QUEST IN EDUCATION

Editorial

World over commemorative programmes and publications dedicated to Gandhian Studies are launched around International Day of Nonviolence to mark birthday of Mahatma on 2nd October 2021. In the midst of 3rd wave of COVID-19 pandemic, most of the programmes have been online, while some of them have been in the hybrid mode following the pandemic guidelines.

In the current issue of Quest in Education we have included articles and review article of contemporary concerns. In the article*, Intersectional Lens to the Digital Divide: Education in Covid-19 India* by Ms. Aarushee Shukla and her Data Collection Team Ms. Anjali Giri, Ms. Rashmi Chakravarty, Ms. Smriti Singh, Ms. Vasudha Prakash provides an in-depth understanding of dynamics of digital divide. Dr. Simi Mehta and Anshula Mehta provide critical *Reflections on National Education Policy, 2020* based on web policy talk organized by Impact and Policy Research Institute (IMPRI), Delhi. Descriptive survey-based article by Dr. Pradnya Anil Bhosekar, *Best practices by academic libraries during Covid-19 Pandemic: A case study of library of Smt. Surajba College of Education, Mumbai,* attempts to capture student-users' awareness and satisfaction of such services provided by the library especially for teacher education colleges with small strength of students who normally depend quite a lot on the library for their studies and related activities. Dr. Sunayana Kadle's review article of the edited volume titled *Reflections on Mahatma Gandhi -The Global Perspectives* edited by Terry Beitzel and Chandrakant Langare provides glimpses of the rich content of the chapter by over 30 authors. Prof. Vibhuti Patel has written obituaries for 3 global gender icons- Dr. Gail Omvedt, Ms. Sonal Shukla and Ms. Kamla Bhasin.

We request authors to send their original research-based articles and book reviews on issues concerning education. As Quest in Education publishes peer-reviewed articles, the authors should be ready to wait. Due to current coronavirus crisis, the print edition of Quest in Education is interrupted & only an online edition is appearing since April 2020.

Prof. Vibhuti Patel
Editor

INTERSECTIONAL LENS TO THE DIGITAL DIVIDE: EDUCATION IN COVID-19 INDIA

Ms. Aarushee Shukla,
MA, Social Work, TISS, Mumbai
Data Journalism Fellow, Equal Measures 2030
Data Collection Team:
Ms. Anjali Giri, Ms. Rashmi Chakravarty, Ms. Smriti Singh, Ms. Vasudha Prakash

INTRODUCTION

Through this segment, the research study topic will be introduced and its unique aspects briefly touched upon.

Education is widely regarded as a medium to unleash the potential of individuals, develop critical thinking and uplift humankind. Brazilian educator Paulo Freire who is renowned for his exemplary contribution in reimagining the role of education in the lives of marginalized and the oppressed argued that transformative education has tremendous potential to liberate. Recognizing, resonating and upholding this belief, the Constitution of India has accorded a unique place to Education in the Fundamental Rights (Part III), Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV) and Fundamental Duty (Part IV-A).

Introduction

COVID-19 pandemic, the unprecedented crisis has brought lives across the world to a standstill: both literally in form of nationwide lockdown and figuratively with socio-economic-political slumps. The education crisis catapulted by this unprecedented pandemic has adversely affected the learning curves worldwide. Especially in a diverse country like India, with pre-existing socio-economic inequities, the cascading effect of digital divide and learning loss will be felt for generations to come.

Through this research paper, an attempt will be made to assess how the learning curves of students enrolled in higher education institutions were impacted during the first wave of the pandemic in India. A conscious effort has been made to look at students as a heterogenous community with diverse identities, needs and aspirations.

Amidst the physical and mental trauma unleashed by the pandemic, the students were forced into a 'new normal' of online learning. However, this was only a reality for a few since the rest were not even a part of this 'new normal' given the deep-rooted social inequities.

Hence, this paper will dive deep into the intersection of caste, class, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability and geography and highlight the marginalized narratives from these intersections. Moreover, non-formal education as a potential tool to bridge the wide learning gaps will be explored. Narratives, experiences and realities of the students will be brought from the periphery to the Centre and a collective manifesto describing their demands will be compiled to bring a nuanced understanding for the readers to engage with and policymakers to act upon.

THEMATIC DISCUSSIONS

Through this segment, the researcher will elaborate on related themes of the research study and present the current scenario with respect to each of them. This will essentially build the foundation for the data analysis that is to follow

Education and Social Inequality

While India has the world's second largest schooling system after China, the availability, accessibility and affordability of quality education is highly skewed (Trines, 2018). Moreover, the urban-rural divide has only gotten deeper in the unprecedented times of ongoing pandemic.

There is gross inequality in terms of opportunities for education and it is influenced by multiple factors of caste, class, gender, disability, religion and geography.
The prominent rural-urban divide demands us to lift the veil off of our 'urban biased' education system.

Wide disparity in access to quality education is due to inadequate infrastructure, lack of trained teachers and most importantly the systemic inequalities leading to concentration of resources with few. Urban societies and amongst the villages, bigger villages undeniably have an edge over their rural counterparts in accessing quality education. Additionally, the rural population has to migrate to cities in pursuit of education and within this group, the rural rich are the ones who are able to come closest in matters of higher education (Kamat, 1968).

Education in COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the structural inequities between the rich and poor both in the real and digital world. Shutting of schools with the onset of the pandemic to control the community transmission, was a logical solution. However, its prolonged closure despite the phased re-opening of the economy has garnered criticism from all over. The learning loss and learning gap is disproportionately affecting the vulnerable and marginalized sections.

Technology cannot be regarded as a replacement to traditional modes of learning. However, it has the potential to solve the issues of inequities in access and learning if deployed in an inclusive and empowering method. It can be harnessed efficiently once the systemic inequities and rights-based policies are addressed. Universal access to technology is still a challenge especially with respect to children with disabilities, tribal areas and interior locations. The glaring digital divide in education in India has made way for short-run repercussions like low learning outcomes, high drop-out rates and long-term effects of loss of economic opportunities and diminished human capital (Hawkins et al., 2020).

Non-Formal Education: Thriving on Inclusivity

UNESCO describes inclusive education as a process of addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all learners by increasing participation in learning and reducing exclusion within and from education (UNESCO, 2016).

UNESCO enunciates non-formal education to have a significant objective of providing equal opportunities to all by mobilizing the potential local resources of the community and catering to the diverse needs of the participants (UNESCO, 2012). A study undertaken by the World Bank highlights that children with disabilities are five times more likely to be out of school than children belonging to scheduled castes or scheduled tribes (World Bank, 2007). Non-Formal Education uniquely designs the pedagogy prioritizing the learner's aptitude and their needs. Hence, the unique requirements of children with disabilities can be fulfilled through it.

The structure of Non-Formal Education is need-based, flexible, functional and cost effective (Pandya & Maniar, 2014). While it is primarily implemented through Central and State Government's programmes of NFE, voluntary organizations play a crucial role implementing it on the ground. The significant role of Non-Formal Education has been increasingly acknowledged and discussed during the ongoing pandemic. It has the potential to reach to the last mile, namely students from vulnerable and marginalized backgrounds, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, migrants, refugees, women and girls- who have borne the disproportionate brunt of the socio-economic crisis induced by the pandemic.

Policy Redesign: Paradigm Shifts

If the pandemic has taught us anything it is that embracing a growth mindset will enable us to grapple with unprecedented challenges. Moreover, an inclusive approach to education can provide us with the opportunity to aim for transformational intergenerational change.

The impending policy shift that has only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic is the need to integrate an intersectional and evidence-based lens across all the levels of policy making. This will lead to the development of more people centered policies with judicious utilization of limited resources.

ABOUT THE DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

This segment will shed light upon the entire process of data collection, from building a team of students to struggles of reaching the last mile.

The researcher built a team of four Post Graduation students from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai for data collection. The data collection process was spread over four weeks.
To keep the sanctity of the issue intact and approach it sensitively while ensuring that the agency was with the students at all times, the team of data collection was composed of students themselves. The prime objective was to capture the nuances and unique lived experiences of the students.

The sample size was of 40 students, with diverse socio-economic backgrounds across India, currently enrolled in one of the post-Graduation courses offered by Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. The intention was to capture the intersectionality and how it led to unique differences amongst the participants. The method of data collection was a detailed questionnaire accompanied by in-depth interviews of the participants.

Through an orientation exercise, the data collection team was introduced to the research study and its objectives. Additionally, the tool was shared with them to get their feedback. Their suggestions were duly noted and incorporated. This was done primarily to ensure that the tool is student friendly and designed well to capture their lived experiences.

The team frequently shared their experiences of data collection and challenges of scheduling interviews amidst their busy schedule. Despite the rushed timelines of the research and the

packed schedules of the team, each of them performed brilliantly and their contribution is a significant component of this research study.

EVIDENCE BASED DISCUSSION

This section will engage in extensive discussion backed by data from the ground and bring the marginalized voices from the periphery to the center.

Resources: Availability, Accessibility and Affordability

The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc in the education sector with the glaring socio-economic inequalities leading to wider learning gaps. The immediate inference from this statement is that education has become accessible to only those who can avail it, access it and afford it. What was once a right of every child has now become a conditional good. If you have a stable internet connection, smooth supply of electricity, electronic gadgets then you will find yourself on the other end of the digital divide- among the luckier lot. However, it is not merely about the access to these physical, tangible resources, it's also about the ability to use it.

While speaking to the research participants and analyzing their responses, it was fathomed that the absence of an institutionalized space for seeking and imparting education is widening the learning gaps and that those from the marginalized sections have to bear the maximum brunt.

The college provides for a dedicated space- devoid of distractions- to promote creative and critical learning. Additionally, with access to libraries and computer labs, students who do not have these resources to begin with find themselves at par with the rest, thereby providing an equal level-playing field to all.

Access to Internet & Electricity and subsequent Travel Requirements

Access to Internet & Electricity and its impact on Learning Efficiency

Travel Requirement broken down by Electricity & Internet connection
Color shows details about Travel Requirement

Travel Requirement broken down by Electricity & Internet connection
Color shows details about Learning Efficiency

Travel Requirement
- No travel
- Yes travel

Learning Efficiency
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

This graph depicts the access of students to stable electricity and internet connection with subsequent travel requirements on the left. On the right, the impact of travel on learning efficiency is showcased.

The graph depicts that the maximum number of students who travel on a daily basis either to their neighbour's house, relative's or friend's place, are the ones who have unstable electricity and poor internet connectivity at their own place. Subsequently, their learning efficiency, as can be seen from the graph on the right-hand side, ranges from 1 to 2 on a scale of 1 to 5.

A male participant had to travel as far as 24 kilometers a day to find a stable internet connection and attend classes. Henceforth, with long hours of travel and poor connectivity, students' learning is taking a backseat.

During the interviews participants shared that female student were adversely impacted with lack of stable electricity and WIFI connectivity since they were discouraged from travelling vis-a-vis their male counterparts.
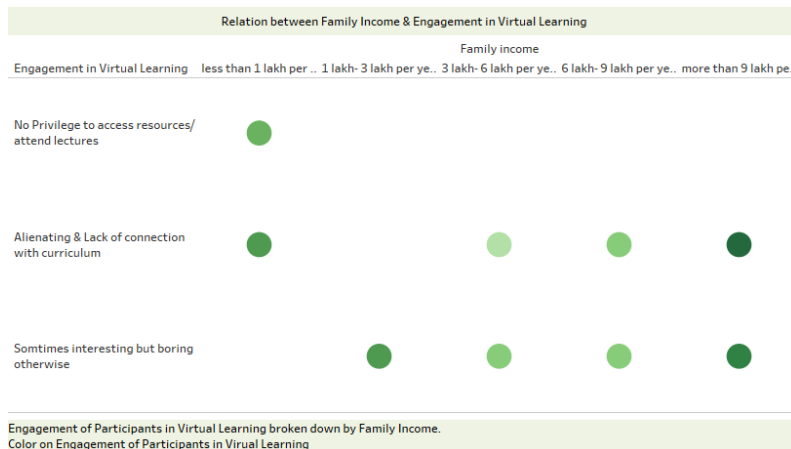
'I travel 3 kms daily on foot since I cannot afford any public transport. My family doesn't support my travel and I am the first one to be blamed if something happens to the livestock or we have any visitors, in my absence.'

'I have to travel around 25kms every day. My family doesn't support my travelling and keep on questioning me about the need to travel and wasting money on this course. Therefore, I have missed several classes, against my wish.'

