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**On innovative practices and Research in Education**

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## Editorial

Quest in Education team wishes you an expansive and fulfilling, happy and harmonious new year. In the first issue of the new year, we bring to you inspiring, insightful and content rich articles.

Shri Vajubhai Patel: A Teacher and Visionary (1914-2013)  
By by Smt. Nupur Mitra

Determinants of Academic Performance: A study of first generation  
Graduates in Mumbai  
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Tribute to Padma Shri Dr Temsula Ao (1942-2022)  
by Vibhuti Patel

**We request the scholars and experts to send their original research-based articles, case studies and book reviews on contemporary challenges faced by the education sector.**

**Prof. Vibhuti Patel**  
**Editor**

**SHRI VAJUBHAI PATEL: A TEACHER AND VISIONARY  
(1914-2013)**

**Smt. Nupur Mitra,  
President,  
Indian Council of Basic Education, Mumbai**

*“Teacher Training Colleges should prepare teachers who are ready to adopt to the changing needs of the society, and the nation. Their dynamism has to emerge from their personality and the professional skill they will develop during the course of their study. It is necessary for the teacher educational institutions to promote and develop a growing curriculum and not remain content with a static one and also develop learning strategies that are conducive to growth.”*

Shri Vajubhai Patel, Founder Director, Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan, 1975

**Early Life**

Born in 1914 to a family of traders in Dedan, a village in Saurashtra, Gujarat, Vajubhai was truly fascinated by this land of generous and brave people. He felt a sense of pride because he hailed from the birthplace of Narsimha Mehta, the saint poet who composed ‘*Vaishnava Jan to Tene Kahiye*’, hymn so dear to Mahatma Gandhi. The words so touched young Vajubhai that he decided to live up to every line of this song. He was one of several siblings, all but one, younger than him. Since his brothers left for Bombay to engage in trade and his mother had a weak eyesight, primary school going Vajubhai willingly decided to help in the family chores like cooking, cleaning, running errands, fetching water from a distance in rain scarce Saurashtra, tending to the domestic cows and buffaloes. These activities made him self-reliant and helped him to develop fortitude to overcome the many adversities in his life.

As there was no high school in his village, Vajubhai moved to a nearby town to complete his matriculation from a Rastriyashala with hostel accommodation. This phase was very significant for him in several ways. He said that he was fortunate to study and be guided by benevolent teachers and this he felt had influenced his decision to be a

teacher in life. This school shaped his thinking, his attitude to life and in his own words, “It completely changed my life”. It was while he was in this school that he took to wearing Khadi and this continued till his last breath. Since he was self-reliant from his earlier days, boarding school days posed no difficulty. A memorable moment which he cherished was seeing Mahatma Gandhi for the first time at Sabarmati Ashram, on a school visit. Another momentous occasion was his participation in a Satyagraha. Vajubhai joined a follower of Mahatma Gandhi to protest against a backward social practice, prevalent at the time. The peaceful protest was successful as the social custom came to be shunned by the villagers. After his matriculation Vajubhai shifted to erstwhile Bombay and joined the Wilson college for his graduation. One of the things that he recalled was his regular visits to the library of Bombay University to read books of John Dewey and Gandhiji’s weeklies ‘Navajeevan’ and ‘Harijan Bandhu’. All this reading helped shape his ideas on life, society, education, customs and traditions.

In 1931, Vajubhai along with some college friends went to Delhi to participate in the Civil Disobedience Movement. His friends and he were arrested and locked up in a temporary jail. Since his initials were V. J. Patel, he was mistaken for either Vallabhbhai Patel or Vitthalbhai Patel. He was released after thirty-six hours when the police realized its mistake.

### **As Teacher**

In October 1937, at an education conference in Wardha, Maharashtra, Gandhiji initiated the idea of ‘Nai Talim’. He did not agree with the education system prevalent in British India, as he felt it was not suited to India’s needs. He emphasized on the need for an alternate system that would be integrated and based on experiential learning. It was in the same year that Vajubhai was appointed as an assistant teacher in HPT Girls High School in Bombay. The concept of ‘Nai Talim’ so impressed him that he decided to implement it in his own way. The students were guided to learn on their own by reading up relevant books, group discussions and activity based learning were encouraged. He strongly disapproved of the system of teaching and learning with the help of a text book and the chalk and talk method.

A great literary figure who left a lasting impression on his mind was Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore and his ideas of wholesome education. He believed that an amalgamation of nature, environment and

aesthetics would make for an integrated educational experience. Vajubhai ensured his students were exposed to and celebrated Nature and its wonders, Environment and aesthetics were also incorporated as part of the education routine.

### **Leelaben Patel**

Vajubhai's sisters could not receive formal education as there was no school for girls, in his village. This was a matter of great regret for him. He made up his mind to ensure that girls received education just like boys, without any discrimination. He took the initiative to admit Leelaben his future wife, to a progressive school with hostel facility in Ahmedabad for a high school education. After matriculation, when Leelaben returned to Bombay, both decided to get married as they shared similar thinking. Though there was stiff opposition from both sides, they tied the knot in a simple ceremony devoid of rituals and with no officiating priest. Leelaben received as gift a Khadi Sari from Vajubhai. The total cost of the wedding was rupees ten. They not only believed it but also practiced simple living and high thinking all their lives.

While Vajubhai pursued his passion for teaching, Leelaben actively participated in the freedom struggle as commander of the Women volunteers, a social service wing of the congress party. She took part in the Quit India Movement of 1942 and was arrested and imprisoned first at Arthur road Jail in Bombay and later at the Yerwada Jail in Pune. During Masi's incarceration, Vajubhai would carry food for her. Later she also protested against the death of young Babu Genu in the Swadeshi Movement. In a talk organized by the students Council of 1975 of which I was the General Secretary, Leelaben, who was affectionately addressed as *Masi* (aunt in Gujarati language) by one and all, related her experiences as a Freedom Fighter. Post-independence *Masi* involved herself in academic and social welfare activities.

### **Daughter, Prof. Dr. Sujata Patel**

Daughter Prof. Dr. Sujata Patel has distinguished herself in both academic and career achievements. An alumna of Elphinstone College, Bombay and Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada, Prof. Patel got her Ph.D. from Jawaharlal Nehru University Delhi. She

initially started as a professor of sociology at the SNDT Women's University, Bombay and later joined Pune University. Prof. Patel retired from the University of Hyderabad. Post retirement she was a distinguished professor at Savitribai Phule University, Pune and a National fellow at the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla.

Currently she is the visiting professor in the department of sociology, Umea University, Sweden. On 29<sup>th</sup> January 2023, Dr. Patel will receive the title of Honorary Doctor from the Uppsala University Sweden. This award is a recognition of Prof. Dr. Patel as one of the leading sociologists and experts in social theory and urban sociology.

### **Higher Education**

After completion of B.Ed., Vajubhai proceeded to Columbia University in USA to study for his M.A. in Education, as it was here that John Dewey had once taught. It was during this time that he learnt of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. This left him shattered and depressed. The loss was immeasurable for all Indians as the non-violent crusader of the freedom struggle and the moral compass was lost forever. His life and works would be the guiding light for generations to come.

