead the student to search for the next.

The greater driving force is externally located, i.e. in the economy. Economic growth has not resulted in expansion of satisfying employment in many countries. In India, the scarcity of worthwhile jobs is quite severe in many regions, even in cities, not to mention villages. The fear of joblessness fuels the urge to gain new eligibilities. Candidates for jobs often select the relevant domain of their multiple certifications in order to represent themselves as being suitable for a job. The volatility of the job market also implies that no job can last for long; hence the anxiety to become eligible for as many types of jobs as possible.

Delinking did not happen

In the 1980s, it was believed that delinking degrees from jobs might be a good idea to reduce the pressure on institutions of higher learning. The argument was that if jobs were delinked from formal qualification, it would discourage the young from accumulating certificates and degrees. The idea was reluctantly pursued due to the suspicion that self-educated job seekers might not have reliable qualities. In any case, the pressure to enrol in one course or another remained high. Students knew they could not be choosy, and their parents were also anxious to push their wards to stay enrolled rather than waste their time. Correspondence courses – now

called 'open' learning – proliferated. Later, the Internet also enabled the self-learning market. It has, to some extent, boosted self-employment, but the lure of formal jobs has not diminished. In fact, it has maintained remarkably high growth in the coaching market. Competitive exams now attract countless youth to indulge in what Craig Jeffrey, on the basis of his studies in India, has aptly described as the "politics of waiting".

Crisis of standards

Dore's thesis that devaluation of degrees is strongly associated with lowering of standards has proved correct. When a course does not give you what you expected to learn from it, you go for a higher level of the same course. The spiral is extended systemically when institutions face financial starvation, leading to chronic vacancies, dwindled support services and poor annual intake in libraries. Public institutions of higher education have suffered sustained hollowing out over the past three decades. Their inability to maintain standards while being forced to accommodate an increased number of students is reflected in the mass exodus to foreign systems and expensive private institutions. Students from deprived strata can't avail of these options. Just when they had begun to knock at the doors of higher education, its offerings entered into descent mode.

There are, of course, many other ways to explain the fall in standards of teaching and also in the expected diligence of students. Digital technology has made its own contribution to the noticeable changes in student behaviour. On a weekly consultation broadcast of the highly regarded Indira Gandhi National Open University, I heard the following statement one day: "Please read the programme guide carefully. Reading is a good activity for you." That a university has to emphasise the value of reading is a sufficient indicator of the silent crisis that has engulfed the system of education. A plethora of reforms introduced despite the weakening of routines due to the pandemic may not succeed in resolving the basic issues and tendencies that Dore had underlined nearly half a century ago. There is a considerable gap between the discourse of reform and the reality of our higher education system. Unwillingness to acknowledge the persistence of older problems has become a source of further systemic enervation. The nature and choice of reforms can certainly be improved by looking at the residues of past difficulties and at the COVID-19 impact.



अترپردیش ایجوکیشن سروس سلیکشن کمیشن کی تشکیل جلد

لکھنؤ، (ایس این بی)

اترپردیش کے وزیر اعلیٰ یوگی آدتیہ ناتھ نے آج منگل

کولوک بھون میں ایک اعلیٰ سطح کی میٹنگ میں ریاست کے

تعلیمی اداروں میں ٹیچر بھرتی کے عمل کا جائزہ لینے ہوئے متحدہ کمیشن کی

شکل میں اترپردیش ایجوکیشن سروس سلیکشن کمیشن کی تشکیل کے سلسلہ

میں ضروری ہدایات دیں۔ انہوں نے کہا کہ ریاستی سطح سے مداخلت نہ

ہونے کے سبب ریاست میں مختلف سلیکشن کمیشنوں کے طریقہ کار

میں شفافیت آئی ہے اور میرٹ کی بنیاد پر ان امیدواروں کا سلیکشن ہو

رہا ہے۔ انہوں نے کہا کہ ریاست میں آئی اس تبدیلی کا براہ راست

فائدہ نوجوانوں کو مل رہا ہے اور بیسک، ثانوی، اعلیٰ اور تکنیکی تعلیمی اداروں

میں اہل ٹیچروں کے انتخاب کیلئے علیحدہ علیحدہ افسر، بورڈ اور کمیشن ہیں۔

انہوں نے کہا کہ مستقبل کی ضروریات کے پیش نظر پالیسی ساز اصلاحات کے

سلسلہ میں ٹیچر سلیکشن کمیشنوں کو متحدہ شکل دیا جانا مناسب ہوگا جسے کمیشن بلدیہ کی شکل

میں اترپردیش ایجوکیشن سروس سلیکشن کمیشن کی تشکیل کی جانی چاہئے، جو ٹیچروں کے

پابندی وقت کے ساتھ انتخاب، انسانی وسائل کے بہتر استعمال اور مالی ڈسپن یقینی

وزیر اعلیٰ نے ٹیچر بھرتی عمل کا جائزہ لیا

پی ایس سی کی ٹی وی سائٹ کا افتتاح

بنانے میں اہم ثابت ہوگا۔ وزیر اعلیٰ نے کہا کہ کمیشن کے

ذریعہ بیسک، ثانوی اور اعلیٰ تعلیمی اداروں میں ٹیچروں کی

براه راست بھرتی کے سلسلہ میں رہنما اصول مرتب کئے

جائیں گے۔ ٹیچروں کی تقرری کے سلسلہ میں امتحان، انٹرویو کے

ذریعہ سلیکشن کا عمل پوزا کرتے ہوئے تقرری افسر کو سفارش کی جائے

گی، اس لئے مذکورہ نکات کے مطابق نئے کمیشن کی شکل، چیئر مین اور

ممبران کی اہلیت، کمیشن کے اختیارات اور کاموں کے سلسلہ میں خاکہ

مرتب کرتے ہوئے ضروری تجویز تیار کی جائے۔ انہوں نے کہا کہ

ریاست میں تعلیمی ماحول کو بہتر بنانے میں ریاست کے قدیم تعلیمی

اداروں کا اہم کردار رہا ہے۔ ریاستی حکومت سے امداد یافتہ مذکورہ ثانوی

اسکولوں میں موجودہ وقت میں اسٹیبلشمنٹ سہولیات کے فروغ کی ضرورت ہے۔

ایسے میں ٹیچروں، طلباء اور سرپرستوں کے وسیع تر مفادات کے پیش نظر منجمنٹ کی

امیدوں اور ضروریات کو ذہن میں رکھتے ہوئے مذکورہ اسکولوں کیلئے ایک بہتر حکمت عملی

تیار کر کے پیش کی جائے۔ انہوں نے کہا کہ ٹیچر اہلیت ٹسٹ (ٹی ای ٹی) کا انعقاد بھی

نئے کمیشن کے ذریعہ کیا جانا چاہئے اور یقینی بنایا جائے کہ ٹی ای ٹی وقت پر ہو۔



Success, distraction, anxiety at Kota's famous coaching factory

Shiv Sunny

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KOTA: Sitting in a park near his daughter's hostel in Kota, Vivek Kumar basks in a relieved smile, congratulating himself on a mission accomplished. For the last few months, the police head constable, posted in Sitapur in Uttar Pradesh, has spent most evenings calling his daughter's friends, checking about her attendance. Still suspicious, in the middle of December, he travelled 750km to the Rajasthan town unannounced, and unbeknownst to her, followed her for two days. He is now convinced; his daughter, he says, is sure to crack the NEET (National Eligibility cum Entrance Test). "Everyone already believes she is a doctor," Kumar, 43, said.

Kumar spends ₹12,000 a month as fee for his daughter to study at one of Kota's prominent coaching institutes, and ₹15,000 a month for her hostel accommodation. It stretches his government salary, something that he reminds his daughter about often. He refuses to spend money on a cup of tea because she must be aware of the family's sacrifices. But the goal is clear. Above him is one of the many advertising hoardings that dot every vacant inch of space in the city. "I want my daughter to be up there, with a photograph proclaiming she is one of the NEET toppers," he said.

But, as has been becoming ever clearer over the past few years, the Kota narrative isn't only about aspiration. On December 12, 2022, three students of coaching institutions killed themselves on a single day. From 2011, government data shows that as many as 121 students have died by suicide, 15 in 2022 alone. That number has begun ticking in 2023 already. On Sunday evening, a 17-year-old JEE aspirant from Shahjahanpur was found hanging in his hostel room.

In the wake of the December deaths, HT spent a week in Kota

interacting with students, parents, teachers, coaching institute owners, psychiatrists and district administration officials, to piece together the story of life (and death) in Kota, India's coaching factory, where a heady, often poisonous mix of rigour and expectation produces IIT and NEET toppers from one end, but broken youngsters from the other.

The industry and stress

Kota is around 250km from Rajasthan's state capital Jaipur, and coaching centres didn't always define it. Until the early 1980s, the town was popular for its Doria sarees, fine grained limestone called the Kota stone, and the manufacturing of yarn and fertilisers. In 1978, a mechanical engineer, VK Bansal, who then worked for a chemical firm in the town, first began teaching a bunch of local students. "In 1981, one of his students cracked the IIT exam," said Akhilesh Jain, general manager of Bansal Classes, the first formal coaching institute to come up in Kota.

Word of success quickly spread; Bansal Classes went from strength to strength; and VK Bansal came to be known as the "Bhishma Pitamah" (elder statesman) of the coaching industry. Around the same time, the Allen Career Institute that now enrolls close to half of all students in Kota and is the biggest test-prep company in town, began operations too. "Tuition had become a necessity. We began around the same time as Bansal. They focused on IIT preparations, we were into medical," Naveen Maheshwari of Allen Institute said. Four-and-a-half decades later, Kranti Jain, president of the Kota Vyapar Mahasangh, says there are 250,000 students who study for various entrance examinations in Kota, serviced by at least 2,500 hostels. While there is

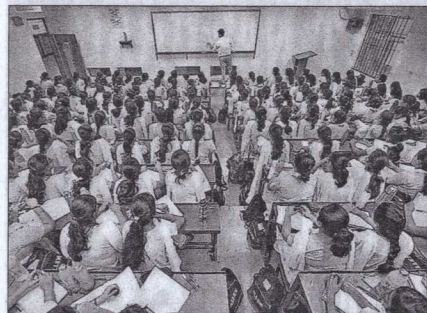
little official data, estimates by coaching institute owners put the annual revenue from that at ₹3,000 crore a year.

Most institutes recruit students after they graduate from school, some even earlier, and prepare them for entrance examinations ranging from the medical stream, engineering, law, and chartered accountancy. A student will typically wake up at around 5.30am, rush through breakfast, and arrive at the coaching institute by 6.15am. There are three classes that span between 75 and 90 minutes, and at least an hour spent at "doubt counters" to clarify any questions. The rest of the day is spent on daily practice problem (DPP) sheets — a term used in Kota for homework — meals, and daily chores.

The students spend no time in regular schools, although admission to both engineering and medical colleges requires that they have finished school; for this, there are local schools where they are enrolled. But they do not have to attend classes; only appear for the school-leaving examinations conducted by the board. Then, there are students who have finished school elsewhere, and are in Kota on a gap year, to prepare for college.

In the frenetic survival-of-the-fittest culture that dominates Kota, a sense of inadequacy can quickly set in. "I was a board topper among 80 students in my class. Here, I was suddenly thrown amid 80,000 toppers," said Laiba Fathima, an 18-year-old NEET aspirant from Bihar studying at the Allen Career Institute.

Experts suggest that, in an ideal world, students should be "mentally readied" for six months before they are sent to Kota. Nitin Vijay, physics teacher and founder of Motion Coaching, for instance, says he offers an "Experience Kota" option, where students can



Around 250,000 students study for entrance exams in Kota. HT FILE

decide whether they continue after a week. "At least 10% of students leave in the middle of that week." A 2015-16 survey by Kota's School of Management and Commerce Studies said that 42% of teachers believed that only half of all students who come to Kota stand a chance of succeeding in competitive examinations.

This has led to suggestions that coaching centres should conduct screening tests. But Maheshwari of the Allen Institute argues, "Students in Kota that have poor board exam marks and inadequate schooling have made it to IITs because of sheer hard work. Who are we to deny them a dream based on a test?" Institutes also say the secret to Kota's coaching industry is to simplify complicated concepts, and make them accessible. "Kota's speciality is the ability to teach in the form of storytelling. The words we use in our classes are carefully chosen to be graspable... Most students can succeed by following 50% of our instructions," said RK Verma, a mathematics teacher and founder of Resonance Coaching.

Once in, the pace is relentless. A missed class or two, or a week of illness, sets students back. Dates for the examinations — NEET

examinations are held in May, JEE in January and April — do not change (except perhaps for a world-altering pandemic). The schedules are not designed individually — one batch of classes typically has anywhere between 100 and 250 students in an academic year — and the onus is on them to keep pace. Coaching centres do have "special classes" for students to claw back, but students often fall behind regardless. "I was ill for a while, and from the front benches, I moved to the last bench because the course moved forward... By the end of the year, I would play 'book cricket' at the back of the class to pass the time," said Gaurav, who only wanted to identify himself with his first name, an 18-year-old IIT aspirant.

Institutes are punctilious about attendance — parents are called when their ward misses classes — but there are many who find ways around these systems. Investigators who looked at the three suicides on December 12 said two of them were getting their friends to punch in attendance cards. "A third found a way to replace his parents' phone number with his own," said deputy superintendent of police Amar Rathore.

Several big institutes have also

created a division within their own ranks, commonly known as 'special rankers group' (SRG), which separates 50-70 students in an academic year. Members of SRG are those with consistently high marks in internal exams, and the process of handpicking them begins within a couple of months of the course commencing.

Once picked, these students have access to better hostels, personal attention from teachers, even free coaching. But for the vast majority, this segregation means a sense of desolation, and anxiety. "Teachers drink tea with SRG, but we aren't even allowed to interact with them. For the institutes, they are rankers, we put the money in the bank," said a distraught Abha Joshi, a NEET aspirant from Rajasthan.

Coaching institutes, however, argue that the shuffling of batches is a "necessary evil". "Weak students cannot grasp advanced concepts, and we cannot slow down the bright ones. Everyone benefits from shuffling," said Amit Jain, a chemistry teacher at Allen.

Pressures of life beyond classes and hostels

Beyond pressure within the classroom, Kota is also the story of young men and women, emerging out of the cocoon of living at home for the first time in their lives, and struggling with life and love. With its reputation as a launchpad for competitive success, Kota draws its 250,000-student population from all over India; from metros, from tier 2 and 3 towns; even from India's villages. For most, this is the first time they live outside the sanctuary that is home.

Over the years, Kota has evolved into a city that caters to its young core. Its streets are peppered with coffee shops, malls, and bars. Akhilesh Jain, general manager of Bansal Classes, said: "Students come here to study, but they are young. There are distractions from the opposite gender,

phones, and social media."

Kesar Singh Shekhawat, superintendent of police, Kota, said, "It is natural, but it is also true that several student suicides have their roots in relationships that have gone wrong." Investigations into one of the 15 student suicides in Kota last year revealed that a 17-year-old girl jumped to her death from her hostel room, even as her parents waited downstairs, luggage in hand. "Her parents found out about her relationship because her phone was constantly busy. So, they arrived to take her away," said Omprakash Bunkar, Kota's district magistrate.

Dr Chandrashekar Sushil, senior professor of psychiatry and former superintendent of Kota's Medical College and Hospital said that most students complain both of academic pressure and reasons such as these. "There are many students who enter relationships, or find themselves in bad company. This can result in poor academic performance and the subsequent fear of pressure from home." The institutional response to this is often predictably restrictive. Mamta Pandey, who operates a 36-room boys' hostel, says that students are made to remove social media applications, their interactions with girls from the neighbouring hostel are barred, and parents are informed if their ward is out after 9pm. "What I consider carefully is whether to call parents if the student is not studying seriously. Mostly I don't because it can drive a student to depression and fear," she said.

The path forward

Coaching institute owners and teachers argue that Kota's student suicides receive disproportionate attention. They point to 2021 NCRB data which shows that "failure in examination" was a cause for 29 deaths in Dhanbad, 13 in Nashik, 14 in Patna, and 18 in Vadodara. "There is an attempt to malign Kota and bring down the

coaching eco-system here," Maheshwari said.

To be sure, several top coaching institutes such as Allen and Resonance have teams of psychiatrists on campus, as well as an active students' welfare association in the town. "Only a few suicides are purely academics-related. There are children that find it difficult to leave their comfort homes, exacerbated by parents telling their children not to return home without succeeding," said Dr. Harish Sharma, Allen's principal psychologist.

But both the district administration and the state government view student suicides as a problem. On December 15, the Kota district administration issued guidelines which asked institutes to find ways to gauge interest and aptitude in students, portray a correct sense of their success rate, and ensure a refund of money if students quit mid-term.

The Rajasthan government is also expected to introduce a bill in the budget session of the Assembly, starting on January 23, proposing an aptitude test for students before admission, a ban on the display of pictures of toppers of different entrance examinations to prevent their glorification, and a mandate to all coaching institutes to set up career counselling cells.

Most in Kota, however, believe that the atmosphere of a cauldron of relentless competition will persist. "Our industry delivers what it promises — nothing more and nothing less. Competition will always cause stress," said Sameer Bansal, director of Bansal Classes.

In his small hostel room in Kota's Mahaveer Nagar, Nitin Nayan has a framed photograph of his parents, who live in Bihar, on his crowded desk. The photograph is double-edged; eliciting both inspiration and fear. "Whenever I imagine failure, I look at their picture," he said. "Failure is simply not an option."

Hindustan Times, 19 January 2023, Pg-2 (5)

(6)

A plea for equity in education

Draft rules for foreign universities emphasise quality without measures to ensure equal access



SUKHADEO THORAT

THE UNIVERSITY GRANTS Commission has released a set of draft rules to facilitate foreign universities in setting up campuses in India. An editorial in this newspaper welcomed the move ("Going Global", IE, January 7, 2023) on the grounds that it "could herald long overdue transformations in the country's higher educational milieu." However, I am not as optimistic about the move — or indeed the larger policy framework on higher education that it is set in, from the point of equity and inclusiveness.

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) envisions a complete overhaul of the education system. The focus is on combining the goal of quality and equity. However, while the measures for quality improvement are clearly specified, those related to equity are left to the state governments and education institutions with a long advisory. Further, while the follow-up regulations for quality improvement have been issued at an unusually high speed by the UGC, the foreign university regulations being the latest, the regulations for ensuring equal access are not forthcoming with the same eagerness.

The implementation of quality measures alone is likely to further reduce the access of weaker sections to higher education, as they possess elements which may enhance unequal access, unless the government comes with corresponding measures to safeguard them.

The main proposals for quality improvement include creating unitary universities in place of affiliating universities, dual duration Bachelor's/Master's/BEEd degree, National Entrance Test for admission, promotion of private education and foreign university campuses.

The first policy suggestion is the switchover from the affiliating university system to the unitary university system with large multi discipline campuses. Unitary universities are recognised as being better than affiliating universities, as the same pool of teachers teach all courses, including at the undergraduate level. Therefore, the NEP proposed the de-affiliation of colleges from state universities and their conversion into cluster unitary universities. The affiliating state university system, however, offers easy and cost-effective access to students from weaker sections of society due to their physical proximity to colleges in small/medium towns and even large villages. On the other hand, the NEP prioritises large unitary universities located in big towns. The way out is to create cluster unitary universities by de-affiliating colleges, keeping the present decentralised geographic location intact to

ensure both quality and equity.

The second measure relates to the dual duration Bachelor's (three and four years), Master's (one and two years) and BEEd (two and four years) degrees. Students who discontinue their studies get a certificate or diploma, with the provision to return and complete their degree and the earlier credit deposited in "credit bank." While this seems like a good idea, it may push poor students to go for a Bachelor's degree of three years' duration rather than four, because that would be cheaper. This could create a hierarchy, as those with degrees of longer duration might get preference in employment.

The third measure is holding national entrance tests for admissions. These tests are invariably biased against students from weaker sections. The Rajan Committee Report from Tamil Nadu clearly indicates that after the entrance test was introduced, some students who scored more at the higher secondary level, did not find a place on the admissions lists, but those with lower marks who could afford private coaching did. There is no justification for holding a national entrance test for all subjects while our higher educational attainment rate remains low. For instance, in 2017-18, the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) was 13 per cent for the bottom income group, 16 per cent for STs, 21 per cent for SCs and 16 per cent for Muslims. In fact, the GER of the bottom income group from STs and SCs was 7 per cent, and 12 per cent respectively. At such a low level of GER, we should have a fairly open admission policy for weaker sections.

Another issue is the lack of a policy to improve the access of students from weaker sections to private institutions. In 2017-18, the average fee per student per year was Rs 29,834 in private unaided institutions, Rs 21,596 for private aided and Rs 6,912 for government institutions. Of the total students in the private-unaided institutions, the share of students from the bottom income quintile was almost four-and-a-half times less

than those from the top income quintile. The NEP should have definite measures to ensure access for the poor in the private education sector.

Allowing foreign universities to open campuses will have a similar impact on access. The best alternative is to have institution-to-institution collaborations which would improve access for students from weaker sections, and lead to improvements in the capabilities of domestic collaborating institutions. The best of our institutes, such as the IITs and IIMs, were set up in collaboration with the best institutes from the US, Russia and Germany in the 1970's, and not by opening foreign university campuses. The Ford Foundation had played an important role in collaborations with US institutions.

It is clear that measures for quality improvement alone will further restrict the access of students from weaker sections to higher education, unless accompanying regulations for ensuring equal access are also issued. This calls for equal emphasis on measures for quality and equity.

The writer is former chairman, UGC

DEAR EDITOR, I DISAGREE

A fortnightly column in which we invite readers to tell us why, when they differ with the editorial positions or news coverage of 'The Indian Express'

The Hindu, 19 January 2023, Pg-12

7

Report flags widening learning gaps

The ASER 2022 report shows that government schools saw a sharp rise in enrolment for the first time in 16 years; basic literacy levels of children have taken a big hit, with their reading ability, as compared with numeracy skills, worsening much more sharply and dropping to pre-2012 levels

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

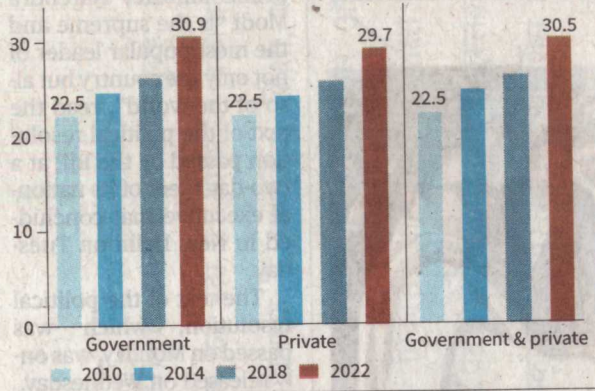
As schools reopened after nearly two years of closure due to COVID-19, student enrolments increased to more than pre-pandemic levels, but the learning gap widened for foundational skills in reading and arithmetic, reversing several years of improvement, finds the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2022, released by Pratham, a non-governmental organisation, on Wednesday.

The national-level study shows that despite school closures during the pandemic, the overall enrolment figures, which have been above 95% for the past 15 years for the six-to-14 age group, increased from 97.2% in 2018 to 98.4% in 2022.

The ASER is a household survey conducted across 616 rural districts covering 6.9 lakh children in the three-to-16 age group to record their schooling status and assess their basic reading and arithmetic skills. The report is being brought out after four

Tuition trends

Across India, the proportion of students from classes I to VIII taking paid private tuitions increased from 26.4% in 2018 to 30.5% in 2022, according to the latest report from ASER



years and records the impact of school closures in 2020 and 2021, as well as the return to school of children in 2022. The proportion of children in the three-to-16 age group who are not currently enrolled dropped to its lowest level ever from 2.8% to 1.6% in 2018, when the last full-scale ASER survey was conducted.

Government schools have seen a sharp increase in children enrolled from 65.6% in 2018 to 72.9% in 2022, reversing another trend of a steady decrease

in student enrolments seen since 2006, when it was at 73.4%. Children's basic literacy levels have taken a big hit, with their reading ability compared with numeracy skills worsening much more sharply and dropping to pre-2012 levels.

The percentage of children in Class 3 in government or private schools who were able to read at the level of Class 2 dropped from 27.3% in 2018 to 20.5% in 2022. This decline is visible in every State, and for children in both government and private

schools. The States showing a decline of more than 10 percentage points from the 2018 levels include those that had higher reading levels in 2018, such as Kerala (from 52.1% in 2018 to 38.7% in 2022), Himachal Pradesh (47.7% to 28.4%), and Haryana (46.4% to 31.5%). Large drops are also visible in Andhra Pradesh (22.6% to 10.3%) and Telangana (18.1% to 5.2%).

Nationally, the proportion of children enrolled in Class 5 in government or private schools who can at

least read a Class 2-level text fell from 50.5% in 2018 to 42.8% in 2022. The States showing a decrease of 15 percentage points or more include Andhra Pradesh (from 59.7% in 2018 to 36.3% in 2022), Gujarat (from 53.8% to 34.2%), and Himachal Pradesh (from 76.9% to 61.3%).

Basic reading ability

The drops in basic reading ability are smaller for Class 8 students, where 69.6% of children enrolled in government or private schools who could read at least basic text in 2022 falling from 73% in 2018.

Class 3 students who were able to at least subtract dropped from 28.2% in 2018 to 25.9% in 2022. While Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh maintained or improved slightly over 2018 levels, steep drops of more than 10 percentage points are visible in Tamil Nadu. The proportion of children in Class 5 across India who can carry out division has also fallen slightly from 27.9% in 2018 to 25.6% in 2022.