Inclusive Education: In Practice and Beyond

Inclusive education, a buzzword these days, simply means that the diverse needs of the students will be identified and incorporated in classrooms. This approach is based on the principles of equity and justice and considers the student community as a heterogenous group with unique wants.

While it was already not achieved in physical classroom spaces, the e-learning space is far from integrating it. Most importantly, as an active stakeholder we have to strive towards integrating this approach across our practices. Before making any space or academic curriculum inclusive, one has to start with identifying the diversity. The needs of students with visible and invisible disabilities, language barriers and diverse socio-economic backgrounds must be carefully integrate into practice.

Relation between Family Income & Engagement in Virtual Learning

Engagement in Virtual Learning	Family income				
	less than 1 lakh per ..	1 lakh- 3 lakh per ye..	3 lakh- 6 lakh per ye..	6 lakh- 9 lakh per ye..	more than 9 lakh pe..

Engagement of Participants in Virtual Learning broken down by Family Income.
Color on Engagement of Participants in Virual Learning

This graph shows the relationship between participant's family income and their resultant engagement in virtual learning

This graph is supportive of the above-mentioned argument on how the diverse socio-economic status of students invariably impacts their access to education. Participants with family income of less than 1 lakh per annum outrightly have no access to educational resources and infrastructure. They either entirely depend upon scholarships or have to drop out in between for the want of adequate resources. Some participants with more than 9 lakhs of family income per annum find virtual learning space as a perfect substitute for traditional models of learning.

However, the striking feature of this graph is that the majority of the participants (represented by the darkest shade of green) find the online medium not as engrossing as the offline classes resulting in loss of interest and curiosity to learn.

The Learning Process: From Classroom to Peer Learning

Education is regarded as the most powerful tool to bring about intergenerational social mobility. It promotes critical consciousness raising and enables the individual to experience, reflect, think and apply. A student is constantly learning, unlearning, reimagining and this process demands time and space for them to be able to sit with their thoughts, reflect and discuss. However, with lack of a space of one's own and preoccupation with household work and caregiving, a student is robbed of personal space and time.

Access to Technological Infrastructure disaggregated by Family Income

Access to Technological Infrastructure and subsequent Value Addition through online learning

Family income broken down by posession of a Laptop/PC.
Color shows details about Family income

Family income
- less than 1 lakh ..
- 1 lakh- 3 lakh pe..
- 3 lakh- 6 lakh pe..
- 6 lakh- 9 lakh pe..
- more than 9 lak..

Posession of a Laptop/PC
Color shows the value addition through online mode of learning

Value Addition through online learning (on scale 1 to 5)
- 1, 2, 3
- Other

This is a graphical representation of access of participants to technological infrastructure, disaggregated by their socio-economic status and the subsequent impact on value addition through online learning

The graph depicts how participants with lower family incomes either do not possess a laptop at all or have a common family laptop. Adjacent to it is the graph shows how with lack of access to personal laptops, the value addition of the participants is severely impacted.

Getting accustomed to gadgets and using them for learning purposes demands time which was not well-accounted for in the swift transition to online learning. This has resulted in many teachers losing their jobs and students dropping out.

While most of the participants were familiar with technical gadgets, switching completely to digital medium was challenging.

'Peer Learning' is an essential component of the overall learning process and it facilitates exchange of ideas, plurality of opinions and mental support. However, it has been severely impacted with online learning.
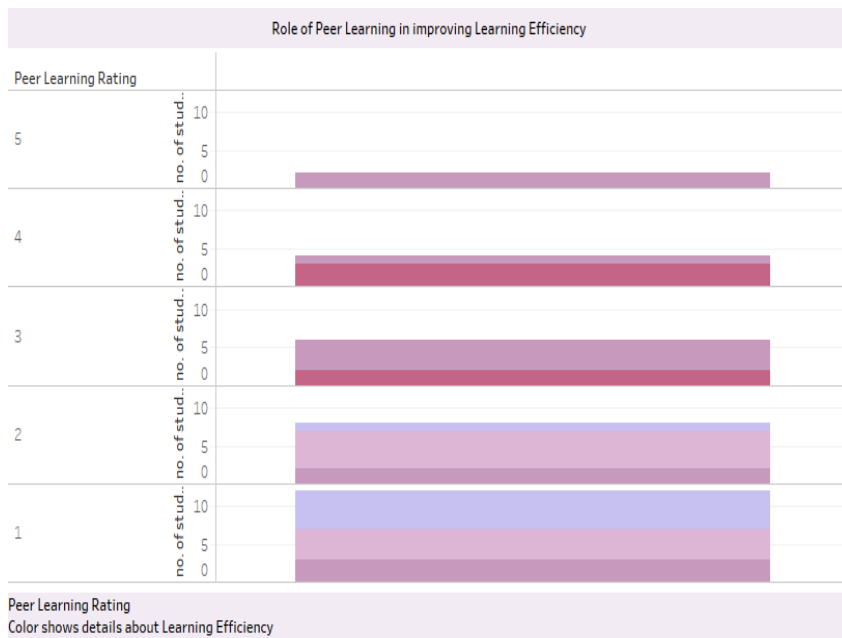
The graph depicts the significance of Peer Learning in overall Learnings of the participants. The colors depict the different ratings (on a scale of 1 to 5) given by participants to their Learning Efficiencies. The Y-axis denotes the Peer Learning rating as given by the participants

Participants with disabilities shared the significance of Peer Learning in their overall learnings for both clarity on certain topics and mental support. Additionally, the importance of reconnecting with alumni to seek academic support was also highlighted by the participants.

Demand for institutionalization of peer study groups was also presented by some participants which again highlights how crucial the role of Peer support groups is in the learning process.

The graph is testimony to the aforementioned direct relationship between Peer Learning and overall learning efficiency. When the Peer Learning is rated as 'one' by the participants, their subsequent learning efficiency also sees a dip- highlighted in lighter shades depicting ratings of 1 and 2 in the scale of 1 to 5. However, when the Peer Learning rating is 4 or 5 then the overall learning efficiency soars high as well, depicted in darker shades in the graphs.
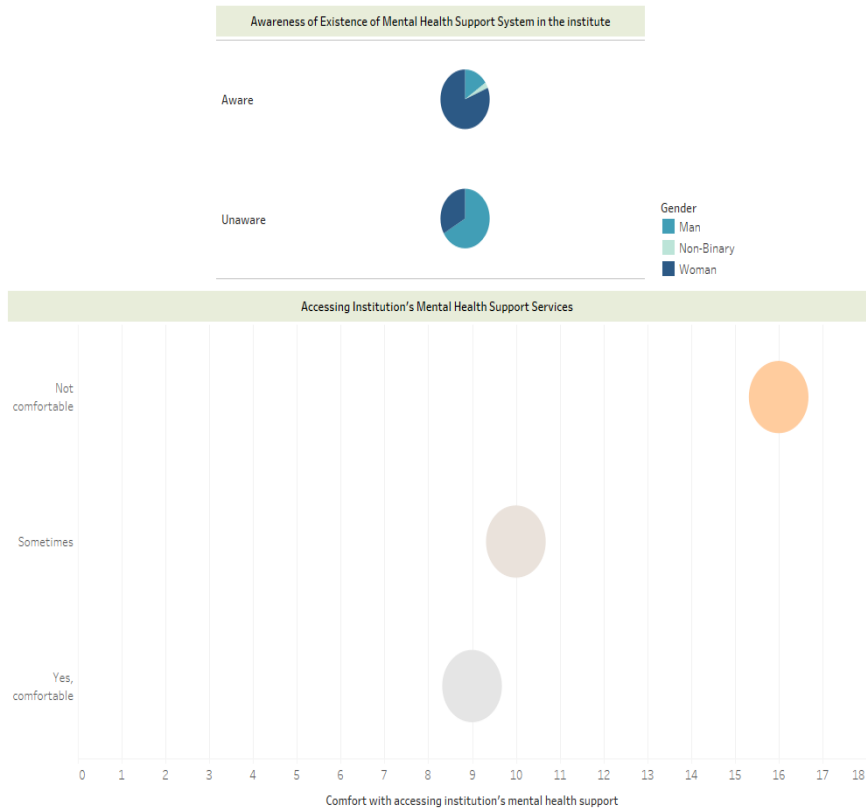
Student Well-being and Mental Health

Mental health refers to our emotional, psychological and social-well-being. When an individual has an optimal mental health then they can work to their maximum potential. Hence, from an economic development perspective, the governments can increasingly benefit from the increased efficiencies.

With the onset of COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of schools, students have had several life-altering choices to make. The ones with the privilege could opt for online classes while others had to either opt for deferment or drop-out completely. Regardless of the choice, students had to meticulously manage studies while taking care of their families and managing the household work.

This has invariably adversely impacted the mental health of the students. For those who had their online lectures scheduled- it became difficult to focus since the world around them was collapsing. However, those who did not have online lectures, or

could not attend it or had to drop out were grappling with uncertainties about their future ahead.

Awareness of Existence of Mental Health Support System in the institute

Aware

Unaware

Gender
- Man
- Non-Binary
- Woman

Accessing Institution's Mental Health Support Services

Not comfortable

Sometimes

Yes, comfortable

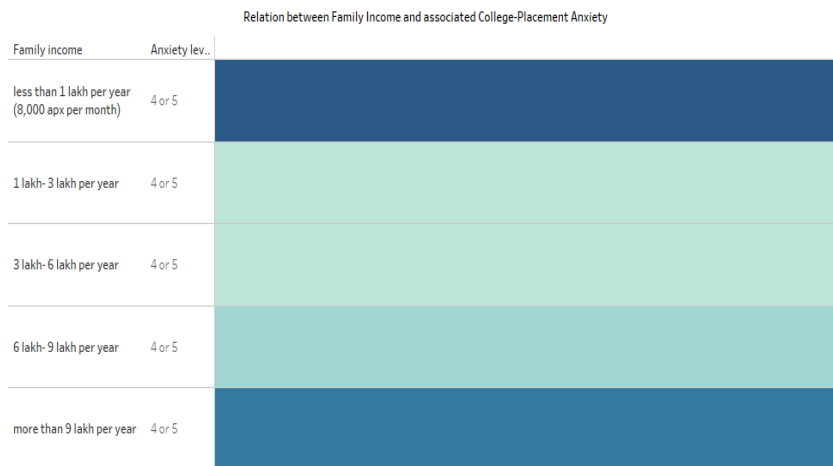Comfort with accessing institution's mental health support

The first graph lays out the percentage of participants who are aware of the existence of mental health services in their institute, disaggregated by their preferred gender. The second graph depicts the comfort of participants with respect to accessing mental health resources.

The participants who were aware of the existence of a mental health support system within their institutes had varied responses with respect to actually availing it. As depicted in the graph (peach shade) despite being aware of the support system, they did not feel comfortable in accessing it. Interestingly, a few participants self-identifying as male shared that there was no such support extended by the institute while in reality there are

systems in place. Hence, it is important to take note of the fact that although the number of participants who deny existence of such support is small, it showcases that taking care of mental health is yet not normalised in our discussions and daily lives.

'Mental health should be weaved into the curriculum in such a way that students feel safe and encouraged to seek support, and at the same time, focus should be placed on making the support available and accessible to them, instead of the burden being on them to get the support.'

For an educational institute it becomes pertinent to proactively address this rising concern. Universal systematic screenings of students and staff, throughout the school year, must be conducted to identify at-risk individuals. Moreover, awareness on the significance of mental health should be raised. The institute should strive to provide for free access to quality mental health resources for its students and staff.

Relation between Family Income and associated College-Placement Anxiety

Family income	Anxiety lev..	
less than 1 lakh per year (8,000 apx per month)	4 or 5	
1 lakh- 3 lakh per year	4 or 5	
3 lakh- 6 lakh per year	4 or 5	
6 lakh- 9 lakh per year	4 or 5	
more than 9 lakh per year	4 or 5	

College-Placement driven Anxiety (on scale of 1 to 5) broken down by Family income.

This graph is representing the College-Placement Anxiety disaggregated by participants' socio-economic status. The darkest shade represents maximum Anxiety Rating from participants from a specific socio-economic status.

The participants' responses clearly showcase how anxiety driven their academic term has been. Moreover, participants from marginalized socio-economic backgrounds are disproportionately affected as depicted in this graph (through the darkest shade of blue) against the family income of 'Less than 1 lakh'.