### **As Headmaster:**

On return to India in 1949, Vajubhai joined the Kachhi school as an assistant teacher. In 1956 he joined Shri Chandulal Nanavati Kanya Vinay Mandir, Vile Parle, Bombay as Principal. It was at this school that Vajubhai, with the consent of Trustee Sir Manilal Nanavati (Former deputy governor of RBI) implemented an education system based on Nai Talim. He started activities that were integral to an all-round education and character building. A regular school day would begin with the spinning of the *charkha* by teachers and students led by the Principal. Simultaneously the music teacher sang bhajans and hymns while playing on a musical instrument – the *Dilruba*.

On an average sufficient yarn was produced by each one annually to have five yards of cloth with which pupils would get a pair of uniform and teachers one set of garment. It was self-help in every department with no peon or sweeper. In classrooms self-study was encouraged. Students had to read up themselves with guidance from teachers.

Question and answer sessions were held to enable students to ask the right questions to elicit the right answers. Group study and discussions were held on different topics. Dramatization, music art and craft and social work were part of the education routine. One unique feature of the library was that it was unattended. Students were encouraged to go to the library, search for books, record it in the register, sign and leave with the book. Vajubhai also introduced the 'Open Store' facility, where students would pick up stationery that they needed, check the price tag and put the money in the box kept for the purpose. Initially there were setbacks but later the system worked successfully. Vajubhai spoke glowingly about his fifteen-year stint as Principal of this school. He was grateful to the management for giving him the freedom to implement his ideas based on Nai Talim and as a dedicated teacher did his best to live up to it.

In the seventies, the SNDT Women's University invited Vajubhai, to take lectures on 'Comparative Education' for its M.Ed. Class. He said these experiences of being associated with women's education through the years was very enriching.

### **Association with Government Projects:**

For the Kothari Education Commission of 1964 Shri J.P. Naik, its member secretary invited Vajubhai to be a member of the subcommittee of its 'School Task Force'. Its function was to define 'Work Experience'. The Task Force visited his school, Shri Chandulal Nanavaty Kanya Vinay Mandir and found the concept of work experience implemented successfully.

The Government of Maharashtra invited Vajubhai to be a member of the 'Teacher Education Committee' for a five year term 1963-1968. The function of this committee was to revise the curriculum of Primary Training colleges. In his second stint Vajubhai was to visit a few primary training colleges to supervise their function. During this time the Government of India selected Vajubhai as one of the recipients of the National Award for Best Teacher. Vajubhai politely declined to accept the award because he felt such awards should be given by professional bodies and not by the government.

## **Indian Council of Basic Education :**

Early in his career Vajubhai had decided to follow and spread the concept of 'Nai Talim', which he did as a teacher and Principal. In 1964, Vajubhai, along with some like-minded academicians and eminent persons decided to form an organization to implement the Principles of Nai Talim. This saw fruition when on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1964 the Indian Council of Basic Education was registered under the Bombay Public Trust Act of 1950.

The first Board of Governors were:

Shri J.W. Airon – Former Principal of Wilson College, First President of ICBE 1969-1972

Acharya Bhise – Eminent Sarvodaya worker

Dr. Sulabha Panandikar – Former Principal, Government Secondary College and Former Director of Education, Maharashtra

Shri L.N. Chhapekar – Academician

Smt. Sonal Shukla – Academician and Social Activist

Shri K.S. Acharlu – Academician

Smt. Leelaben Patel – Teacher, Freedom Fighter and Social Activist.

Shri Vajubhai Patel – Founder and Director, Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan

Shri. J.P.Naik who was a close friend of Vajubhai was one of the life members of Indian Council of Basic Education.

In 1969, in the Gandhi Centenary year, the Board of Governors decided to establish an Institute of Education for research, training and also to help change the stagnant system of education. The college was named Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan and it functioned from a rented place in Vile Parle, Bombay. Later in 1971 the college moved to a building called Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan Juhu, which was built with donations from well-wishers. On 27<sup>th</sup> march 1971, the foundation was laid by Acharya Bhise and presided over by Shri Madhukar Chaudhari, the then Minister of Education, Government of Maharashtra. The Department of Higher Education recognized the college as an aided research institute of education. A research wing was started at the very beginning and the journal 'Quest in Education', which was started in 1964 began to be published from Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan. The college of education was later renamed as Smt. Surajba College of Education. In the college a regular day would start with community work in nearby slum areas. In the assembly, Sarva Dharma Prayers, Paper reading, discussions on

current topics and book reviews were held. Lectures were interactive sessions, between students and teachers, question and answer sessions, group discussions, debates. The practice teaching part was very interesting. Many innovative practices were introduced that were different from the normal teaching methods which were mainly text book reliant. Other activities included talks by experts, workshops on innovative teaching practices in different subjects (Methods), socially useful productive work (SUPW), art, craft, poetry music and folk dance. An annual visit to an Adivasi village was looked forward to.

One of the Principles of *Nai Talim* is community service. Vajubhai, along with professors and students made several visits to the areas around the college to learn about the socio-economic conditions of the residents. It was found that among the middle class and affluent sections, there were two colonies that stood out in stark contrast. One was a harijan colony and the other a slum where mostly daily wagers and fisher folk resided in shanties. A report based on the socio economic condition of the residents was prepared.

In cooperation with the Department of sociology, University of Bombay, a questionnaire was drawn up. Students were divided into batches led by a professor. The students visited the areas almost daily before college timings. Children, who went to a local municipal school were helped with their studies, Women were taught sewing., the unemployed men were helped to find jobs and also open bank accounts, some children were admitted to the Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan Nursery school at very nominal fees. As part of their social service outreach students visited the Homes for the hearing and visually challenged and also to the Homes of the differently abled. In the Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan Community hall, two hours weekly were allotted for adult education. Past students often recalled that their community service was the most satisfying part of their B.Ed. course.

Vajubhai not only encouraged the celebrations of festivals but also believed in celebrating the beauty of seasons, particularly Vasant Utsav and Varsha Mangal. In order to create the ambience of Shanti Niketan, flowering plants and trees were planted in the vast compound of Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan, becoming a virtual oasis in the concrete surroundings. Even today the Greenery is much appreciated. Very often classes were held in the open under the shade of trees, much to the

delight of students and teachers. The college has completed over five decades.

In order to enable teachers to practice innovative methods of teaching and also facilitate schooling of children in the neighbouring areas, Vajubhai and the council started the schools in Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan first the primary and later the secondary school.

In the early seventies, the UNESCO Institute of Education, Hamburg, initiated a research project viz. Life Long Education and Teachers Training. Smt. Surajba College of Education was one of the several Teacher Training Colleges of Education from around the world that was invited to participate in the preliminary discussions of the research project. Vajubhai attended the discussions and agreed to implement the assignments in the college in the year 1973. The first assignment was to design a curriculum of teacher preparation in the context of Life long education and the second was a case study of a school in India that promotes community participation and community improvement. Despite meagre resources, the project was completed successfully, as Vajubhai had already implemented principles of Nai Talim and Life Long Education. The Report was submitted to the Institute, which was published along with the reports of all colleges who took part in the project, in a book titled 'Life Long Education and Teachers Training'. The entire research project of Gandhi Shikshan was published in the October 1975 issue of Quest in Education.