The performance of

Class 8 students in basic arithmetic is more varied. Nationally, the proportion of children who can do division has increased slightly, from 44.1% in 2018 to 44.7% in 2022. This increase is driven by improved outcomes among girls as well as among children enrolled in government schools, whereas boys and children enrolled in private schools show a decline from the 2018 levels. Children in Class 8 in government schools did significantly better in 2022 than in 2018 in Uttar Pradesh (from 32% to 41.8%) and Chhattisgarh (from 28% to 38.6%), but were worse off in Punjab (from 58.4% to 44.5%).

While families withdrew students from private schools to save money on fees, they invested in private tuitions, which increased as the proportion of such students rose from 26.4% in 2018 to 30.5% in 2022 in private and government schools. This may be the reason learning gaps are sharper in reading because students typically choose to study maths and science in tuition classes.

Story of a recovery



WILIMA WADHWA

First ASER survey after pandemic frames the disruption in learning, and its revival

AFTER A GAP of four years, the national ASER survey was back in the field in 2022, reaching 616 rural districts of the country to understand children's enrollment status and basic reading and arithmetic ability. The Covid pandemic had caused schools to shut down in March 2020, and India had one of the longest school closures in the world — primary schools were closed for almost two years. The impact of the pandemic on the education sector was feared to be twofold — learning loss associated with long school closures, and higher dropout rates, especially among older children, due to squeezed family budgets.

During the Covid period, ASER looked for opportunities to go back to the field and was able to conduct representative surveys in three states in 2021 — Karnataka in February, Chhattisgarh in October and West Bengal in December. Estimates from these three state-level surveys could be used to understand the extent of children's learning losses. These state level estimates are extremely useful as they are the only ASER estimates of learning we have between 2018 and 2022.

For the country as a whole, learning levels had been rising slowly between 2014 and 2018, after being stagnant for several years. For example, at the all-India level, the proportion of children in Class III who could read a Class II level text (a proxy for grade-level reading) had risen from 23.6 per cent in 2014 to 27.2 per cent in 2018. ASER 2022 shows a big drop in this proportion to 20.5 per cent. This 7 percentage point fall is huge, given how slowly the all-India numbers move and confirms fears of large learning losses caused by the pandemic. In math also, learning levels had risen slowly between 2014 and 2018. The 2022 estimates show a drop here as well although much smaller than in the case of reading.

However, the four-year period between these measurements encompasses both the

Extrapolating from the experience of the three states for which we have 2021 data, we can assume that other states also experienced large learning losses during the pandemic. However, once schools reopened, states made a concerted effort to build or re-build foundational competencies, which has resulted in a partial and in some cases, a full recovery. The extent of the recovery varies across states depending on how long their schools were closed as well as when they initiated learning recovery measures.

period of school closures as well as the initial six to eight months after school reopening, depending on the state. As mentioned earlier, ASER managed to assess learning levels in three states — Karnataka, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal — in 2021, when schools were still closed or had just reopened. While these are not national estimates, they provide an interim measurement that is more reflective of pandemic-induced learning losses than the estimates for 2022. Across all three states, there were large learning losses in both reading and math in 2021 — in excess of 7 percentage points, except in the case of Std V in West Bengal. The loss in reading is a little higher, though not by much. In both reading and math, the 2021 learning levels in these three states fell below their 2014 levels. A year later, ASER 2022 data shows that across all three states, there has been a recovery in both reading and math (except Karnataka in reading and West Bengal in reading in Std V) after schools reopened in 2021-22. In other words, while the 2022 learning levels were still below or in some cases close to the 2018 levels, comparing 2018 with 2022 hides the dramatic fall in learning levels observed between these two points and the subsequent recovery that has happened in the last year.

Another big development during 2020-21 was the introduction of the new National Education Policy (NEP) in 2020. For the first time, there was a big focus on the early years and the importance of foundational competencies. Once schools reopened, states moved quickly and almost all states have made a major push in the area of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) under the NIPUN Bharat mission (National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy). This push is reflected in the ASER 2022 data. As part of the survey, ASER field investigators visited one government school in each of the sam-

pled village to record enrollment, attendance and school facilities. This year we asked whether schools had received any rectify from the government to implement FLN activities in the school and whether teachers had been trained on FLN. At the India level, 81 per cent schools responded that they had received such a directive. 83 per cent said that at least one teacher at the school had been trained on FLN.

Extrapolating from the experience of three states for which we have 2021 data, we can assume that other states also experienced large learning losses during the pandemic. However, once schools reopened states made a concerted effort to build or build foundational competencies, which resulted in a partial and in some cases, a full recovery. The extent of the recovery varies across states depending on how long their schools were closed as well as when they initiated learning recovery measures. For instance, Chhattisgarh was one of the earliest states to reopen their primary schools in June 2021, giving them a longer period to work with children, as compared to, for instance Himachal Pradesh or Maharashtra, where schools reopened much later. Taking into account the 2021 figures, the 2022 estimates for Chhattisgarh point to a remarkable recovery, in both reading and math, that is hidden if we just compare 2022 with 2018. The absence of a 2021 measurement for other states, it is difficult to say what the origin pandemic-induced learning loss was — from which states are aiming to recover.

Now that the NEP has set clear FLN goals for the entire country, states can find different pathways to achieve these goals. While there have been learning losses, there has also been recovery once the schools reopened. Accounting for all the interim measurements, ASER 2022 estimates tell a story of recovery rather than one of loss.

The writer is Director ASER Centre

जनसत्ता ; 19 जनवरी 2023 ; पृष्ठ- 1

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शिक्षा की वार्षिक स्थिति रिपोर्ट (एएसईआर) 2022 विद्यालय जाने वाली लड़कियों का अनुपात देश भर में दो फीसद बढ़ा

जनसत्ता ब्यूरो
नई दिल्ली, 18 जनवरी।

भारत में स्कूल नहीं जाने वाली लड़कियों का अनुपात 2022 में अब तक की सबसे कम दर दो फीसद पर आ गया है। यानी स्कूल जाने वाली छात्राओं की संख्या में इजाफा हुआ है। बुधवार को जारी शिक्षा की वार्षिक स्थिति रिपोर्ट (एएसईआर) 2022 में यह जानकारी दी गई है। रिपोर्ट में यह भी कहा गया है कि समग्र गिरावट के बावजूद, तीन राज्यों मध्य प्रदेश, उत्तर प्रदेश और छत्तीसगढ़ में 10 फीसद से अधिक लड़कियां स्कूल नहीं जा रही हैं जो चिंता का विषय है।

स्कूल नहीं जाने वाली लड़कियों का कुल अनुपात 2018 में 4.1 फीसद और 2006 में 10.3 फीसद था। नवीनतम अध्ययन में ग्रामीण भारत में कुल 19,060 गांवों का सर्वेक्षण किया गया है जिसमें 3,74,544 परिवार और तीन से 16 वर्ष की आयु के 6,99,597 बच्चे शामिल हैं। रिपोर्ट के अनुसार महामारी के दौरान लंबे समय तक बंद रहने के बावजूद स्कूलों में दाखिले के आंकड़े 98 फीसद से

विद्यार्थियों के 'ट्यूशन' पढ़ने के अनुपात में हुई बढ़ोतरी

कोरोना महामारी से पहले की तुलना में देश भर में स्कूल के बाद 'ट्यूशन' जाने वाले विद्यार्थियों की संख्या में चार फीसद से ज्यादा की बढ़ोतरी हुई है। एएसईआर रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक, उत्तर प्रदेश, बिहार और झारखंड समेत कुछ राज्यों में 'ट्यूशन' जाने वाले विद्यार्थियों की संख्या आठ फीसद बढ़ी है। अहम रिपोर्ट यह भी बताती है कि ग्रामीण भारत में पहली से आठवीं कक्षा तक के

बच्चों का बीते दशक में 'ट्यूशन' लेने के अनुपात में लगातार बढ़ोतरी हुई है। रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि 2018-2022 के बीच यह अनुपात सरकारी व निजी दोनों प्रकार के स्कूलों के विद्यार्थियों में बढ़ा है। राष्ट्रीय तौर पर पहली से आठवीं कक्षा के बच्चों का 'ट्यूशन' लेने का अनुपात 2018 में 26.4 फीसद था जो 2022 में बढ़कर 30.5 फीसद हो गया है।

अधिक के सर्वाधिक उच्च स्तर पर पहुंच गए। रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि इस अवधि के दौरान बड़ा बदलाव सरकारी स्कूलों में दाखिला लेने वाले बच्चों की बढ़ती संख्या है। इसमें कहा गया है, 'छह से 14 आयु वर्ग के लिए दाखिला दर पिछले 15 सालों से 95 फीसद से ऊपर रही है।

महामारी के दौरान स्कूल बंद होने के बावजूद, ये आंकड़े 2018 में 97.2 प्रतिशत से बढ़कर 2022 में 98.4 फीसद हो गए हैं।' रिपोर्ट के अनुसार सभी

कक्षाओं के स्कूली छात्रों की पढ़ाई संबंधी क्षमता 2012 से पहले के स्तर तक गिर गई है, जबकि बुनियादी गणित कौशल 2018 के स्तर तक गिर गया है। इससे पता चलता है कि ज्यादातर राज्यों में सरकारी और निजी स्कूलों में लड़कों और लड़कियों दोनों के लिए गिरावट देखी जा सकती है। रिपोर्ट के अनुसार पढ़ाई करने संबंधी क्षमता में सबसे ज्यादा गिरावट केरल, हिमाचल प्रदेश और हरियाणा जैसे राज्यों में देखी गई है।

19

Basic reading ability at pre-'12 levels: Study

Manash.Gohain
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New Delhi: The basic reading ability of children in the country has dropped to pre-2012 levels, while basic maths skills have gone back to 2018 levels, the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2022 launched on Wednesday highlighted, showing the reversal of slow improvement achieved in the intervening years.

The decline is visible in both government and private schools in most states, and in boys and girls. The report for rural India showed that 43.9% of Class I children cannot read a letter, while only

Enrolment crosses 98% in 6-14-yr-olds

Despite school closures in the pandemic, overall enrolment in the 6-14 age group rose from 97.2% in 2018 to 98.4% in 2022, recording the highest enrolment yet, according to ASER 2022. Government school enrolment continued its upward trend, increasing to 72.9% in 2022 from 65.6% in 2018. **P 15**

12% can read a complete word. Around 37.6% of children in Class I cannot read numbers 1 to 9.

► **Related report, P 15**

Despite pandemic, rise in school enrolment figures

Up From 97.2%
In 2018 To 98.4%
In 2022: ASER

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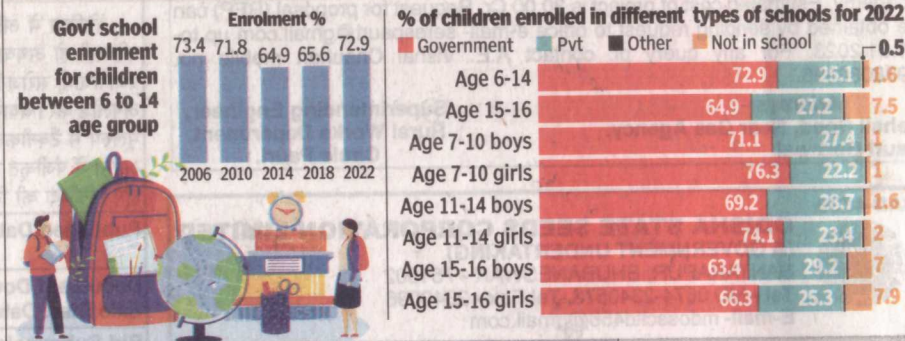
New Delhi: Despite school closures during the pandemic, overall enrolment figures have increased from 97.2% in 2018 to 98.4% in 2022, recording the highest enrolment for the 6-14 age group, according to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2022. The annual status of education in rural India also highlighted that now almost one-third of the students from classes I to VIII are now taking paid private tuitions.

The big turnaround during this period is the rebound of enrolment in government schools. Government school enrolment in this age group had seen a steady decline from 2006 to 2014 to record 64.9% and remained around that figure till 2018. In 2018 it increased to 65.6% and thereafter reached 72.9% in 2022. This is visible in all states/UTs in the country.

Another improvement marker highlighted in ASER 2022 released on Wednesday is the lowest ever rate for the proportion of girls out of school—down to 2% from 4.1% in 2018

SCHOOL DROPOUT RATE AMONG GIRLS GOES DOWN

Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2022 is a nationwide citizen-led rural household survey that reached almost 7,00,000 children in over 19,000 villages across 616 districts in India



► The enrolment rate for the 6 to 14 age group has been above 95% for the past 15 years

► Proportion of children (age 6 to 14) enrolled in government school increased sharply from 65.6% in 2018 to 72.9% in 2022

► In 2006, the All India figure for the percentage of girls age 11-14

who were out of school stood at 10.3%, falling over the following decade to 4.1% in 2018

► All India figure for 11-14-year-old girls not enrolled in school stands at 2%

► Average teacher attendance increased slightly, from 85.4% in 2018 to 87.1% in 2022

► Average student attendance

continues to hover at around 72% for the past several years

► The fraction of schools with usable girls' toilets increased from 66.4% in 2018 to 68.4% in 2022

► Proportion of schools with books other than textbooks being used by students increased from 36.9% in 2018 to 44% in 2022

and 10.3% in 2006. This becomes significant as nationally now a lesser number of girls in the 15 to 16 age group are out of school. However, MP, UP and Chhattisgarh present causes for concern since they continue to have more than 10% of these older age group girls out of schools.

ASER 2022 returned after a gap of four years, reaching 616 rural districts. This year's data

comes after schools reopened after prolonged closures due to the Covid pandemic. The latest study surveyed a total of 19,060 villages in rural India, which include 3,74,544 households and 6,99,597 children in the age group 3 to 16.

The report also observed that the proportion of government schools with less than 60 students enrolled has increased every year over the

last decade. Nationally, this figure was 17.3% in 2010, 24% in 2014, 29.4% in 2018, and stands at 29.9% in 2022. The states with the highest proportion of small schools in 2022 include Himachal (81.4%) and Uttarakhand (74%). However, some states show a decrease in the fraction of small schools, such as UP (from 10.4% in 2018 to 7.9% in 2022) and Kerala (from 24.1% in 2018 to 16.2% in 2022).

AI Vs Schools

ChatGPT rises, ASER scores fall, India needs much better trained teachers to navigate this vortex

Even as India struggles to rise to the present challenges of improving school learning outcomes, a big new one is looming on the horizon. The ASER 2022 report indicating how much the pandemic pushed reading and math outcomes below already disquieting levels, has come amidst a global panic about how much ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence tool that can write college and school essays and solve some basic problems, will be upending education. For example, it's been banned from New York City public schools' devices and networks. Remember this chatbot was launched less than two months ago, more advanced versions and cousins will take exponentially faster tolls.

Yet, most of India's policymakers, school administrators and teachers maintain a loud silence on this topic. Their attitude makes zero sense given the breakneck pace at which the country has been embracing new technologies. It is also tone-deaf to the buzz among



the students themselves. They are strikingly swifter at catching global cultural trends. The pull of a tool that can do the homework without the teacher detecting the plagiarism, is no different in Bengaluru than New York. Bans are a poor counter, with ChatGPT itself suggesting multiple ways of evading them. Much more sensible workarounds are also being devised, such as increased in-class, hand-

written and creative assignments.

ASER reports that across rural government and private schools, since 2018 the proportion of Class V children who can read at least a Class II text has fallen from 50.5% to 42.8%, while the number of Class V children who can do division has fallen from 27.9% to 25.6%. In theory it is possible that as deep learning is being deployed for mass admissions and testing, it can help guide more effective lesson plans. But this will need teachers with very sophisticated pedagogic and digital competency to be in the driving seat.

Basically a new paradigm of foundational education is rising up in the world even as India is rallying the building blocks of the previous one. But our Achilles heel remains the same: poorly trained teachers. Herding them into a stadium to sit through lectures is a very poor substitute for 'learning by doing'. Meanwhile, Bihar's pupil-teacher ratio is a horrifying 54, 55 and 63 at the primary, secondary and higher secondary levels. Let's equip our teachers better, then they can help turn AI from learning's foe to friend.

12

Steepest drop in reading skills in Kerala, HP, Haryana

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REPORT CARD

New Delhi: The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2022 said the maximum decline in reading abilities was reported in Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Haryana, among other states, while the drop in arithmetic levels is severe in Tamil Nadu, Mizoram and Haryana.

The percentage of children in Class III in government or private schools who can read at Class II level dropped from 27.3% in 2018 to 20.5% in 2022. Large drops are also visible in Andhra (from 22.6% to 10.3%) and Telangana (from 18.1% to 5.2%).

The ASER reading test assessed whether a child can read letters, words, a simple

Times View: The report sadly indicates that the quality of education being imparted to children in rural India is deplorable. It is sadder still that there's a sharp drop in learning outcomes even from such low levels. The problem seems to be deep-rooted and fundamental. Educationists and policy framers need to find ways out of this pedagogic mess. Children are a nation's future. By imparting shoddy education to them we cannot have a strong and vibrant India.

paragraph at Class I level of difficulty, or a 'story' at Class II level of difficulty.

"The percentage of children in Class III in government or private schools who can read at Class II level dropped from 27.3% in 2018 to 20.5% in 2022. This decline is visible in every state and for children in both government and private schools," the report stated.

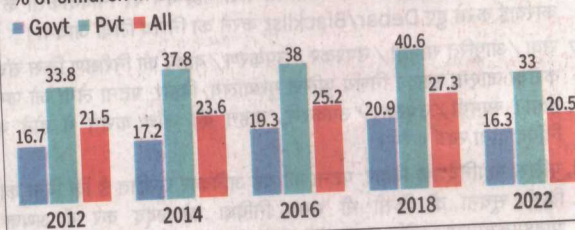
States showing a decline of more than 10 percentage points from 2018 levels include those that had higher reading levels in 2018, such as Kerala (from 52.1% in 2018 to 38.7% in 2022), Himachal Pradesh (from 47.7% to 28.4%), and Haryana (from 46.4% to 31.5%). Large drops are also visible in Andhra Pradesh (from 22.6% to 10.3%) and Telangana (from 18.1% to 5.2%).

Children in the age group of 5-16 are assessed in 19 languages

Class	% of children by grade & reading level 2022				
	Not even a letter	Letter	Word	Class I level text	Class II level text
I	43.9	35.3	12	4.3	4.5
II	22.3	36.2	20.3	10.1	11.1
III	14.5	27.6	22.4	15.1	20.5
IV	8.9	20.6	20.1	18.9	31.5
V	6.1	14.9	16.4	19.9	42.8
VI	4.4	10.6	13	19.2	52.8
VII	3.1	8	9.7	17.1	62.1
VIII	2.5	5.8	7.5	14.7	69.5

Trends over time

% of children in Class II who can read Class II level text

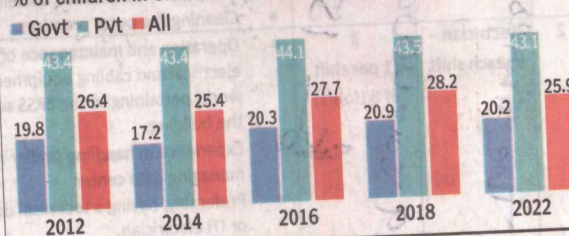


% of children by grade and arithmetic level

Class	Recognise numbers				
	Not even 1-9	1-9	11-99	Subtract	Divide
I	37.6	36.8	19.8	4.1	1.7
II	16.9	36.1	33.1	10.1	3.9
III	9.8	27.6	36.8	17.6	8.3
IV	5.8	20.2	35.3	22.9	15.9
V	3.7	14.6	31.8	24.3	25.6
VI	2.8	10.2	30.4	24.9	31.7
VII	1.9	7.3	28.3	24.7	37.8
VIII	1.6	5.2	25.5	23.1	44.6

Trends over time

% of children in Class III who can do atleast subtraction



"Nationally, the proportion of children enrolled in Class V in government or private schools who can at least read a Class II level text fell from 50.5% in 2018 to 42.8% in 2022. States where this indicator held steady or improved marginally in-

clude Bihar, Odisha, Manipur, and Jharkhand.

"States showing a decrease of 15 percentage points or more include Andhra Pradesh (from 59.7% in 2018 to 36.3% in 2022), Gujarat (from 53.8% to 34.2%), and Himachal (from 76.9% to 61.3%).

Flip the page to the chapter on middle schoolchildren

After a gap of four years, the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) report for 2022 was recently released in New Delhi. This nationwide household survey that covers all rural districts in the country generates estimates for schooling and basic learning for every State in India. Data from 2018 and 2022 can be compared with longer run trends over the last decade to see how the COVID-19 years have impacted India.

The National Education Policy 2020 gives high priority to the acquisition of foundational literacy and numeracy skills especially for children in early grades. "NIPUN Bharat" (where NIPUN is National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy) the government's flagship programme designed to translate policy into practice, is beginning to have traction in many States.

Given that the policy and implementation focus currently is on early years in primary school, it may be useful to also understand how older children in upper primary grades are faring.

A look at the metrics

In 2018, the all-India rural enrolment figure for the age group 6-14 years was 97.2%. In ASER 2022 data, this is now 98.4%. The rise has been accompanied by a significant shift away from private schools to government schools. Several factors may be at play – decrease in family income, permanent closures of low-cost private schools, and the efforts of many State governments to provide services even when schools were closed such as mid-day meal rations, teaching-learning materials shared remotely, worksheet and textbook distribution.

On the 'plus' side, rising enrolment means that more students can benefit for longer, sustained periods of time from schooling. Completion of the entire cycle of eight years of schooling for each cohort of 25 million students is no mean



Rukmini Banerji

is CEO, Pratham Education Foundation

With policy and implementation focused on the early years in primary school, it is time to rethink strategy for India's schoolchildren who have gone past the foundational stage

achievement in a country of India's size and diversity. On the 'minus' side, with more and more students going through the middle school pipeline and attending secondary schools, there is increased competition for post-secondary opportunities. Board examinations continue to perform a gatekeeping function. Acute examination stress, grade inflation in school-leaving examinations, difficulties of gaining admission into college, and lack of appropriate jobs for many school leavers are all consequences of high enrolment and completion rates.

Since its inception, ASER has measured foundational skills in reading and arithmetic. The highest reading task on the ASER tool is reading a text at Grade II level of difficulty. In mathematics, the highest level is a numerical three-digit by one-digit division problem, usually expected of children in standard four or so. The assessment is done one on one with each sampled child in the household. The child is marked at the highest level that she/he can comfortably reach. The same tasks are used for all children aged 5 years to 16 years.

ASER data shows that even in 2018, basic skills of children in upper primary grades left a lot to be desired: less than a third of all children in standard five and less than half of those in standard eight could do division in pre-COVID-19 times. These low levels which are worrying declined further between 2018 and 2022, especially in reading. ASER evidence suggests that basic learning levels of middle schoolchildren have remained low and stagnant for over a decade. The "value" add of each year of middle school is small.

Thinking ahead

In the last 10 years, much has changed such as new technologies, new knowledge domains, and new ways of operating. But within our school

systems, many children are reaching standard eight without being sufficiently equipped with foundational literacy and numeracy skills, let alone higher-level capabilities.

Unless children have strong foundational skills, they cannot acquire higher level skills or develop advanced content knowledge. ASER data shows that an "overambitious" curriculum and the linear age-grade organisational structure of Indian schools result in a vast majority of children getting "left behind" early in their school career. In the absence of in-school mechanisms for "catch up", children fall further and further behind academically. With this comes low motivation to learn and a lack of self-confidence. At the same time, as children reach higher grades, parental and family aspirations for the child's future increase.

Our school system is driven by preparations for Board examinations. Academic content transacted in schools implicitly assumes that students are being prepared for college. However, the reality is that a college degree is neither relevant nor possible for most students who finish secondary school. It is also not clear that a college degree will lead to the prized white-collar jobs that most students and their families are aspiring for.

Now that schools have stayed open for most of this school year, most children are back in school, the urgency of dealing with "learning loss" is acknowledged, and we have a policy that speaks of "critical thinking" and "flexible pathways through school", it is time to rethink and rework what happens with our children once they grow past the foundational stage of schooling. Much of the country's efforts in school education today are focused on ensuring strong foundations for children in the early years. But it is critical that we remember that middle schoolchildren also urgently need support for learning recovery and "catch up".

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The Hindu, 20 January 2023, p-8

HOME & CLASSROOM

ASER report has pointers on reversing post-pandemic educational losses. Parents must be part of the endeavour

THE FINDINGS OF the first nationwide ASER survey in four years offer significant takeaways. Covering nearly seven lakh children in the age group of 6 to 16 in 616 districts, it frames the impact of the pandemic on learning outcomes. As expected, the report card in this respect is not too good. But ASER 2022 also belies fears that the prolonged closure of schools — amongst the longest in the world — would set back the steady rise in enrollment over the past 10 years. More than 98 per cent of 6-16 year-olds are in school. It's heartening that the proportion of out-of-school girls has fallen to 2 per cent. The uncertainties and exigencies of the pandemic years do not seem to have diminished the importance that parents, across social groups, attach to sending children to school.

ASER recorded a steady rise in learning outcomes between 2014 and 2018. But the lack of classroom interaction with the teacher seems to have reversed these incremental gains. The percentage of Class 3 students who can read a Class 2 book has fallen by nearly 7 percentage points since the last nationwide ASER survey in 2018. The loss in numerical skills is less steep — about 2.3 per cent. But these figures seem less grim when seen from another perspective — 2022 was the first year in a physical classroom for these students. The report suggests that despite wide variations in how children accessed technology during the pandemic years, most schools — even in rural areas — “attempted to keep learning going with digital resources”. Here, too, a significant contribution seems to have been made by mothers and fathers. The percentage of young parents who have been to school has gone up appreciably in the past 10 years and they may have actively participated in overcoming some of the challenges caused by the pandemic-induced disruption, the report suggests. In the coming months and years, as states try to find different pathways to reach NEP 2020's goal of achieving universal foundational literacy and numeracy, they would do well to work ASER 2022's hypothesis on the role of parents into their plans.