Finding the Value in Online Learning

Purpose of education is not to fetch marks and trophies. In the truest sense, education seeks to empower an individual, build their agency and enable them to realise their full potential. Rabindra Nath Tagore, India's foremost philosopher of education reiterated that education went beyond rote learning: '*The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence*'.
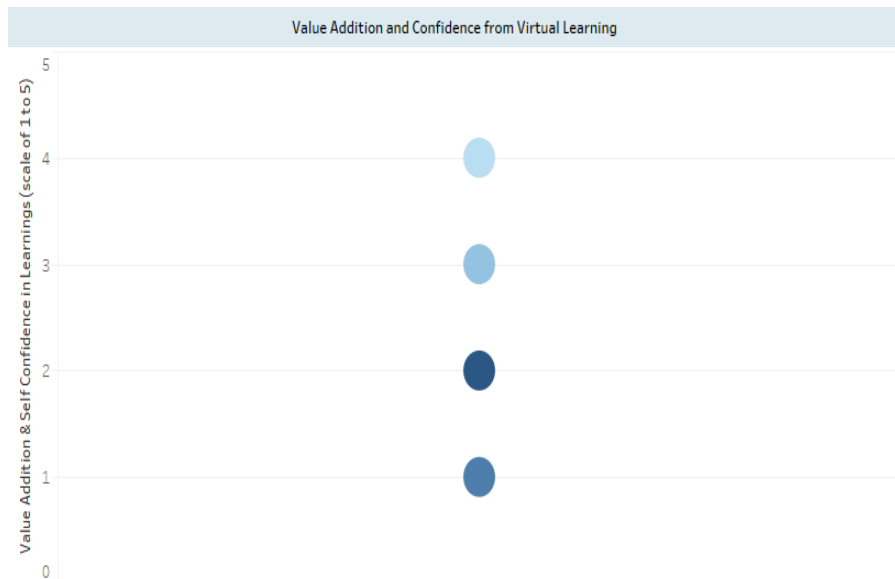
The graph shows the ratings of students on their Value Addition from Online Learning

This graph shows that the majority of participants have rated their Value Addition from Online Learning in the range of 1 to 2, as shown through a dark shade of blue while only a few have rated their learning experiences in the range of 3 to 4 and no participant has rated it as 5.

Online learning is unfortunately not accommodative of transformative learning. It restricts the free-flow of ideas and makes the process robotic for students- with escalated screen time. With such a restricted learning space, the students are struggling to find value from their e-classes which is ultimately impacting their self-esteem.
Students with disabilities are more troubled by this arrangement since their unique needs are hardly acknowledged, let alone being addressed. A participant with disability shared –

'During online examinations, students with disabilities are given extra time however with respect to submission of assignments, the timeline is the same for all students which is unfair.'
'Access to reading materials is a big challenge. Online library is not available in readable format. Hence, despite having access to it, I cannot use it'

RECOMMENDATIONS
This section of the paper is a compilation of the demands, suggestions and innovative strategies as shared by the participants in their interviews.

Holistic Infrastructural Support

1. Timely and adequate infrastructure support with respect to Laptops, WIFI Vouchers, Remedial Classes and Language Assistance to be provided to students, especially for the ones from marginalized communities. The need for Mental health advocacy and interventions has been highlighted through this research study. Hence

requisite support and resources should be institutionalized and normalized.

2. The participants unequivocally shared the need for an Elected Student Body to be representative of demands of students. Such a body can be elected through online elections and would be responsible to bridge the gap between authorities and the students. Additionally, it will ensure that the decision-making process is inclusive and representative of diverse needs of students.

3. Regular monitoring and evaluation of new practices and the performance of online learning pedagogy should be undertaken. The responses then collected should be analyzed and incorporated. Hence, the voices of the students should be adequately heard, addressed and implemented.

4. Dedicated survey of availability, access and affordability of online learning devices and services should be undertaken. Students without laptops and smartphones should be immediately sent one with adequate time allotted for them to get accustomed with its functioning. Additionally, WIFI vouchers should be provided by the institutes for uninterrupted access to classes.

5. The tuition fees should be re-looked at with justification for each component. The students are already overburdened with extra expenses incurred from travelling, stable electricity connections, expensive internet plans and buying smartphones and laptops. Moreover, there must be timely disbursal of student aid.

Reimagining the Assessments

1. Given the nature of the pandemic, clouded with uncertainty and medical emergency at any point, the participants shared that sticking to the traditional modes of assessments was not feasible. They demanded a re-imagination of the mode, type and number of assessments.

2. The assessments can be based on reflective creative thinking with less emphasis on group assignments since coordinating schedules outside of six to eight hours of lectures during an ongoing pandemic is highly improbable. Moreover, participants with Internet and Electricity connection issues shared that they could not afford to walk more miles or incur extra expenditure for group-assignment meetings.

'One of my seniors had his father on the ventilator and still was asked to give a presentation the next day. Students, like me, went to public hospitals for internships during the second wave. We were endangering both ourselves and our families for 7 credits of course. This should change.'

Innovative Teaching Pedagogies

1. The teaching pedagogy should be student-centric and accommodative of their diverse needs otherwise students with disabilities have to bear the brunt. Virtual learning can be alienating at times and hence consistent efforts should be made to be sensitive towards students and their unique needs.
2. Asynchronous Learning should be practiced so that students are able to schedule their lectures based on their learning pace and time constraints.
3. Teaching methodology should be made more participatory with students being consulted at all stages. Peer- learning should be institutionalized and it will not only encourage students to share their learnings but also promote a co-learning environment.
4. Hybrid models of learning should be explored, contextualized and adopted with courses necessitating offline learning to be held on campus with all the protocols.
5. 'Introspective Sessions' should be frequently scheduled for the students to be able to absorb the content and develop critical consciousness.

> *'The pedagogy should not be autocratic in nature. It must be sensitive and accommodative of students' aspirations and diverse learning abilities. For instance, our Third Semester has online classes for eight weeks, and our professors want us to finish 2 assignments of each of the 6 subjects within this time frame. What value will this add to our learnings?'*

Facilitating Fieldwork

1. The pattern and structure of Fieldwork with ongoing pandemic should be re-designed. It should be universalized to ensure equity especially in some instances where students who are able to access the field have the evaluation in their favor while students devoid of such access suffer on grades.
2. The institute can work towards connecting students with alumni and thereby establish a ground contact through alumni's work and experience. It is significant as the pandemic has rendered us into silos without hardly any mobility for internships or volunteering.

> *'I sometimes feel this institute is not for students like me with multiple disadvantages. I want my professors to stop comparing me with students belonging to the same geographical area as mine but with a very different family situation. I want my college to look at the reality of my problems, and not dismiss them'*

CONCLUSION

Through this section, the researcher will summarize the key takeaways from this research study and leave the reader with some food for thought

This research study has shown us that the impact of online education on students' learnings has been different for each student. A Gender and Caste disaggregated analysis clearly

shows that students identifying as females, from low-income backgrounds and belonging to tribal communities have been disproportionately affected. Restricted mobility, increased household responsibilities, mental health issues, lack of availability of and access to infrastructure- in terms of electronic gadgets, electricity, internet connection, peer learning, non-formal education support and a conducive environment to study are some of the factors resulting in widening digital divide.

Students have been forced to drop out or take deferments owing to the aforementioned reasons. UNICEF cautioned us all about the 10 million additional girls at risk of child marriage due to COVID-19 (UNICEF, 2021). As per the World Bank Review, private rate of return, in terms of increase in an individual's earnings, with just one extra year of schooling is about 9% and over 10% of social returns. Interestingly, these figures are much higher for women. Thus, we must collaborate to create a systematic pull for girls back into the education system (Psacharopoulos, 2018).

One of the major recommendations and demands of the students that emerged from this study is reopening of the institutes along with major changes in the virtual mode of study to make it sensitive to diverse needs of students.

An uptake in vaccination numbers is a positive indication towards allowing re-opening of educational institutes. A research model for school re-opening designed by Brian Wahl, Sandeep Krishna and Gautam I. Menon suggests that in-person schooling can proceed with caution and state-specific measures. While a rise in cases amongst students may occur, it is highly unlikely to spark a third wave. Thus, reopening of educational institutes must be considered with masking, practicing social distancing and vaccination of adults (Wahl et al., 2021).

Besides academic and skill development, for virtual learning to thrive, it has to be made evidence based and holistic encompassing physical, social, emotional and mental well-being of the students.

Moreover, availability, accessibility and affordability of online education infrastructure must be adequately addressed. Otherwise, the digital divide will invariably create increased inequities, difficult to bridge.

REFERENCES

- Hawkins, R. Trucano, M. Cobo, C. Twinomugisha, A. Ciarrusta, I. (2020). *Reimagining Human Connections: Technology and Innovation in Education at the World Bank*. World Bank Group. Washington, D.C. http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/82949160686 0379513/Reimagining-Human-Connections-Technology-and-Innovation-in-Education-at-the-World-Bank

- Kamat, A. (1968). *Educational Progress in Rural Maharashtra*. Economic and Political Weekly. Retrieved July 20, 2021, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/4359142

- MHRD. (2014). *National Sample Survey of Estimation of Out-of-school Children in the Age 6–13 in India*. Ministry of Human Resource Development, SRI-IMRB survey. New Delhi.

- Pandya, R. Maniar, A. (2014). *Non-Formal Education: An Indian Context*. International E- Publication.

- Psacharopoulos, G. Patrinos, H. (2018). *Returns to Investment in Education: A Decennial Review of the Global Literature*. Policy Research Working Paper No. 8402. World Bank, Washington, DC. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/2967 2

- Trines, S. (2018). *Education in India*. World Education News Reviews.

- UNESCO. (2016). *Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning.*

- UNESCO Institute for Statistics. (2012). *International Standard Classification of Education.*

- UNICEF. (2021). *A Threat To Progress Against Child Marriage*.

- Wahl, B. Krishna, S. Menon, G. (2021). *The Prognosis for School Reopenings*. The Hindu. Access here: The prognosis for school reopenings - The Hindu

- World Bank. (2007). *People with Disabilities in India: From Commitments to Outcomes*.

REFLECTIONS ON NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY, 2020

Dr. Simi Mehta
Editorial Director of the Impact and Policy Research Institute (IMPRI)
Anshula Mehta,
Assistant Director at IMPRI.

In an endeavour to harness India's massive potential in the 21st century, the Government of India launched the "National Education Policy 2020". The policy has been hailed as progressive and revolutionary; it has sparked discourse on the future of education.
Given its potential to initiate massive transformations and create substantial change, it becomes pertinent to analyze and question its comprehensiveness, inclusiveness, flaws, ability to impart value education and skills and whether it can make a peaceful, tolerant and just society.

In this context, the Center for ICT for Development (CICTD), Impact and Policy Research Institute (IMPRI), New Delhi, organized a #WebPolicy talk on National Education Policy: Looking Through the Lens of Repurposing Education Towards Thriving for Every Child by Vishal Talreja, Co-Founder, _Dream A Dream_.

It has been three decades since the last policy was passed and implemented, and the situational realities have transformed since then. Technological developments have prompted a paradigm shift in the lives, workspaces and almost every sector globally. Thus, even education has to evolve and adapt to contemporary realities.

There are increasing challenges that need to be addressed as more and more first-generation school-goers come into the fold of the education system. Exacerbating problems of lack of reach, quality and professionalism demand interventions as evidence of poor learning outcomes, low-quality teaching, gaps between

urban and poor, and the chasm between theory and practice become recorded.

Talreja demonstrated through the use of statistics the need for a new education policy. The data reflects that 54% of the youth are not job-ready, 81% of the workforce is in the informal sector, and there is only 25% enrollment in higher education. Furthermore, 3.22 crore of students are out of school, and one out of three do not finish their schooling.

Vision and key principles of the NEP

A testament to the National Education Policy's (NEP's) righteous vision and principles is Talreja's assertion that they encapsulate almost everything needed for an inclusive education system. The vision has three components:

1. An inclusive system that leaves no one behind through the provision of equitable and vibrant knowledge for everyone.
2. Creation of responsible and aware citizens through inculcating respect towards fundamental rights, duties and constitutional values

Moving beyond academic outcomes to prepare citizens for society and the world through instilling skills, values, and dispositions that support responsible commitment to human rights, sustainable development and global well-being

The NEP also consists of certain foundational principles. These include:

- Respect for diversity and local context
- Equity inclusion
- Community participation
- Use of technology
- Emphasis on conceptual understanding
- Unique capabilities
- Critical thinking and creativity
- Continuous review

Key Highlights of the NEP 2020

Talreja lists out all highlights of the policy before elaborating upon crucial aspects that merit consideration. These include

- The Universalization of Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE)
- National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy
- 5+3+3+4 Curricular and Pedagogical Structure
- Curriculum to integrate skills of Mathematical Thinking and Scientific temper
- Education of Gifted Children
- Regional Language as Medium of Instruction
- No Rigid Separation between Arts and Sciences, Curricular and Extracurricular activities, and Vocational and Academic streams
- Reduction in Curriculum to Core Concepts
- Vocational integration

There are specific changes brought upon by the NEP 2020 that are significant and merit particular focus. First is the transformation of the Curricular and Pedagogical structure. Talreja explains how the traditional academic system of ten years of school and two years of pre-university education has been overhauled to be replaced by the three-plus two plus three plus 3+4structure.