Around the same time NCERT decided to make a Case Study of some of the institutes of Basic Education in India. Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan was one of the twenty selected. In 1981 NCERT published a report of the case studies of all the colleges titled 'Basic Education Institutions: Their relevance Today'. The report published all the innovative practices developed in Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan college of education.

In 1974 Vajubhai took the lead in forming the 'Maharashtra State Teacher Educators Association with the support of many Principals of Teacher Education colleges. He was appointed the President of the Association. Under his president ship many meetings were called in

Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan and other colleges to bring above reforms in the B.Ed. curriculum, especially in the area of practice teaching.

The association also wrote to the University to allow students to take the B.Ed. examinations in their mother tongue mainly English, Hindi and Marathi. After due deliberations the university accepted the proposal. Soon after Hindi was also introduced as a medium of instruction, besides English in Smt. Surajba College of Education

### **Quest in Education**

Vajubhai was greatly interested in research in the field of education, and one of the initiatives was to start a journal called Quest in Education. It was first published in 1964 by the Teachers Club housed in Shri Chandulal Nanavaty Kanya Vinay Mandir. The founder editorial board comprised Shree G.L. Chandavarkar, Shri J.W. Airon and Shri Vajubhai Patel. Since 1971 it is being published by Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan. Eminent educationists from India and abroad contributed articles, research papers, studies and innovative teaching practices. The journal is subscribed by colleges from across India. At present it is steered by Chief Editor Prof. Dr. Vibhuti Patel and a distinguished Editorial Board comprising eminent academicians.

**Nai Talim** : From 1937 onwards Vajubhai was convinced of the efficacy of Nai Talim as a system of education. He made great efforts to promote it. The Sarva Seva Sangha of Wardha constituted the 'Akhil Bharat Nai Talim Samiti', and appointed Vajubhai as one of its members. In 1974 when he was appointed the Honorary Secretary, he helped in organizing conferences of Nai Talim workers from across the country. Along with Shri K.S. Acharlu and Smt. Morjorie Sykes, he decided to revise the Nai Talim curriculum for classes I to VII. It was published in a book under the title 'Functional Education' for Std. I to VII.

In his book 'Nai Talim' Vajubhai cleared several misconceptions. He emphasized that it entails learning experiences at every stage and every topic. It encompasses all levels of education. The preschool, primary, high school, undergraduate and post graduate levels. It believes in

continuous evaluation and not examinations to decide a student's capability. Vajubhai implemented many of the principles of Nai Talim as was possible under the rules and Guidelines of Education authorities.

### **Courage of Conviction**

Throughout his life, Vajubhai upheld moral values and ensured probity in personal and public life. Despite this Vajubhai faced a severe challenge to his integrity in the seventh decade of his life. A person who only breathed education was subjected to the rigours of litigation foisted on him. He had the courage of his convictions hence decided to face it to clear his name as well as of his institution, which he held dear. Scores of well-wishers rallied behind him prominent among them being Smt. Sonal Shukla, educationist and Women's activist. Late legal luminary Shree Atul Setalvad, defended Vajubhai pro-bono, for he knew that Vajubhai may be financially weak but his moral uprightness needed to be vindicated. The Indian Council of Basic Education will forever be indebted to all who stood by Vajubhai and his family throughout till he was cleared of all charges after twelve long years.

Vajubhai, the *karmyogi*, once again actively involved himself in the service of progressive education. The lengthy litigation took a toll on Vajubhai's health, leaving him frail in body but not in spirit. In the twilight years of his life Vajubhai decided to stay with his daughter first in Pune then in Hyderabad where he breathed his last on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2013, leaving behind a rich legacy of principled conduct and utmost dedication to the teaching profession. His labour of love, the Indian council of Basic Education, Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan, Juhu is a thriving embodiment of his vision. In the sylvan surroundings of Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan is the 'Smriti Sthal' of its founder and Director, Shri Vajubhai Patel.

### **Books written by Vajubhai Patel:**

1. Alternative to Bookish Education
2. Nai Talim
3. Child Education
4. Breakthrough in Routine Education
5. Story of a Teacher
6. Experiences of My Life

To commemorate the life of this great visionary teacher a memorial lecture is held every year on 20<sup>th</sup> September. Eminent personalities from diverse fields are invited to Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan to deliberate on Educational and Socially relevant topics.

A fitting tribute would be to continue his glorious legacy.

**English translation of *Vaishnav Jan* ..... by Narsingh Mehta**

One who is a Vaishnav, knows the pain of others,  
does good to others, without letting pride enter his mind..

a *Vaishnav*, tolerates and praises the entire world, does not speak ill of others,  
keeps his promises, actions and thoughts pure, your mother is blessed indeed.

a *Vaishnav* sees everything equally, rejects greed and avarice,  
respects women as he respects his own mother,  
though his tongue may tire he will utter no untruth,  
never touches the property of others..

a *Vaishnav* does not succumb to worldly attachments,  
he has renounced lust of all types and anger,

who has no greed and is not deceitful,  
who has renounced lust and anger,  
the poet *Narsi* would like to see such a person by who's virtue,  
the entire family gets salvation.

# **DETERMINANTS OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: A STUDY OF FIRST GENERATION GRADUATES IN MUMBAI**

**Mr. Prakhar Goel,  
Independent Researcher  
and  
Prof. Dr. Manisha Karne,  
Professor,**

**Mumbai School of Economics and Public Policy (Autonomous)  
& I/c Director, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar International Research  
Centre, University of Mumbai, Vidya Nagari, Kalina, Mumbai-98.**

*In this study of first-generation graduates in Mumbai, the analysis of the primary data was examines to study the factors influencing that academic performance. Several socioeconomic factors such as gender, parental occupational status, income, type of family and social category were included in the study. It has been observed that e, academic achievement scores were lower among first-generation learners who are male, living in a joint family, and from Scheduled Tribes. The results of this study are compared with findings from other micro studies across diverse Indian geographies, as well as national- and state-level surveys. Finally, policy recommendations are made to improve the performance of the first-generation graduates.*

## **Introduction**

Past studies have shown that students who are the first one to pursue higher education i.e. pursuing graduate degree after completing 12<sup>th</sup> standard perform significantly worse in academics than subsequent-generation learners. In a study across 16 schools in Delhi, a statistically significant difference was found between the mean academic achievement scores of first-generation students, 49.88%, and that of subsequent-generation learners, 57.52% (Pandey & Singh, 2015). In addition to lower academic scores, students who are the first one to pursue higher education also have lower educational attainment than

subsequent-generation students and display higher rates of high dropout and absenteeism (Wadhwa, 2017).

To examine the influence of the socioeconomic factors that influence the academic achievement of first-time higher education graduates, a sample of graduates currently studying in the graduation in different colleges of in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region were considered.