A comparative analysis of learning outcomes during the pandemic and post-pandemic years in West Bengal, Karnataka and Chhattisgarh — states where the ASER was conducted during the health crisis — also offers hope. It shows that these states have reversed their losses significantly in 2022. Other studies, including that by the University of California's Karthik Muralidharan on Tamil Nadu's recovery, underline the significance of empowering teachers and reaching out to students in their homes. A system that synergises the roles of the home and classroom is the way to go.

15

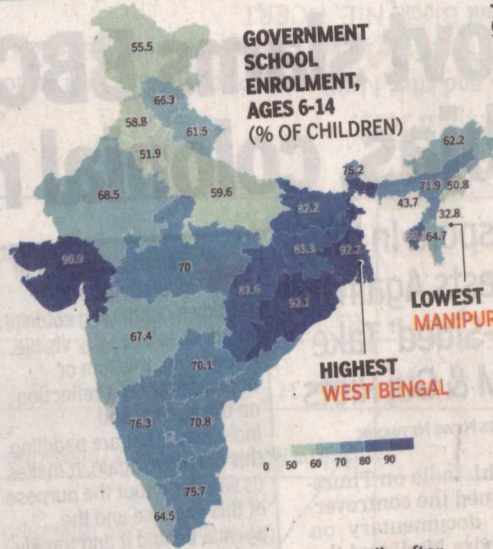
ENROLMENT IS UP BUT STUDENTS IN RURAL GOVT SCHOOLS ARE LEARNING LESS



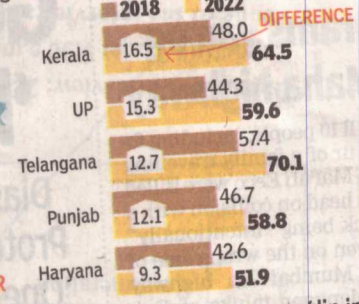
Between 2018 and 2022, enrolment in rural government schools rose in all but two states, but learning outcomes in reading and arithmetic have suffered in the majority of states, according to data published in the latest **Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)**. The 2022 report assesses the state of rural education in more than 19,000 villages in 616 districts, covering nearly 7 lakh students. It's the first full study since the pandemic began, with children now returning to school after extended closures and remote learning. Here's a statewise breakdown of enrolment and learning outcomes after an unprecedented interruption in education

Mizoram, J&K Only States Where Enrolment Fell

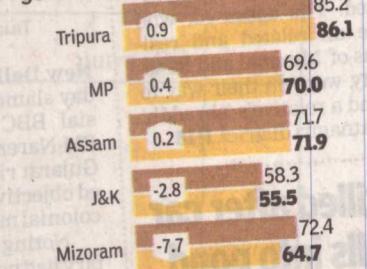
Among the 28 states surveyed, enrolment in rural government schools for children aged 6 to 14 rose everywhere except in Mizoram and J&K despite the pandemic interrupting education. West Bengal, which had the highest enrolment rate in 2018, remains the top state. In 2018, seven states had less than 50% enrolment; in 2022, that number fell to two (Meghalaya and Manipur). Kerala and UP saw the biggest improvements in enrolment. Nationally, enrolment rose by 7.3 percentage-points from 65.6% in 2018 to 72.9%.



States with biggest increase in government school enrolment (%)



States with smallest increase/dip in government school enrolment (%)



Enrolment in private schools, however, has dropped considerably across India after decades of consistent increases. In 2022, 25.1% of rural students were enrolled in private schools, down from 30.9% in 2018. Only four states — Mizoram, J&K, Madhya Pradesh and Assam — saw an increase in private school enrolment. Manipur tops the country with 66.1% of students in private schools. The biggest decline in private enrolment was in UP, dropping from 49.7% to 36.4%.

Majority Of States Saw Decline In Learning Outcomes

Despite the increase in government school enrolment, learning outcomes have suffered. Across classes 3, 5 and 8, proficiency in reading and arithmetic has declined in most states.

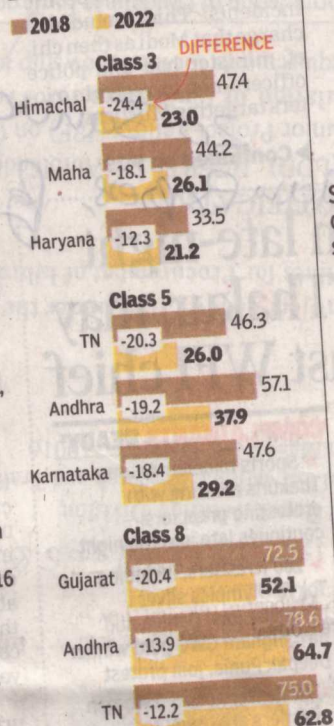
Since 2018, the proportion of Class 3 students who can read Class 2-level text fell in 24 states. More concerning, perhaps, the proportion of students in classes 5 and 8 who can read Class 2-level text fell in 23 and 17 states, respectively.

The state of arithmetic proficiency isn't quite as dire, but alarming nevertheless. In 16 states, the proportion of Class 3 students who can at least do subtraction has declined from 2018. The proportion of those who can do division fell in 20 states for Class 5 students and in 16 states for Class 8 students.

While Class 3 students may have many years of schooling left to catch up, older students who fall behind are more likely to struggle or stagnate.

READING

States with the biggest decrease in proportion of students who can read Class 2-level text (%)

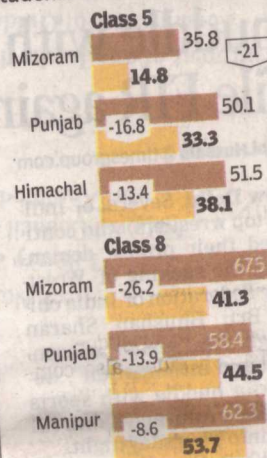


ARITHMETIC

States with the biggest decrease in proportion of Class 3 students who can at least do subtraction (%)



States with the biggest decrease in proportion of students who can do division



While learning outcomes in government schools have suffered, the proportion of students in classes 1 to 8 attending paid tuition classes outside school has risen in 22 states since 2018. There are five states where more than half the students take paid tuition classes with West Bengal topping the list at 73.9%

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Source: ASER 2022; Text: Anjishnu Das; Graphic: Karthic R Iyer; Note: J&K data includes Ladakh. No UTs other than J&K covered. No data for Goa

The Hindu, 23 January 2023, Pg-7 (16)

Post-COVID-19, math skills of students in south, west dipped most

The adverse impact of the pandemic on arithmetic ability was more pronounced among boys in southern and western India

DATA POINT

Rebecca Rose Varghese & Vignesh Radhakrishnan

The recently released Annual Status of Education Report (Rural) 2022 shows that the ability of schoolchildren to carry out simple arithmetic calculations was poor in most of the southern, central and western States compared to the children in many northern and eastern States.

While this observation is true both for the pre- and post-pandemic periods, the school closures forced by COVID-19 widened the gap further – the arithmetic learning outcomes of students from the south and west were impacted more than the learning outcomes of students in other regions. Notably, despite the pandemic, the arithmetic ability of children in the central States – Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh – improved markedly, though from a lower base. Moreover, in the south and west, the adverse impact of the pandemic on arithmetic ability was more pronounced among boys than girls.

The ASER survey's test of arithmetic ability consisted of four tasks. The first task was to recognise numbers 1 to 9. Those who completed this were asked to recognise numbers 11 to 99. Those who completed both tasks were presented with subtraction problems. And those who passed were presented with division sums.

Chart 1 shows the share of students in Classes V and VIII who could carry out all the four tasks successfully. Each circle corresponds to a State, and India's figures are depicted using a plus sign. The farther a circle to the right, the higher the share of students who could carry out all the four tasks successfully.

Chart 2 shows the same for the year 2018.

Among the northern States, the

share of such students in Class VIII was above the national average in Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana. Among the eastern States, Bihar's figure was much higher than the national average. On the other hand, except Andhra Pradesh, the share of such students was relatively low in the southern States. Among the western States, such as Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan, the share of Class VIII students who were able to complete all the tasks successfully was even lower than in the southern States.

The trend of northern States (except Jammu and Kashmir) leading, closely followed by the eastern States of Bihar and sometimes Jharkhand, the southern States (except Andhra Pradesh) middling and the central and western States near the bottom was also observed in the arithmetic performance of Class V students – with some exceptions. This trend was also true for 2018, as shown in Chart 2.

Chart 3 shows the percentage of Class VIII children who completed all four tasks in 2022 and the change in percentage points from 2018. The States above the 0 mark saw an increase in the share of children who completed the tasks – all the central and eastern States are part of this group. The States below the 0 mark saw a decrease – all the southern and western States are part of this group except Andhra Pradesh. This graph shows that the pandemic had a disproportionately higher adverse impact on the arithmetic ability of children in the southern and western States.

And among the southern and western States, the adverse impact was higher among boys than girls, as shown in Chart 4. The chart shows the change in the share of Class VIII students who could complete division in 2022 compared to 2018 (in percentage points). For instance, the change was 6.4 percentage points among girls in Kerala and 8.7 percentage points among boys.

Doing the math

The data for the charts are collated from the Annual Status of Education Report (Rural), published based on a survey conducted between September and November 2022



● North ● East ● Northeast ● West ● Central ● South + India

Chart 1 | The share of students in Class V and Class VIII who carried out all the four tasks successfully in 2022

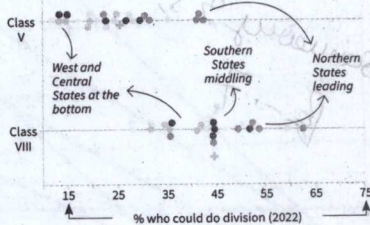


Chart 2 | The share of students in Class V and Class VIII who carried out all the four tasks successfully in 2018

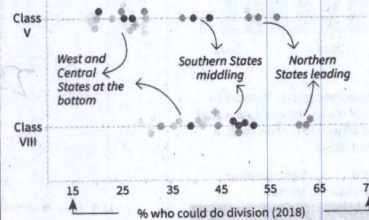


Chart 3 | The % of Class VIII children who completed all four tasks in 2022 and the change in % points from 2018

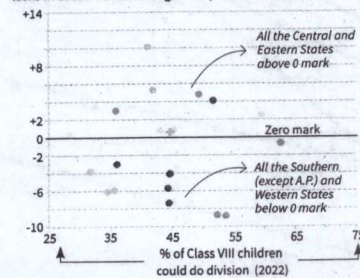
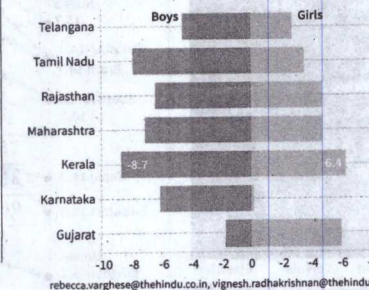


Chart 4 | The change in the share of Class VIII students who completed division in 2022 compared to 2018 (% points)



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अभी सीबीएसई के 74 स्कूलों में लागू होगी परियोजना भविष्य में 60 लाख बच्चे होंगे लाभान्वित

तीसरी कक्षा तक लागू होगा 'समग्र प्रगति पत्र'

जनसत्ता ब्यूरो
नई दिल्ली, 10 जनवरी।

केंद्रीय माध्यमिक शिक्षा बोर्ड (सीबीएसई) से संबद्ध स्कूलों में पहली से तीसरी कक्षा में बच्चों का 'समग्र प्रगति पत्र' तैयार किया जाएगा। इसके माध्यम में बच्चों की प्रतिभा, गुणों, उनके व्यक्तित्व के मजबूत और कमजोर पक्षों का उल्लेख किया जाएगा। अभी 74 स्कूलों में इस योजना को लागू किया जा रहा है। इनमें 25 केंद्रीय विद्यालय, 16 सरकारी स्कूल और 33 निजी स्कूल शामिल हैं।

इस पायलट परियोजना के पूरा होने पर इसे सीबीएसई से संबद्ध 27,000 स्कूलों में कक्षा एक से तीन में लागू किया जाएगा जिससे करीब 60 लाख बच्चे लाभान्वित होंगे। सरकार 'राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति' की सिफारिशों के तहत स्कूली बच्चों के लिए 'समग्र प्रगति पत्र' योजना

को जल्द ही पूर्ण रूप से सीबीएसई से मान्यता प्राप्त स्कूलों में, कक्षा एक से तीन में लागू किया जाएगा।

शिक्षा मंत्रालय के एक अधिकारी के मुताबिक अभी प्रारंभिक परियोजना के आधार पर सीबीएसई से संबद्ध 74 स्कूलों में कक्षा एक से तीन में इस योजना को लागू किया जा रहा है। इनमें 25 केंद्रीय विद्यालय, 16 सरकारी स्कूल, 33 निजी स्कूल शामिल हैं। 'राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति के अनुपालन के दो वर्ष' विषय पर शिक्षा मंत्रालय की हाल ही में जारी रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि 'समग्र प्रगति पत्र' योजना (हालिस्टिक रिपोर्ट कार्ड) तैयार करने की इस पायलट परियोजना पर दैनिक आधार पर नजर रखी जा रही है।

इसमें कहा गया है कि बुनियादी एवं समरूप आंकड़ा एकत्र करने के लिए प्राचार्यों एवं शिक्षकों की राय एवं आकलन के प्रारूप को

अंतिम रूप दिया गया है। इससे रिपोर्ट तैयार करने में मदद मिलेगी। रिपोर्ट के अनुसार कि इसके बाद इसे जरूरत के अनुरूप अंगीकार करने के लिए राज्यों/केंद्रशासित प्रदेशों के साथ साझा किया जाएगा। इसमें कहा गया है कि सीबीएसई द्वारा विकसित 'समग्र प्रगति पत्र' के प्रारूप को नौवीं-बारहवीं कक्षा के लिए ढांचागत तैयारी में उपयोग में लाया जायेगा।

राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति 2020 की सिफारिशों के आधार पर बच्चों के प्रगति पत्र के स्वरूप में बदलाव करते हुए समग्र मूल्यांकन पर आधारित 'समग्र प्रगति पत्र' तैयार किया जा रहा है। इसके तहत हर कक्षा में जीवन कौशल परखने पर जोर होगा ताकि बच्चा जब बारहवीं कक्षा पास करके निकलेगा तब उसके पास अपना पूरा खाता (पोर्टफोलियो) होगा। बच्चों की इस खाते में उसकी प्रतिभा, गुण, मजबूत एवं कमजोर पक्ष आदि का उल्लेख होगा।

Rashtriya Sahara Uchlu, 16 January 2023, Pg-2

واڈ-فائڈ اور رولڈی ٹیوی سے لیس ہونے والے ریاستی پوسٹاں

ریاستی لائبریریاں وائی فائی اور ای ڈی ٹی وی سے لیس ہوں گی 4 کروڑ روپے مختص، ہر ہفتہ کونسلنگ کرنے کا فیصلہ

کونسلنگ کی سہولت ملتی ہے، اس کے لیے مقامی کوچنگ سینٹر کے ذریعے کونسلنگ کا انتخاب کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ ضلع لائبریریوں میں ای ڈی ٹی وی بھی لگائے جائیں گے۔ وائی فائی کی سہولت بھی فراہم کی جائے گی۔ اس کے لیے ضروری کارروائی مکمل کرنے کو کہا گیا ہے۔ مختلف مسابقتی امتحانات میں کامیاب طلباء کو کونسلنگ کے لیے مدعو کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ ابتدائی طور پر کونسلنگ آف لائن ہوگی۔ لوہردگا، پاکوڑ، گڈا، جامتاڑ اور چتر اضلاع کی لائبریریوں میں کمپیوٹر نہیں ہے۔ یہاں کمپیوٹر فراہم کرنے کو کہا گیا ہے۔ ڈائریکٹوریٹ آف سیکنڈری ایجوکیشن نے لائبریری کے لیے 3.69 کروڑ مختص کیے ہیں۔ لائبریریوں میں ضروری اشیاء کی خریداری کے لیے فنڈز مانگے گئے ہیں۔ لائبریریوں میں پانی کا انتظام یقینی بنانے کی بھی ہدایات دی گئی ہیں۔

لائبریریاں مسابقتی امتحانات کی تیاری کرنے والے طلباء کے لیے مددگار ثابت ہو رہی ہیں۔ بدلے وقت کے ساتھ اسے مزید بہتر بنانے کے لیے تقریباً چار کروڑ روپے مختص کیے گئے ہیں۔ اس رقم سے اضلاع کی لائبریریوں کو وائی فائی اور کمپیوٹر سے لیس کیا جائے گا۔ اب تک لائبریریوں میں صرف بیٹھ کر پڑھنے کا ذریعہ ہوا کرتی تھی لیکن ٹیکنالوجی سے لیس ہونے کے بعد طلبہ یہاں سے امتحان فارم بھر سکیں گے اور ایڈمٹ کارڈ ڈاؤن لوڈ کر سکیں گے۔ ٹیکنالوجی میں اپ گریڈنگ کے ساتھ ساتھ ان لائبریریوں میں کیئر کونسلنگ کی سہولت بھی فراہم کی جائے گی۔ یہ کونسلنگ ہر ہفتہ کو کی جائے گی۔ اس کو شروع کرنے کا مقصد یہ ہے کہ طلباء کو مقابلہ جاتی امتحان کی مکمل تیاری کی سہولت فراہم کی جائے۔ اس حوالے سے ہدایات جاری کر دی گئی ہیں۔ ہر ہفتہ کے روز طلبہ کو



رائسٹی (ایس این بی) ڈائنسی (ایس این بی) والی لائبریری کو اب مزید ٹیکنالوجی سے لیس کیا جائے گا۔ کئی اضلاع میں چلنے والی ریاستی حکومت کی طرف سے چلائی جائے

The Statesman, 31 January 2023, Pg-11

We need to move away from marks-based education assessment system

KADAMBARI RANA

The purpose of assessment is to thoroughly examine age-appropriate learning milestones, to review the student's capabilities and capacities, to inspect the student's fortes and limitations and to scrutinize the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching methodologies adopted by the educators.

Unfortunately, the simplistic marks-based assessment system is incompetent to sketch a multidimensional picture of this kind and offer solutions thereof. Often schools, educational institutes and independent educators overlook the fact that the purpose of an assessment is to holistically examine what worked and what did not work, make rectifications, and then step up to build missing blocks.

The state-of-affairs of the assessment system in our country can be compared to an incompetent medical practitioner's one, who at best is able to ambiguously suggest a problem but is entirely incapable of concluding specific diagnosis and offer an effective treatment.

Mark-based assessments do not give a wide-ranging representation of where the students are in terms of learning milestones, in terms of aptitude, in terms of fault lines and deficiencies in the teaching approach and in terms of making optimistic recommendations to achieve full inner potential.

To examine the student's response to the teaching and learning atmosphere, the educators need to have an insight into the various dimensions of the student's mind, heart, behaviour, and spirit. When the sole objective of student assessments is limited to grasp over the course content, then under most likelihood schools will misinterpret the student's potential.

UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS' NEEDS

Academic institutions, globally, need to appreciate that the needs of the students are not limited to academic work nor is the impact on students' well-being necessarily stemming out of only academic deliberations.

Some basic needs of the students can be broken down into physiological needs, safety needs, need for love and belonging, need for socialization, need for intellectual stimulation, need to discover, freedom to explore and make errors, need to participate and communicate and even spiritual needs.

When the learning trajectory is drafted taking into consideration the learning needs of its learners, considering the learning potential of the learners and considering the scope of rectification then the results of such teaching-learning efforts are positive. A marks-based assessment system fails to consider the manifold factors that are simultaneously working in favour of or against the students. Therefore, it is imperative to understand student needs and potential and weave this into assessment methods.

TYPES OF ASSESSMENTS

Generally speaking, assessments can range from class tests, unit tests, exams, entrance tests, open book tests, assignments, project work, grades for community service, oral tests, reading tests, class participation, peer review, self-marking, flip-class, class observations,

social engagement, extra-curricular participation and so on.

Specifically speaking some structured assessment methods are; assessment of learning, assessment for learning, assessment as learning, summative assessment, formative assessment and so on.

Assessment of learning also referred to as summative assessment, inspects where the students stand in their understanding as against the defined course curriculum. This can take the form of standardized class tests, unit tests, project work and exams. Then there is assessment for learning also referred to as formative or diagnostic assessment is primarily conducted with an intention to support the student fill up learning gaps.

Here the educator is focussed on examining the students' core take-



common errors and examining the efficacy of the teaching strategy.

Then there is assessment as learning which aims at making students active participants in their own learning journey.

This process makes them aware of their strengths and weaknesses, their limitations and capacities and assists them in developing strategies to achieve their goals. This takes the form of critical thinking assignments, problem solving assignments, self-assessment, peer assessment and so on.

MAKE WAY FOR FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS AND SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

Formative assessment is conducted with a primary purpose to support the student plug in learning gaps rather than cruelly testing them against textual content. Here, the

teacher is focussed on investigating the students' core takeaways, common errors and in examining the efficacy of the teaching strategy.

This is also referred to as diagnostic assessment. Formative assessment helps are effective in evaluating the learning needs of students, both during normal circumstances as well as special circumstances (break in learning due to natural disasters, loss of family member, health issues). Formative assessment provides better solutions for learner progress and unfinished learning.

Some of the ways in which schools can transform their assessment styles are; cutting back on length of exam and test papers, giving additional writing time, replacing tests and exams with class presentations, case studies and project work, introducing open book examinations, introducing class-room debates and discussions, community service, cutting back on volume of academic course, focussing

on basic concepts rather than advanced knowledge, more activity-based learning and research work.

PROS AND CONS OF MARKS BASED ASSESSMENT

Marks based system of assessment is widely used because; it is a simplistic and easy form of checking student's progress, it is easy for making comparisons with other students in the bracket, easy to establish baseline standards, it simplifies decisions with regards admissions and promotions to next level. However, it plagued with several shortcomings such as; it cannot measure effort, it cannot measure aptitude, students who are not able to put in long hours to memorize and reproduce lengthy concepts feel punished and discouraged under this system, it is not a holistic measure of overall academic excellence.

The author is an educator, who advocates principles of child-centric holistic education



अपनी शिक्षा नीति की अहमियत के बारे में जी20 देशों को बताएगा भारत

जनवरी से जून 2023 के बीच शिक्षा कार्य समूह की कई महत्वपूर्ण बैठकें

Bhupender.Sharma

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■ नई दिल्ली : जी20 की भारतीय अध्यक्षता के दौरान शिक्षा क्षेत्र की प्राथमिकताएं भी तय की गई हैं। शिक्षा मंत्रालय ने जनवरी से जून 2023 के बीच शिक्षा कार्य समूह की कई महत्वपूर्ण बैठकें कराने का प्रस्ताव दिया है। शिक्षा कार्य समूह जी20 शिक्षा मंत्रियों की जून में होने वाली बैठक के लिए शिक्षा और डिजिटल प्रौद्योगिकी की भूमिका के भविष्य पर सेमिनार करेगा। जी20 के दौरान भारतीय शिक्षा नीति के महत्व को प्रतिभागी देशों के प्रतिनिधियों के सामने रखा जाएगा।

मंत्रालय के एक सीनियर अधिकारी का कहना है कि जी20 की अध्यक्षता शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में उपलब्धियों को प्रदर्शित करने का एक अच्छा अवसर है। देश में 2020 में नई शिक्षा नीति लागू हुई है और भारतीय



भाषाओं को महत्व मिला है। देश में अब भारतीय भाषाओं में पढ़ाई को बढ़ावा मिल रहा है। नई शिक्षा नीति की उपलब्धियों को भी दुनिया के सामने रखा जाएगा। नई राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति लागू होने के बाद क्या-क्या हासिल किया गया है, इसको लेकर भारत शिक्षा का एक नया मॉडल पेश करेगा, जो सभी उभरती अर्थव्यवस्थाओं

के लिए एक वैश्विक मॉडल हो सकता है। शिक्षा मंत्रालय ने जी20 में देश भर के शिक्षा संस्थानों, छात्रों, शिक्षकों की भागीदारी सुनिश्चित करने की कोशिशें भी शुरू की हैं। विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग (यूजीसी) ने सभी यूनिवर्सिटीज को पत्र लिखकर कहा है कि जी 20 से जुड़े शैक्षणिक कार्यक्रमों में जरूर भाग

■ देश भर के शिक्षण संस्थान, उनके छात्रों, शिक्षकों की होगी भागीदारी

■ राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति 2020 की उपलब्धियों पर भी रहेगा फोकस, भारत का शिक्षा मॉडल दुनिया के सामने रखा जाएगा

ले और इसके महत्व के बारे में लोगों को जागरूक करें। छात्र अपने संस्थान में जी20 को लेकर कई तरह की गतिविधियां कर सकते हैं।

जी-20 में शिक्षा प्राथमिकता वाले क्षेत्रों में से एक है। मंत्रालय ने दो वेबिनार भी आयोजित करने की योजना बनाई है। फाउंडेशनल स्कूल, लाइफ लॉन्ग लर्निंग जैसे विषयों पर ये वेबिनार आयोजित किए जाएंगे। भारत में रोजगारपरक शिक्षा को खासा जोर दिया जा रहा है।

The statesman, 31 January 2023, Pg - 11 (21)

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Bring back ancient power of knowledge sharing and wisdom

SATYA MULEY

Vasudev kutumbakam and Vishava Vidyalaya, both these concepts originated from ancient India. About 75 years of post-independence, it is being cherished that ancient India was the fountainhead of knowledge sharing and development and therefore enjoyed the status of being a Vishwa Guru.

Even today, Education is looked upon as a powerful tool for nation building. Historically the ancient India education system was comprehensive, but an area monopolised by the elitist to a large extent. Currently India sees a mix of traditional and British principles infused education system, methodologies. And even our national and state education policies revolve around the same, with very small progress towards evolving with the modern times and current needs.