This structure focuses on early childhood education and brings it within the ambit of the Right to Education (RTE). Furthermore, the education system is broken down into stages or achievement of milestones. This allows for an assessment of whether the child is prepared to go into the next stage.

A change in pedagogical approach has also been outlined with play and activity-based learning for the foundational stage and more interactive classroom learning for the preparatory stage. For the middle stages, experimental learning in the sciences, mathematics, arts, social sciences, and humanities and for the secondary stage greater critical thinking, flexibility and student choice of subjects are recommended.

Another aspect is the emphasis on minimal curriculum and maximum outcomes. Reducing the curriculum to focus on core concepts such as life skills, social-emotional learning

competencies, critical thinking, and inquiry-based learning has been emphasized. The policy provides for the utilization of

experiential learning models to shift the transaction and experience of curriculum from didactic to interactive. Talreja elucidates how the innovative pedagogies presented in the NEP 2020 will transform the teacher learning process, i.e. how children learn. He further explains how teachers, through the use of such approaches and creating a conducive environment, will transform their role as primary sources of knowledge to the role of facilitators of learning. The policy also deserves merit for its focus on inclusion and socio-economically disadvantaged groups. By acknowledging and recognizing diverse identities, the policy accounts for even disabled students and brings all kinds of students under the education system's gambit, thus enhancing inclusiveness. Talreja argues that separate strategies have to be formulated for focused attention and reducing category wise gaps in school education.

Through his experience and work with students and teachers, Talreja elaborates upon how teachers appreciate policy due to its child-centric nature and the scope for flexibility; however, they remain apprehensive about access to teacher training. On the other hand, students appreciate the policy for features such as regional language learning, multiple exits and entry points, and choosing between different streams.

Loopholes in the policy

While the policy has acknowledged current realities, Talreja argues that the NEP has not recognized the pace at which the world is changing and the complexities of these changes. There are widening inequities and inequalities in access to livelihood, health services, and housing that impact students' ability to come out of poverty using education.

The current education system is irrelevant to the need of the present and the future of work, and the workspaces are rapidly changing. Even the role of individuals in society is changing; traditional education has worked on developing workforces for

more extractive work. Today, an individual's role is to be an active and global citizen who can respond to high levels of complexities, volatility, and uncertainty. He states that the future we prepare our students for is our present. Thus, there is a need to transform the role of education from academic outcomes to shape how individuals live in society for thriving individuals, planet and humanity. The contemporary realities of climate change, increased polarization, changing nature of jobs, automation, misinformation and technological advancements need to be addressed.

Those mentioned above are certain considerations that need to be taken into account while designing new education systems curriculum and pedagogy. Talreja, in his address, describes enabling students and individuals to thrive as the true purpose of education.

The failure to thrive: Education inequity

A significant concern with regards to the education system is the prevalence of education inequality. Children who grow up in adverse conditions such as the lack of food and nutrition, abuse, neglect, and lack of emotional, their ability to achieve developmental milestones is affected. Thus, when they enter school, they do not possess the required cognitive faculties to access learning.

This also manifests itself in the inability to demonstrate age-appropriate behaviour. The education system does not recognize this; the failure to thrive has an impact on poor cognitive skills, missed sensitive periods of development, poor relationship skills, insufficient maturity and emotional skills.

Thus, it has been argued by Talreja argues that education systems need to be designed to create environments of trust, care, love, and empathy so that students can have safe, authentic environments to overcome adversity.

What does thriving look like?

Talreja defines thriving as the inner state of confidence and surety in oneself that allows for a reevaluation and re-definition of the circumstances that have in the past and still do from the context of life. This allows for the emergence of a new identity

and subsequently enables the possibility of crafting a new relationship with the world. He further describes it based on three

Characteristic features.These include resilience, i.e. inner grit and strength to overcome adversity to make responsible decisions wherein individuals feel that they live the best version possible. Thriving has not been clearly defined or elaborated upon in the NEP, but the policy has its elements. The aim should be to make aspects of thriving clear and intentional.

Thriving does not happen in isolation. To ensure that the education system is inclusive and equitable, we need to engage with intersectional profiles and analyze how that impacts their ability to thrive. Even educators designing the system carry their own biases and prejudices; if they bring it into the education system, the children will not thrive. There are inequalities in the education system; to combat them, the system needs to understand, acknowledge and break out of intersectional lenses.

Way forward

Dr Rukmini Banerji, Chief Executive Officer, Pratham Education Foundation, argues that to bring the NEP to life, there is a need to be informed from many perspectives. The diversity of opinion is expected to allow for context suitable translation of policy. She states a higher likelihood of survival exists if mechanisms for engagement and precipitating discussions and debate are provided.

She further argues that the prevailing global crisis and the potential to broaden scope have occurred at the right time since they allow us to take stock of the education system. She suggests doing away with the annual work planning process and instead implementing a rolling plan to allow for flexibility. She concludes by stating that the policy will be redundant without focus and emphasis on foundational learning.

Meeta Sengupta, Founder, Centre for Education Strategy, New Delhi, says that there is a need to understand why and what

before jumping to the question of how. She addresses the anxiety associated with change and elucidates that the system's working

elements should not resist change and instead embrace it as an inevitable reality.

She also places the onus on educators to make idealistic changes visual, visible, and evidence-based to foster trust within the teaching community. She also states that the dire situational realities have presented a unique opportunity to rebuild the education system by retaining effectual elements and discarding elements that hindered potential.

To conclude, we need to envision the NEP's potential and its ability to transform society and India as a country in the next 30 years. Investments in education in the early years will define and shape the society we will live in. In the last couple of thousands of years, the education system has supported certain sections of society who have gone on to become decision-makers; it's the result of their choices that the modern world's problems have manifested.

Talreja sums up his address in the following maxim: "If we can truly transform education and emphasize thriving for every child, the kind of society to emerge in 20-30 years will truly be thriving".

BEST PRACTICES BY ACADEMIC LIBRARIES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A CASE STUDY OF LIBRARY OF SMT. SURAJBA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, MUMBAI

Dr. Pradnya Anil Bhosekar,
Librarian,
Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan's
Smt. Surajba College of Education
Email: Pradnya.bhosekar@gandhishikshan.com

The pandemic and subsequent lockdown to control the spread, created a sudden impact on personal and professional lives. Like every other service that was possible to be provided online, the libraries too provided services online. The paper attempts to capture student users' awareness and satisfaction of such services provided by the library especially for teacher education colleges with small strength of students who normally depend quite a lot on the library for their studies and related activities. Data collected from second year B.Ed. students of Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan. Researcher prepared a questionnaire and collected data in online mode.

Introduction

Rapid upsurge of covid 19 across the globe has brought a radical shift within academical services and change of the physical library services. The pandemic and subsequent lockdown to control the spread, created a sudden impact on personal and professional lives. Unlike other planned changes, this change was forced upon everybody almost overnight. In the teacher education colleges library plays a very important role for lesson preparation, assignments, essays, examination preparation etc. Though everything was closed, librarian had to think about her new role. She had to plan a few activities to help students in pandemic situation.

In covid situation, libraries needed to continue their services with social media. Libraries increased effectiveness due to the use of social media. The paper gives some recommendations for effective services with social media.

The Objective of the study was to understand expectation of library users in this pandemic period. Sample collected from two libraries through online questionnaire. Results found that for both the libraries, the library users expect same services like electronic access, virtual reference service etc.

Rationale

The literature review reveals that the libraries in the other parts of the world also made efforts with regard to the use of digital content and social media to deliver services to the library users and activities conducted by other librarians throughout the world (Friday, J., & Ngozi, L. 2020; Okike, B. I. 2020; Okonoko, V. N., Abba, M. A., & Arinola, A. E. 2020).

This change impacted the researcher herself as a librarian and her students as users of the services provided by library. The librarian had to cope up on two fronts. On one side preparing herself to handle the change and on the other side preparing the students to do the same. It was a big change management effort, although unplanned. The Librarian of the college carried out certain projects for students in this difficult situation to help them tide over. These projects were aimed at making students comfortable in use of technology and give them confidence that all their needs can be fulfilled in many different ways. Further, after review of available literature, it was found that not a single paper was published on pandemic services rendered by academic libraries, especially in teacher education colleges. The researcher thought of conducting such programs in the small college on the same lines like universities and other colleges.

This paper provides insights to fellow librarians to understand their user needs and render appropriate services to them. It will

also help librarians augment online library services according to students' expectations.

Objectives

The survey was carried out keeping in mind the following objectives.

1) To explore the awareness among the users about the special services provided by library during Covid-19 Pandemic.
2) To find out the frequency of use by users of the special services provided by library during Covid-19 Pandemic.
3) To discover user opinions about quality of content associated with the special services provided by library during Covid-19 Pandemic.
4) To explore the user satisfaction regarding the special services provided by library during Covid-19 Pandemic.
5) To discover measures to further improve the quality of existing services provided by library.
6) To discover measures to further improve the quality of existing services provided by library.

Methodology

A survey was conducted with the students of the Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan's Smt. Surajba College of Education (2020-21) and the responses were analyzed. The subsequent sections of the paper provide the details of the effort and findings of the survey.

New Services and Programs

Following services and activities provided by the librarian which were aimed at introducing students to Open Education Resources as well as to inculcate reading habits while still trying to fulfil their needs from traditional services.

- **Open educational sources awareness**

Librarian introduced to the students, various OERs available to fulfil their needs by way of a quiz to assess their knowledge about the OERs and then conducted specific training. Library of

Smt. Surajba College of Education launched a quiz based on OER with the collaboration of Lords College of Education.

- **Nlist and NDLI orientation**

As college subscribes to Nlist membership, to increase use of Nlist, librarian conducted online orientation sessions and gave assignments to students to make them familiar with the databases.

Dr. Vignesh conducted orientation session of NDLI for our students. This database is made by IIT Kharagpur and Ministry of Education and Government of India. This program was a collaborative effort with St Teresa's Institute of Education.

- **Inculcating reading habits**

The students of the college are future teachers and hence they need to read a variety of materials. This will help them build quality content that can be used effectively while imparting education to their future students. To achieve this objective, the library organised various programs from external experts.

- **Online lecture by the booklet guy**

A lecture by Mr. Amrut Deshmukh, 'The Booklet Guy', was arranged for the students keeping in mind importance of books in the Tick Tock age. He motivated students to read and how to read and enjoy the books. This program was arranged in collaboration with St. Teresa's Institute of Education.

- **Celebration of Vachan Prerana Din**

Library organized Vachan Prerana Din on the theme of 'Reading: Essential virtue for teachers'. Experienced professors and good readers shared their views about reading. It also included a session by a school librarian who conducts many activities to inculcate reading habits for school children.

- **Use of google classroom**

Library period was allotted as a library work. Librarian uploaded videos on different topics like reading, importance of reading, videos related to different books, Jackets of books related to

Lokmanya Tilak, Dr Kalam etc. Assignments were given to the students to understand their response.

- **Traditional Services**

While the library was closed for students and staff for a large part of the year, the Librarian tried to provide traditional services as well, to the extent possible.

- **E document delivery service**

Change was sudden, digitization of books was a difficult task. The librarian provided scanned copies of the relevant sections from the books as per requirement of the students.

- **Book bank**

Initially our college library had started the book bank for economically backward students. But especially with the conditions of pandemic, it was a very useful service. When lockdown was relaxed, students came to the college and took books from the book bank.

Scope

The study was limited to the student teachers of Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan's Smt. Surajba College of Education. of Second year batch (2019-2021). A larger study of student community could also be undertaken for more in-depth analysis. This paper would provide necessary background for the same.