### **Literature Review:**

In India educational disparity has been observed in several studies. The constitution has recognized the responsibility of the government to ensure access to education for all. The Article 46 of the Constitution, the federal government is tasked for fostering the economic and educational advancement of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The state is required to safeguard the weaker groups of the population from social injustice and all sorts of exploitation while also promoting their economic and educational interests, particularly those of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. It is one of the State Policy Directive Principles.

As marginalised communities are lagging behind the other groups in education, many students from these disadvantaged socio-economic conditions are pursuing higher education now. There are several constraints they face, including the inability to afford private tuition classes, limited space and uncomfortable atmosphere at home for studying beyond school hours, greater absenteeism because of income-generating responsibilities, among others (Lal, 2017).

Moreover, since their parents have not attended college and have limited knowledge regarding higher education, first-generation students receive little guidance during this phase of their educational journey. It causes lower levels of motivation to study, poor study habits, and confusion and uninformed decision-making in aspects of career development and choice. In fact, a study of 300 students found that the father's educational background has a larger impact on academic achievement than the intelligence of the child himself (Pandey & Singh, 2015). A study in Kashmir quantified parental involvement and found a statistically significant difference in the parental involvement for first- and subsequent-generation students. It was observed that

lower mean parental involvement among first-generation students, compared to subsequent-generation students, resulted in lower academic achievement (Sultan & Najjar, 2019).

It is been observed that a large proportion of first-generation students are from ethnic minorities and are victims of discrimination while pursuing education. These issues are especially prominent for first-generation SC and ST students, who have historically been perceived to be inferior communities in the social hierarchy. A hostile school environment lowers students' motivation to study, excel academically, and pursue higher education, thus leading to high dropout rates and absenteeism.

So far, the socioeconomic factors affecting first-generation students have been studied in a number of Indian states, but not Maharashtra, where there has been limited research in this domain. Additionally, while most research papers study the effect of individual socioeconomic factors on academic achievement in an isolated manner, this research paper takes a more comprehensive view by collectively analysing the impact of several socioeconomic determinants on academic achievement. The following are the objectives of the study:

- 1) To analyse the factors influencing the academic achievement of first-time graduates in higher education in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region.
- 2) To suggest policy recommendations to improve the academic achievement of first-generation learners in higher education.

### **Data Source**

To collect data on socioeconomic profile and academic achievement of first-generation graduates, a structured questionnaire with close ended questions, prepared in English and then translated in Marathi, was used in four colleges offering arts, commerce and science disciplines. The respondents pursuing either first, second or third year of graduation were selected by using random sampling in each of these colleges to collect information.

Since the study is focused on examining the determinants of the academic achievement of first-time graduates, the responses were filtered on the basis of the response to the question "Who has the highest level of education in your immediate family?" If the answer to

this question was either of the parents, the student was classified as a subsequent-generation learner and not considered for the study. The remaining respondents were classified as first time graduates and after filtering, there were 184 responses which could be classified as first-generation pursuing graduation for the first time in their families.

### **Descriptive Data Analysis**

*Table 1: Sample Profile*

Gender	Male		Female
	49%		51%
Age (in years)	17-19	20-22	23-25
	24%	62%	14%
Monthly Household Income (in Rs)	Percentage		
<2,500	8%		
2,500 – 5,000	10%		
5,000 – 10,000	31%		
10,000 – 25,000	21%		
25,000 – 50,000	22%		

(Based on Primary Data)

*Table 3: Educational profile*

Stream Taken for HSC	Arts/ Humanities	Commerce	Science	Technical/ Vocational
	78%	19%	2%	1%
Class Obtained in HSC Exams	Distinction (>75%)	First (60% - 74.99%)	Second (45% - 59.99%)	Pass (<45%)
	21%	40%	37%	2%
Did you take private tuition for HSC exam?	Yes		No	
	19%		81%	

(Based on Primary Data)

*Table 4: Occupation of Parents*

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Father</b>	<b>Mother</b>
Professional	1%	0%
Clerical, shop-owner, or farmer	59%	36%
Government service	8%	1%
Skilled worker	5%	3%
Semi-skilled worker	5%	1%
Unemployed	22%	59%

(Based on Primary Data)

*Table 5: Highest Level of Education of Parents*

<b>Highest Level of Education</b>	<b>Father</b>	<b>Mother</b>
Illiterate	19%	33%
Primary	34%	28%
Secondary	40%	34%
Higher Secondary	7%	5%

(Based on Primary Data)

### Methodology

To examine the influence on academic performance, it was decided to have common measure of performance which was basically their marks obtained in 12<sup>th</sup> standard. This is identified as a dependent variable For the independent variables, the data on following variables was collected from each student: social category, type of household, number of family members, profession of father, profession of mother, highest level of education of father, highest level of education of mother, average monthly income of household, type of parents' house, parents' area of residence, type of building of residence, access to private coaching and distance between school and residence.

The study uses multilinear regression to analyse the effect of various socioeconomic factors on academic achievement, using a p-value level of significance of 0.10. The dependent variable was the student's aggregate marks out of 600 in the Grade 12 HSC board examinations After analysing with the data, the 6 most independent variables with p values being significant are reported.

**Gender:** The data was converted into binary form by assigning ‘0’ to “Female” responses and ‘1’ to “Male” responses.

*Null Hypothesis:* Gender does not have a significant impact on the academic achievement of a first-generation learner.

*Alternative Hypothesis:* Gender has a significant impact on the academic achievement of a first-generation learner.

**Type of family:** The two options were “Nuclear” and “Joint”. A nuclear family is defined as a household where only parents live with their children. A joint family is defined as a household with multiple family units, where family members like grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins live together. The answers were converted into binary form by assigning ‘0’ to “Joint” responses and ‘1’ to “Nuclear” responses.

*Null Hypothesis:* Type of family does not have a significant impact on the academic achievement of a first-generation learner.

*Alternative Hypothesis:* Type of family has a significant impact on the academic achievement of a first-generation learner.

**Number of family members:** It states the number of family members that are living in the student’s household.

*Null Hypothesis:* The number of family members does not have a significant impact on the academic achievement of a first-generation learner.

*Alternative Hypothesis:* The number of family members has a significant impact on the academic achievement of a first-generation learner.

**Parents’ area of residence:** The two options were “Urban” and “Rural”. This data was converted into binary form by assigning ‘0’ to “Rural” responses and ‘1’ to “Urban” responses.

*Null Hypothesis:* Parents’ area of residence does not have a significant impact on the academic achievement of a first-generation learner.

*Alternative Hypothesis:* Parents’ area of residence has a significant impact on the academic achievement of a first-generation learner.

**Type of parents’ house:** The three options were “Kuccha” (made using bamboo, mud, grass, and/or thatch), “Semi-Pucca” (made of fixed walls, but has a weak roof), and “Pucca” (walls and roof made of bricks, cement, and/or stone). To quantify them for the regression, they were each assigned a scale value, in order of increasing safety and

comfort. “Kuccha” was ‘1’, “Semi-Pucca” was ‘2’, and “Pucca” was ‘3’.