PROGRESSION IN EDUCATION POLICIES IN INDIA

After independence, Education was looked upon as a tool for modernization of the country. With this view, 2 committees (The Central Education Commission and the Mudaliar Commission) were set up which suggested restructuring of the education system with the assent of the Indian constitution. It was then that reforms for Higher secondary schemes, along with 3-year degree courses were introduced. Education was made the responsibility of both the central and the state government. Since then, various policies like, Radical Restructuring, Special Focus on The Removal Of Disparity were introduced in 1968 and 1986 respectively, which proposed equal educational opportunities, especially for women and scheduled castes, creation of Rural Universities was encouraged.

In 2001 and 2002 the government through Sarva Shikshan Abhiyan and amendment in the Indian Constitution made education compulsory and was declared a fundamental right for the children of age 6 to 14. The Right to Education Act 2009 mandated private schools to reserve 25 per cent of the seats for the poor.

A major transformation in the Indian education system is underway by the way of National Education Policy 2020 which will replace the structure of '10+2' with '5+3+3+4' and aims to reduce the curriculum contents and focus on enhancing essential learning, critical thinking.

CURRENT STATUS OF INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Indian education system is known to be one of the best education systems in the world even with all the present policies and implementations it is ranked 33rd amongst all the countries in the Education Ranking of 2022. The current curriculum followed by India's education system is known to be the toughest in the world, which mostly weighs on the Sciences and mathematics known to be the career-oriented subjects but unfortunately ignoring the inherent talents of the youngsters.

Soft skills and morals are ignored too. Gaining knowledge through education is one thing and using it to be productive in the Society is another. More efforts and change in perspective are needed in order to enhance the education system which will lead to the development of a child in a more comprehensive manner.

POLICIES AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION

The efforts being put by the government in areas of education are seen through implementation of various policies the question of whether the policies are effective arises.

In the case of Shyam Sundar VS state of Tamil Nadu (2011), Hon'ble Supreme Court stated that 'right of a child should not be restricted only to free and compulsory education, but should be extended to have quality education without any discrimination on the ground of their economic, social and cultural background.'

There is a huge gap due to the lack of resources in effective implementation of policies like the compulsory education for children of age group of 6 - 14 years, which is a fundamental right under article 21 A of Constitution of India. But the constitutional guidelines go a step further and direct the state under article 45 to provide early childhood care and education for all children till age of 14 years is completed and it made this a fundamental duty of parents to provide educational opportunities to their children. These provisions were added by 86th Constitutional

Amendment act, 2002 which is crucial to uphold children's right of education.

Inadequate infrastructure, lack in quality of education etc. are very visible and most common problems with the current education system. The Private schools can be seen as another hurdle, the commercialization for providing quality education and facilities has changed the people's perspective regarding government schools.

On one side where the private schools are required to reserve 25% of the seats for the poor and on the other side these private schools are being shut down for reasons like irregularities regarding certain permissions, instead of offering them help in getting regularisation. Thus, increasing the number of schools and number of children getting educated. Even when there is an exemption from the fees, the fear of not fitting in with the environment and economic divide between peers discourages poor children from taking advantage of such policies. The harsh reality is that such private schools are also unwilling and unwell-

coming to these children in a view that they will taint the high kept image of such schools by their humble backgrounds.

The government has implemented policies like Sakshar Bharat Mission, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Sukanya Samridhi Yojana for female literacy, at the same time majority of parts in the society still does not believe in educating women. Whereas educating women is required in order to bring more uniform development in the society.

If the country truly believes that education is the key to development and modernisation, then steps towards it should be taken. Though the government has from time to time taken efforts in improving the education system the effects of it are not very visible. The government must not only implement policies but also check its effectiveness and take actions accordingly, proper regulation and inspection of the working of the schools is needed.

The author is an advocate at Bombay High Court.



Technology is a game-changer and leveller

Technological interventions have greatly eased the administrative and management aspects of teaching while freeing up time for teachers to focus exclusively on pedagogical improvements and advancements

Technology is a game changer and a field leveller in more ways than one as far as learning and education are concerned. Its presence in our everyday lives is a testament to how it is a powerful tool. There are three prongs to the use of tech in education-related matters. The first is its contribution in managing school administration.

The second focus is on how technology can help the teacher utilize their time more effectively. And the third prong is about how tech can help the student with personalised learning.

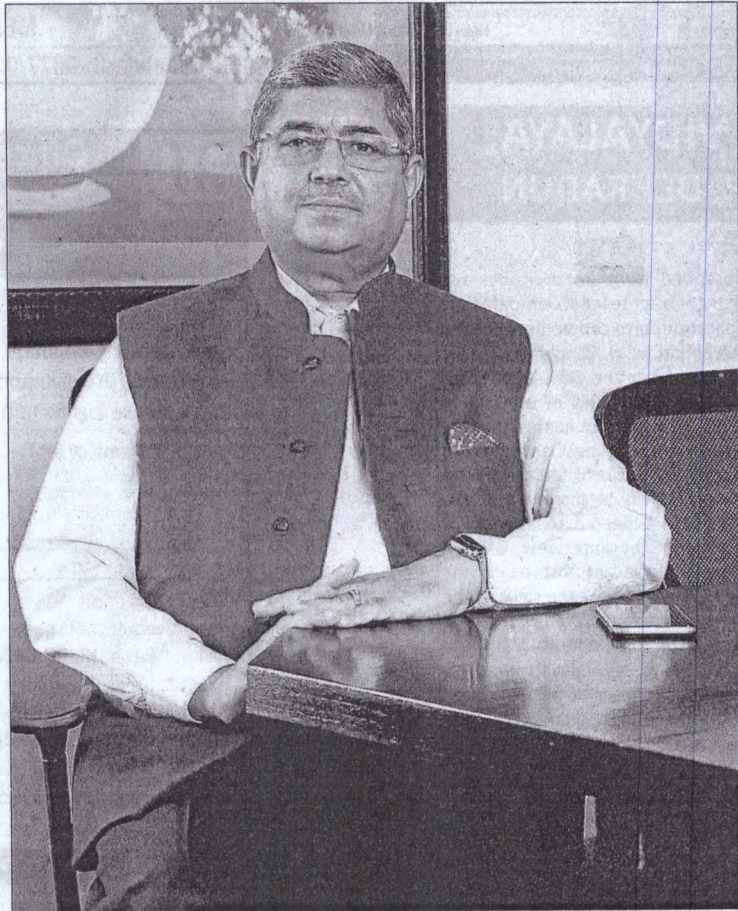
Let me explain in detail.

When routine administrative work is handled by technology, it frees up more time for the teacher to focus on the teaching in the classroom. An effective administration consists of better management of finances, services, and data to enable better decision-making and the availability of several function-specific software has made all this easier. Complex administrative tasks and human resource management have successfully been taken care of by evolved technological systems. With the advent of AI, all these functions' efficiency will improve manifold which will allow principals and teachers to focus specifically on improving academic and co-curricular activities.

We all know that teachers work very hard and invest a lot of time in developing the lesson plan, in setting and checking homework assignments as well as managing examinations and evaluations. But not all of these tasks are currently being done using technology across the school community. But over the years, there have been instances of apps and digital tools to help assignment and management of homework submissions.

Teachers can also conduct evaluations online and submit the report instantly. Similarly, earlier teachers used to do lesson planning by hand but the arrival of learning management systems has made that an easier task. Teachers can use ready-made templates for better presentation and organisation which allows them to focus more on the pedagogical content and techniques. In fact, the layout allows them to integrate and include various materials that they can source from the online world and store it in a single location. This eases their trouble of having to carry several books or teaching aids physically from one class to the other.

In fact, across discussions with stakeholders, the need for a continuous assessment has always been pointed out in order to better gauge learning outcomes. The ease of access to these digital tools as well as their in-built assessment tools has made the process of continuous assessment more effective and efficient. The analysis is more granular with specific insights about the



areas of improvement for the students to work on. Additionally, tech allows one to offer system-generated assignments as well as feedback questionnaires which can better inform the teachers' plans. This definitely reduces the workload of the teacher while giving them a bird's eye view of the learning abilities of every student in their classroom. While these interventions are gaining popularity, the degree with which they are being used varies across schools.

But the pandemic has certainly accelerated the adoption of tech tools across domains including education. While a few tech solutions here and there have been adopted by all institutions, the need of the hour is to undertake large-scale integration of these solutions with all departments in a school. The advent of AI is a sign of the times to come and how much the learning community will stand to benefit from the extremely detailed insights it can offer. There has always been some hesitation in adopting new technologies and while it may not be the best way to deliver a lesson, it can certainly help improve the ancillary processes associated with teaching and learning.

With every leap such as the arrival of virtual reality tools, the classroom stands to evolve to become more than a place where classes are held. While sitting in the class-

room itself, the child can experience the entire length and breadth of the universe. They can examine the human anatomy in a 3-D format or experience the planets in the solar system. All of these activities were earlier being conducted using 2D tools such as charts but with VR the quality of the learning experience will transform in a way that is difficult to imagine. Technology allows one to experience a concept first-hand including objects and ideas that otherwise seemed distant and far away.

The other important aspect to consider is that technology allows students to access learning materials at any hour of the day. This allows them to engage with material with greater flexibility thereby easing some of the pressure of learning. It is an established fact that every student learns at their own pace. While the classroom cannot always account for these differences in pace, the online storage space allows students to pace lessons and assessments at a frequency that they are comfortable with. Apart from greatly improving the learning experience, this grants them a certain autonomy to manage their lesson cycle and to supplement with different learning tools. They can comfortably view the same lesson again and again without having to disrupt the class which is a great benefit.

Class X Exam Results Dipped After Boards Made Mandatory

81.2 Pass Percent In 2022 When Exams Were Held After 2 Yrs

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

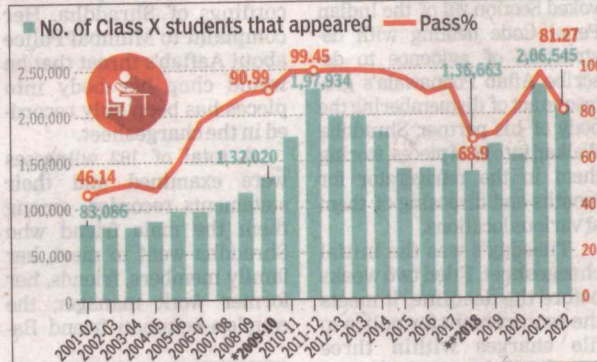
New Delhi: The class X results in Delhi government schools have shown a decline in comparison to the pass percentage during the period when the exams were made optional, shows data released by the lieutenant governor's office.

As per the data, the pass percentage was the lowest in 2001 at 46.1%, when 83,086 students appeared for the exam. This figure gradually improved to 48.7% in 2002 and 50.7% in 2003. However, the number of students who appeared reduced in those two years, to 79,069 and 79,330, respectively.

The year 2006 saw a significant jump, with the pass percentage hitting 77.1%, up from 59.5% the previous year. But it was not until 2007 that the pass percentage crossed the 80% mark, touching almost 83.7%, with 1,05,332 students appearing for the exam. In 2008, the pass percentage stood at 89.4%, and 1,16,054 students appeared for the exam.

In 2009, the class X board exams were made optional

CAUSE FOR CONCERN



*2009 | Class X Board exam was made optional by the education ministry
 **2018 | Class X Board exam was reintroduced after Compulsory Continuous Examination (CCE) was scrapped

In 2009, the Class X board exams were made optional by the Union human resources development ministry

sing, Delhi government launched schemes like Chunauti and Mission Buniyaad to improve learning levels.

Since then, the results began seeing a gradual improvement. In 2019, the pass percentage in the schools increased to 71.58%. The next year, the Covid-19 pandemic struck. In 2020 and 2021, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) adopted an alternative system of tabulation of results. The pass percentage for the two years stood at 82.6% and 97.5%, respectively.

In 2022, when the exams were held after a gap of two years, the pass percentage recorded was 81.2%, with 2,06,545 students appearing for them.

When contacted, there was no response from Delhi government officials.

by the Union human resources development (HRD) ministry. The government also introduced the no-detention policy and the system of comprehensive continuous examination (CCE). Between 2009 and 2015, the pass percentage remained consistently over 90%, and even crossed 99% several times.

However, the decision was reversed in 2016. In 2018, the year the exam was re-introdu-

ced, the pass percentage in Delhi government schools plummeted to 68.9% from 92.4% in the previous year. The number of students appearing for the exam also dipped sharply, from 1,55,263 to 1,36,663.

At the time, the government said that the results were impacted by the no-detention policy and that it was in favour of scrapping it too. Stating that foundational and basic skills were mis-

NAAC releases new benchmarks to assess varsities, autonomous colleges

Hemali Chhapia
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Mumbai: In a push towards transparency, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council recently released the benchmarks it has set for universities and autonomous colleges. The benchmarks manual is its secret ledger of maximum scores it awards to institutes that line up for assessment. Earlier, the assessment body declared benchmarks for affiliated colleges.

As **TOI** had reported on November 14, this is the first time that the NAAC has declared the highest marks called benchmarks that it has set as-

ide for each of the parameters it grades institutes on, thus allowing every higher education institute to know the maximum achievable marks.

"These will act as a barometer, allowing institutes to identify areas that need working upon, thus resulting in a process of continuous improvement in the overall quality of education," said executive committee chairman Bhushan Patwardhan.

For instance, among the volley of questions that the assessment body poses to higher education institutes under seven broad criteria, there is a classified number that NAAC has pre-determi-

ned and that is its established top score. To date, universities and colleges had absolutely no idea about that score.

This was after a series of **TOI** articles on institutes that had surpassed the NAAC score of the Indian Institute of Science, as also about consultants that were being hired by colleges and universities that were assuring a top NAAC grade for a price. Earlier, NAAC scores were not attached to any schemes or benefits. The race for a top score began after a high grade translated into getting autonomy or a university status or getting grants or admitting foreign students.

The future is international

UGC regulations facilitating premier foreign universities' campuses is a win-win for students and higher education institutes



MAMIDALA JAGADESH KUMAR

WITH THE LAUNCH of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the world is looking at India as an ideal destination to establish campuses and invest in the higher education sector. The NEP also envisions that India will be promoted as a global study destination that provides affordable, excellent education. Establishing foreign campuses will provide wider educational choices, exposure to innovative pedagogical approaches and the potential for collaboration with world-class institutions.

By fixing a benchmark of allowing only the top 500 foreign universities in India, the draft UGC regulations have an in-built mechanism to ensure the entry of only the highest-quality institutions. Foreign higher education institutions (FHEIs) intending to come to India will be experienced in imparting education and with robust financial resources, integrity, long-term commitment, and a better understanding of the venture's feasibility. The FHEIs that intend to open campuses in India are expected to have adequate financial and other resources. They should also arrange for appropriate physical infrastructure in terms of built-up spaces for their academic programmes.

The draft regulations empower the positioning of India as an affordable value player in the global education sector. Campuses of foreign HEIs will attract students from the Global South as students worldwide will find the high-quality education in India appealing. Given India's cultural ambience, international students can get a world-class learning experience near their home country. It is precisely to provide an environment for interaction that the regulations say that academic programmes in the FHEI campuses need to be in physical mode.

The draft regulations are also a breath of fresh air, giving more viable options to the four lakh or so Indian students who head overseas each year for transnational education. Many students who plan to go abroad will continue to do so to study and work in a different environment. However, many may not be able to due to family or financial situations. While some may think studying in a foreign country is about much more than just earning an international degree, FHEIs will provide opportunities for students who do not wish to immigrate to stay in India and study at a foreign university. This can be a win-win situation because Indian students will be able to access high-quality education living in India while foreign universities can cater to huge numbers.

However, all this will only happen with enabling legal and regulatory structures. The establishment of foreign campuses will be facilitated through the provisions of the Foreign Exchange Management Act 1999

and its rules. A few representative ways in which FHEIs can establish campuses are: As a company under the Companies Act, 2013 and operate the campus through this company; via the Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008; as a joint venture with an existing Indian entity such as a university or setting up a branch office in India for conducting its operations in education. The biggest incentive for FHEIs is that there is no need to keep a corpus fund and they can repatriate their funds to the parent university.

The Union budget announced on February 1, 2022, emphasised foreign direct investment (FDI) in education. If we factor in potential FDI in the education sector, the cascading effects on employment, technology transfer, and investment in academic infrastructure are promising.

The National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration recently conducted a study to gather reliable information on foreign universities' current and future priorities regarding establishing their campuses in India, identifying major concerns and expectations of foreign universities, and to identify areas that need policy interventions. In the report, several universities ranking in the top 200 have expressed their interest in considering India as a destination.

Therefore, there is evidence for the need for FHEI campuses in India at least in two aspects. First, such campuses will foster healthy competition among Indian institutions to better their standards and establish world-class institutions. Second, the Institutions of Eminence (IoE) have made considerable progress in multidisciplinary teaching and research, leveraging technology for effective teaching-learning, developing state-of-the-art facilities, and promoting the internationalisation of higher education. They and other institutes in India can be potential partners in research collaborations with FHEIs in cutting-edge areas.

Trust in regulations and regulatory bodies is not an event but a series of continuous efforts and improvements. Following NEP 2020, the UGC has been proactively working to meet the aspirations of Indian higher education institutes by providing them with more autonomy and bringing out progressive regulation. The draft regulations on FHEIs consider the current and desired stages of internationalising Indian higher education. Opening windows for cross-border growth for top institutions from other countries and opening ourselves to other countries is a progressive regulatory step.

Suppose, we see regulations regarding campuses of FHEIs along with the other recent initiatives like the joint, and dual degrees with foreign universities, and the regulations for enabling the Indian universities to open campuses in other countries, which are in the making. Then, one can see how the regulatory architecture addresses the desired stages of internationalisation. The UGC's reforms should not be read in silos. Rather, the cumulative effects of the enabling provisions must be seen as a catalyst for transforming higher education in India.

The writer is chairman, University Grants Commission. Views are personal

ریاست کی پرائیویٹ یونیورسٹیوں کی اب جانچ ہوگی

اسمبلی نے پانچ رکنی کمیٹی تشکیل دی، اسٹیفن مرانڈی قیادت کریں گے، جلد ہوگی پہلی میٹنگ

یونیورسٹیوں کی حیثیت کا جائزہ لینے کے لیے ایک کمیٹی تشکیل دیں۔

سرمائی اجلاس کے دوران بنیادی طور پر ایم ایل اے انتہت اوچھا اور ایم ایل اے لیور مہوتو نے پرائیویٹ یونیورسٹی کا مسئلہ اٹھایا۔ ایم ایل اے انتہت اوچھا نے کہا تھا کہ کئی پرائیویٹ یونیورسٹیاں ریاست کے وسائل کا استعمال کر رہی ہیں۔ دوسری طرف ایم ایل اے لیور مہوتو نے کہا تھا کہ بہت سی پرائیویٹ یونیورسٹیاں ہیں جو کرائے کے مکانوں میں چل رہی ہیں۔ پوجی سی کے گاؤں لائن پر عمل نہیں کیا جا رہا ہے۔ گویا کے ایم ایل اے لیور مہوتو، جو کہ پرائیویٹ یونیورسٹیوں کی جانچ کے لیے اسمبلی کی طرف سے تشکیل دی گئی کمیٹی کے رکن ہیں نے بتایا کہ کمیٹی تشکیل دی گئی ہے۔ اس کمیٹی کا پہلا اجلاس جلد ہوگا۔ جس میں جانچ کیسے اور کب شروع کی جائے اس کا فیصلہ کیا جائے گا۔ بہت ممکن ہے کہ اسی ہفتے کمیٹی کی میٹنگ ہو۔



سازوں کی طرف سے پرائیویٹ یونیورسٹیوں کی مخالفت کے دوران ہی واپس کر دیا گیا۔ سی ایم ہیمت سورین نے ایوان میں پرائیویٹ یونیورسٹیوں کے بارے میں ایم ایل اے کی مخالفت کو ایک سنگین معاملہ سمجھا تھا۔ یہ وزیر اعلیٰ ہی تھے جنہوں نے اسپیکر پر زور دیا کہ وہ ریاست میں کام کرنے والی تمام پرائیویٹ

ہے۔ دو دستگہ، کیدار ہزارا، لیور مہوتو اور رام چندر سنگھ کمیٹی کے دیگر ارکان ہیں۔ اس کمیٹی کو جانچ کے بعد اپنی رپورٹ ودھان سبھا کو سونپنی ہے۔ اسمبلی کے سرمائی اجلاس میں کئی ایم ایل اے نے پرائیویٹ یونیورسٹیوں کی من مانی اور قواعد کو نظر انداز کرنے کے خلاف احتجاج کیا۔ جین یونیورسٹی مل کو قانون

دلفنچی (ایس این پی)

قانون ساز اسمبلی کے سرمائی اجلاس میں پرائیویٹ یونیورسٹیوں کو ضابطے کے خلاف چلانے پر ہونے بٹ کے بعد ان کی جانچ کی بات ہوئی۔ اب ریاست کی پرائیویٹ یونیورسٹیوں کی چھان بین کی جائے گی۔ جھارکھنڈ اسمبلی کے اسپیکر روندر ناتھ مہوتو نے اسمبلی کی جانب سے ایک پانچ رکنی کمیٹی تشکیل دی ہے۔ یہ پانچ رکنی کمیٹی تمام پرائیویٹ یونیورسٹیوں کی جانچ کرے گی۔ یہ دیکھنا کمیٹی کی ذمہ داری ہوگی کہ کیا پرائیویٹ یونیورسٹیاں پوجی سی اور ریاستی حکومت کے وضع کردہ اصولوں کے مطابق چلائی جا رہی ہیں۔ کمیٹی کو اس انکوائری کی رپورٹ بھی اسمبلی میں پیش کرنی ہوگی۔ جھارکھنڈ اسمبلی کے اسپیکر روندر ناتھ مہوتو نے اس کام کے لیے پانچ رکنی کمیٹی تشکیل دی ہے۔ اس کمیٹی کی کمان چے ایم ایم ایم ایل اے اسٹیفن مرانڈی کو دی گئی

(27)

Three tiers of a crisis

Public universities are in decline and private universities out of reach for most. Entry of foreign universities will exacerbate inequalities



SUKANTA CHAUDHURI

THREE SWIMMERS enter a competition. One is allowed free use of all four limbs. The second has hands tied, and the third, both hands and feet.

That could be an apt allegory of Indian higher education if, following the UGC's latest proposal, foreign universities freely set up campuses in India. "Freely" means just that. They can appoint their own staff, Indian and foreign, on their own terms, and devise their own courses. They can determine admission procedure and fee structure. The only restrictions are that they cannot offer online courses (for how long, one wonders), endanger India's national interest, or jeopardise the standards of education in India. The last would indeed be an ironic outcome. If India's national interest is as fiercely monitored on these campuses as on desi ones, would they accept such a regime?

Why should our vishwaguru nation bend over backwards to import instruction from abroad? No doubt it exemplifies the noble principle of *atithi devo bhava*. But our traditions honour home-grown gurus as well. How are they faring?

Some of those gurus subsist on students' *dakshina*, others on patronage. The first lot, private universities, enjoy many of the above freedoms but not others. They are vulnerable to political pressures. If private universities have their hands tied, public universities are bound hand and foot. They cannot appoint foreign faculty. Their curricula are straitjacketed by UGC models. Research funds are increasingly tied to set fields and topics — a trend likely to swell under the new National Education Policy. Government grants are plummeting, even as the freedom to seek funds elsewhere is curtailed.

Some concerns about the entry of foreign universities were powerfully voiced by Pratap Bhanu Mehta ('The Gimmicks Commission', IE, January 9). I need not repeat them. There are enough other issues. Universities allowed entry must rank among the world's top 500, but other institutions have to be merely "reputed" back home. How would that reputation be measured?

Again, if these universities followed their current curricular patterns, how would they mesh with each other, or with Indian norms? Britain chiefly has three-year undergraduate programmes, the US has four-year ones. Master's courses come in all shapes and sizes, as does the build-up to doctoral research. One wonders how far the UGC appreciates the intellectual implications of its proposal. Its chairperson instances urban design and fashion design as the kind of "diverse" courses desired. Where do fundamental studies feature in this concept? If they do not, what will we gain from the world's leading institutes?

But the really troubling questions concern the context of tertiary education. Currently, India has two types of tertiary institutions, public and private. Public universities have traditionally charged very low fees with no relation to costs. Even the poor-

est student could enter university, assuming she cracked our inequitable school system. The chief source of funds was government grants.

The Union government is now aggressively slashing grants and pressing for a major hike in fees, at times beyond the means of even middle-class students. This has caused unrest even in the IITs, where students are reconciled to high fees — where, the government still provides substantial funds. Far stronger protests (as currently at Allahabad University) have come from students studying general courses at central universities, where faculty appointments and grants have been grossly curtailed. Courses and standards are in jeopardy, while many students are dropping out from financial constraints. Universities under state governments face the same trauma in heightened form.

The crisis of public universities has brought into being a new generation of academically ambitious private universities. They are few in number, and likely to remain so. Not many students can spend in six or seven figures for an "unremunerative" degree in basic science or humanities. Some private universities have a laudable but inevitably limited programme of scholarships. Most crucially, few indigent students can negotiate the state school system to qualify for admission in the first place. At the same time, there is a ceiling to the income even from such high fees. Educational philanthropy in India is nascent compared to, say, in the US. Hence private universities, too, face financial and educational challenges — for both the institution and the student.

Yet within their purview, they might have achieved stability over time. That prospect will diminish with the entry of foreign universities. The most affluent and ambitious students will shift to the latter, depriving home-grown private universities of the cream of their limited intake. Yet that cream might curdle in its new vessel. Those students might save on the expenses of living abroad, but it is simply unreal to suggest that their experience can approach that of the parent campus.

Many university systems in the world are scarred by divisions and exclusions. The US is a prominent instance. But if the current proposal goes through, India will have spawned a three-tier system uniquely divided by inequalities of class and wealth. The greater part of India's youth would be roundly deprived of quality higher education — the nation will lose out on the greater part of its human resources.