Data Analysis

Table 1. The awareness among the users about the special services provided by library during pandemic period

Services Rendered	Availed	Not Availed
Document delivery service from textbooks	85%	15%
Webinar on NATIONAL DIGITAL LIBRARY BY Dr. Vignesh	96%	4%
Provided access to N-list data base	96%	4%
The session of "The Booklet Guy" Amrut Deshmukh on reading	85%	15%
The quiz regarding OER	89%	11%

Sessions conducted for Nlist and other OER	96%	4%
Book Bank Scheme	96%	4%
Vachan Prerna Din	96%	4%

From the table above, it is apparent that most of the users were aware of the services being offered by the college library. A few who may not be aware could be because of issues related to network availability.

Table 2. The frequency of use by users of the special services provided by library during covid 19 pandemic situation

How frequently have you used the listed services provided by library	Very rarely	Rarely	Never	Often	Very frequently
Document Delivery Service from Text Books	4%	41%	15%	19%	22%
Use of Nlist	4%	44%	7%	37%	7%
Use of NDLI	15%	41%	11%	26%	7%
Use of OER	11%	52%	11%	19%	7%
Book Bank Service	11%	52%	11%	19%	7%

Table 2 indicates that over 50 % students have not used the special services provided by the library even though they were aware of availability of such services. It is really a matter of concern and efforts need to be made to understand the reasons thereof. A deeper analysis would be needed to find out opportunities for improvement in these services.

Table 3. User opinion about quality of content associated with the special services provided to library during covid 19

Rate the quality of content provided by the library through the listed services and activities	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Document delivery service from textbooks	0%	0%	26%	52%	22%
Webinar on NATIONAL DIGITAL LIBRARY BY Dr. Vignesh	0%	0%	19%	59%	22%
Provided access to N-list data base	0%	0%	19%	59%	22%

The session of "The Booklet Guy" Amrut Deshmukh on reading	0%	0%	19%	56%	26%
The quiz regarding OER	0%	4%	22%	56%	19%
Vachan Prerana Din	0%	4%	15%	52%	30%

From the table above, it appears that the students appreciated the quality of the content provided by the library.

Table 4. The user's satisfaction regarding the special services provided by the library

How satisfied are you with the listed services provided by library	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Document delivery service from textbooks	0%	4%	19%	41%	37%
Webinar on National Digital Library BY Dr. Vignesh	0%	0%	15%	59%	26%
Provided access to N-list data base	0%	0%	22%	48%	30%
The session of "The Booklet Guy" Amrut Deshmukh on reading	0%	0%	15%	48%	37%
The quiz regarding OER	0%	0%	19%	59%	22%

While trying to understand the user satisfaction of the services being provided, it appears that about 80% to 85% of the users are satisfied with the services provided by the library.

Table 5. Results of services provided by library during covid 19 pandemic

Did the services provided by Library during Covid-19 pandemic resulted in	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Increased Reding habit	0%	7%	22%	63%	7%
Become aware of sources and facilities available within library	0%	0%	22%	70%	7%
Feel engaged and connected with the library	0%	0%	19%	70%	11%

Identify and being aware of computer resources	0%	0%	15%	74%	11%

From the table above, one can conclude that the programs conducted had by and large a positive effect on the students.

- 90 % students were aware about the services provided by the library.
- More than 70% of the students agree that the programs conducted by library during pandemic situation were helpful to inculcating reading habits among them.
- More than 75% students agree that they are aware of sources and faucitis available within library after attending these programs.
- 81% students agree that because of these programs they were engaged and connected with the library
- More than 85% students agree that they became aware of computer resources.
- 75% students are satisfied with the activities conducted by the library.
- 70% students felt that quality of material provided by library during covid period was good.

Findings
- It is found from the analysis that most of the users were aware of the services being offered by the college library. A few who may not be aware could be because of issues related to network availability.
- Over 50 % students have not used the special services provided by the library even though they were aware of availability of such services. It is really a matter of concern and efforts need to be made to understand the reasons thereof. A deeper analysis would be needed to find out opportunities for improvement in these services.
- Overall users were satisfied with the services made available by the library and the outcome from these services is on expected lines.
- Use of Nlist and NDLI is not satisfactory. More assignments, practical sessions should be arranged frequently to improve the utilization.

- Librarians should motivate to faculty members to create appropriate content for OER.
- Librarians should take initiative to conduct online services and promote E reading because that is need of hour.
- Librarians needs to rewrite and redesign the policies and budget allocation to cover the future opportunities.
- Librarians should invest in getting new technology, new systems for online services. They also must acquire knowledge to update themselves.
- Librarians should take initiative to digitize material and books (considering copyright issue) to students.

Conclusion

Libraries are passing through difficult times as the pandemic covid 19 forcing to change to reshape the library services. Librarians should render services according to users' expectations. The Librarian has to march forward with different goals, different plans of actions by gathering e resources, disseminating them and educating readers about that, replan budget. This is the need of the hour.

REFERENCES

- Friday, J., & Ngozi, L. (2020). Social Media and Library Services : A Case of COVID-19 Pandemic Era. *International Journal of Research and Review*, *7*(October), 230–237.

- Okike, B. I. (2020). Information dissemination in an era of a pandemic (COVID-19): librarians' role. *Library Hi Tech News*, *37*(9), 1–4. https://doi.org/10.1108/LHTN-04-2020-0040

- Okonoko, V. N., Abba, M. A., & Arinola, A. E. (2020). Users' Expectation of Library Services and Resources in the COVID 19 Pandemic Era: A Comparative Study of Two Academic Libraries in Nigeria. *Library Progress (International)*, *40*(2), 236–246. https://doi.org/10.5958/2320-317x.2020.00027.6
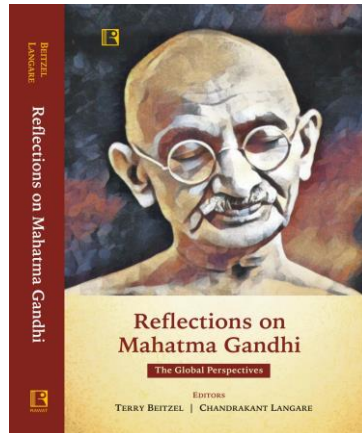
**REFLECTIONS ON MAHATMA GANDHI -THE
GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES:**
**Edited by Terry Beitzel and Chandrakant Langare, Rawat
Publication, 2021**

A REVIEW ARTICLE BY

Dr Sunayana Kadle
Associate Professor
Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan's
Smt. Surajba College of Education
Juhu North, Mumbai 400049. E-mail:
sunayanakadle@yahoo.co.in

*The book - Reflections on Mahatma Gandhi -the Global
Perspectives, has been an outcome of the book project
commemorated to the life and works of Mahatma Gandhi on his
150th birth anniversary. The Book has been Edited by Terry
Beitzel and Chandrakant Langare and was globally launched on
2nd October 2021.*

Introduction

Terry Beitzel is the Director, Mahatma Gandhi Center for Global
Nonviolence and Professor, Department of Justice Studies, James

Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia. He is Editor-in-Chief of the International Journal of Peace Research. His research subjects include non-violence, transitional and restorative justice, conflict and peace studies, social and political theory, Gandhian studies, and civil resistance. He has a graduate degree from Harvard and George Mason University. His recent book is *Service, The Path to Justice*, and he has worked in the Balkans and Guinea.

Chandrakant Langare is Associate Professor of English at Shivaji University, Kolhapur. He has published widely in reputed journals and books. He has edited a book on the fictional works of Joseph Conrad. He has worked as a resource person, delivered lectures, and been invited to talks on Literature, Culture and Film Studies at national and international seminars and University Grants Commission (UGC)/HRD-sponsored refresher courses organized by premier universities and higher education institutes in India. He has presented papers on literary and cultural studies at the international conferences held in premier universities of Italy, the USA, and England.

Thirty contributors have examined the different aspects of Gandhi's thought and background from varied angles. The chapters collectively present a rich view of Gandhi and shows a suitably reinterpreted Gandhian perspective to bear on challenges facing India and the world.

As the name suggests the book will give the readers a lot of data to reflect upon and surely help in understanding the Mahatma from various angles. This book has 422 pages and ISBN 978-81-316-1191-3 has been published by Rawat Publications, Jaipur. The book is a collection of chapters on the continued significance of Gandhian values in the 21st Century. The collection brings forth insightful observations through creative writing and academic reflections, thus encompassing an illuminating journey that contemplates, revives and paves way for a novel dialogue with the enigmatic Mahatma.

The book begins with the preface titled *Do we need Gandhi? By Mr. Tushar Gandhi,* great grandson of the Mahatma. In the preface he discusses about the values of Gandhi and the relevance today with the few anecdotes and also asks questions

about the relevance of Gandhiji philosophy today. He writes at the end that, Gandhiji though being the father of the nation, a Mahatma, it becomes very essential that one studies the ordinary human being Mohandas and not the almost divine Saint, Mahatma. He puts a question to us "I hope this book helps the readers to understand Mohandas Gandhi, not a Mahatma. Bapu is gone, it makes no difference to him whether we remember or forget him. We can discard him, but if we discard Goodness, Love, Peace, Truth Humility and Non-violence, will we survive?"

The Forward is written by Professor Bhiku Parekh. He writes in the forward that the thirty contributors have examined the different aspects of Gandhi's thought and background from diverse disciplinary and interdisciplinary angles and together they present a rich and nuanced view of Gandhi that is not only valuable in itself but should also inspire other equally creative works in future. In his forward he has raised a few new questions about some of Gandhi's defining ideas, such as the nature and basis of political power and nonviolence. He assesses the closely related strengths and limitations and at the end explains why Gandhi enjoys the unique honor of being called the father of the nation.

The Introduction part for the book written by Terry Beitzel and Chandrakant Langare. justify very nicely the reason behind having the title Reflections on the Mahatma and they write that the book seeks to address a plethora of Gandhian thoughts in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary spheres of study and investigations and to continue Gandhi's 'great experiment'. Since Mahatma Gandhi was a visionary and polymath with an comprehensive range of interests and one of the giant figures of Indian nationalism and renaissance, reflections on Mahatma Gandhi with all forays of global perspectives reflect the many dimensions of Mahatma Gandhi's personality. And it is for the same reason that the philosophically powerful and humanly unbelievable works make the global followers of Gandhi introspect deeply.

The Thirty chapters on various topics are written with a lot of thought and references and gives the reader a lot of information

and makes the reader reflect on the topics. I have tried to highlight few points that the authors have discussed in each of the chapters .

The first chapter **Gandhian Approach- A Pathway to Resolve the Contradictions of Globalization by Devarchan Banerjee**- In this chapter Globalization is discussed at length and in-depth with number of references from other authors on the topic. Part 1: Introduction: Globalization and Its Contradictions Part 2: The Gandhian Dystopia and Utopia Part 3: A Framework for Reform Conclusion: Gandhi, the Behavioural Scientist. It is discussed very well in light of Gandhijis philosophy of Ahimsa, Satyagraha, etc. This chapter is written meaningfully and justifies the title and at the end. The author concludes by writing -the challenges of globalization—an existential threat to the environment, runaway inequality and unemployment, and the threat of global conflict—require cooperative action on a scale that transcends national boundaries. The Gandhian method allows one to empower the better aspects of both nature and our adversaries to build the trust that can address these challenges.

In the second chapter **Religion as a Homespun Shawl to the Needy: Re-visiting Moral, Spiritual, and the Humanitarian Dimension of Religion from a Bhakti-centric Perspective of the Mahatma by Archana Barua,** the author discusses Satya and Ahimsa the two main principles on which Mahatma lived his life. These are discussed by the author in the light of religion and there are many stories and verses in the chapter. The question to reflect is that how to connect or re-connect the two now at a time when there is loss of all values and trust in humanity all around us. Also, how to do this at a time when technology and globalization   have changed the very face of humanity on earth. How far a Gandhian perspective on ethics and religion of non-violence is relevant for us today

The third chapter, ***Basaveswara and* Mahatma Gandhi -A Comparative Study of their Ideas *by* Basavaraj Naikar** highlights the similarities between Basaveswara and Gandhiji's ideologies and few differences between the two. The author concludes that though these personalities lived at particular

points of time and place their message is relevant for all the ages and climes. They remain our eternal contemporaries as their message guides and helps us to lead a noble life.

The fourth Chapter **Satyagraha and the ethics of responsibility by Terry Beitzel** examines Max Weber's 'ethics of responsibility' as a way of better understanding Gandhi's mechanism and effectiveness of non-violent principles, tactics, and strategies. Weber's perspective on ethics of responsibility is discussed and compared to Gandhi's ethics of responsibility. This chapter ends with a short debate on just war theory and illuminates Weber's ethics of responsibility in the context of M.K. Gandhi's non-violence. Weber's ethics of responsibility is reflected in Gandhi's notion that Satyagraha does not begin and end with civil disobedience.