*Null Hypothesis:* Type of parents’ house does not have a significant impact on the academic achievement of a first-generation learner.

*Alternative Hypothesis:* Type of parents’ house has a significant impact on the academic achievement of a first-generation learner.

Social category: The three options were “General Category”, “Scheduled Caste (SC)”, and “Scheduled Tribe (ST)”. Dummy variables were used for SC and ST, and a ‘0’ in both variables indicated that the student was from the “General Category”.

*Null Hypothesis:* Social category does not have a significant impact on the academic achievement of a first-generation learner.

*Alternative Hypothesis:* Social category has a significant impact on the academic achievement of a first-generation learner.

## Findings & Discussion

The study used the following form of multiple linear regression and the results are reported in the table below:

Academic achievement = f (Gender, Type of Family, Number of Family Members, Housing, Parents’ Area of Residence, Social Category)

*Table 6: Regression results for the six socioeconomic determinants*

<b>Socioeconomic Factor</b>		<b>Coefficients</b>	<b>P-value</b>
Gender		-17.18	0.057
Type of Family		22.94	0.017
Number of Family Members		5.10	0.015
Housing		10.24	0.100
Parents' Area of Residence		-35.41	0.024
Social Category	Scheduled Caste	19.90	0.096
	Scheduled Tribe	-21.84	0.061

(Computed by Author)

For each of the six socioeconomic factors in Table 6, the p-value was less than or equal to the level of significance. Therefore, each variable has a statistically significant impact on the academic achievement of the first-generation students and the alternative hypothesis is accepted for all 6 variables.

### Gender

The coefficient is -17.18, suggesting that female first-generation students, on average, scored 17.18 more marks compared to their male counterparts. These results are a promising sign of the bridging of gender inequality in the Indian education system. This micro study mirrors the macro findings of the National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2021 report published by the government. Studies have reported the gap in mean years of schooling between male and female first-generation students continues to widen. Using data from 1990 and 2018, the difference between the mean years of schooling for boy and girl students has increased from 2.4 years to 3.5 years. Additionally, as students reach higher grades in school, the difference between the dropout rates of male and female students exponentially increases (Iype, 2020). These observations indicate the need for conducting further studies that use variables like educational attainment and attendance rates to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of gender as a socioeconomic factor on the education outcomes of first-generation students. This is of utmost importance because education of the girl child is considered a powerful equaliser and instrument to achieve socioeconomic development of vulnerable and low-income communities (Maharashtra Development Report, 2007).

### Type of Family

The coefficient found for type of family is 22.94, suggesting that first-generation students living in a nuclear family outperformed those living in joint families by 22.94 marks. Nuclear families tend to be more financially stable because factors such as family feud, property divisions, and real estate laws in India have made it less economically profitable for people to live in joint families (Sinha, 1984). Additionally, coordination of finances is easier since there are fewer family units living under the same roof. The greater financial stability of nuclear families was seen in a study of 250 first-generation learners in Tamil Nadu. Having quantified the severity of economic problems faced by a student, the study found that first-generation learners living in nuclear families face much lower levels of economic hardships compared to those living in joint families (Kiran & Daniel, 2017). The additional economic hardships because of living in a joint family can limit the students' access to educational resources, such as textbooks, study material and private tuitions. Hence, this could explain the higher

academic achievement scores of first-generation students living in nuclear families.

*Number of Family Members*

The coefficient found for the number of family members is 5.10 which suggests that the larger the size of the family, the better the academic achievement score of the first-generation learner.

At first, higher academic achievement due to larger family size may seem contradictory to the finding that first-generation students perform better academically when living in a nuclear household structure, which is perceived to have fewer members than joint families. However, in the case of the sample in this study, the median number of family members in nuclear families and joint families is the same, 5.

In the case of nuclear households, a high number of family members indicate the presence of many siblings. Few studies on socioeconomic factors affecting low-income students in general find that there is negative correlation between number of siblings and parental involvement per child. This further leads to lower academic achievement for the child. However, while studying first-generation students in particular, it could be argued otherwise. The parents of first-generation students have not attended college and have limited experience in the higher education domain. When a first-generation student has elder siblings, the parents likely gain some knowledge in this field while helping their elder child. This would make them more capable of guiding their younger child, thus leading to higher academic achievement for that child. As seen in Table 3, first-generation students whose elder siblings have previously attended college performed better academically compared to first-generation students who are the only child or first sibling to attend college.

***Table 8: Academic Scores of First-Generation Students; Education of Sibling***

	Elder brother has attended college	Elder sister has attended college	Only child or first sibling to attend college
Median	400	396	375.66
Mean	398.69	387.71	382.53

(Computed by Authors)

In the case of joint families, a high number of family members could indicate that the first-generation student lives with his grandparents. Grandparents can be viewed as additional social capital as they help take care of the child, especially when both parents are working. The parents of first-generation students, who have low incomes as seen in Fig 3, are unable to afford nannies and hence grandparents would significantly help in the socio-emotional development of the child from a young age, leading to better academic performance in the future. Additionally, grandparents in South Asian countries often help extensively with daily errands, which could relieve parents of some of their household responsibilities and free up time for greater parental involvement in the child's academics (Epstein, 2018). Furthermore, the presence of grandparents in the household can lead to better-behaved children as those who respect their grandparents are likely to respect other adults as well, including teachers and school administration (Jackson, 1968). These values indirectly have a positive impact on the first-generation student's academic achievement. Research in Taiwan found that co-residence with grandparents has a positive effect on the grandchild's cognitive test scores (Pong & Chen, 2010). Similarly, studies in rural China found a statistically significant difference between the dropout rates of upper secondary students living with their grandparents (43%) and those that are not (49%) (Zeng & Xie, 2014).

### Parents' Area of Residence

The coefficient found for the parents' area of residence is -35.41, suggesting that rural first-generation students scored 35.41 marks higher than first-generation students from urban areas. This finding contrasted the findings of the NAS 2021, which reported that students in urban schools performed much better than those in rural schools across all subjects (Ministry of Education GOI, 2021). This difference can be attributed to the sampling techniques used for the two studies. While studying the academic achievement of students in a particular area, NAS decides the number of "Government", "Government Aided", and "Private Unaided" schools to include in its sample based on the proportion of these types of school in that area (Department of School Education & Literacy, 2021). Hence, samples of urban areas, compared to rural areas, have higher proportions of "Private Unaided" schools,

which are known to deliver better quality education. This could partially explain the wide gap in academic achievement of urban and rural areas reported by the NAS. On the other hand, in this study, the type of management was constant as all the first-generation students surveyed, irrespective of whether they are studying in an urban or rural college, were studying in a “Government-aided” college.

The large size of the coefficient makes the result found even more surprising. Despite the p-value for this variable being much lower than the level of significance, a possible source of error in my method could be that “Urban” and “Rural” was not defined on the Google Form sent to the sample. Hence, some of the students may have misreported the type of area of residence of their parents. Therefore, an improvement to the methodology could be to instead ask respondents to fill in their address and then the researcher could manually categorise it as “Urban” or “Rural”. While this is a more tedious process, it would lead to greater data reliability. It would be interesting to see whether the finding that rural first-generation students outperform their urban counterparts still holds in studies using this improvement.