The success of an educational community depends disproportionately on the participation of the already-educated elite. If they shift patronage to a more exclusive class of institutions, the tremors destabilise the tiers below. Yet, even the upper tiers will suffer an institutional deficit, preventing us from matching the great educational ecosystems of the world.

Despite its many faults, the upper end of our public university system had gone a long way in setting up a comparable ecosystem, organically adapted to Indian conditions. Instead of reforming its defects, we have thrown out the baby with the bathwater. Is there still time to pull it out by the toe before it disappears down the drain?

The writer is professor emeritus department of English, Jadavpur University

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LEARNING AID

How Annie helps children learn Braille on their own

Annie is a self-learning Braille device for the visually impaired

ANUJ BHATIA

A CONVERSATION THAT started at a breakfast table between Aman Srivastava and three of his friends from BITS Pilani, Goa, soon took the shape of a research project. It eventually led to a prototype far from the friends' realm of imagination. That's how Bengaluru-based Thinkerbell Labs developed "Annie," the world's first self-learning device for teaching Braille to visually impaired kids.

Although there has been a global push towards inclusive education, Srivastava, 28, saw a gap between teachers not adequately trained and the lack of the right tools needed to provide early education for the visually impaired. Srivastava says when he and his team started working on Annie in 2016, they found that the traditional teaching method for visually impaired students required one-to-one hand-holding, which could be extensive in nature. "We realised that we could build something that amplifies the effectiveness of a special educator by developing a solution designed to cater to not one but multiple students at the



same time. What would that world look like?" he said in an interview.

Srivastava describes Annie as a literacy tool, a Wi-Fi-enabled electronic Braille device that helps a child with low vision to read, write and type. It has been designed around the concept of audio-tactile, which makes learning more interactive for a child with visual impairments. The device teaches Braille—an embossed reading system which allows blind or visually impaired students to read

using their fingers—in English, Hindi or whichever local language they are comfortable in. The idea is to cover all the basic aspects of language first and once a child becomes literate, they use that knowledge of literacy to learn vocabulary, sentences, comprehension, etc.

The design of Annie has gone through multiple iterations, which Srivastava says is a common practice in designing a product from the ground up. The early versions of



Annie is a literacy tool, a Wi-Fi-enabled electronic Braille device that helps a child with low vision to read, write and type."

AMAN SRIVASTAVA,
CO-FOUNDER,
THINKERBELL LABS

Annie developed in-house had only one large Braille cell with audio but later it was decided to add a few standard cells. "The design has evolved based on functional requirements, which is if you have to educate from classes 1 to 8, what all do you need hardware-wise?" Srivastava says.

Srivastava recalls the team built 50 to 60 prototypes across five to six versions before commercially starting deploying Annie in 2018. He sees Annie as a full-fledged computer

which can be updated just like a smartphone. The device controls the tactile display that children can touch and feel which then shows words, alphabets and letters to them. There are different buttons for different tasks, similar to how a laptop works. Annie is a connected device and can be remotely enabled to keep track of students' performance.

But Annie isn't just a hardware device, clarifies Srivastava. In fact, Annie has a hardware layer, a content layer, and a software layer to it. Srivastava and team worked with the UK's Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) as well as India's National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Visual Disabilities to develop the content which is as per different grades of Braille that works on Annie. The content, which consists of alphabet learning, listening to sentences and games, is fully digitised and made interactive in nature.

The acceptance of Annie—sold as Polly in the US—has opened new opportunities for the young startup in the west. Since its launch, as many as 400 units of Annie are up and running across schools. Just recently, Thinkerbell Labs signed a deal with the American Printing House for the Blind, a non-profit organisation, to provide 700 units of Annie every year for three years. "One Annie project costs ₹7.5-9 lakh depending on a school, how many students are there, how many teachers have to be trained and how many devices have to be deployed," he adds.

Thinkerbell Labs is currently working on new versions of Annie with more content. There are also plans to expand the regional language support on Annie, including Malayalam, Oriya, Gujarati and Punjabi.))

Developing schools without barriers

“Ma’am, may I please go to the toilet?” or “Can I go play outside?” are usually innocuous requests by most schoolchildren. But for children with disability/disabilities (CWD), these are difficult tasks, due to the higher care needed to complete the actions. These actions become tougher in schools which do not have accessible spaces and guiding infrastructure to get there safely.

A UNESCO 2019 report mentioned that CWD comprise 1.7% of the total child population in India (Census 2011). As they are faced with physical, institutional, socioeconomic and communication barriers from an early age, more than 70% of five-year-olds with disabilities in India have never attended any educational institution, the report said. Many CWD also tend to drop out of school as they grow older.

To motivate all children to meaningfully participate in all indoor and outdoor activities without barriers or limitations, the school ecosystem has to be made safe, accessible, and reliable.

Barriers to accessibility

Several barriers impede the participation of CWD in accessing educational opportunities such as inaccessible school buses; inaccessible facilities in schools (drinking water facilities, canteens and toilets); and inappropriate infrastructure in classrooms (uncomfortable seating, slippery flooring and low illumination). Misinformed attitudes and perceptions among parents, teachers, staff, and communities further influences the child’s emotional development.

The lack of teaching and learning practices that integrate inclusive technologies and digital equipment to engage the child, such as assistive devices, are additional challenges. At training programmes conducted by UN-Habitat India and IIT Kharagpur recently, school teachers and special educators



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Developing inclusive and accessible schools will help challenge perceptions about children with disabilities and actualise the zero-rejection policy in schools

said that accessible infrastructure within schools, such as ramps or tactile paths, are either in deficit or have not been constructed utilising suitable materials. School management authorities added that if such provisions are maintained regularly and adequate funding is provided for the construction of new infrastructure, we would have accessible places. The cooperation, involvement, and sensitisation of parents and caregivers, teachers, school management authorities, and the local government departments are required so that all these barriers are actively addressed.

Article 21A of the Constitution and the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 outline the fundamental right to education and the right to have free and compulsory education for children aged 6-14 years. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, which adopted a ‘zero rejection policy’, emphasises that “every child with special needs, irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability, is provided meaningful and quality education”. India ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Aligning with this commitment, the government launched the Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan) in 2015. An important pillar of this campaign is accessibility to built environment. The government has also been supportive of the principle of Leave No One Behind (LNOB), which is the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Anchored under the Mainstreaming LNOB project by UN-Habitat, pilot training programmes on enhancing accessibility and inclusion were implemented in two schools in Delhi with support from IIT Kharagpur and the Department of Social Welfare, Delhi government.

Through interactive training sessions and simulation exercises that encourage empathy-building,

more than 400 participants, including children, school faculty and staff, were informed about different types of disabilities among children and the specific barriers experienced in different infrastructure zones of a school. After the simulation exercises, children said they will make more efforts to assist their classmates whenever they can. Various good practices, guidelines, and standards for making buildings, campuses, and infrastructure safe, accessible, and inclusive were also showcased. Even if any combination of these accessibility features is added or adapted in schools, it can go a long way in creating inclusive spaces.

Towards inclusivity

Developing inclusive and accessible schools will not only challenge perceptions about CWD, and the associated discrimination, but also help in actualising the zero-rejection policy in schools.

A multi-pronged participatory approach towards providing an enabling environment for the empowerment of future citizens is needed to ensure that stakeholders in the school ecosystem collectively work towards promoting accessibility and inclusion in schools. This includes awareness and sensitisation programmes for children, parents, and caregivers; training trainers for upskilling of school faculty and special educators and providing access to updated teaching toolkits and materials; technical training for local government departments; and a co-learning platform for knowledge-sharing between all.

Additionally, five principles – equitability, usability and durability, affordability, cultural adaptability, and aesthetic appeal – should be embedded from the planning to implementation to evaluation stages of providing infrastructure services in schools.

With the realisation of such an approach, removing the barriers to accessibility will be an uphill, but not insurmountable, battle.

दैनिक जागरण, 30 जनवरी 2023! पृष्ठ-7

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विश्वविद्यालय के हर छात्र को अब पांच अनपढ़ों को पढ़ाना होगा आवश्यक

जागरण ब्यूरो, नई दिल्ली: वर्ष 2047 तक देश को विकसित राष्ट्र बनाने का सपना अभी भले ही दूर की कौड़ी जैसा लग रहा है, लेकिन केंद्र सरकार इस दिशा में तेजी से आगे बढ़ चुकी है। खासकर शत-प्रतिशत साक्षरता के लक्ष्य को हासिल करने को लेकर सरकार ने बड़ी पहल की है। इसके लिए एक नया साक्षरता अभियान भी तैयार किया है। इसमें विश्वविद्यालयों और उच्च शिक्षण संस्थानों में पढ़ने वाले प्रत्येक छात्र के लिए हर वर्ष कम से कम पांच अनपढ़ लोगों को पढ़ाना जरूरी होगा। इसके लिए उन्हें क्रेडिट स्कोर भी मिलेगा, जो उनके कोर्स में जुड़ेगा।

विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग ने फिलहाल नए शैक्षणिक सत्र से ही नई साक्षरता योजना को लागू करने

- नए शैक्षणिक सत्र से विश्वविद्यालयों में शुरू होगा नया साक्षरता अभियान, यूजीसी ने जारी की गाइडलाइन
- पाठ्यक्रम से जुड़े प्रोजेक्ट वर्क और एसाइनमेंट का होगा हिस्सा, इसके बाद ही छात्रों को मिलेगी डिग्री

के निर्देश दिए हैं। इसके लिए एक विस्तृत गाइडलाइन भी जारी की गई है। इसमें प्रत्येक कोर्स के प्रोजेक्ट वर्क और एसाइनमेंट को इससे जोड़ने के लिए कहा है। इनमें ग्रेजुएट और पोस्ट ग्रेजुएट दोनों ही तरह के कोर्स शामिल होंगे। इस योजना के तहत एक अनपढ़ को पढ़ाने पर पांच क्रेडिट स्कोर मिलेंगे। लेकिन यह तभी मिलेंगे जब सीखने वाले को साक्षर होने का प्रमाण पत्र मिल

जाएगा। यूजीसी के मुताबिक, इस पहल से साक्षरता की मुहिम काफी तेज हो सकेगी। देश में साक्षरता की दर लगभग 78 प्रतिशत है। जबकि इसे लेकर शुरू किए गए नए अभियान में इसे शत-प्रतिशत करने का लक्ष्य रखा गया है।

यूजीसी ने विश्वविद्यालयों और उच्च शिक्षण संस्थानों से अनपढ़ लोगों को पढ़ाने के लिए छात्रों को विशेष प्रशिक्षण देने का भी सुझाव दिया है। ताकि इस अभियान पर बेहतर तरीके से अमल हो सके। जानकारों की मानें तो इस पहल के पीछे उद्देश्य छात्रों को पढ़ाई के साथ कुछ जिम्मेदारी भी देना है। मालूम हो कि मौजूदा समय में देश में एक हजार से ज्यादा विश्वविद्यालय और करीब 45 हजार कालेज हैं।

इस साल जमीन पर दिखने लगेगी नई राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति

जागरण ब्यूरो, नई दिल्ली : राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति के जरिये देश की समूची शिक्षा को जिस नई ऊंचाई पर ले जाने का सपना बुना गया है, उसके अमल के लिहाज से साल 2023 बेहद अहम होगा। स्कूलों के लिए नया पाठ्यक्रम तैयार करना, सभी राज्यों में इस नीति की सिफारिशों के मुताबिक पीएम-श्री स्कूल स्थापित करना, उच्च शिक्षा को सभी की पहुंच में लाने के लिए डिजिटल यूनिवर्सिटी का गठन और भारतीय उच्च शिक्षा आयोग का गठन जैसी पहल इसमें शामिल हैं।

शिक्षा मंत्रालय ने नीति के अमल का जो रोडमैप तैयार किया है, उसके तहत नीति से जुड़ी 50 से ज्यादा छोटी-बड़ी सिफारिशों पर इस साल काम होना है। इन सभी का सीधा असर जमीन पर दिखेगा। इसके साथ ही चार वर्षीय नए इंटीग्रेटेड

नीति से जुड़ी 50 से ज्यादा छोटी-बड़ी सिफारिशों पर इस वर्ष होना है काम

पीएम-श्री स्कूल और स्कूली शिक्षा का नया पाठ्यक्रम होगा तैयार



नए इंटीग्रेटेड बीएड कोर्स की शुरुआत होगी इस साल से, विद्यार्थी को बीच में पढ़ाई छोड़ने व शुरू करने का विकल्प

बीएड कोर्स की भी शुरुआत इस साल से होगी। इसमें शिक्षण के क्षेत्र में रुचि रखने वाले छात्रों को बारहवीं के बाद सीधे दाखिला मिलेगा। इसके तहत छात्र बीए-बीएड, बीएससी बीएड और बीकाम बीएड जैसे कोर्स कर सकेंगे। इसके अलावा विश्वविद्यालयों में चार वर्षीय नया स्नातक कोर्स भी शुरू होगा। इसमें

विद्यार्थी को बीच में कभी भी पढ़ाई छोड़ने व शुरू करने के विकल्प मिलेंगे। इस दौरान एक साल में छोड़ने पर सर्टिफिकेट, दो साल में डिप्लोमा और तीन साल में डिग्री व चार साल में आनर्स की डिग्री मिलेगी। यदि इस दौरान किसी छात्र ने शोध के क्षेत्र में भी काम किया है, उसे शोध के साथ ही स्नातक

में आनर्स की डिग्री मिलेगी। उच्च शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में दोहरी डिग्री और संयुक्त डिग्री से जुड़े कोर्सों में नए साल में तेजी दिखेगी। उच्च शिक्षा में प्रस्तावित क्रेडिट स्कीम की भी शुरुआत होगी।

मंत्रालय से जुड़े अधिकारियों के मुताबिक उच्च शिक्षा में बड़े बदलावों से जुड़े भारतीय उच्च शिक्षा आयोग के गठन पर भी तेजी से काम शुरू हो गया है। इसके मसौदे को अंतिम रूप दिया जा रहा है। इसी साल के अंत तक इसके गठन के विधेयक को संसद में लाया जा सकता है। गौरतलब है कि नई राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति को केंद्र सरकार ने 29 जुलाई 2020 को मंजूरी दी थी। इसके बाद से इसके अमल पर योजनाबद्ध तरीके से काम हो रहा है। अब तक इस नीति की करीब दौ सौ सिफारिशों पर अमल हो चुका है।

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'Every Exam Is An Opportunity, But Not The Only One'

Union education minister writes on the new year's first Pariksha Pe Charcha

Dharmendra Pradhan



The much-awaited sixth edition of Pariksha Pe Charcha is here and will be held at the Talkatora Indoor Stadium, Delhi on January 27 at 11am.

Crores of students, teachers and parents across the country and abroad will be participating.

Registrations have risen phenomenally to around 39 lakh, including students from almost 150 countries, teachers from 51 countries and parents from 50 countries. The massive increase of over two and a half times is primarily from students and teachers registered with various state boards, clearly indicating the soaring popularity of this unique initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In this edition too, participants will get a chance to directly interact with him.

Is there an optimal stress level?

The PM has undertaken Pariksha Pe Charcha with the vision of a stress-free ecosystem for assessment which brings students, parents, teachers and society together to celebrate the uniqueness of every student and foster her holistic development. So his direct interaction with students, answering their queries on exam stress and related issues, is an important part of the initiative.

It is of course normal to feel some stress about upcoming tests and exams. Indeed, in the right amount, stress can challenge and stimulate you to work harder. But when it interferes with your ability to perform and achieve your academic and learning goals, parents and teachers have to play a crucial role. It is their responsibility to enable every child to follow her own dreams, rather than forcing through their own dreams.

The Pariksha Pe Charcha movement is aided by the PM's book *Exam Warriors*, which is now available in 13 different languages. It outlines a refreshing



The image is for representational purposes

approach to education, where holistic development of students is given utmost importance. It also urges everyone to see any exam in the right perspective, rather than making it a life-and-death situation, causing undue stress and pressure.

What is special about your generation?

While addressing the issue of how students should handle the demands of competitive exams and board exams, the PM has often said that if one studies the syllabus with full attention, then exams really don't matter. Aim to master the subject rather than to clear the exam. Study for the knowledge.

As the PM has said, "You belong to a special generation. Yes, there is more competition but there are more opportunities too." So, treat competition as the greatest gift of these times. Treat learning as an enjoyable, fulfilling and lifelong journey. Indeed, "In a long life, an exam is just one of the opportunities to challenge yourself. The problem arises when you look at it as the end of

In the near future NEP will change the whole syllabus and pattern for Classes 10 and 12. With the amalgamation of subjects and the crossover between streams, students will be able to study subjects as per their preferences

all your dreams, as a life-and-death question. Take any exam as an opportunity. Actually, we must keep looking out for such challenges rather than run away from them."

A "repository of mantras and activities" he has shared this time can be accessed online, to help students beat exams. It covers several topics such as the right attitude towards exams; confidence in and out of the exam hall; time management; handling difficult subjects;

how to concentrate; making the most of memory; setting goals, and much more.

In view of the various challenges facing education today and the need for transformative reforms in this sector, our government has brought in the pathbreaking National Education Policy 2020, which has been formulated through intensive consultations with all stakeholders.

Among its various transformative interventions, the policy recommends flexibility in choice of subjects for the students. Students will have the liberty to take subjects of their choice, choose their own path, and pursue a profession of their own liking.

Do you get to study subjects that you like?

NEP also focuses on continuous, formative and competency-based assessment, promoting learning and development of students, and testing higher-order skills which include analysis, critical thinking and conceptual clarity.

In the near future NEP will change the whole syllabus and pattern for the students of Classes 10 and 12. With the amalgamation of subjects and the crossover between streams, school students will not only be able to study subjects as per their preferences but also pursue higher studies accordingly. They will have an option to choose subjects such as arts and crafts and vocational studies along with the conventional ones. For example, a science student will be able to choose an arts subject and study both simultaneously.

In this process, an initiative like Pariksha Pe Charcha will play a major role by addressing the concerns of students, teachers and parents regarding time management, exam anxiety and other related themes. I invite all of you to join this movement and actively support the students so they can thrive in their respective fields and contribute to the noble cause of nation-building. I look forward to your participation in the upcoming Pariksha Pe Charcha.

PM ने दिया गुरु मंत्र, स्मार्ट तरीके से हार्ड वर्क करें छात्र परीक्षा पे चर्चा : बच्चों पर उम्मीदों का बोझ न डालें

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■ नई दिल्ली : 'परीक्षा पे चर्चा-2023' के दौरान प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने छात्रों को अपनी क्षमताओं पर भरोसा करने, पूरी ईमानदारी से मेहनत करने और स्मार्ट तरीके से हार्ड वर्क करने का मंत्र दिया।

प्रधानमंत्री ने शिक्षकों को सलाह दी कि जो छात्र उनसे सवाल करते हैं, वे उनका स्वागत करें। छात्र अगर कोई सवाल पूछता है तो वह आपकी परीक्षा नहीं लेता। उन्होंने कहा कि आरोप और आलोचना के बीच बहुत बड़ी खाई है। आलोचना हमारे लिए पोषक तत्व है, उसे सकारात्मकता से लें। आरोप लगाने वालों को नजरअंदाज करें। छात्रों से संवाद के दौरान प्रधानमंत्री ने यह भी कहा कि आज दुनिया में भारत को एक आशा की किरण के रूप में देखा जा रहा है। परिवार के लोगों की उम्मीदों से जुड़े छात्रों के सवालों के जवाब में प्रधानमंत्री ने कहा कि परिवार के लोगों को बहुत अपेक्षाएं होना बहुत स्वाभाविक है। मगर, यह सिर्फ सामाजिक स्थिति बनाए रखने के लिए है, तो यह खतरनाक हो जाता है। छात्रों को अपनी क्षमता पर भरोसा करना चाहिए। उन्होंने अभिभावकों से आग्रह किया कि वे बच्चों पर उम्मीदों का बोझ न डालें और छात्रों से कहा कि वे अपनी क्षमता के अनुसार खुद का मूल्यांकन करें।



PM ने दी सलाह, आलोचना पोषक तत्व है, उसे सकारात्मकता से लें।

मोदी ने कहानी के जरिए समझाया

■ हार्ड वर्क और स्मार्ट वर्क से जुड़े एक सवाल के जवाब में प्रधानमंत्री ने कहा कि स्मार्ट तरीके से हार्ड वर्क करना होगा। एक कहानी का जिक्र करते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि एक प्यासा कौवा कैसे घड़े में कंकड़ डालकर पानी पीता है, यह स्मार्टली हार्ड वर्क है। ऐसे लोग हैं जो बहुत मेहनत करते हैं। कुछ मुश्किल से स्मार्ट वर्क करते हैं और कुछ स्मार्ट तरीके से हार्ड वर्क करते हैं। इससे सीखना चाहिए।

शॉर्टकट से बचने की दी सलाह

■ प्रधानमंत्री ने छात्रों को दिए अपने संदेश में कहा कि वे जीवन में कभी भी शॉर्टकट न अपनाएं। उन्होंने नकल के प्रति भी छात्रों को आगाह किया और कहा कि इससे उन्हें अल्पकालिक लाभ तो हो सकता है लेकिन दीर्घकालिक नुकसान ही होगा। जीवन में डगर-डगर पर परीक्षा देनी है और नकल से जिंदगी नहीं बन सकती। दयूशन देने वालों की भी यह जिम्मेदारी है कि वे अपने छात्रों को इस बीमारी के प्रति आगाह करें।

Rashtriya Sahasra Shiksha, 21 January 2023, 5-5

फीस-न चुकाने पर छात्रों की परीक्षा भाग कक्षाओं में शामिल होने से नहीं रोक सकते स्कूल : हाईकोर्ट

34

फीस کی عدم ادائیگی پر اسکول طلباء کو امتحانات یا کلاسز میں شرکت سے نہیں روک سکتا: ہائی کورٹ

نقصان کی وجہ سے اپنی اسکول کی فیس باقاعدگی سے ادا کرنے سے قاصر ہے۔ ایک ہمدردانہ نقطہ نظر لیتے ہوئے، عدالت نے مشاہدہ کیا کہ تعلیمی سیشن کے وسط میں طالب علم کو اس طرح کی ہرسانی کا نشانہ نہیں بنایا جاسکتا۔ اسکول انتظامیہ نے عدالت کو بتایا کہ فیس کی ایک خطیر رقم جو کل تین لاکھ روپے سے زائد ہے نہ صرف درخواست گزار کو بلکہ اس کی بہن کو بھی ادا کرنا ہے، جو گزشتہ تعلیمی سیشن میں پاس آؤٹ ہو گئی تھیں۔ نجی غیر امدادی اسکول ہونے کی وجہ سے اسکول کے لیے تعلیم فراہم کرنا ممکن نہیں ہوگا اگر طالب علم اپنی فیس باقاعدگی سے ادا نہیں کرتا ہے۔ حالانکہ عدالت نے دونوں فریقوں کے لیے متوازن رویہ اختیار کرتے ہوئے طالب علم کو چار ہفتوں کے اندر اندر 30 ہزار روپے اسکول کو ادا کرنے کی ہدایت کی۔



عدم ادائیگی کی بنیاد پر کسی طالب علم کو امتحان میں شرکت سے روکنا آئین ہند کے آرٹیکل 21 کے تحت ضمانت یافتہ بچے کے حقوق کی خلاف ورزی ہے۔ انہوں نے اسکول انتظامیہ کو ہدایت کی کہ طالب علم کو بورڈ کے امتحانات میں شرکت کی اجازت دی جائے۔ طالب علم نے عدالت کو بتایا کہ وہ اپنے والد کو کوویڈ سے متاثرہ لاک ڈاؤن کے بعد ہونے والے مالی

نفسی دہلی (ایس این جی)

ہائی کورٹ نے واضح کیا کہ اگر کوئی طالب علم فیس ادا نہیں کرتا ہے تو اس کی وجہ سے اسکول انتظامیہ اسے کلاس میں جانے یا امتحان دینے سے نہیں روک سکتی۔ عدالت نے یہ مشاہدہ کیا کہ نجی غیر امدادی اسکول کے 10 ویں جماعت کے طالب علم کی طرف سے دائر درخواست پر سماعت کرتے ہوئے کیا۔ فیس کی عدم ادائیگی کی وجہ سے طالب علم کو بی ایس ای بورڈ کے آئندہ امتحانات میں شرکت کی اجازت نہیں دی گئی۔ طالب علم نے اسے ہائی کورٹ میں چیلنج کیا اور عرضی دائر کی۔ جسٹس مٹی پشکر نے مشاہدہ کیا کہ کسی طالب علم کو امتحان دینے کی اجازت نہ دینا، خاص طور پر بورڈ کے امتحانات، اس کے حقوق کی خلاف ورزی ہے جیسے اس کے جینیہ کا حق۔ فیس کی

Edu ministry forms plan to bring in 'Bharatiya Games' in schools

Fareeha Iftikhar

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The first "Bharatiya Games" initiative, under which the government is set to introduce indigenous games in schools, will be implemented by appointing a teacher as a point of contact, developing annual and monthly training programmes for them, training students under those teachers, and review and recognition of their performance by experts, according to a plan chalked out by the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) division of the education ministry.

The first interschool competition under the initiative will be held in January, officials said.

The plan to hold Bharatiya Games was announced in July. The ministry has prepared a list of 75 Indian games from different parts of the country, including Raja mantri chor sipahi, posham pa, gilli danda, yubi lakpi, and different forms of kabbadi and kanche, HT reported on July 31.

According to the implementa-



The plan to hold Bharatiya Games was announced in July.

tion plan, each school will nominate a person, most likely the sports teacher, as the point of contact. "The schools will upload the details of these teachers on the IKS website, and we will reach out to them directly for further coordination," a document prepared by the IKS division said. "These teachers, upon training, will prepare students in their respective schools to play the games."