The fifth Chapter **Ahimsa and Gandhian Ecology-A Multicultural Paradigm of Non-violence Towards Nature by Tom Berendt** provides evidence of numerous examples of how Gandhi still acts as a role model for environmental movements across the world, highlighting that he is one of the main inspirations behind international movements and theories in creating non-exploitative social consciousness as a paradigm of non-violence towards animals, nature, and the environment. Readers after reading this chapter can conclude that Gandhian ecology and its application of ahimsa has a highly influential role in shaping and influencing environmental movements and activists all across the world.

The sixth Chapter **Gandhi's Self-purification and Poorna Swaraj Biplove Kumar** is divided into four sections: Section I analyses the existing literature on caste, untouchability, and Gandhi. Section two comprehends Gandhi's approach towards caste and untouchability. Section III analyses the Gandhian idea of self–purification, and Section IV analyses Gandhian Swaraj through his idea of self-purification. The chapter concludes as to how the whole idea of self–purification can fill up the present vacuum, which exists in the context of social justice and equality.

The seventh *Chapter-* **The Cinematic Portrayal of the Apprenticeship of *'Mahatma'* in South Africa in Shyam Benegal's *The Making of the Mahatma* by** Chandrakant Langare. As the name suggests the chapter talks about the film and Gandhi's life through the film and how analyses the way the film is made and the message it gives viewers. The author concludes by saying that the film is not just visualization of history, it is rather a holistic body of Gandhian discourse and unearthing of new facts about young Mohan and his journey of making of Mahatma.

The Eight *Chapter* **The Gandhian Idea of Conflict Transformation Examining the Relevance to the United Nations' Engagement by Yeshi Choedon** is focused on the influence of Gandhian Idea on the current conflict transformation approach and why there is a need to adopt this approach in letter and spirit to bring about sustainable peace in the post-conflict societies.

In t*he Nineth Chapter* **Incorporating *Ahimsa* into India's Constitutional Morality is written by Swaha Das and Hari Nair, t**he authors give certain arguments for the inclusion of ahimsa, which is a uniquely Indian concept, into the preamble of the Indian Constitution and then further recommend that this inclusion of Ahimsa, it will be a genuine tribute to Gandhi while reminding Indians as well as others of the profound significance of this principle.

Chapter ten, **Understanding Gandhi for the Contemporary World by Gita Dharampal** highlights some of his seminal propositions, implicitly or explicitly containing viable solutions concerning a vast spectrum of issues relating to the spheres of politics, economics, society, culture, and religion. The author at the end provides a kind of moral compass to help us navigate our way through life in order to realize a more humane and sustainable future for our planet earth.

Chapter Eleven, **Close Encounters of an Imperial Kind is written by Karen Gabriel** tries to map out the

distinguishing gender politics that was organized by imperial coloniality, Gandhi, and politico-historical developments that are now almost emblematic of national and communitarian identity politics within the modern Indian nation-state.

Chapter Twelve **Gandhi and the Jews by Barry L. Gan** discusses about the instances Gandhi opposed the establishment of pure enclaves of different ethnic and religious groups, urging people to learn to live together with minorities in their midst and makes one understand Gandhi's reasoning with a variety of historical instances.

Chapter Thirteen **Gandhian Theory of International Politics by Anurag Gangal** discusses Gandhian theory of international politics. He explains through the chapter that Gandhian theory in Politics is entirely opposed to any kind of perversion. In effect, the main task of politics—international, national, and local—is to set right all perversions, corruption, exploitation, and violent eruptions and disorders.

Chapter fourteen **Toward a Nonviolent World Order Gandhi's Light to the by World Robert L. Holmes** discusses about the importance of Non-Violence which was given to us by Gandhi and gives a lot of references to what violent means is doing to countries. The need to reorient the whole conception of education to teach at the earliest levels, and throughout the educational process.

In Chapter Fifteen **Personal Asceticism and Political Activism, Spiritual Cravings, and Social Movements the Stupendous Muddle of Gandhi's Theory and Practice of Brahmacharya, the author Prakash Joshi** has written about Gandhiji's journey and later goes to explain the practice of Brahmacharya and the experiments he did and the conclusion from his experiments. He explains that it is difficult to think of another public figure in the history of the past 200 years who has been, figuratively speaking, an open book. What is important for us in for our times, therefore, is to look up to the idea that Gandhi has become.

In Chapter sixteen **Decoding Gandhian Studies the Odishan Sources of Gandhi's Ideas by Kamalakanta Roul**, the author in this chapter, describes the special relation of Gandhi with Odisha and its people. Gandhi paid seven visits to Odisha during the period of freedom struggle. These visits were mainly based on activisms by addressing the public, people to people contact, and foot march. Gandhi was accepted and revered by Odia people in three different ways: as an avatar of the deity, as a saviour against the oppressive British rule, and as the messiah of Odia Cause

Chapter Seventeen **Nai Talim in the Context of Discrete Educational Experiments in India by Tripti Karekatti** explains Nai Talim , Its importance and how the Nai Talim came into existence and the similarities between Dewey and pestalozzis thoughts which are closer to concept of Nai talim.She explains that , how it is very much to be incorporated in education in the present times.

Chapter Eighteen **The Subversion of the Colonial System of Humiliation A Case Study of the Gandhian Strategy by Rina Kashyap** discusses few incidents from Gandhi's personal life and his writings and some aspects of India's situation under the colonial rule. The focus of this chapter is Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence to free India from British colonialism witnessed a conscious incorporation of a strategy to subvert this system of shame and humiliation.

Chapter Nineteen **The Legacy of Mahatma Gandhi in the Nehruvian Foreign Policy of Indian A Retrospective Analysis Sourav Naskar** discusses how the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi was grounded in the theory and practice of the foreign policy which Pandit Nehru established to the whole world. It is discussing Gandhiji's contribution in formulating the foreign policy of India post- independence period and lot of historical events are reported related to the title.

In the *Chapter twenty* -**Empowering the Oppressed A Gandhian Approach to Mahasweta Devi's by Aajir Natasha Vashisht** talks about Mahashweta Devi's theatre

which persists as a major tool of empowerment of the people of India at the grassroot levels. The author has made an effort to interpret Mahasweta Devi's personal and theatrical activism as a continuation of Gandhi's longstanding commitment towards the emancipation of the downtrodden through his method of Satyagraha and ahimsa.

In chapter *twenty-one* **Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore Synchronous Philosophy and Dichotomy in Experiment by Pravat Kumar Padhy**, the author has examined the similarities and the differences in both the eminent personalities Tagore and Gandhi who remained true friends with more on the intellectual difference and congregation of emotional supplements.

Chapter twenty-two **Gandhi and the Bhagavad Gita A Derivative Discourse on Non-violence, Karmayoga, Varnashrama Dharma, and Moksha by Ramchandra Pradhan** seeks to focus on the Gandhian interpretations of the Gita to bring out their distinctive nature that played a significant role in the gamut of his major ideas. In particular, it would collect and collate his interpretations to understand and explain his views on four major issues: *non-violence, Varnashrama Karma yoga, and moksha*

In Chapter twenty-three **Gandhi and Communal Harmony by Ram Puniyani** , the author explains Gandhiji's ideas on religion and communal harmony and how Gandhi emerged like a colossus to unite the whole country around the identity of Indian nationalism due to his unique interpretation of religion based on the moral aspects.

Chapter twenty-four **Gandhian Vision of Self-Reliance in Traditional and Village Industries Sector Insights from Two Cases in Assam by Ratna Bhuyan and Santanu M. Deka** focuses on the status of the SME sector including the village industries sector in Assam and explores the existing scenario of traditional and village industries of Assam through two case studies of brass metal works in Sarthe Bari and mask-making activities in Majuli, and delves into the issues and

challenges faced by the two traditional activities in an attempt to capture the current transition of the two activities and their resilience for survival among all odds. Thus, adhering to the Gandhian philosophy of traditional cottage and village industries, self-reliance seems to be one of the panaceas for solving many a modern ill like the solvable yet unsolvable, rural

Chapter twenty-five **Gandhi and Thanthai Periyar Believer and Non-believer Par Excellence by V. Sangeetha** explains about the social reformer Periyar and how he was first inspired by Gandhi. Author reports many incidents in Tamil Nadu that took place for social upliftment of the downtrodden. The author further explains that in spite of differences that existed between Gandhi and Periyar, both toiled for the upliftment of the downtrodden. Along with Periyar, Tamil Nadu too played a pivotal role in the life of Mahatma Gandhi.

Chapter twenty-six **The Efficacy of Non-violence in Present Context by Manish Sharma** talks about the relevance of Gandhi's non-violence for generations to come. Gandhiji's replies to various interviews in this regard have been reported, which gives the readers an insight into his ideology. The author concludes that if non-violence fails, it the failure is not due to its philosophy, but due to failure of human mind which needs the cultivation of highest moral values and virtues like humility, patience, religious tolerance, compassion, friendliness, discipline, and above all aptitude to serve the fellow human beings.

Chapter Twenty-Seven **Gandhi on Society, Swaraj, and Democracy by Shilpa Shaw,** the author has explained Gandhi's views on Society, Swaraj and Democracy as she feels that Gandhi's constructive works based on non-violence on the Gandhi becomes important for the understanding of society and democracy even in the contemporary times.

Chapter Twenty-Eight **The Making of Mahatma Unravelling the Mystery of Bapu's Talisman by Vilas Shinde** explains about Mahatma Gandhi's journey and how he influenced every aspect of the society through his ideas whether social, political, moral, related to health, his writings, thoughts.

The author rightly quotes that The Talisman is an intangible heritage of mankind. It is the essence of the enormous legacy that he has left behind. Gandhiji put his heart before everything because he believed that the greatest decisions of the world are taken not by thinking but by feeling.

Chapter Twenty-nine -**Understanding Gandhian Trusteeship in the Light of Industry and CSR by Harish K. Thakur** describes the concept of Trusteeship that Gandhi propounded as to transform the current order of society into a more egalitarian one, thus eradicating the prevalent inequalities at all the levels. He justifies that Gandhian economics is so wide and comprehensive in nature because of its induction of social and ecological issues that will ever remain important, especially in respect of the issue of CSR that connects the corporate world to the hard reality and requirements of the society.

The last *Chapter thirty* **-Satyagraha as a Gandhian Method of Conflict Transformation by Vibhuti Patel In this chapter,** the author has explained Gandhi's concept of *Satyagraha* as an integrated concept that includes truth, non-violence, non-stealing, chastity or Brahmacharya, poverty or non-possession, bread labour, fearlessness, control of the palate tolerance, Swadeshi, and removal of untouchability. The concept is discussed in-depth. The importance of peace today, the process of satyagraha, the critical meaning of satyagraha the pillars of satyagraha, Ill effects of war, nuclear war and how it is very bad for humankind. The author has quoted writings on the topic and explains the need for peace and non -violence in the 21st century and it therefore becomes essential to teach children in all the educational institutions, right from the lowest level to the level of university, the concept of *Satyagraha* and the principles of truth and non-violence as the basic factors contributing to the peace, harmony, and the welfare of the society.

In conclusion,

Gandhi who was a great leader and globally recognized as a great Personality. Every citizen has their own opinion of the Father of the Nation. The book has exhaustive information and Gandhi's

ideologies have been discusses in-depth, at length and the historical events have been quoted, the situation of the country during the times of Gandhi, the context in which Gandhi put forth his ideas, and the reasoning of Gandhi behind his philosophical thoughts and ideas has been explained extremely well by the authors through the extensive research through the reference work. It is not very easy to finish reading the book. The chapters are very reflective in nature and every chapter makes the reader think on the aspect discussed and makes one realize that Gandhi was simply brilliant.

All the 30 articles written by the authors are well researched. At the end of each of the chapter there are many references which shows that so much reading, reflection and efforts have been put by all the authors in writing each of the chapters and in justifying their work with reference to the title chosen. Every chapter offers the picture-perfect opportunity to understand Gandhi. Every article in the book is presented in a unique manner. The authors have put forth their point of view after an in-depth study of articles, books or stories written about Gandhiji. Anyone who reads the book will surely come to know more about Gandhi.

There are certain stories in the article related to Gandhiji interaction with people. Besides this, we also get to know about writers who have published articles based on the research, written books on Gandhiji with differing views as such articles are quoted by the authors in the chapter. A number of quotes, poems, stories and historical events have been presented through the articles.

My sincere appreciation to all the authors. Reading through the pages made me revive the ideals of Gandhiji. Overall, the book was remarkably exhaustive and interesting, and it throws light on very pertinent principles and ideologies of Gandhiji. I am certain that this would invite many readers researchers to find all their sources in one place.