### Type of House

The coefficient found for the type of house is 10.24, indicating that first-generation students living in Pucca houses outperformed those in Semi-Pucca houses by 10.24 marks, and first-generation students living in Semi-Pucca houses outperformed those in Kuccha houses by 10.24 marks. This relationship between the type of housing and academic achievement was also seen in a study analysing the impact of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme on students living in Kuccha, Semi-Pucca, and Pucca houses. A better-quality house leads to a more comfortable, safe, and conducive environment for the student to continue studies beyond school hours, thus leading to higher academic achievement.

### Social Category

**Fig 2 & 3: Dropout Rate at Upper Primary & Primary Levels; Social Category**



(Educational Development Index for Maharashtra, 2008).

The coefficient found for Scheduled Caste (SC) is 19.90 and indicates that SC first-generation students scored 19.90 more marks compared to first-generation students from the General Category. The coefficient found for Scheduled Tribe (ST) is -21.84 and indicates that ST first-generation students scored 21.84 less marks compared to first-generation students from the General Category. These findings suggest that while SC first-generation students are catching up with the general population and even performing better in some cases, ST students are still lagging behind. This trend of SC first-generation students catching up to the General Category while their ST counterparts continue to struggle is also evident in data from the Educational Development Index for Maharashtra regarding dropout rates. As evident in Fig 13 and 14, while the dropout rate for SC students is converging with that of the overall population, the ST community still has a long way to go.

The slow progress of ST first-generation students relative to their SC counterparts can be explained by a key difference between these communities: culture. Over and above the discrimination and socioeconomic constraints that are faced by ST and SC first-generation students, ST students have significant cultural differences from mainstream society, which makes it difficult for them to adapt to the school environment. A study of Scheduled Tribe first-generation learners in West Bengal sheds light on this issue. Interviews with the students revealed that the school environment itself fosters a sense of alienation towards the first-generation tribal students due to factors like a lack of recognition of tribal festivals and holidays in the school calendar, the ignorance of the school curriculum towards tribal cultural knowledge, and the starkly different style of pedagogy used in schools compared to traditional tribal processes of acquiring knowledge (Banerjee, 2012). Additionally, poor teaching quality and the lack of specially trained teachers that are sensitized to the needs of tribal students further leads to low interest in learning among tribal first-generation students (Ramachandran, 2018).

### **Policy Recommendations**

Given the lower academic achievement of first-generation graduates, they may require specialized attention from teachers in the classroom

and constant reinforcement of concepts taught in class. Hence, policies are required to shift the focus of the education system away from rote learning and syllabus completion, and towards achievement of learning outcomes and ensuring a holistic, well-rounded understanding of topics. Additionally, financial constraints often hinder first-generation students from accessing private coaching, which provide individualised attention to students and is known to increase academic achievement (Dandekar & Karne, 2022). To bridge this inequality, state education authorities should encourage teachers to conduct frequent formative assessments and identify areas of improvement for individual students. After-school one-on-one classes with students would allow teachers to allocate sufficient attention to each student and engage in remedial education. Furthermore, authorities can make it mandatory for each government school to have a “School Counsellor”, who is responsible for guiding students in their higher education and future career aspirations. This is important for first-generation students because most of their parents have limited experience in this domain since they had not attended college themselves.

Besides this, the “type of housing” variable showed that an uncomfortable study environment at home is often a hindrance to first-generation students’ academic achievement. In response, policies must be introduced to improve school infrastructure like school libraries, reading rooms, and computer labs, and students should be allowed to access these facilities even beyond school hours, in case their home environment is not conducive enough.

With regards to helping ST first-generation students catch up with the general population, the government could implement a range of policy measures. Apart from increasing the number of tribal residential schools, the school curriculum can be revised to make it more compatible and respectful of tribal culture. It should aim to achieve acculturation, rather than assimilation, of the ST community. This would not only make ST first-generation students more excited to learn, but also sensitize their peers and reduce the discrimination against them at school. Additionally, a proportion of teachers in Scheduled Areas should be hired from the ST community itself because they can use their strong understanding of the tribal lifestyle to develop pedagogy strategies that are more engaging and interesting for ST students. While the government has expressed interest in adopting a similar policy in the past, there must be strong implementation of such practices and the

backlog in appointment of these teachers should be filled urgently. Furthermore, government should ensure that the teaching-learning material in tribal-dominated areas is made available in the tribal language, as well as in the regional dialect.

## **Conclusion**

This study is an illustration of the vicious cycle of poverty and how the aspirations and abilities of first-generation graduates are constrained by their socioeconomic conditions. To help free first-generation graduates from the shackles of poverty, concerted action and thoughtful policies as mentioned above must be implemented by the government and key education stakeholders. Education is the backbone of a nation, and empowering first-generation students will yield exponential future returns to Indian society as a whole.

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**PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS: REFLECTIONS ON  
'ETHICS IN HIGHER EDUCATION' PROGRAM FACILITATED BY  
INITIATIVES OF CHANGE, INDIA**

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*One cannot become a seasoned teacher by just acquiring professional and higher qualifications. Teaching can only be mastered through a process of professional and personal development. This article documents the author's own journey of being part of a teacher personal development program organized by Maharashtra State Faculty Development Academy in association with Initiatives of Change, India.*

### **Introduction**

Till 19<sup>th</sup> century, teacher development was not deemed necessary. With the emergence of public schooling in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, teachers' task became more complex and greater emphasis was placed on teaching competencies. Professional skills such as planning of sessions, classroom management, facilitation, and assessment techniques became important. However, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, teachers are expected to have excellent personal qualities which complement their professional teaching skills. Students today expect their teachers to have sound value system. For example, if a teacher gets angry in the class at the slightest disturbance (like how I was), he cannot expect his/her students to be moderate during real life situations. Pupils are keen observers and they are intelligent enough to observe discrepancies between what a teacher preaches and how he/she actually behaves. More than ever, qualities such as kindness, concern, understanding, sincerity, and collaboration are becoming very important for the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace. These values can be imbibed in students most often through teachers' own behavior.

Lieberman and Miller (1990) approach teacher development in professional practice schools with both optimism and caution. They are

optimistic because teacher development activities can enhance efforts to improve teaching and to improve schools. But are cautious because in the name of professional development, status quo is promoted. Agarwal and Naaz (2020) suggest that through teacher development programs, changes or modification can be done by the individual teachers on not just teaching-learning, but also on his/her behaviour. Helan et al (1998: 1) rightly observe that “teacher development is a process. It involves [incremental] changes over time and is achieved in stages. When teachers are able to reflect on and change, they enjoy being around students, manage their classrooms well, understand their role in the broader community, and are highly motivated which effectively increases student achievement”. Selvaraj et al (2015) finds out that teacher development program enhances the growth of teachers in all three dimensions, namely classroom environment, human relations, and the social communication.