The games' experts will develop a structured training programme consisting of details of the game, including methods to play, scoring techniques, rules, life lessons attached to each particular game, variations of each game, and skills

developed through each game.

"After getting trained using the website and by attending the training programme conducted by IKS, the teachers will identify the students, ideally a large number. A few of these students could be selected for the final game, that is recorded, depending on their interest and competence," the document stated. "These games generally require no special equipment or field, hence there is no need to procure additional funds."

The schools will upload a five-minute video of students' performance on the IKS website for review. "IKS will set up a team of games experts, taken primarily from the teachers from the schools. This team of about 20 will be coached by IKS experts on rating the games. The rating framework will be developed by IKS games experts," the document stated.

Schools have started registering teachers and students on the division's website, said Ganti S Murthy, national coordinator for IKS. "In January, we are likely to conduct our first competition."

Over 1k primary teachers' posts vacant

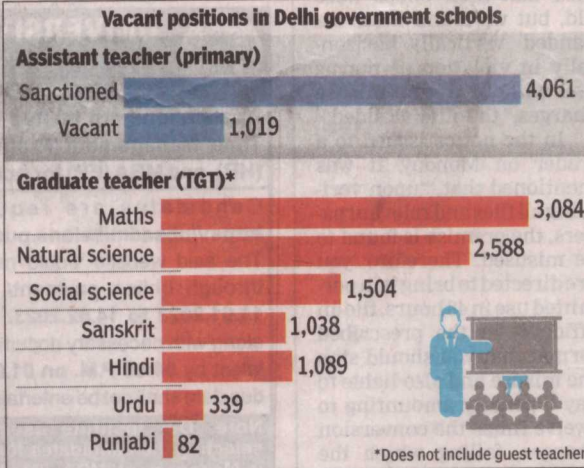
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Even as Delhi government locks horns with lieutenant governor V K Saxena over sending assistant primary teachers in charge to Finland for training, more than 1,000 sanctioned positions in primary schools lie vacant. According to the response to an RTI query, there are 4,061 sanctioned positions of primary teachers.

Pendency of vacancies is not only a big problem in the primary schools, but it has also assumed huge proportions in government schools. Over 400 schools run by Delhi government have classes from nursery to Class XII, most schools having classes starting from VI. Primary education in the city is mainly provided by municipal corporation schools.

The reply to the RTI by Delhi government's Directorate of Education revealed that as of December 20, 2022, a total of 4,061 posts of assistant primary teacher were sanctioned, of which 1,019

UNFILLED POSITIONS



posts were vacant. In most schools, the vacancies are filled temporarily with guest teachers. There are around 22,000 guest teachers teaching in these schools.

According to a senior education official, the requisition for filling up 214 positions has been forwarded to Delhi Subordinate Services Selection Board (DSSSB),

the agency responsible for conducting tests to recruit employees for the Delhi government.

The RTI response also shows a huge backlog in hirings of trained graduate teachers (TGT) in government schools. On December 13, 2022, mathematics had the maximum vacancies in Delhi government schools, with

around 3,084 positions for math teachers unfilled. This, when a large number of students fail maths in Class X, so much so that Delhi government recently had to conduct a mathematics winter camp to bridge the learning gaps for Class IX students.

Natural science and social science too have big vacancies. The posts of 2,588 and 1,504 teachers in these subjects, respectively, are yet to be appointed. This is true even for language teachers, the highest pendency being for English at 2,053, followed by Hindi (1,089), Sanskrit (1,038), Urdu (339) and Punjabi (82).

"The requisition to fill 616 vacancies for TGT/TGT (Modern Indian Languages) has been sent to DSSSB. We are also in the process of sending more requisitions to DSSSB," said a DoE official. He added that the vacancies had arisen due to retirement of some teachers and the promotion of others. "Due to the various processes to be followed, it takes time to fill the vacant positions," the official claimed.

Reading newspapers effectively to prepare for the civil services examination

The all-India third rank holder of the 2021 UPSC exams looks back at her study regime and how it changed during the three stages of the exam. She explains why general awareness and analysing and debating a topic from different angles are a must

Gamini Singla

Gamini Singla cleared the 2021 civil services examination (CSE) conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) with an all-India third rank. The journey wasn't easy, with Singla failing the first Prelims exam in October 2020. She came out with flying colours in her second attempt, and decided to write a book about her experience when she received many requests to share her strategy, timetable and other aspects for her preparation. An excerpt from How I Topped the UPSC and How You Can Too.

You can't do without newspapers in an exam like the UPSC. I made the mistake of ignoring and bypassing them in my first attempt, which was a failure. No news analysis can compensate for the newspapers. Newspapers can be read in multiple ways, and in the CSE too, you must read your newspaper in different ways for the three stages.

For the Prelims

The key areas to focus on are facts, data points, terms (especially for economics) and the static background behind the current news. You need to explore these points in detail. Say you read an article

that mentions a particular tribal movement from the period of the freedom struggle. Newspapers might not elaborate on it, but it becomes your duty to explore it further and prepare all the relevant questions that could be framed out of that topic for the Prelims. If it's covered in the daily news analysis you follow, well and good. Otherwise, make sure to google it further, and make a small note. In a newspaper what is relevant and what is not is a question that troubles many candidates. The only way out of this dilemma is to look at the questions from the previous years, which give you an idea about the frequently asked topics and how in-depth your preparation should be. Also, for the Prelims, anything that you study in the static book must be correlated with the current news.

For the Mains

The focus must be on analysing a particular topic from different angles. If there is a topic that can be debated upon, you must understand both sides of the issue thoroughly and form a balanced opinion. The editorial pages are extremely helpful for the Mains. You must analyse every article correlating with the topics in your Mains syllabus and mentally structure answers for questions likely to be asked from the topic.

Whenever I made my notes on different topics from newspapers, I wrote them in an answer format, inserting the data quoted in the newspaper article in the introduction, other points in the body and the suggestions in the conclusion.

This way, I made my work easy for the Mains. A diversity of points becomes very important for this exam. You should not just stick to one angle and keep explaining it, but explain the same topic from different angles - political, social, environmental, ethical, economic, etc.

The conclusions must always be optimistic and forward looking and show there is good scope for improvement in a given situation.

For the Interview

Newspapers become 80 per cent of your preparation at this stage. For the Prelims and the Mains, I followed only one newspaper. But for the Interview stage, I started reading three newspapers.

For the Interview, every news in and around your area becomes important. The focus should not be on memorising the facts but on framing your own opinions on every issue. I started watching a few discussions daily on different news channels, like Sansad TV, to understand different opinions, and based on the knowledge I had gained

during the preparation, I framed my opinion.

Remember, your opinion and viewpoint must be logical, optimistic and balanced. You can take the backing of the Constitution and the Supreme Court judgments on some controversial issues. At this stage, the newspapers must be followed until the last day, even the news of the day of the Interview becomes crucial.

I developed the habit of newspaper reading in my college days. I would recommend all beginners start with this aspect of preparation first. Make the newspaper your best friend. Initially, it would take me nearly two and a half hours to finish reading the day's papers, so do not worry if you take more time in the early days. Slowly, the time I took reduced to 45 minutes. I got immense help from my father in covering the newspaper portions. I read the newspaper a day late, as my father would mark the essential points every day and the next day, I would read it and focus on the marked items.

I ignored the points I felt were not very relevant. But since my father had also read all my General Studies books, he had a good idea of what was important.

Excerpted with permission from Juggernaut

Food Subsidy For Thought

With India's deficit highest among G20 nations, the budget must chart a clear consolidation path

Rajeswari Sengupta



The government has recently announced that it will discontinue the free-food scheme that it started during the Covid pandemic and will instead distribute foodgrains for free under the Public Distribution System (PDS). According to some analysts, this is good news because it will reduce the government's food subsidy bill. However when looked at closely, this announcement could raise questions about the fiscal conservatism of the government and also about the direction of agricultural policy.

Let's try to unravel these issues.

Pandemic effect

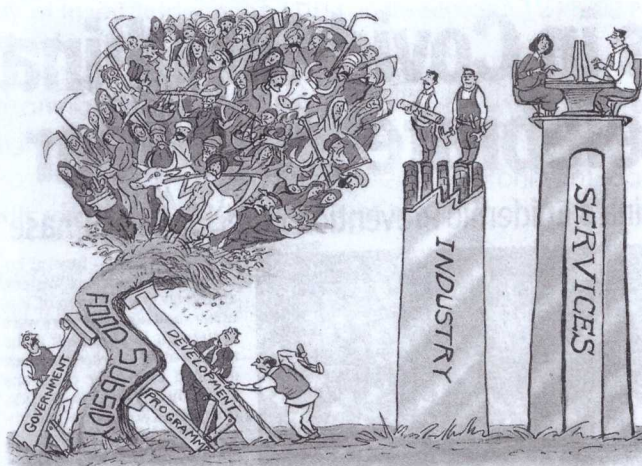
During the pandemic, the government's fiscal deficit understandably soared, as revenues fell and the need for spending increased. But even after the economy has recovered from the pandemic, the fiscal deficit remains large. The deficit of the Centre and states put together is likely to be around 10% this year, the highest among G20 countries. The deficit of the Centre alone is budgeted to be 6.4% of GDP.

Such a high fiscal deficit is not sustainable. Hence, economists expect the Union Budget, to be presented by the finance minister on February 1 to establish a clear glide path of consolidation, which would ensure that the deficit is brought down over the medium term.

Root of the problem

How does the recent announcement fit into this picture? To answer this question, some background is necessary.

- In March 2020, the government launched the PM-GKAY (PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana) free food scheme as a Covid-relief measure.
- The scheme provided 5 kg of free foodgrains (wheat or rice) per person, per month to all families holding a ration card, around 80 crore people.
- The scheme was meant to run from April to November 2020 but was



Chad Crowe

extended multiple times and most recently to December 2022.

- While being well-intentioned and appropriate as an emergency measure, this scheme imposed a serious fiscal burden on successive Union Budgets.

Accordingly, on December 23, the government announced that it will discontinue the PM-GKAY scheme. Instead, it would provide free foodgrains through the existing PDS system for a period of one year, starting from January 1, 2023. This policy action will supposedly generate savings for the government on account of a reduced food subsidy bill.

Hence, at first glance, it seems that the announcement achieves the right objectives - help the poor and reduce subsidy burden. But does it, really?

- The food subsidy will undoubtedly fall next year, compared to this year, but that is not the right comparison.
- This is because PM-GKAY was meant to be a temporary relief provision to help people tide over the pandemic.
- So, the post-health emergency plan needs to be compared to the pre-

pandemic situation.

- Evaluated against that base, the announcement implies that food subsidy will go up since (a) the selling prices of PDS grains have been reduced to zero; and (b) the quantities provided have been increased.
- In other words, the scheme will increase the fiscal burden when compared with the pre-pandemic base.

Opening a Pandora's Box

The medium-term implications could be significant. In the past, there was always the possibility that the government could reduce the budget deficit by raising the prices at which foodgrains were distributed through PDS. But now that the government has made grains free, it will be difficult to start charging the households again. In other words, this announcement commits the government to a scheme that arguably makes it more difficult to achieve medium-term fiscal consolidation targets.

This announcement is likely to have repercussions for overall agricultural

policy as well. The government will now be even more constrained than before as far as raising the minimum support price (MSP) is concerned. If it raises the MSP, its budget will get squeezed further because it will procure the grains at a higher price and then distribute them for free. Yet if it does not raise the MSP, farmers' income from selling to the government will fall in real terms.

In that case, the farmers may decide to sell to the free market rather than the government. But then, the government will face a shortage of foodgrain stock and will not be able to fulfil its commitment. In other words, over and above fiscal issues, this announcement may have opened a Pandora's Box.

Good politics, bad economics?

Some may argue that this is nonetheless a good measure, since the government is giving more help to poor people. But the new programme is aimed at 80 crore beneficiaries: Is more than half the country's population poor? Put another way, why is it necessary to provide free foodgrains tomorrow to people who could afford to pay for them yesterday, when the country is becoming more prosperous every day?

- The main task of the approaching Union Budget is to present a credible plan for reducing the fiscal deficit over the medium term.
- This will be difficult, since most of the major items in the Centre's budget - interest payments, wages, defence and such like - cannot effectively be reduced.
- Until recently, the largest scope for reduction lay in steadily narrowing the food subsidy, the largest component of discretionary current expenditure.
- But with the recent announcement merging the PM-GKAY into the PDS this option may have been foreclosed. While this may make for good politics, it reflects questionable economics.

The writer is Associate Professor of Economics, Indira Gandhi Institute for Development Research

ABSTRACT

Understand economics to know policy

This paper highlights the importance of instilling knowledge of economics among the public

Prashanth Perumal

Nall, Clayton and Elmendorf, Christopher S. and Oklobdzija, Stan, *Folk Economics and the Persistence of Political Opposition to New Housing* (November 2, 2022). <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4266459>

Economists usually blame special interest groups for the prevalence of bad economic policies. The adverse effects of such policies can turn out to be destructive in the long run. In the U.S., for instance, housing policy that restricts supply is estimated to have lowered overall economic growth by more than a third between 1964 and 2009. It is also estimated that housing prices in the most heavily-regulated metropolitan markets are about three times more than what they would have been in the absence of these regulations which restrict the supply of houses. The narrow economic interests of landlords have usually been blamed for the prevalence of bad housing policy. After all, restricting housing supply helps keep housing rents high, which in turn works to the favour of landlords. This is why many economists recommend the abolition of restrictive zoning and land-use planning laws.

Prices need to rise before they drop

Yet another crucial factor may be behind the widespread prevalence of bad economic policies. In "Folk Economics and the Persistence of Political Opposition to New Housing," researchers Clayton Nall, Chris Elmendorf, and Stan Oklobdzija document how public misunderstanding about economics can lead to bad housing policy. It is widely accepted by economists that the supply of a good or service has to first rise for its price to drop, thus making the good or service accessible to more people. This means that if policymakers want to make a good or service widely available to the public, they need to implement policies that boost supply. It would be expected that such a fundamental principle of economics would be widely known among the general public. But the authors of the paper found that only about 30 to 40% of respondents actually believed that an increase in the housing stock would cause housing prices to drop. In fact, about a third of the respondents believed that a rise in the housing supply would cause housing prices and rents to rise rather than drop. Moreover, many people seem to blame real estate developers who play a crucial role in the housing supply chain for high housing prices. This may be due to the common myth that profiteering by greedy developers, rather than insufficient supply, is what causes housing prices and rents to be so high. The results of this study highlight the importance of instilling a basic understanding of economics among the general public. Given that public understanding of economics can play a significant role in shaping government policy, ignorance of basic economics can have a huge impact on economic growth.

The Indian Express, 11 January 2023, Pg-18 (40)

EXPLAINED SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, & CLIMATE CHANGE

Ozone hole, filling up now

A new assessment says the ozone layer will recover to 1980 values by 2066 over Antarctica; in Arctic by 2045. Success of Montreal Protocol is noteworthy, but phasing out greenhouse gases is more difficult



AMITABH SINHA

THE OZONE 'hole', once considered to be the gravest danger to planetary life, is now expected to be completely repaired by 2066, a scientific assessment has suggested. In fact, it is only the ozone layer over Antarctica — where the hole is the most prominent — which will take a long time to heal completely. Over the rest of the world, the ozone layer is expected to be back to where it was in 1980 by 2040 itself, a UN-backed scientific panel has reported.

The recovery of the ozone layer has been made possible by the successful elimination of some harmful industrial chemicals, together referred to as Ozone Depleting Substances or ODSs, through the implementation of the 1989 Montreal Protocol. The assessment has reported that nearly 99 per cent of the substances banned by the Montreal Protocol have now been eliminated from use, resulting in a slow but definite recovery of the ozone layer.

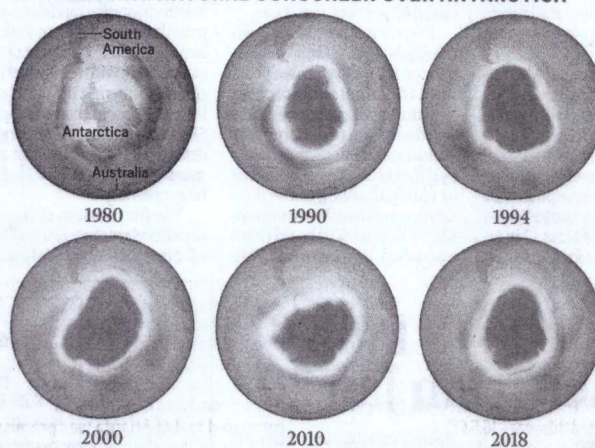
Damage to the ozone layer

The depletion of the ozone layer, first noticed in the early 1980s, used to be the biggest environmental threat before climate change came along. Ozone (chemically, a molecule having three Oxygen atoms, or O₃) is found mainly in the upper atmosphere, an area called stratosphere, between 10 and 50 km from the Earth's surface. It is critical for planetary life, since it absorbs ultraviolet rays coming from the Sun. UV rays are known to cause skin cancer and many other diseases and deformities in plants and animals.

Though the problem is commonly referred to as the emergence of a 'hole' in the ozone layer, it is actually just a reduction in concentration of the ozone molecules. Even in the normal state, ozone is present in extremely low concentrations in the stratosphere. Where the 'layer' is supposed to be the thickest, there are no more than a few molecules of ozone for every million air molecules.

In the 1980s, scientists began to notice a sharp drop in the concentration of ozone. This drop was much more pronounced over the South Pole, which was later linked to the unique meteorological conditions — temperature, pressure, wind speed and direction — that prevail over Antarctica. The ozone hole over Antarctica is the biggest during the months of September, October, and

THINNING NATURAL SUNSCREEN OVER ANTARCTICA



Pictures and caption: NASA Earth Observatory

PRIOR TO 1979, scientists had not observed atmospheric ozone concentrations below 220 Dobson Units (DU; measure of the total amount of ozone in a vertical column of air above the Earth's surface). In the early 1980s, scientists using ground-based and satellite measurements began to realise that the Earth's natural sunscreen was thinning dramatically over the South Pole each spring. This thinning of the ozone layer over Antarctica came to be known as the ozone hole. The stratospheric ozone layer protects life on Earth by absorbing ultraviolet light, which damages DNA in plants and animals (including humans) and leads to sunburns and skin cancer.

IN 1979, the maximum depth of the hole was 194 Dobson Units (DU). In 1982, it fell to 173 DU, in 1983 to 154 DU, and in 1985 to 124 DU.

THE IMAGES HAVE been picked from a series published by NASA showing the size and shape of the ozone hole every year from 1979 through 2019. The measurements were made from 1979-2004 by NASA's Total Ozone Mapping Spectrometer instruments; from 2005-11 by the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute's Ozone Monitoring Instrument (which flies on NASA's Aura satellite); and from 2012-19 by the Ozone Mapping Profiler Suite on the NASA/NOAA Suomi NPP satellite. Red and yellow areas in the images indicate the ozone hole. The maps show the ozone hole on the day the lowest ozone concentrations were measured each year.

IN 1991, ozone concentration fell below 100 DU for the first time. The deepest hole was in 1994, when concentrations fell to 73 DU on Sept 30.

November.

By the middle of 1980s, scientists had figured out that the chief cause of ozone depletion was the use of a class of industrial chemicals that contained chlorine, bromine or fluorine. The most common of these were the chlorofluorocarbons, or CFCs, that were used extensively in the airconditioning, refrigeration, paints, and furniture industries.

Improvement in the situation

The ozone hole has been steadily improv-

ing since 2000, thanks to the effective implementation of the Montreal Protocol.

The latest scientific assessment has said that if current policies continued to be implemented, the ozone layer was expected to recover to 1980 values by 2066 over Antarctica, by 2045 over the Arctic, and by 2040 for the rest of the world.

The elimination of ozone-depleting substances has an important climate change co-benefit as well. These substances also happen to be powerful greenhouse gases, several

of them hundreds or even thousands of times more dangerous than carbon dioxide, the most abundant greenhouse gas and the main driver of global warming. The report said that global compliance to the Montreal Protocol would ensure the avoidance of 0.5 to 1 degree Celsius of warming by 2050. This means that if the use of CFCs and other similar chemicals had continued to grow the way it did before they were banned, the world would have been 0.5 to 1 degree Celsius warmer than it already is.

In fact, it was with this climate change objective in mind that the Montreal Protocol was amended in 2016 to extend its mandate over hydrofluorocarbons, or HFCs, that have replaced the CFCs in industrial use. HFCs do not cause much damage to the ozone layer — the reason they were not originally banned — but are very powerful greenhouse gases. The Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol seeks to eliminate 80-90 per cent of the HFCs currently in use by the year 2050. This is expected to prevent another 0.3 to 0.5 degree Celsius of global warming by the turn of the century.

Precedent for climate action

The success of the Montreal Protocol in repairing the ozone hole is often offered as a model for climate action. It is argued that emissions of greenhouse gases can also similarly be curtailed to arrest rapidly rising global temperatures.

However, the parallels of elimination of ODSs with greenhouse gases are limited. The use of ODSs, though extensive, was restricted to some specific industries. Their replacements were readily available, even if at a slightly higher cost initially. The impact of banning these ozone-depleting chemicals was therefore limited to these specific sectors. With some incentives, these sectors have recovered from the initial disruption and are thriving again.

The case of fossil fuels is very different. Emission of carbon dioxide is inextricably linked to the harnessing of energy. Almost every economic activity leads to carbon dioxide emissions. Even the so-called renewable energies, like solar or wind, have considerable carbon footprints right now, because their manufacturing, transport, and operation involves the use of fossil fuels.

The emissions of methane, the other major greenhouse gas, comes mainly from agricultural practices and livestock. The impact of restraining greenhouse gas emissions is not limited to a few industries or economic sectors, but affects the entire economy, and also has implications for the quality of life, human lifestyles and habits and behaviours. Climate change, no doubt, is a far more difficult and complex problem than dealing with ozone depletion.

शुक्रवार 18 अक्टूबर 2023, पृष्ठ-10 (41)

एक नई क्रांति के मुहाने पर दुनिया

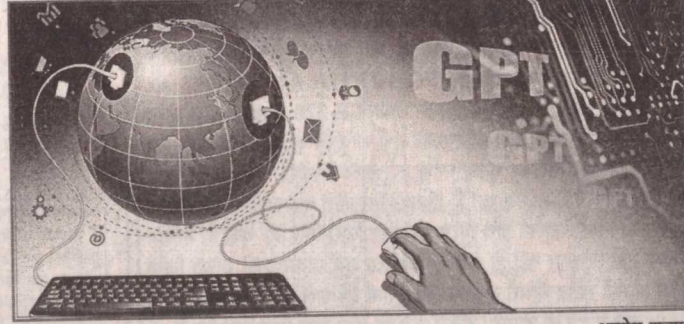


शिवकांत शर्मा

आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलीजेंस का उदमव औद्योगिक क्रांति के बाद होने वाला सबसे बड़ा परिवर्तन है, जिससे हमें अपनी ताल मिलानी ही होगी

बीते वर्ष प्रिंस्टन यूनिवर्सिटी प्रेस ने एक किताब छपी, 'यू आर नाट एक्सपेक्टेड टू अंडरस्टैंड दिस' यानी यह अपेक्षा नहीं कि आप इसे समझ ही लें। दिलचस्प शीर्षक और सामग्री की वजह से चर्चा का विषय बनी यह पुस्तक, जिसकी संपादक टोरी बाश हैं, हमारे वर्तमान और भविष्य पर कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता (आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलीजेंस-एआइ) और मशीन लर्निंग जैसी तकनीकों के प्रभाव का आकलन करती है। 1975 में जारी किए गए कंप्यूटरों के ओपन सोर्स अपरेटिंग सिस्टम 'यूनिक्स' के छोटे संस्करण के लेखकों ने उसके कोड में एक दिलचस्प टिप्पणी डाली थी-आप इसे समझ लें, यह आशा नहीं। यह उस कोड की चमत्कारिक क्षमताओं की घोषणा थी, क्योंकि यह अपरेटिंग सिस्टम अलग-अलग कंप्यूटरों पर एक साथ कई एप्लीकेशन चला सकता था। यहीं से नई तकनीक की वह यात्रा शुरू हुई, जो आज एलगोरिथ्म के जरिये कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता और

मशीन लर्निंग तक आ पहुंची है। एआइ के क्षेत्र में गत वर्ष कई उल्लेखनीय बातें हुई हैं, जिनकी वजह से यह किताब लिखी गई है। जैसे फेसबुक की प्रवर्तक कंपनी मेटा के कुछ कर्मियों ने ऐसा एआइ प्रोग्राम बनाने का दावा किया, जो रणनीति के प्रसिद्ध खेल 'डिप्लोमेसी' में अधिकांश लोगों को हरा सकता है। चीन के शेनजेन शहर के अधिकारियों ने दावा किया कि वे 5जी नेटवर्क से जुड़े मोबाइल के डिजिटल जुड़वा रूपों के जरिये लोगों, उनकी आवाजाही और ऊर्जा खपत की निगरानी कर रहे हैं। इस बीच सबसे अधिक चर्चा चैट-जीपीटी नामक चैट बोट की रही, जो आकलन-विश्लेषण कर सकता है। जटिल विषयों पर लेख लिख सकता है। उलझाऊ समस्याओं के तर्कसंगत हल बता सकता है। चुटकुले और कहावतें समझ सकता है और फंसाने वाले सवाल की गुथी सुलझा सकता है। खबरें हैं कि माइक्रोसाफ्ट चैट-जीपीटी बनाने वाली कंपनी 'ओपन-एआइ' में 1,000 करोड़ डालर के निवेश की योजना बना रही है। माइक्रोसाफ्ट एक छोटी उदीयमान कंपनी पर इतना बड़ा दांव इसलिए लगाना चाहती है, क्योंकि उसे गूगल के सर्च इंजन से मुकाबले के लिए विकल्प की तलाश है। चैट-जीपीटी में उसे ऐसा इंजन बनाने की क्षमता नजर आती है। चैट-जीपीटी में जीपीटी का आशय ऐसी तकनीक से है, जिसमें इंटरनेट पर उपलब्ध नाना विषयों की लाखों किताबों की सामग्री पढ़कर स्मृति का विशालकाय डाटाबेस तैयार होता है। फिर उसका प्रयोग समझने और भाषाई व्यवहार करने में कर सकता है। अभी चैट-जीपीटी शैशव अवस्था में है, लेकिन जैसे-जैसे उसमें और जानकारी