On the whole I felt that this book is very comprehensive due to the efforts taken by the authors to refer to so many books and articles. My sincere thankfulness to all the contributors. Because

of whom the reader will be able to understand Gandhi's greatness and make one reflect on the writings.

For further reading, the readers can also refer to ***Rethinking Mahatma Gandhi*** by the same editors and published by Rawat Publications also globally launched on **2nd October 2021.**
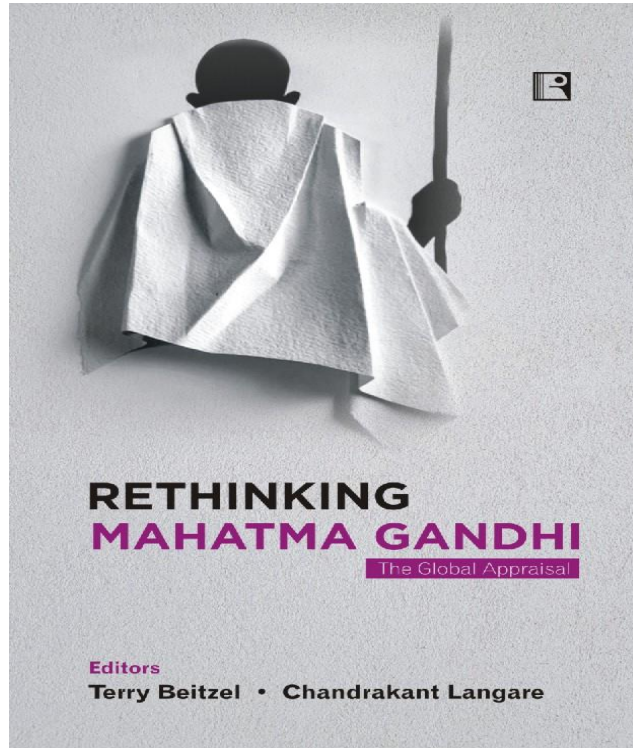
OBITUARY FOR
Dr. Gail Omvedt
(2nd August to 1941 to 25th August 2021)

By Prof. Vibhuti Patel

Dr. Gail Omvedt, committed and courageous, prolific writer and powerful social scientists who brought to the fore Phule-Ambedkar legacy in the context of rising social movements in the post emergency period is no more. She passed on 25 August 2021 at the age of 80. Gail's close association with grass-roots movements of rural women- farmers, forest dwellers and women headed households and her involvement in the newly formed women's rights movement during late 1970s were captured in her engaging and outstanding first-person account in her book, *We Shall Smash this Prison* published in 1978. She was a prolific writer and popularly known as a political theorist who pioneered non-Brahminical Marxism. Memorial meetings organised by rural groups, Dalit organisations, academic institutions, activists of grass roots movements, farmers organisations and Bahujan Groups bears witness to the fact that Gail had made a permanent Mark among the progressive thinkers and practitioners.

Bridged the Gap between Theory and Action

Gail actively participated in all meetings of the united front of women's liberation movement in Maharashtra. During 1970s, 1980s and 1990s we worked together in several campaigns, padayatras, rallies, dharanas, workshops, national conferences, gatherings in rural, tribal and urban locations, travelled together long-distance in unreserved train compartments to attend conferences in Nandurbar in 1981 and preparatory meetings for the Patna Conference on Perspective for Women's Liberation Movement in 1988, shared rooms in seminars and workshops which gave us opportunity to engage in lively discussions on political economy of caste-class-ethnic issues determining women's predicaments, caste question in mode of production and relations of production in the rural economies, entitlements of forest dwellers, gender-water-caste and land, property rights of tribal and rural women, need for rural-urban solidarity and support. During early 1970s, she visited India for the field work of her Ph.D. dissertation on *Cultural Revolt in a Colonial Society: The Non-Brahmin Movement in Maharashtra.*

She made a major impact as Dr. Ambedkar Chair Professor at NISWASS in Orissa, as a Professor of Sociology at the University of Pune, as Asian Guest Professor at the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, Copenhagen and as a Senior Fellow at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi. She was a Visiting Professor and Coordinator, School of Social Justice, University of Pune, visiting faculty at Centre for Social Studies, Surat and a Fellow at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla. Gail Omvedt was a former Chair Professor for the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Chair of Social Change and Development at IGNOU.

Gail believed in Feminist Principle of 'Personal is Political'

Gail married a politically active doctor, Com Bharat Patankar in 1978 and settled down with her mother-in-law and husband in Kasegaon village, Maharashtra, she attended and spoke in (her own style of) Marathi all meetings of the united front of women's liberation movement in Maharashtra along with her mother-in-law, veteran feminist Com. Indutai Patankar. She actively supported renaming of Marathwada University as Babasaheb Ambedkar University in 1978 and reached out to Dalit survivors of cattiest riots after the legislative assembly of Maharashtra unanimously passed a resolution for the renaming. At that time, even her pregnancy did not deter her from joining *padayatras* in solidarity with the Dalit victims of riots in Marathwada. She had a caring mother-in-law, renowned feminist in her own right, Comrade Indutai Patankar. As fellow feminists, they were always together in all public events of the social movements till Indutai passed on. Her home in Kasegaon was always open for social activists, researchers and young scholars in Kasegaon. Her freedom-fighter and feminist mother-in-law, Indutai Patankar was an idol for the movement of Single Women that began in the mid-1980s. Gail and Indutai enjoyed unique camaraderie. They lead by their personal examples. She encouraged, inspired and mentored 1000s of Dalit, Adivasi, Bahujan men and women to dedicate their lives for social reformatory processes.

Inclusive Public Intellectual

Gail was actively involved in social movements of Dalits, Adivasis, workers, rural women and expressed her solidarity with anti-caste movements, environmental movements, farmers' movements. She was active in Shramik Mukti Dal, Stri Mukti Sangarsh Chalval which works on issues of abandoned women in Sangli and Satara districts of southern Maharashtra, and the Shetkari Mahila Aghadi, which works on issues of women's land rights and political power. She was a huge inspiration to so many of us. I was fortunate to have a long association with Indutai and with her also Gail and Bharat when I became part of the Stree Mukti Sangharsh Chalwal from the mid 90's. After Indutai passed away four years ago my visits to Kasegaon never happened so I met Gail only a few times when she came to Pune.

Her work will continue to inspire generations to come for the struggle against caste patriarchy and for a better world.

Gail as a champion of Women's Rights Movement

Gail was an active participant of the workshops and group discussions of early feminist discourses on paid and unpaid work of women, agrarian relations and rural women's survival struggles, livelihood strategies of women headed households of widows, deserted, divorced and single women. She put her ideas upfront, she always attended meeting with her types notes and discussion points that conveyed that she had done considerable homework for the meaningful and result oriented discussions. She contributed to the women's liberation movement in Maharashtra immensely. She not only translated Marathi and Bhilori feminist songs into English but also extensively quoted verses of these songs in her theoretically dense research papers and monographs. She generously shared rare literature on the student's movements against racism and against anti-Vietnam war and the international women's liberation movement during the early 1970s. Her in-depth understanding on Satya Shodhak Movement of Jyotiba Phule and Savitribai Phule contributed towards historical sense to the emerging feminist consciousness in India. She enthusiastically took part in the Stree Mukti Sangharsh Parishad in Pune during the emergency Rule. Gail was an ardent supporter of Stree Mukti Sanghatana in Mumbai and Pune. Gail represented rural and tribal women's concerns in the state level network organisation Stree Mukti Sampark Samiti. After the nation-wide anti-rape movement, when the newly formed women's groups spread all over the country expressed the need for a National Conference and Forum Against Oppression of Women took the lead to host the 1st National Conference on Perspective for Women's Liberation Movement in India in December 1980, Gail was active in the preparatory Committee. During the conference, she prepared minutes for the sub-group on Women and Work. Gail always fulfilled her promise, whether it was an organisational work or an intellectual work. In 1981, we attended Asian Conference against Sexual Violence organised by Prof. Upendra Baxi in Surat and from

there we went to attend the Convention of tribal women in Nandurbar in an unreserved over-crowded railway compartment

by narrow gauge train with coal engine in company of goats and chickens and their owners. In 1988, We worked together for a massive mobilisation of rural and tribal women in a National Conference in Patna.

Pathbreaking Legacy of Intersectional Feminist Writing

Gail's highly acclaimed writings brought out her deep theoretical insights that came from local experiences and connected with the global perspective. Gail's intellectual honesty gained her an unconditional acceptance even among those who did not completely agree with her. Her views on support to *Shetkari Sanathana* movement lead by rich farmers in 1990 and policy of liberalisation and globalisation in 1991 were not acceptable to many activists working with the urban and rural poor. Still, she enjoyed trust of social movements of Dalits-Adivasis-Bahujan who respected Gail for her following path-breaking contributions over 3 decades.

- *Cultural Revolt in a Colonial Society: The Non-Brahman Movement in Maharashtra* (Scientific Socialist Education Trust, 1976)
- *We Shall Smash This Prison: Indian Women in Struggle* (1979)
- "We Will Smash This Prison!.: Indian Women in Struggle " (Zed, 1980)
- "Violence Against Women: New Movements And New Theories In India" (Kali for Women, 1991)
- *Reinventing Revolution: New Social Movements in India* (M.E. Sharpe, 1993)
- *Gender and Technology: Emerging Asian Visions* (1994)
- *Dalits And The Democratic Revolution: Dr. Ambedkar And The Dalit Movement In Colonial India* (Sage India, 1994)

- *Dalit Visions: the Anti-caste movement and Indian Cultural Identity* (Orient Longman, 1995)
- *Growing Up Untouchable: A Dalit Autobiography* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2000)
- *Buddhism in India : Challenging Brahmanism and Caste* (Sage India, 2003)
- Jotirao Phule and the Ideology of Social Revolution in India (Delhi: Critical Quest, 2004)
- "Ambedkar: Towards an Enlightened India " (Penguin, 2005)
- *Seeking Begumpura: The Social Vision of Anti-caste Intellectuals* (New Delhi, Navayana, 2009)
- "Understanding Caste: From Buddha To Ambedkar And Beyond" (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2011)
- *Songs of Tukoba with Bharat Patankar she has published (translations)* (Manohar, 2012)

Our heartfelt condolences to Gail's caring companion Dr. Bharat Patankar and affectionate daughter, Prachi Patankar. Gail lives with us through her writings. We salute Gail Omvedt for her revolutionary spirit, passion for social change and caste-less society, commitment for women's rights, intersectional feminist analysis and revolutionary praxis.

OBITUARY FOR
Ms. Sonal Shukla
(12th July 1941 to 9th September 2021)

By Prof. Vibhuti Patel

A veteran feminist activist and the public intellectual, Sonal Shukla passed away on 9-9-2021. She was the mainstay of Indian Council for Basic Education (ICBE) right from its inception. This has created an irreparable loss to the ICBE and its institutions, Surajba College of Education and Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan's Pre-Primary School, Primary School and Shri. I. J. Patel Secondary School where she mentored hundreds of teacher educators. She considered founder of ICBE, noted Gandhian Educationists, Vajubhai and Leelamasi as her role models and always stood by them at the most trying times in their lives. Sonalben was a powerful writer, orator and debater who consistently championed the causes of women's rights and dignity and examined an unfolding reality with the gender lens. Sonal Shukla was a champion of feminist activism and always vociferous about women's rights. Through her writings and oratory, she consistently highlighted the burning issues of

women at workplace, in the homes, in the political spheres, She was humble and humorous, witty and warm. She had a zest for life and was actively involved in the solidarity work for local as well as global efforts of the women's rights movement.

First time, I met Sonal Shukla in 1977 as our meeting of newsletter, Feminist Network in English and Stree Sangharsh in Gujarati used to take place from her home. Since then, we have been in the women's movement together for a long time. We worked together for anti-rape campaign (1980), solidarity for textile workers (1982), Forum Against Sex Determination and Sex Presentation (1982), campaign through Music ballet and Yatra on Women's Movement in India- Chipko, Anti Price Rise, Anti Rape, Anti Dowry, Anti Sati (1984-87), campaign against dowry- Manjushree Sarda & Vibha Shukla murder, campaign against religious bigotry after Bhivandi riots (1984), National Conferences on Perspectives for Women's Liberation Movement in India (1980-Mumbai, 1985- Mumbai, 1988- Patna, 1990-Calicut).