As far as Indian higher education sector is concerned, several experts have pointed out the teacher development gap in Higher Education. Mudaliar Commission (1952) stated that training is required for the professional development of the teachers. National Education Commission (1964-66) recommended professional preparation of teachers of higher education. National Policy on Education in its Programme of Action (1986) proposed a specially designed orientation programme for all new entrants and to organise refresher courses for all the teachers at least once in five years. Ramamurti Committee (1990) recommended that there should be one year training after the recruitment of teachers for their professional development. The New Education Policy 2020 also recommends teacher training to address the key challenges of education in India. To fulfill these policy articulation, Academic Staff Colleges/ Human Resource Development Centre’s have been established in 66 Universities in India. These Centre’s has taken the responsibility in training the novice and experienced teachers in Higher Education through offering orientation and refresher courses ranging from 1 week to 1 month respectively. In spite of these professional development initiatives by ASC/HRDC, there is huge demand for quality

personal development segment as indicated by Gaba and Dash (2004). To address this demand, Maharashtra State Faculty Development Academy (MSFDA) has collaborated with Initiatives of Change (IofC).

There is very little formal writing on the experiences of teacher-participants in the programs anchored by Initiatives of Change (IofC). The objective of this article is two-fold:

- Document the core ideas of Initiatives of Change (IofC)
- Reflect on own personal development experience of the author

## **Methodology**

We introspect our life lived at various intervals to understand internal states and interactions with the external world (Haian and Pieter 2019). This helps us to be aware of our ongoing experience and provides answers to some of our own questions on (Gould 1995). In order to document our experiences during introspection, Clandinin and Connelly (1994), suggested ‘personal experience method’ as qualitative research strategy to study experience or events. This method of study focuses on both internal conditions of feelings and outward context. An advanced version of the personal experience method is self-study. Alan (2019) encourages teacher-researcher to use Self-study when the researcher focuses on “self” as the center of the research study.

In this current study, the author reflect on his experience as a participant in the teacher development program anchored by IofC. The source of primary data is the researcher himself who attended the program. The self-study is on his introspection/ reflection of the experience of the program. The research evolved with a guided reflection tool on the lines of Trinity Guided Reflection (<https://www.tcd.ie/students/reflection/>). Other data collection sources include the documents shared by the training centre, notes taken during sessions, etc. Kolb’s (1984) model of reflection was used by the author to go ahead with the process of documentation. First step was to dwell on the experience, then reflecting on the experience, followed by formation of concrete statements on the experience. Final step was making resolution on how to put what he has learnt into practice.

## **About the Training Centre and its Approach**

Initiatives of Change (IofC) grew out of the work of Frank Buchman, an American Lutheran minister. In the 1920s his work become known as the Oxford Group and in 1938 was named Moral Re-Armament (MRA). It changed its name to Initiatives of Change in 2001. IofC places great emphasis on search of inner wisdom as the heart of its

approach. It believes that when people listen to what is deepest in their hearts, insights often come which leads to unexpected directions.

Three fundamental beliefs of IofC are as follows:

1. Personal transformation begins with honest look at one' own motives and behavior. In order to access truth and obtain inspiration, one must reflect on past/recent actions using four cardinal virtues, namely honesty, unselfishness, love and purity
2. Open conversation and empathically listening to others builds bridges of trust between people of similar, different or antagonistic backgrounds
3. Before one strives to take focused action, it is important to heal and reconcile. This will develop inner strength and conviction to serve unselfishly and be effective agents of change.

IofC believes that social transformation starts with looking inwardly in to one own life. A humble and honest introspection of the past events (to list out the acts of wrongdoing) will help in taking steps of correction and restitution. For this to happen, listening to the inner voice (Antaratma) is required. IofC suggests making it a daily habit to have a “quiet time” to listen and to write down the thoughts in a note book.

Quite time is structured in the following phases:

1. Connection with Inner Self: This process starts with getting in to a prayerful/ reflection mood. Reading inspirational/ religious/ spiritual books lifts the spirit and helps oneself to connect with inner self
2. Self-Correction: During the moment of silence in the quite time, one can review the life lived so far or in the recent times and where one has fallen short of the four absolute moral standards/ virtues namely honesty, unselfishness, love and purity. Writing it in the note book and sharing with a trusted friend will help making the corrective steps. This helps the mind to remain free of guilt/ burden and seek inspiration for the task ahead.
3. Direction for Change: The earlier two phases strengthens oneself to turn attention outward to see what needs to change and what role one has in it. The action one seeks to initiative should go beyond self-interest, hate and greed. It would also require planning and collaborating with specific people/ communities/ organizations who may hold the key to the situation or who has the means to effect

substantial change. IofC believes that if one is sensitive and obedient to the “still small voice within”, he/she will be able to play a unique role in the place of work.

## **Reflecting on Personal Change**

Through engagement with the program content and reflections during quite time, some personal resolutions were made by the author.

### **1. Spend quality time with nature for soul nurture**

I realized that in the fast paced life, I forget to live the moment and enjoy the nature. As a teacher, I have a lot of preoccupations such as what should I teach today, what questions should I ask for assignment, how will I reach campus by time, etc. As soon as I get up, I go for my mobile and engage with the toxic digital contents which keeps my mind running fast and enraged. The session on *soul nurture* calmed my mind. I could see my stress getting reduced and mood lifted. I could personally experience the healing powers of Mother Nature. Post the program, I have made it a routine now to spend quality time with nature at least during the weekends. I have renewed the connection with the natural world and feel a happier and more relaxed.

### **2. Focus on Inner Development for Ethical Self Governance**

In the classical sense, governance is the manner of administration. Self-governance is the practice of keeping one’s own thought and action under the control of higher order values/ ethics. The session on *inner development* helped me to understand and recognise the processes and experiences of inner development that fosters personal change. I realized that inner development begins with the awakening of consciousness. Listening to the inner voice (Antaratma) is required to get connected with the consciousness. The program facilitators helped me to look at virtues such as humility, compassion, and keeping one’s word during quiet time. I realized that I have been a passionate teacher, but not a compassionate human being. I have made a resolve to be compassionate irrespective of being a teacher or not.

### **3. Practice the power of Pause (for navigating ethical dilemmas)**

Most of the wrong decisions are made because of making decisions in haste. The session on *power of pause* exposed me to the “pause” button which I seldom use in life. I realized that pause allows mind to take a break, renew, and get back to the rhythmic flow of life. The sessions gave an awareness on the number of ways to pause. I made a resolve that whenever I am in ethical dilemma, I will use the power of pause.

#### **4. Look at life’s balance sheet**

The session on *life’s balance sheet* provided an interesting insight to me on the assets (all those things which add value to my life such as positive habits, positive relationships, skills, character traits, etc.) and liabilities (all those things which decrease my ability to lead a good life such as negative characters, health problems, lack of purpose, etc.). By subtracting life liabilities from life assets, we can get the net worth. During the session, I realized that I have more liabilities that asserts. I resolved to take steps to become healthier and be grateful to all those people around me.