अवधेश राजपूत

भरी जाएगी, वैसे-वैसे उसकी क्षमता और समझ बढ़ती जाएगी। ऐसी मशीनें अनुवाद करने, कानूनी और दफ्तरी दस्तावेज लिखने के अलावा रचनात्मक लेखन या संगीत के कच्चे मसौदे बनाने के काम भी कर सकेंगी, जिसके बाद लेखक उन्हें परिमार्जित कर सकेंगे।

गूगल पर हम शब्द या फिकरे डालकर जानकारी खोजते हैं और सर्च इंजन वांछित जानकारी के सही संदर्भ और विषय के बजाय जहां-जहां शब्द और फिकरा मिले उसे पेश कर देता है, लेकिन यदि कल्पना करें कि आप किसी सर्च इंजन से सधे हुए सवाल करें और वह उसके एकदम सटीक उत्तर खोज दे तो कितना अच्छा होगा? माइक्रोसाफ्ट को 'ओपन-एआइ' से इसी तरह के सर्च इंजन की दरकार है, जिसके सहारे वह गूगल सर्च इंजन के एकछत्र राज को चुनौती देना चाहता है। यह सब इसलिए संभव हो रहा है, क्योंकि आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलीजेंस प्रोग्राम अब अपनी डीप लर्निंग की पीढ़ी से फाउंडेशन माडल के पड़ाव पर पहुंच गए हैं। पिछले दस वर्षों से हम गूगल और एपल नक्शों के सहारे घूमने

के आदी हो गए हैं। अमेजन की एलेक्सा और एपल की सीरी से भी छोटे-मोटे काम करा लेते हैं, लेकिन फाउंडेशन माडल के बोट एकदम अगली पीढ़ी के होंगे। पायलट से कहीं भूल हो रही होगी तो वे चेतावनी देंगे। आपकी कार चलाएंगे। ड्रोन उड़ाएंगे। डाक्टर को बीमारी का सही निदान बताएंगे। संगीतकार के गुनगुनाते ही धुन और संगीत के नोट बनाकर दे देंगे। यह सब इसलिए संभव लगता है, क्योंकि आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलीजेंस के कोड अब मशीनों को हमारे मस्तिष्क की तंत्रिकाओं के करोड़ों नेटवर्कों की तर्ज पर प्रशिक्षित कर रहे हैं। मशीनें अपनी भूलों से खुद रेल यातायात नियंत्रण, विमान नियंत्रण और चालन, मौसम पूर्वानुमान, मिसाइल, राकेट और उपग्रह प्रक्षेपण जैसे काम मशीनों की आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलीजेंस ही करती है। नई पीढ़ी की एआइ मशीनों में भूल सुधार की क्षमता भी होगी।

टोरी बाश का मानना है कि लगभग हर काम में प्रयोग आने वाली मशीनों के कोड लिखने वाले लोग हम और आप ही हैं। इसलिए ये उनकी धारणाओं से अच्छे

नहीं रह सकते। नीति-निर्माताओं के लिए चुनौती यह है कि ये मशीनें आंकड़ों को खंगाल और समझ तो सकती हैं, परंतु इनकी नैतिक और सामाजिक जरूरत का सही फैसला नहीं कर सकतीं। आम लोगों के लिए चुनौती यह है कि एक बार जब सब मशीनों में हर जगह एआइ की कोई न कोई मात्रा लग जाएगी तो उन्हें चलाने और उनकी मरम्मत करने वालों को भी उनकी कुछ जानकारी चाहिए होगी। अन्यथा ये कैसे चलेंगी और ठीक होंगी? संभवतः इसी सोच-विचार के बाद ब्रितानी प्रधानमंत्री ऋषि सुनक ने हाल में कहा कि स्कूलों में बारहवीं कक्षा तक गणित को अनिवार्य किया जाएगा। उनका कहना था कि तेजी हो रहे तकनीकी विकास और बदलाव को देखते हुए गणित की बुनियाद मजबूत किए बिना युवाओं को रोजगार मिलने में दिक्कतें होंगी। आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलीजेंस और मशीन लर्निंग में हो रहे विकास और रोजगार के प्रत्येक क्षेत्र में गणित की महत्ता को सुनक से बेहतर और कौन समझ सकता है? ऐसे में, भारत के नेताओं और नीति निर्माताओं को भी इस विषय पर जागने की जरूरत है। बुद्धिमान मशीनों की क्रांति औद्योगिक क्रांति के बाद होने वाला सबसे बड़ा परिवर्तन है। लोगों के रोजगार पर इनके संभावित असर को लेकर अभी गहरे मतभेद हैं, लेकिन इस परिदृश्य में हमारे समक्ष दो ही विकल्प हैं- या तो एआइ और उसकी कोडिंग के बारे में जानकारी हासिल करें और मशीनों को अपनी जरूरतों और चुनौतियों के हिसाब से ढालें। या सब कुछ कोड लिखने वालों और मशीनें बनाने वालों पर छोड़ दें।

(लेखक बीबीसी हिंदी सेवा के पूर्व संपादक हैं)

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समय के साथ समर्थ होती हिंदी

भारत की विश्व में जैसे-जैसे प्रभुता बढ़ रही है, वैसे-वैसे हिंदी भी अपने महत्व को रेखांकित कर रही है। वैश्वीकरण के दौर में हिंदी भी वैश्विक हो रही है। हिंदी विश्व में अनेक विश्वविद्यालयों में पढ़ाई जा रही है। भारत में व्यापार करने वाली विश्व की अनेक बड़ी कंपनियां जनता तक पहुंचने के लिए अपने उत्पादों में हिंदी का प्रयोग कर रही हैं। हालांकि इसकी राह में कुछ चुनौतियां भी हैं, लेकिन नई शिक्षा नीति में देश की मातृभाषाओं को समृद्ध करने के लिए जो प्रविधान किए गए हैं, यदि वे प्रभावी तरीके से लागू हो पाते हैं तो निश्चित ही हिंदी और समृद्ध होगी।

यह उल्लेखनीय तथ्य है कि हिंदी को समृद्ध करने में देश के विद्वानों के साथ-साथ अनेक विदेशी एवं प्रवासी भारतीयों की अहम भूमिका रही है। विदेशी विद्वानों का हिंदी के प्रति अनुराग का एक लंबा इतिहास है। इसी कड़ी में वे भारतवंशी लोग भी हैं, जो गिरमिटिया मजदूर के रूप में लगभग 175 वर्ष पूर्व मारीशस, फिजी, त्रिनिदाद, गुयाना और सूरीनाम पहुंचे थे। वे लोग बहुत विद्वान तो नहीं थे, लेकिन अपने साथ रामायण, हनुमान चालीसा की पोथियां एवं आल्हा आदि ले गए थे। परिणामस्वरूप आज उन देशों में हिंदी एवं भारतीय लोक भाषाएं तुलनात्मक रूप से अधिक समृद्ध हैं। फिजी के राष्ट्रकवि पंडित कमला प्रसाद मिश्र, विवेकानंद शर्मा, मारीशस के राष्ट्रकवि ब्रिजेंद्र भगत मधुकर, सोमदत्त बखौरी, मुनीश्वर लाल चिंतामणि सहित अनेक लेखक हैं, जिन्होंने विश्व हिंदी को समृद्ध किया है। इन गिरमिटिया मजदूरों के रूप में विभिन्न देशों में हिंदी तो पहुंची ही, उसका विस्तार भी हुआ। हिंदी को लेकर शोध कार्य अनेक विदेशी विद्वान अंग्रेजी शासन की शुरुआत के समय से ही कर चुके थे।

भारत में ईस्ट इंडिया कंपनी ने ज्यों-ज्यों अपना तंत्र स्थापित किया, त्यों-त्यों उसके सामने भाषा को लेकर अनेक समस्याएं आने लगीं, क्योंकि भारत में अनेक भाषाएं एवं बोलियां प्रचलित थीं। उस समय मुगल शासन होने के कारण फारसी एवं अरबी ही राजकाज की भाषा थी, जिसे न तो ईस्ट इंडिया कंपनी के अधिकारी समझते थे और न ही आम जनता। ऐसी स्थिति में जान गिल क्राइस्ट ने देसी भाषाओं का समन्वय कर एक ऐसी भाषा



डा. राकेश पांडेय

यदि हम हिंदी को वैश्विक भाषा बनाने का सपना देख रहे हैं तो विदेशी हिंदी विद्वानों और प्रवासी भारतीयों के बल पर



समन्वित प्रयासों से विस्तार करती भाषा • फ़ाइल

का सृजन किया, जिसे हिंदुस्तानी भाषा का नाम दिया गया। उन्होंने 'डिक्शनरी आफ इंग्लिश एंड हिंदुस्तानी' की रचना की। इस कोश में तत्कालीन प्रचलित अरबी एवं फारसी भाषा के अनेक शब्दों को स्थान दिया गया। उन्होंने 1796 में हिंदुस्तानी भाषा के व्याकरण पर भी एक पुस्तक प्रकाशित की। जान गिल क्राइस्ट का यह ग्रंथ तत्कालीन अंग्रेजों को हिंदी सिखाने के लिए अत्यंत उपयोगी सिद्ध हुआ। उनकी ही तरह फ्रांस के विद्वान गार्सा द तार्सी की भी विश्व में हिंदी के महत्व को रेखांकित करने में अहम भूमिका है। वह कभी भी भारत नहीं आए, लेकिन उन्होंने भारतीय संस्कृति एवं भाषाओं पर उल्लेखनीय कार्य किया। उनकी फ्रेंच भाषा में लिखी गई पुस्तक 'हिंदुई और हिंदुस्तानी साहित्य का इतिहास' हिंदी साहित्य की प्रथम कड़ी मानी जाती है, जिसमें उन्होंने तुलसी, कबीर, जायसी और सूरदास सहित हिंदी और उर्दू के लगभग सात सौ से अधिक रचनाकारों का उल्लेख किया है।

भारत से सात समुंदर पार बैठकर हिंदी के साहित्य के विषय में शोध करना सहज कार्य नहीं है। वह भी उस समय जब आवागमन और संचार की सुविधाएं आज की भांति नहीं थीं। यहां फ्रेडरिक पिकाट का उल्लेख आवश्यक है। उन्हें हिंदी कविता

से लगाव था। वह ब्रज भाषा में लिखते भी थे। उन्होंने अनेक ग्रंथों के साथ 'हिंदी मैनुअल' का लेखन किया। इसी कड़ी में जार्ज अब्राहम ग्रियर्सन का नाम लिया जा सकता है। अंग्रेज अधिकारी के रूप में भारत आए ग्रियर्सन ने हिंदी साहित्य पर तमाम शोध किए, जिसके लिए तत्कालीन अंग्रेजी सत्ता ने उन्हें 'फादर आफ लैंग्वेज आफ अवर टाइम' की उपाधि से सम्मानित किया। इसी प्रकार जापान की प्रो. तोशियो तनाका, तोमियो मिजोकामि और रूस के वारान्कोव, डा. ल्युदमिला एवं पोलैंड के प्रो. ब्रिस्की की हिंदी को विश्व में स्थापित करने में अहम भूमिका रही। आज सिंगापुर, आस्ट्रेलिया और खाड़ी सहित अनेक देशों के विद्वान लगातार हिंदी के कार्य को आगे बढ़ा रहे हैं।

आज यदि हम हिंदी को विश्व भाषा के रूप में स्थापित करने का सपना देख रहे हैं तो विदेशी हिंदी विद्वानों और प्रवासी भारतीयों के बल पर ही। आज अनेक विश्वविद्यालयों में प्रवासी साहित्य को पाठ्यक्रम में सम्मिलित कर लिया गया है। प्रवासी हिंदी साहित्य करुणा और संघर्ष का साहित्य है। भारत के विश्वविद्यालयों में पढ़ाए जा रहे प्रवासी हिंदी साहित्य के नाम पर सब कुछ अच्छा है, ऐसा भी नहीं है। प्रवासी साहित्य के पाठ्यक्रमों में पढ़ाई जा रही कई कहानियों के कथानक बच्चों को पढ़ाए जाने के लिए उपयुक्त नहीं हैं। अभी तक उनका कोई मानदंड स्थापित नहीं है, न ही इस प्रकार की कोई व्यवस्था है, जो इसकी निष्पक्ष समीक्षा करे कि यह साहित्य बच्चों को पढ़ाए जाने योग्य है या नहीं? सरकार को इस ओर ध्यान देना चाहिए, ताकि हमारी वर्तमान पीढ़ी अपने पूर्वज प्रवासी भारतीयों के संघर्ष और उनके कुली से एक कुलीन होने की संघर्षगाथा से प्रेरणा ले सके। हमें अपनी भाषाओं को समृद्ध करने के लिए अपने घरों में अपनी मातृभाषा और राष्ट्र की भाषा का प्रयोग अपने बच्चों के साथ अवश्य करना चाहिए, ताकि आने वाली पीढ़ियां अपनी भाषा भूल न सकें। हिंदी विश्व में नया आकार ले रही है। आने वाले समय में हिंदी तकनीक के साथ कदमताल करती हुई दिखेगी। यह व्यापार के साथ-साथ संस्कार की भाषा होने के कारण समृद्ध होगी।

(लेखक साहित्यकार हैं)

response@jagran.com

New NCERT manual on transgender students silent on caste, patriarchy

Previous document, withdrawn over NCPDR objections, highlighted disparities

SOURAV ROY BARMAN
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 16

OVER TWO years after it removed a document on inclusion of transgender children in schools, following an objection by National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPDR) to suggestions on gender-neutral toilets and puberty blockers, the NCERT has released a fresh manual, which avoids the usage of not just those terms but also references to caste system and patriarchy that were highlighted in the previous one.

The draft manual titled "Integrating Transgender Concerns in Schooling Processes", prepared by a new 16-member committee convened by NCERT's Department of Gender Studies head Jyotsna Tiwari, recommends the introduction of gender-neutral uniforms.

"Some of the students, specially from Grade VI onward, have preference for clothes, particularly school uniform. They do not feel comfortable in a particular dress. Schools can introduce

gender neutral uniforms which are comfortable, climate appropriate, fit and do not conform to a particular gender," states the manual.

The previous project was coordinated by former head of NCERT Department of Gender Studies, Poonam Agrawal, who was transferred, along with Prof Mona Yadav of the same department, after the NCPDR raised concerns in November 2020. Tiwari was heading NCERT's Department of Education in Arts and Aesthetics then.

The two manuals, prepared by two different committees, are starkly different in nature despite dealing with the same subject. For instance, the previous manual, which was titled "Inclusion of Transgender Children in School Education: Concerns and Roadmap", categorically stated that while there is evidence of diverse genders and gender expression being socially accepted in the subcontinent since the Vedic age, "the dominant social system of caste patriarchy in India had relegated transgender persons to occupations that are stigmatised".

"Disparities like socio-eco-

nomic status, religion, caste, gender, and colour, many of which are typical to the Indian context, have a distinct role in breeding an imbalance of power. This imbalance of power has been suggested to aid bullying," it said. Textbooks, it added, should enable transgender learners to relate knowledge to their own lived experiences and also equip all students "with a critical lens to explore a variety of issues that continue to confront us, namely caste, class and gender, gender and power relations, patriarchy and dominance, diverse sexual identities and marginalisation, etc".

The new report underlines that diverse gender expressions have a long history of visibility and acceptance in India, where it was documented in various art forms and multiple texts of ancient period, including epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata, but it steers clear of any engagement with the role of caste system or patriarchy in perpetuating stigmas.

While the previous report dealt extensively with the needs of all categories of gender non-conforming children, the latest

one states that though there is a recognition of people with diverse sexualities and sexual orientations, including LGBTQIA+ communities, "the present module is specifically focusing upon transgender persons by birth".

As a result, it contains no information for teachers on dealing with children who may not be transgender but show signs of "Gender Dysphoria", which indicates psychological distress resulting from a conflict between a person's physical or assigned gender at birth and the gender with which they identify, or the "agender" category, which the previous report used to describe as those "identifying themselves as neither man nor woman".

On the issue of toilets, it suggests that a toilet may be assigned exclusively to transgender students. "In case there is a toilet for Children With Special Needs (CWSN) that can also be shared by transgender students," it adds. The previous report had recommended that toilets for CWSN "may be earmarked 'gender neutral' toilets which both can use".

जवभारत टाइम्स, 18 जनवरी 2023,

पृष्ठ - 11

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लड़का-लड़की नहीं 'बच्चों' कहा जाएगा, NCERT के नए नियम

■ पीटीआई, नई दिल्ली

नए नियमों में जेंडर न्यूट्रलिटी पर दिया गया है जोर

NCERT ने देशभर के स्कूल स्टाफ के लिए नया ड्राफ्ट मॉड्यूल जारी किया है। इसमें ट्रांसजेंडर स्टूडेंट्स को स्कूलों में होने वाली परेशानियों को हाईलाइट किया गया है। इस नए मॉड्यूल में ट्रांसजेंडर स्टूडेंट्स को कई तरह से सहूलियत देने की बात की गई है। NCERT ने ट्रांसजेंडर स्टूडेंट्स को ध्यान में रखते हुए स्कूलों में रेगुलर वर्कशॉप, आउटरीच प्रोग्राम और जेंडर न्यूट्रल यूनिफॉर्म रखने की सलाह दी है। NCERT के दिशानिर्देश में सुझाव दिया गया है कि स्कूलों में लड़के, लड़कियों जैसे संबोधन के बजाए 'छात्र', 'बच्चों' जैसे जेंडर न्यूट्रलिटी भाषा का इस्तेमाल किया जाना चाहिए। ड्राफ्ट मॉड्यूल के अनुसार,

कई अकादमिक, गैर अकादमिक और दूसरे पदों पर बिना लैंगिक भेदभाव ट्रांसजेंडर टीचर और दूसरे स्टाफ की नियुक्ति करने की भी सलाह दी गई है। इसमें कहा गया है कि सभी एडमिशन फॉर्म्स

और सभी तरह के कोर्स के सर्टिफिकेट्स में 'ट्रांसजेंडर' कैटिगरी को शामिल किया जाए। उनके लिए स्कॉलरशिप का प्रावधान करने के साथ ही ट्रांसजेंडर स्टूडेंट्स की हेल्थ पर विशेष ध्यान के लिए भी कहा गया है। साथ ही ट्रांसजेंडर कैटिगरी के छात्रों की मदद के लिए ट्रेड काउंसलर तैनात किए जाएं, क्योंकि ऐसे छात्र अकेलेपन और परेशान किए जाने की घटनाओं का सामना करते हैं। ड्राफ्ट में जेंडर न्यूट्रलिटी और जाति व्यवस्था आदि जैसी बातों से बचने का भी सुझाव दिया है।

Trans-formation! NCERT to break with gender binary

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Indian schools can soon go for gender-neutral uniforms and a transgender-inclusive curriculum. A 16-member committee convened by NCERT's Department of Gender Studies head Jyotsna Tiwari has made these suggestion in a draft manual titled "Integrating Transgender Concerns in Schooling Processes".

"Some of the students, especially from Grade VI onwards, have preferences for clothes, particularly school uniform. They do not feel comfortable in a particular dress.

Schools can introduce gender-neutral uniforms which are comfortable, climate-appropriate, fit and do not conform to a particular gender," it said.

The panel has noted that these uniforms might be designed by design institutes.

Many schools have introduced pants and shirts that can suit any gender and they are comfortable for all school activities. Reinforcement of gender binary in school structures, in terms of uniforms, use of toilets, participation in sports and extra-curricular activities, bullying and harassment for simply choosing to express themselves as opposed to social norms, are some of the glaring

concerns raised by transgender persons when it comes to barriers in their education," it added.

A year ago, the NCERT removed a document on diverse gender expressions following objections raised by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR).

The NCERT's new manual says that "the present module specifically focuses on transgender persons by birth."

The report also suggests there is recognition of people with diverse sexualities and sexual orientations, including LGBTQIA+ communities.

Continued on Page 2

Trans-formation! NCERT to...

From Page 1

The new report underlines that diverse gender expressions have a long history of visibility and acceptance in India, where it was documented in various art forms and multiple texts of ancient period, including epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata, but it steers clear of any engagement with the role of caste system or patriarchy in perpetuating stigmas.

The panel has also stressed that while introducing transgender-inclusive curriculum, it is best to do so collectively as a school community, led by the administrative and school leaders.

It is also recommended that the decisions in this regard

be communicated through gender-specific professional development for educators and community members at the start of each academic year.

The panel has suggested that educators could identify the spaces and scope of integrating gender, especially transgender concerns, in their pedagogy and textbook content wherever they feel the gap in the existing text books.

"Such practices should be shared with fellow teachers (subject or stage specific) to collectively evolve best practices which are context specific.

Issues of masculinity, equality and empowerment must be addressed through a careful choice of themes in our textbooks as well as through other pedagogies such as role play, debates, creative writing, development of short films, etc.

"If students are noticed to be gender non-conforming or emerge as transgender at this stage, help them to form healthy, supportive alliances with peers and generate a gender sensitive school environment so that such a student feels supported.

Health educators should be gender sensitive and use gender inclusive practices while educating on puberty, sex education and health education," the manual read.

Noting that due to society's marked intolerance of gender nonconformity, those who do not conform to gender norms are more likely to suffer from violence as compared to other gender conforming students from an early age, the panel said it could be inflicted upon them within different contexts through various social interactions.)

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The unwillingness of leaders like Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru (seen here with Indira Gandhi) to accept dominion status led to the adoption of the Poorna Swaraj resolution in Lahore on December 19, 1929. Express Archive

WHY DOES INDIA CELEBRATE REPUBLIC DAY ON JANUARY 26?

ARJUN SENGUPTA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 25

THE CONSTITUTION of India was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on November 26, 1949. However, it was officially promulgated only on January 26, 1950, a day India celebrates as Republic Day.

The reason for choosing January 26 lies in the importance of the date in India's freedom struggle. On January 26, 1930, the historic Poorna Swaraj declaration was promulgated, beginning the final phase of India's freedom struggle that would culminate in India attaining complete independence from British rule.

Simon Commission

In 1927, British Authorities appointed the Simon Commission — a seven-man, all European team under Sir John Simon — to deliberate on political reforms in India. This was met with widespread discontentment and mass protests.

In response to the Simon Commission, the Indian National Congress appointed its own commission under Motilal Nehru. The subsequent Nehru Report demanded that India be granted "dominion status" within the Empire. This would maintain India's allegiance to the British Crown while providing Indians with greater say in their rule.

Dominion vs Republic

Notably, within the Congress, the Nehru Report did not enjoy universal support. Younger leaders like Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru wanted India to break all ties with the British Empire. For them, attaining dominion status would not fundamentally alter India's subservient position to Britain.

Furthermore, it would make India party to colonial exploitation elsewhere in the British Empire, mainly Africa.

However, for a long time, Mahatma Gandhi stood firmly pro-dominion, seeing it as a welcome step in India's anti-colonial

struggle. His views would change in 1929 when Viceroy Irwin went back on his previous pronouncement assuring Indians that they would "soon" be granted dominion status.

With the British unable to follow through on even the most reasonable reforms, the Indian public and the Congress would grow increasingly radical — culminating in an energetic session in Lahore in 1929.

Declaration of Poorna Swaraj

On December 19, the historic Poorna Swaraj resolution was passed in Lahore. Literally meaning "total self-rule/sovereignty," the resolution read, "The British government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually.... Therefore... India must sever the British connection and attain Poorna Swaraj."

This declaration of independence was officially promulgated on January 26, 1930. The Congress urged all Indians to come out and celebrate "independence" on that day. The Indian tricolour was hoisted across the country by Congress party workers and patriotic songs were sung.

Historian Mithi Mukherjee wrote in *India in the Shadows of Empire* that the Poorna Swaraj declaration was a critical pivot point for India's freedom struggle. It is with this declaration that India's national movement "shifted from the language of charity to the language of justice," she wrote.

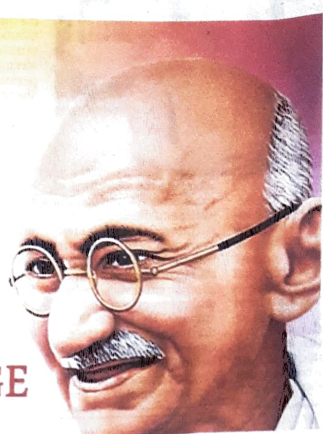
After Independence

From 1930 until India finally won its independence on August 15, 1947, January 26 was celebrated as "Independence Day" or "Poorna Swaraj Day" with Indians reaffirming their commitment towards national sovereignty on that day.

Thus, when leaders had to decide on a day to promulgate India's new constitution, January 26 was considered ideal.

Gandhian Ethics

Gandhi without denying the distinction between the domain of Caesar and that of God repudiates any rigid separation between the two. As early as 1915, Gandhi declared his aim 'to spiritualise' political life and political institutions. Politics is as essential as religion, but if it is divorced from religion, it is like a corpse, fit only for burning. Gandhi is often called a saint among politicians. In an epoch of 'globalisation of self-centredness' there is a pressing necessity to comprehend and emulate the moralistic dimension of Gandhian thought and re-evaluate the concept of politics



MY LIFE IS MY MESSAGE

The word ethics is derived from the Greek word 'ethos', which means 'way of living'. The judgement of right and wrong, what to do and what not to do, and how one ought to act, form ethics. It is a branch of philosophy that involves systematising, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong behaviour. Morality is the body of standards or principles derived from a code of conduct from a particular philosophy, religion, or culture. It can also derive from a standard that a person believes in. The word morals is derived from the Latin word 'mos', which means custom.