Personal Charm

Sonalben was highly creative, full of humour and wit, warm and caring, hospitable for the colleagues from underserved communities. From the wide range of feminists that I have known, what set Sonal apart from others in the feminist movement was her open-door policy and readiness to help at the time of crisis. Other feminists were politically correct and articulate but are not accessible to "common" women, at the most they showed paternalistic concern or curiosity in the lives of 'women with problems', but they carefully guarded their own privacy. On the other hand, Sonalben was friend in need and accessible to fellow feminists, colleagues and friends at the time of their difficult circumstances. She always balanced advocacy work with relief operations in terms of food, clothes, medical aid, teaching, counselling and capacity building.

Creation of Feminist Cultural Alternatives

Right from the post emergency period, Sonal had been active in the autonomous women's groups and housed the first feminist newsletter (1978-1980), cultural subcommittee of Forum Against Oppression of Women (1981-82) for campaign building, Women's Centre (1982- 1984) to provide institutional support to women survivors of violence, Vacha Study Circle (1986-1990) to

discuss feminist writings. Sonal registered VACHA in 1990 as a trust. Sonalben's unique contribution to the women's movement has been to integrate alternate cultural activities in the women's movement and through her action she has conveyed feminist ethics of sharing material, financial, emotional and intellectual resources generously with anyone who touched our lives.

Commitment to Secular Humanism

Death, destruction and devastation during communal riots in 1992-93 shook Sonal and she got involved in the relief operations. After Bombay Riots got over, she decided to devote her life to strive for creation of young minds with secular humanism. In this effort, Sonal was actively supported by several professionally competent women as volunteers. Prof. Dineshwari Thonse, Mrs. Kumud Shanbaug, Prof. Nina Haeems and Prof. Vrijendra, media personality Nischint Hora and theatre artist Utkarsh Majumdar, Sonal's brother Uday Majumdar (Music Director) and sister Meenal Patel (actress) whole-heartedly supported VACHA in creation of cultural resources such as documentary films, audio cassette of feminist songs in Gujarati and Hindi. Under Sonal's visionary leadership, VACHA channelised collective energy in empowerment of poorest of the poor adolescent girls in 18 bustees (communities) in Mumbai through education, skill training and exposure programmes along with focus on livelihood issues. VACHA's personality development programmes were marked by message of empowerment, self-care, recreation and importance of education. While counselling women survivors of violence, girls facing constraints and housewives facing restrictions, she would always share her experiences and convince them not only to set high goals but also achieve those goals with the support of feminist sisters. In this heroic journey, her co-travellers were feminists

Swatija Manorama, Anju Jani, Darshana Joshi, Medhavinee Nanjoshi and Amrita De.

Reaching Out

Sonal Shukla's best quality was her sense of humour, sharp wit, magnificent and enchanting personality and command over languages- Gujarati, Hindi and English. She was a brilliant and erudite orator. Her caustic remarks at times brought sharp reaction, but it also brought transformative changes in the mindset. She was well-known among social activists as a comrade in need and always very hospitable. She shared her intellectual and material resources with utmost generosity. She lived for others- her friends, her students and members of the organisations with which she was associated. Wherever she went, she made everyone laugh with her unique sense of humour based on her immediate observations, anecdotes with cross section of people, choice of the most effective words- terminologies and phrases, naughtiness and spirited laughter even in the midst of difficult circumstances

Vision of VACHA as an Institution to Voice the Rights of Adolescent Girls

Sonal visualised Vacha as a women's group involved in social research and action. Vacha started with a women's library and since has developed several community-based programmes dealing with research, documentation and training, a children's centre, and a cultural centre. The VACHA library maintained a collection of serous books, fictions and documents on women's issues. Since most available written material on women's issues is in English, Vacha also collects, creates, and disseminates cultural resources such as songs, skits, audio and video material concerning women's rights. Vacha collective is composed of a group of women with varied backgrounds such as social activism, community work, media, research, management, law, writing, finance, teaching and training.

Just a week before her demise, Sonalben visited us at our home and spent 3 hours taking optimistically about VACHA girls, She

said, "The adolescent girls are surpassing earlier milestones in the area of education, vocation, sports and cultural activities by displaying tremendous grit and hard work. They are setting new benchmarks in their success stories in spite of socio-economic and cultural hurdles. Now the state and civil society need to remove the institutional and cultural constraints so that the adolescent girls can realize their dreams. Providing good and healthy role models for adolescent girls is very important. Let the Girls Bloom**.** They are the future of this planet." She was full of praise of the current leadership of VACHA directed by Dineshwari Thonse, Yagna Parma, Steffi Fernando and Rupali Pethkar.

Mother of 100s of Daughters

Sonal was a great giver and lived for others. On March 8, 2021, Sonal was awarded 'An icon of the Women's movement in India and across the globe!' under the banner of Gender Icon Award instituted by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), India. On the same day, Graphic Novel, penned by veteran feminist journalist Jyoti Punwani and illustrated by Sharad Sharma, capturing milestones

of Sonal's life was released in social media for free downloads. Currently that this FES publication has gone viral.

Sonalben has left a glorious legacy by mentoring 100s of young girls who are working with honesty of purpose and feminist vision even in the midst of COVID19 pandemic. Till the end Sonal was continuously in touch with the VACHA team to guide its education programme and relief operations such as distribution of ration kits, sanitary material, computers for online education under the lock down. Sonal's quest for participatory democracy was crystalised in VACHA's motto, Nothing about us, without us and nothing about girls without girls.

REFERENCES:

- Sonal Shukla (2021) An icon of the Women's movement in India and across the globe!
- https://india.fes.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Gender_Icons_-_individual_-_India.pdf

- Books, pamphlets, Newsletters, songs, films by VACHA: https://vacha.org.in/resources

An icon in feminist groups and the wider women's movement in India and across the globe!

SONAL SHUKLA

FRIEDRICH
EBERT
STIFTUNG
India Office

Text : Jyoti Punwani | Illustration : Sharad Sharma | Cover : Garima Sharma

OBITUARY FOR
Ms. Kamla Bhasin
(24st April 1946 to 25th September 2021)

By Prof. Vibhuti Patel

Kamala Bhasin has left us. Her passing has caused an irreparable loss to the feminist movement and One Billion Rising Movement in Asia. Kamaladi, as she was popularly known, lives in her songs, verses, stories, speeches, publications in multiple languages and the most importantly in our hearts and minds. Thousands of scholars, activists, young adults with non-English background (ridiculed by their elite peers as VERNACs) got their understanding of feminism by studying Kamala Bhasin's booklets of Feminism, Patriarchy, Gender-based violence so on and so forth. Kamala made discourses on women's rights accessible to the first-generation learners. Kamala became their window/door/pathway for the feminist worldview.

Kamla Bhasin was a founder member of *Jagori* , *Pacific and Asia Forum* (1985-1995*)*, *South Asia Women Network*, *Aurat Foundation* and played pivotal role in forging solidarity among the feminist movements a across the South Asian Countries. She

actively supported Indian Association for Women's Studies right from its inception, was also the General Secretary of IAWS for Jaipur Conference and attended all IAWS National Conferences. In the last Conference at National Law University, Delhi

Kamala's speech brought to the fore heroism of the women's rights movement and raised slogans for protecting the Constitution of India and of course, her most popular slogan of AZADI raised in her spirited style echoed the conference hall and lifted everybody's spirit. In the month of May, 2021, we had invited her as a chief Guest to address the International Conference but due to her medical investigation she could not join us. We had a long conversation on the telephone.

On a personal note: My mother was a great fan of Kamla. She was so enchanted by Kamla's deconstruction of the concept of PATRIACHY in a palatable manner in TV series *'Satyamev Jayate'* that she discussed it with all her peers endlessly!! Educationist for gender equality will miss your live performances- electrifying singing, energetic dancing and forceful speeches for assertion of women's rights and secular humanism. In solidarity with all fellow feminists of Jagori-SANGAT- Equity Foundation and many more, friends and family members of Kamla Bhasin .

BECAUSE I AM A GIRL, I MUST STUDY

A father asks his daughter:
Study? Why should *you* study?
I have sons aplenty who can study
Girl, why should you study?

The daughter tells her father:
Since you ask, here's why I must study.
Because I am a girl, I must study.

Long denied this right, I must study
For my dreams to take flight, I must study
Knowledge brings new light, so I must study
For the battles I must fight, I must study
Because I am a girl, I must study.

To avoid destitution, I must study
To win independence, I must study
To fight frustration, I must study
To find inspiration, I must study
Because I am a girl, I must study.

To fight men's violence, I must study
To end my silence, I must study
To challenge patriarchy I must study
To demolish all hierarchy, I must study.
Because I am a girl, I must study.

To mould a faith I can trust, I must study
To make laws that are just, I must study
To sweep centuries of dust, I must study
To challenge what I must, I must study
Because I am a girl, I must study.

To know right from wrong, I must study.
To find a voice that is strong, I must study
To write feminist songs I must study
To make a world where girls belong, I must study.
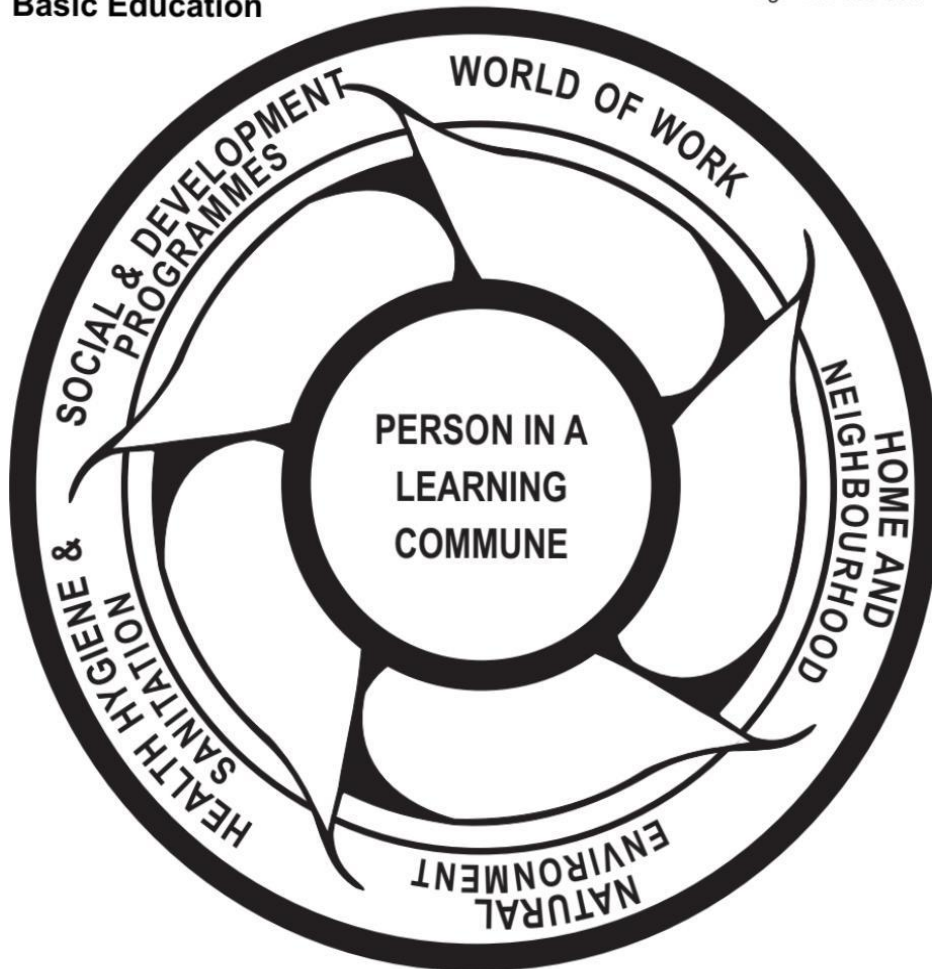*Because* I am a girl, I must study.

-- *Kamla Bhasin*

GANDHI SHIKSHAN BHAVAN

Functional Education

**Indian Council of
Basic Education**

Regd. No. 9331/64

Circular diagram with central text "PERSON IN A LEARNING COMMUNE" surrounded by: SOCIAL & DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES, WORLD OF WORK, HOME AND NEIGHBOURHOOD, NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH HYGIENE & SANITATION.

Develpment of well-integrate personality is possible if :

a. Educational experiences and work experiences interweave, intersect and reinforce each other.
b. Students and teachers participate actively in the community services such as adult education, promotion of better health, hygience and sanitation etc.
c. Curriculum provides for self-directed learning and
d. Education concerns itself with the development of the human person.