Many people use the words Ethics and Morality interchangeably. However, there is a difference between Ethics and Morals. To put it in simple terms, Ethics = Moral + reasoning.

For example, one might feel that it is morally wrong to steal, but if he/she has an ethical viewpoint on it, it should be based on some sets of arguments and analysis about why it would be wrong to steal. Mahatma Gandhi is considered as one of the greatest moral philosophers of India. The highest form of morality in Gandhi's ethical system is the practice of altruism/self-sacrifice.

For Gandhi, it was never enough that an individual merely avoided causing evil; they had to actively promote good and actively prevent evils. The ideas and ideals of Gandhi emanated mainly from: (1) his inner religious convictions including ethical principles embedded in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Christianity; (2) the exigencies of his struggle against apartheid in South Africa and the mass political movements during India's freedom struggle; and (3) the influence of Tolstoy, Carlyle and Thoreau etc. He was a moralist through and through and yet it is difficult to write philosophically about his ethics. This is because Gandhi is fundamentally concerned with practice rather than with theory or abstract thought, and such philosophy as he used was meant to reveal its 'truth' in the crucible of experience. Hence, the subtitle of his Autobiography - 'the story of my experiments in truth'. The experiments refer to the fact that the truth of concept, values, and ideals is fulfilled only in practice.

Gandhi's ethics are inextricably tied up with religion, which itself is unconventional. Though an avowed Hindu, he was a Hindu in philosophical rather than a sectarian sense; there was much Hindu ritual and practice that he subjected to critique.

In his Ethical Religion, published in 1912 based on lectures delivered by him, Gandhi had stated simply that he alone cannot be called truly religious or moral whose mind is not tainted with hatred and selfishness, and who leads a life of absolute purity and of disinterested services. Without mental purity or purification of motive, external action cannot be performed in selfless spirit. Goodness does not consist in abstention from wrong but

from the wish to do wrong; evil is to be avoided not from fear but from the sense of obligation. Consistency was less important to Gandhi than moral earnestness, and rules were less useful than specific norms of human excellence and the appreciation of values. Politics is a comprehensive term which is associated and operation of state structure as well as its inter-relationship with other states. It is activity centred around power and very often deprived of morals. With its power-mongering, amoral Machiavellianism, and its valourisation of expediency over principle, and of successful outcomes over scrupulous means, politics is an uncompromising avenue for saintliness. Inclusion of ethics in politics seemed to be a contradiction to many contemporary political philosophers. Bal Gangadhar Tilak among others warned Gandhi before he embarked on a political career in India. "Politics is a game of worldly people and not of sadhus." Introducing spirituality into the political arena would seem to betoken ineffectiveness in an area driven by worldly passions and cunning. It is perhaps for these reasons that Christ himself appeared to be in favour of a dualism: "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." In this interpretation, the standards and norms that apply to religion are different from those relevant to politics.

Gandhi by contrast, without denying the distinction between the domain of Caesar and that of God, repudiates any rigid separation between the two. As early as 1915, Gandhi declared his aim 'to spiritualise' political life and political institutions. Politics is as essential as religion, but if it is divorced from religion, it is like a corpse, fit only for burning. In the preface to his autobiography, Gandhi declared that his devotion of truth had drawn him into politics, that his

power in the political field was derived from his spiritual experiments with himself, and those who say religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means. Human life being an undivided whole, no line could be drawn between ethics and politics. It was impossible to separate the everyday life of man, he emphasised, from his spiritual being. He said, "I feel that political work must be looked upon in terms of social and

moral progress." Gandhi is often called a saint among politicians. In an epoch of globalisation of self-centredness there is a pressing necessity to comprehend and emulate the moralistic dimension of Gandhian thought and re-evaluate the concept of politics. The correlation between ends and means is the

essence of Gandhi's interpretation of society in terms of ethical value rather than empirical relations. For Gandhi, means and ends are intricately connected.

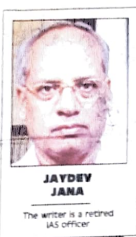
His contention was, "For me it is enough to know the means. Means and ends are convertible terms in my philosophy." Gandhi countered the assertion that ends vindicate means. If the means engaged are unjust there is no possibility of achieving satisfactory outcomes. He compared the means to a seed and the end to a tree. Gandhi stuck to this golden ideal through thick and thin, without worrying about the immediate results. He was convinced that our ultimate progress towards the goal would be in exact proportion to the purity of our means. Gandhi believed that "Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will." His seven social sins refer to behaviours that go against ethical code and thereby weaken society. When values are not strongly held, people respond weakly to crisis and difficulty. The seven sins are: (1) Wealth without work; (2) Pleasure without conscience; (3) Knowledge without character; (4) Commerce without morality; (5) Science without humanity; (6) Religion without sacrifice; and (7) politics without principle. Gandhi's Seven Sins are an integral part of Gandhian ethics.

The Satyagraha (Sanskrit and Hindi: 'holding into truth') as enunciated by Gandhi seeks to integrate spiritual values, community organisation and self-reliance with a view to empower

individuals, families, groups, villages, towns and cities. It became a major tool in the Indian struggle against British Imperialism and has since been adopted by protest groups in other countries.

According to the philosophy of Satyagraha, Satyagrahis (Practitioners of Satyagraha) achieve correct insight into the real nature of an evil situation by observing a non-violence of the mind, by seeking truth in a spirit of peace and love, and by undergoing a rigorous process of self-scrutiny. In so doing, the satyagrahi encounters truth in the absolute. By refusing to submit to the wrong or to cooperate with it, the satyagrahi must adhere to non-violence. They always warn their opponents of their intentions and forbid any tactic suggesting the use of secrecy to one's advantage. Satyagraha seeks to conquer through conversion: in the end, there is neither defeat nor victory but rather a new harmony. Gandhi's Satyagraha always highlighted moral principles. By giving the concept of Satyagraha, Gandhi showed mankind how to win over greed and fear by love.

There was no pretension or hypocrisy about Gandhi. His ethics do not stem from the intellectual deductive formula. 'Do unto others as you would have them unto you'. He never asked others to do anything which he did not do. It is history how he conducted his affairs. He never treated even his own children in any special manner from other children, sharing the same kind of food and other facilities and attending the same school. When a scholarship was offered for one of his sons to be sent to England for higher education, Gandhi gave it to some other boy. Of course, he invited strong resentment from two of his sons and there are many critics who believe that Gandhi neglected his own children, and he was not the ideal father. His profound conviction of equality of all men and women shows the essential Gandhi who grew into a Mahatma. The question of why one should act in a moral way has occupied much time in the history of philosophical inquiry. Gandhi's answer to this is that happiness, religion and wealth depend upon sincerity to the self, an absence of malice towards others, exploitation of others, and always acting 'with a pure mind.' The ethical and moral standard Gandhi set for himself reveals his commitment and devotion to eternal principles and only someone like him who regulated his life and action in conformity with the universal vision of human brotherhood could say "My Life is My Message."



JAYDEV JANA

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Jobs data and its discontents

Speculation notwithstanding, both government and non-government data show a healthy employment gain since pre-Covid 2019



SURJIT S BHALLA AND TIRTHATANMOY DAS

IT IS SAID that data is the new oil. Given this reality, data is the new politics, especially when official data are not present. There is considerable interest, and therefore a virtual cottage industry in comparing the GDP and employment outcomes between the last pre-Covid year 2019 and the first post-Covid year 2022. As acknowledged by virtually all international organisations, Indian GDP growth, at 7 per cent, is expected to be the fastest among the G20 economies.

There is an equal interest in comparative (and absolute) performance in terms of job growth. For most economies, it is too early to tell. But there are pointers. Employment recovery in the US has surprised many, and in 2022, employment in the US averaged 152 million a month, up marginally from its 2019 level of 150.9 million. US GDP was 3.7 per cent above the 2019 level, compared to India's 8.4 per cent. Comparing with 2019 is correct — neither 2020 nor 2021 would be appropriate years of comparison since both years suffered from Covid effects.

Unfortunately, while employment is a very important policy concern, data in India is scarce. Profound changes in fertility, workforce, income generation and labour force participation of women are happening. But we don't know because government data is being released on a delayed and irregular basis. In 2017-18, the NSO launched its periodic labour force survey (PLFS) with the promise that a timely quarterly employment series would be made available for urban areas, and an annual all-India series made available, after the completion of the July-June agricultural year. Unfortunately, this promise has not been kept, despite India being amongst the top two economies in the world for computer software, and the leading economy in terms of financial payments technology. The introduction of computer tablets over the years has considerably lessened, if not removed, concerns about the timeliness of data input. The time taken from the end of survey collection to tabulation/publication has been reduced to less than a month. Yet MOSPI is finding it difficult to release collected and processed data on time ("normal" MOSPI lag is six to nine months).

Hence, the last available urban PLFS survey results (and these also in the form of a press release) are for the period July-September 2022; a quarterly bulletin with survey details is awaited, as well as the annual report, and data, for 2021-22.

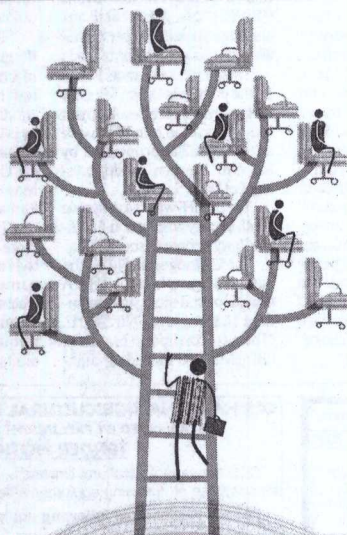
For urban areas only, one can assess the nature of employment expansion since 2019 by comparing the worker-participation rate for July-September 2022, with the corresponding pre-Covid July-September 2019 — urban employment increased by a healthy 10.7 per cent in India, a rate matching the exceptional comparative growth in GDP noted above (see table).

Non-availability of official data has allowed unofficial estimates about employment growth in India to flourish. One such unofficial estimate is in the form of a jobs bulletin

GDP AND EMPLOYMENT GROWTH, PRE-COVID VS POST-COVID

	2019	2022	Change (in mil)	Change (in %)
PPP GDP				
India	8.33	9.03		8.4
US	18.7	19.4		3.7
Average G20 (excluding India)	4.33	4.58		5.8
EMPLOYMENT (IN MILLIONS)				
USA, >=15 years	150.9	152	1.1	0.7
PLFS, India, urban (July-Sept), >=15 years*	149.2	165.2	16	10.7
CMIE, urban (May-Aug), >=15 years	128.5	126.5	-2	-1.6
>=15 [CEDA-CMIE, Jan '20, Oct. '22]	406	392	-14	-3.4
>=15 annual average	405.2	400.5	-4.7	-1.2
15-24 annual average	39.7	30.2	-9.5	-23.9
25-64 annual average	357.4	365.3	7.9	2.2
15-64 annual average	397.1	395.5	-1.6	-0.4

Note: *Urban population increased from 343.8 to 371.3 million (CMIE data), and PLFS urban worker participation rate from a 2019 level of 43.4 to a post-Covid level of 44.5 — hence, workers increased from $0.434 \times 343.8 = 149.2$ to $0.445 \times 371.3 = 165.2$ or 16 million. That is, there was a 16 million increase in urban employment between these three years, or a 3.4 per cent rise in employment per year



C R Sasikumar

jointly produced by Ashoka University's Centre for Economic Data (CEDA) and CMIE. In complete contrast to the recovery in GDP between 2019 and 2022, the CEDA-CMIE study (The Long Road to Recovery, Preeti Joseph and Raashika Moudgill) claimed that 14 million jobs (3.4 per cent of the workforce) were lost between month of January 2020 and month of October 2022.

The reason that month is italicised is because CMIE itself does not report monthly data on employment (at least none that we have seen). What the CEDA-CMIE report does is to synthetically construct monthly estimates from each set of data — January-April, May-August and September-December. Doing so yields the result that for the age-group of people more than or equal to 15, employment declined by 14 million in 2022 (or 3.4 per cent) between January 2020 and October '22.

How plausible is the CEDA-CMIE conclusion that employment declined by 3.4 per cent at the same time as GDP increased by 8.4 per cent? Both numbers cannot be right. If both are right, then labour productivity in India in 2022 would be unrealistically high at 11.8 per cent above the 2019 level!

Given that CMIE (the CPHS survey) has been doing its surveys continuously since 2015, there is plenty of CPHS-CMIE data to do a before-Covid (2019) and after-Covid (2022) comparison. The table presents such a comparison for 4 different age-groups (>=15 years, 15-24, 25-64 and 15-64 years).

India has been undergoing an extensive transformation in education (the youth opting for education rather than jobs). It is for this reason that the 25-64 age group might be considered the most "representative" of the job market. Nevertheless, we report the results for all five groups. In stark contrast to the CEDA-CMIE claim of a loss of 14 million jobs between January 2020 and October 2022, we find that for the same age-group (>=15 years), the non-interpolated, non-synthetic original CMIE data for the calendar year 2019 and 2022 shows a loss of only 4.7 million. And as documented above, the PLFS data for urban India alone shows a gain of 16 million between July-September 2019 and July-September 2022.

There are other more substantial reasons

to doubt the credibility of the CPHS-CMIE data. The CPHS-CMIE female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) for 2019 is observed to be 11 per cent; for 2022 it is reported to be even lower at 8.7 per cent. The latest CPHS-CMIE data for urban FLFPR is a low 6.3 per cent (for September-December 2022). All these estimates are not only the lowest observed for India, but the lowest observed for any country, at any time, in recorded world history. PLFS estimates of FLFPR are close to three times higher than the CMIE estimate (around 27 per cent versus 9 per cent).

The CPHS-CMIE estimates of urban male LFPR are also troublesome, but less so than female LFPR. In 2022, urban male LFPR of 68 per cent for PLFS is almost 10 percentage points higher than the CMIE estimate of 59.4 per cent. Even though CMIE and PLFS define employment differently, it is difficult to explain such a large difference in LFPR estimates obtained from the two sample surveys.

We have been examining the authenticity and reliability of the CPHS-CMIE data ("What does the evidence show?", NCAER presentation, June 9, 2022) over several years and have found the data troublesome. We are not alone. The World Bank, in its report on Indian poverty, first accepted and then explicitly rejected the CPHS-CMIE weights and constructed its own weights in order to derive results about consumption and poverty reduction in India. For the uninitiated, (population) weights are the backbone of any household survey.

The non-timely release of the PLFS data emphasises the need for the government to introspect why its own data is kept unprocessed and/or delayed. No matter what the cause, the data are lost for all practical purposes. In this fast-moving world in which policy is meant to be made, official government data, collected, and tabulated, is staying in some government computer. If the collected data had been released on time, this article would have been unnecessary, as well as speculation about speculative job losses.

Bhalla is former Executive Director IMF; Das is Associate Professor, IIM Bangalore. Views expressed are personal.

The non-timely release of the PLFS data emphasises the need for the government to introspect about why its own data is kept unprocessed and/or delayed. No matter what the cause, the data are lost for all practical purposes. In this fast-moving world in which policy is meant to be made, official government data, collected, and tabulated, is staying in some government computer.

GoI's Job: Think Of Creating Jobs

Employment recovery after Covid is modest. To change this, invest in India's small towns

Amit Basole



The presentation of the Union Budget by the finance minister is an occasion to reflect on both short-term and long-term economic policy and prospects. India's economy as well as the global economy have been through a rough

few years with Covid pandemic followed by the war in Ukraine.

In India, as per CMIE data, neither employment nor incomes have recovered completely in aggregate terms, from the Covid shock.

- Workforce participation rate for men remains, on average, five percentage points below the pre-Covid level.
- Household incomes are at 90% of their pre-Covid average in real terms, which was a low Rs 6,000 per person per month to begin with.
- In addition, household financial savings are at historic lows.

Worrying growth trend

On the other hand, the 'K-shaped' recovery has meant historically high profit rates for the corporate sector. But high profits and low corporate taxes have failed to translate into higher investment rates. The burden of creating

BUDGET 2023-24

demand has fallen on the public sector, taking largely the form of capital expenditure on infrastructural projects. It is not clear yet if this strategy is working as envisioned.

Even prior to the onset of the pandemic, the Indian economy was experiencing a severe growth slowdown. The growth rate of gross value added adjusted for inflation fell from 8% in 2016-17 to 6% in 2017-18 and further to 4% by 2019-20, on the eve of the pandemic.

If we leave out the Covid-induced base effect which resulted in large bounce-back growth rates in 2021-22, and assume a real growth rate of 7% for the current financial year, we see that the economy will have grown at a compounded annual growth rate of just under 3% between 2019-20 and 2022-23. These are worrying numbers.

More pertinent to the ordinary person's concerns, while growth may pick up again, what the recovery will



The image is for representational purposes

do to help our long-standing jobs problem is an open question. Creating good quality, productive jobs has proved difficult for many countries, not just India. But, across the developing world, India stands out for its particularly poor performance in linking growth to jobs.

Link between growth and jobs is missing

Cross-country data show that GDP growth is usually positively related to employment growth – in years in which the economy grows faster, more jobs are also created. For India, on the other hand, this relationship is almost non-existent.

That is, over the past 30 years, there is no correlation between GDP growth in a given year and employment growth in that year. Of course, this does not mean that employment has not risen over this period. But it does mean that we cannot bank on raising GDP growth to promote employment growth. We need a separate policy focus on employment itself.

Even the employment that the economy has managed to create in sectors other than agriculture has been largely of the precarious kind, mostly in construction and a few other services. Despite many years of con-

ted policy efforts via Make in India and more recently the Production-Linked Incentives scheme, the shares of the manufacturing sector in GDP and in employment have remained stuck around 17% and 11% respectively.

The rate of open unemployment among educated youth in India has reached alarming levels, and this does not even take into account women who tend to drop out of the labour force entirely.

Persist with infrastructure spending

So what is the way forward? First, even though the pandemic itself may be receding from our memory, its economic effects linger on. Thus continued support for social safety measures such as MGNREGA remains essential to help vulnerable households cope with employment and income losses.

MGNREGA outlays have been reduced to pre-Covid levels since the last Budget. But, our surveys show that the programme is making a vital difference and demand for work far exceeds its supply, so raising the programme budget is imperative. MGNREGA only operates in rural areas. Hence, it is worth considering an employment guarantee programme for urban areas, as many states like Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Odisha and others are experimenting with.

Public infrastructure spending can be part of the solution since it not only creates direct and indirect jobs but also improves ease of doing business, helping the private sector to create jobs. But to really make a difference for micro and small businesses, investment is needed in local infrastructure in thousands of small towns and cities across the country, not in a few mega projects or metro areas.

Given large fiscal deficits, there is pressure on GoI to control expenditures. The solution lies, at least in part, in restructuring the revenue side. The pandemic has been good for larger firms and richer households. Reducing tax exemptions on these is called for, thereby increasing reliance on direct taxes at the expense of indirect taxes, which tend to be regressive. In this context, recall that cutting corporate taxes did not boost private investment.

The Budget is an exercise in balancing interests. The interest of workers in the unorganised sector and MSMEs should not be forgotten in the bargain.

The writer is with Azim Premji University

The Times of India, 24 January 2023, Pg-20 (49)

अंडर-19 महिला टी-20 विश्व कप के फाइनल में इंग्लैंड को

पोचेप्सट्रम, प्रेट्र: शोफाली वर्मा की अगुआई में युवा टीम ने वो कर दिखाया, जिसका महिला क्रिकेट में लंबे समय से इंतजार था। युवा टीम ने पहला विश्व कप खिताब भारत को दिलाया। इससे पहले, भारत की सीनियर टीम तीन बार विश्व कप फाइनल में पहुंची थी, लेकिन जीत नहीं सकी थी।

गेंदबाज तितास साधु के साथ स्पिनर अर्चना देवी और पार्थी चोपड़ा की शानदार गेंदबाजी के दम पर भारतीय महिला टीम ने फाइनल में रविवार को इंग्लैंड को हराकर अंडर-19 टी-20 विश्व कप का खिताब जीता। भारत की फिरकी गेंदबाजों के सामने इंग्लैंड की टीम सिर्फ 68 रन ही बना सकी। भारतीय टीम ने तीन विकेट खोकर 14 ओवर में ही लक्ष्य हासिल कर ट्राफी पर कब्जा जमाया।

टास जीतकर गेंदबाजी का फैसला करने के बाद तितास ने पहले ओवर में ही इंग्लैंड की सलामी बल्लेबाज लिबर्टी हीप को आउट कर भारत को शानदार शुरुआत दिलाई। हालैंड ने दूसरे ओवर में आफ स्पिनर अर्चना की गेंद पर चौका जड़ा, लेकिन इस गेंदबाज ने पारी के चौथे ओवर में दो विकेट झटक कर शानदार वापसी की। साधु ने सातवें ओवर में सेरेन स्मेल को बॉलड कर दिया। पार्थी और मन्नत ने भी गेंद से कमाल दिखाया। लक्ष्य का पीछा करने उतरी भारतीय टीम के लिए सौम्या तिवारी और गोंगादी त्रिशा ने भारत को जीत दिलाई। दोनों ने तीसरे विकेट के लिए 46 रन जोड़े। ओलिंपिक चैंपियन नीरज चोपड़ा ने स्टेडियम में बैठकर मैच देखा और भारतीय टीम का हौसला बढ़ाया।

स्कोर बोर्ड

टास : भारत (गेंदबाजी) प्लेयर आफ द मैच/सीरीज : तितास/ ग्रेस स्क्रीवेंस
इंग्लैंड 68/10 (17.1 ओवर)

प्लेयर	रन	गेंद	चौके	छक्के	विकेट
ग्रेस स्क्रीवेंस का. त्रिशा बो. अर्चना	04	12	00	00	1-1 (लिबर्टी, 0.4), 2-15 (हालैंड, 3.3), 3-16 (स्क्रीवेंस, 3.6), 4-22 (सेरेन, 6.2), 5-39 (पेवली, 9.6), 6-43 (रथाना, 11.1), 7-53 (ग्रोव्स, 13.5), 8-53 (बेकर, 14.1), 9-68 (एलेक्सा, 16.4)
लिबर्टी हीप का एंड बो साधु	00	02	00	00	गेंदबाजी
नियाम हालैंड बो. अर्चना	10	08	02	00	तितास साधु 4-0-6-2
सेरेन स्मेल बो. साधु	03	09	00	00	अर्चना देवी 3-0-17-2
मैकडोनाल्ड का. अर्चना बो. पार्थी	19	24	03	00	पार्थी चोपड़ा 4-0-13-2
चैरिश पेवली एलबीडब्ल्यू बो. पार्थी	02	09	00	00	मन्नत कश्यप 3-0-13-1
स्टोनहाउस का. सोनम बो. मन्नत	11	25	01	00	शोफाली वर्मा 2-0-16-1
जोसी ग्रोव्स रन आउट	04	05	00	00	सोमन यादव 1.1-0-3-1
हाना बेकर स्टंप रिच बो. शोफाली	00	01	00	00	
सोफिया स्मेल का. एंड बो. सोनम	11	07	02	00	
एली एंडरसन नाबाद	00	02	00	00	

अतिरिक्त : (वा-3, नोबा-1) 04, कुल : 17.1 ओवर में

भारत 69/3 (14 ओवर)

प्लेयर	रन	गेंद	चौके	छक्के	विकेट
शोफाली वर्मा का. एलेक्सा बो. बेकर	15	11	01	01	3.4), 3-66 (त्रिशा, 12.5)
श्वेता सहरावत का. बेकर बो. स्क्रीवेंस	05	06	01	00	गेंदबाजी
सौम्या तिवारी नाबाद	24	37	03	00	हाना बेकर 4-1-13-1
जी. त्रिशा बो. स्टोनहाउस	24	29	03	00	सोफिया स्मेल 2-0-16-0
रिषिता बासु नाबाद	00	01	00	00	ग्रेस स्क्रीवेंस 3-0-13-1
अतिरिक्त : (वा-01) 01, कुल : ओवर में तीन विकेट 69					जोसी ग्रोव्स 2-0-09-0
रन, विकेटपतन : 1-16 (शोफाली, 2.1), 2-20 (श्वेता, एली एंडरसन 1-0-10-0)					एलेक्सा स्टोनहाउस 2-0-08-1

भारत की बेटियों ने इतिहास रच दिया। आपने पूरे टूर्नामेंट में उल्लेखनीय ऊर्जा और जुनून दिखाया है। भारत को आप पर गर्व है। आपकी जीत लाखों युवा लड़कियों के सपनों को पंख देगी।

- अमित शाह, केंद्रीय गृहमंत्री

भारत में महिला क्रिकेट आगे बढ़ रहा है और विश्व कप जीत ने महिला क्रिकेट के कद को कई पायदान ऊपर किया है। यह निश्चित रूप से शानदार वर्ष है।

- जय शाह, सचिव, बीसीसीआइ

जय हो, देश की बेटियों ने आइसीसी महिला अंडर-19 विश्व कप जीतकर इतिहास रच दिया। पूरी टीम को बधाई।

- योगी आदित्यनाथ, मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश

यह वह अहसास है जिसका हम बहुत लंबे समय से इंतजार कर रहे थे। यह पहली बार है जब हमने विश्व कप जीता है और यह अंडर-19 बच्चों के साथ आया है। यह दिखाता है कि हमारा भविष्य कैसा होगा।

- नूशिन अल खादीर, कोच, भारतीय अंडर-19 महिला टीम

सात विकेट से दी मात फिरकी गेंदबाजों ने दिखाया कमाल



विश्व कप जीतने के बाद तिरंगा लेकर जश्न मनाते भारतीय महिला अंडर-19 टीम के सदस्य • बीसीसीआइ