#### **5. Improve Emotional and Social Intelligence**

It is true that persons with emotional and social intelligence are found to be the greatest asset to organizations. Emotional intelligence focusses on building and sustaining relationships (by self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, and social skills). Social/Spiritual Intelligence on the other hand is about capacity to be calm in uncertainty. Intrapersonal and interpersonal skills are crucial for development of social/ spiritual intelligence. I realized that emotional and social intelligence will help in tuning into other people’s emotions and read the subtle behavioral cues to choose the most effective response in a given situation. I have started to pay attention to my students’ expressions, postures, or vocal cues. Being responsive to them has helped me create a participatory and self-managed learning environment.

#### **6. Create a competition free, fear free learning environment**

Fear is often used as a tool to educate students. Students have several fears such as fear of exams, fear of being ridiculed, etc. Students are also placed under constant pressure to win. When teachers continue to put students in the circumstances that caused fear, they tend to struggle

and some find shortcuts. Overall, no real learning will take place. A fear-free classroom allows students to think and express themselves freely without fear hindering their learning capabilities. Such a classroom can be created when students collaborate to improve themselves instead of competing. I realized that though I don't really care for marks or ranking of students, I expect students to be disciplined and understand the subject matter. So unconsciously I create a serious environment. I have made a resolve to provide unconditional love and support and dispel their fears.

## **7. Improve Relationships**

With the rapid transformation of the Indian family structure from joint to nuclear, and society from conservation to cosmopolitan, clashes in values and cultures are bound to happen. Because of difference of opinion we don't talk to those loved ones again. We don't have the courage or we are filled with anger that we fail to get back to them. The session on *relationships* provoked me consider my family and the classroom context too. What I realized is that the core differences can remain, but people can still be cordial. Initiative to talk, unconditional acceptance, and nonviolent communication are three vital strategies to improve relationships.

## **8. Understand the Purpose of Life**

The session on *purpose of life* clarified the difference between purpose (reason for existence), calling (the road to be travelled), goal (milestones) and destiny (the place to reach). I have been wandering to find the meaning of life. Is it about doing this or that? So much of confusion that mind cannot ponder anymore. I got clarified that purpose of life is twofold; namely liberation of self and welfare of the world. The sloka from *Rigveda*, "*atmano mokshartham jagat hitaya cha*" clearly states the purpose of life. The "Shrelekar Model" describes 'work' (in my case, Teaching) as an opportunity to do good to the [students] and concurrently achieving spiritual and material advancement in life. I felt calmness in mind and felt relieved that I don't have to run anymore.

## **9. Engage in Conversations**

Conversation is a great way to talk to one another on a regular basis. In today's world, communication has been an issue. Good communication helps build relationships in good times, and mend relationships in difficult times. These skills include speaking as well as listening and nonverbal communication. The evening slots for *family group conversation*, helped me to open up about myself as a person and in the due process I could gain friendship with other teaching professionals. Through this process, I was able to value family time, and develop self-compassion, empathy, respecting boundaries, etc.

## **10. Value Diversity**

From a simple stereotyping (labelling), a person can soon become prejudiced (judgmental), and starts discrimination (an act of exclusion/abuse). I realized that unconsciously I have become judgmental on students. I realize that fostering respect for diversity in classroom or family or with peers requires me to accept, respect, educate myself and practice equity. I am willing to do inner work leading to self-awareness and eventually leading to correction.

## **Conclusion**

It is very important that every teacher development program should focus not just on professional aspects, but also on personal development as it helps teachers find a sense of purpose, inner peace and change his/her behavior. Such teachers will not only create excellent classroom environment, but also prepare value driven professionals for the future. The efforts of Maharashtra State Faculty Development Academy (MSFDA) and Initiatives of Change (IofC) needs special appreciation for their commitment to focus on inner self rather than looking outside.

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## **Book Review**

***Meenu Anand: Gender and School Education, challenges and strategies, New Delhi: Regal Publication, 2014.***

***Pp. xiv, 316 pages, ISBN: 9788184842890, 8184842899 (hardback), price: Rs. 977.***

**By Dr. Pradnya Anil Bhosekar,  
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While we talk about gender equality, we forget where the gender biases get built up in our minds. School is one such place among many, including households, where the gender biases are imbibed inadvertently in our minds. The research by Dr. Meenu Anand tries to analyze the gender differentiation in schools both private and public has resulted in authoring the book 'Gender and School Education' written by Dr. Meenu Anand. She works as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Work, University of Delhi. The book is published by Regal publication, New Delhi in the year 2013. The book is based on research that she has carried out in Delhi region. She has covered both public schools and private schools for the research. The sample for the research covered 155 School Teachers + 160 Children + 16 School Principals + 8 School Social Workers/ Counsellors, a total of 339 respondents. The research method used is interview method. The book has 7 chapters detailing various aspects of her research and findings.

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The chapter details the importance of education of girl child as being focus area for building equality in male and female children in the society. It starts with national and international commitments, discusses difference between sex and gender and in the process elaborates different categories of theories on gender namely (a) Biological Theories (b) Cultural Theories (c) Psychological Theories (d) Functional Theories (e) Conflict Theories (f) Feminist Theories (g)

Sociological Theories. The book then introduces us to the multi-layered theoretical framework that the author has used to analyse and explain social practices among men and women and then emphasises the need for multi-layered perspective. The book then elaborates how socialization and social groups such as family, peer group, mass media, education imparts values, norms, behavioural patterns and self-control and relates it to how gender discrimination is an extension of how we think in these social groups.

The chapter then takes a review of the Indian Education Scenario and the Delhi Education scenario where the research sample is based. Further the chapter reviews past research on the subject and emphasizes the need to carry out the focused research that the author has undertaken. The chapter also outlines the structure of the chapters that follow to complete the book. Introduction of the book is very elaborate.

## **Chapter 2: Unveiling Schools**

The author has selected both public and private schools in the sample. The chapter gives detailed information of school profile that the author has selected as a sample and captures the mission of the school, location, nomenclature, year of establishment, website, school leadership, school strength, physical environment of the school, school building, furniture, basic amenities, laboratory, cocurricular activities, health and physical education, inclusive education. The chapter focusses on effective role of school as a system on the basis of components such as school mission, school strength, attention to needy students, Infrastructure and other facilities as well as human and nonhuman resources and analyses these with respect to gender. Interesting observation by the author is with respect to the co-curricular activities in both the types of schools. While the public schools provide on Most apparent and interesting component of this chapter is the diversity in the co-curricular activities (Art Education and Health and Physical Education) provided by the two categories of schools for their students. While most government schools provide conventional activities like music, art, dramatics, essay writing, etc. many private schools are attempting to provide innovative and creative activities to explore and nurture the hidden talents among children. It is also observed that the staff at private schools comprises mainly of female teachers while the public schools are suffering shortfall of staff. The chapter also captures trainings attended by the school teachers and the thrust areas of the schools. The chapter enlists and contrasts the

facilities, employment benefits provided to the teachers by the school. The chapter concludes with the need to understand the socio-economic background of the students, teachers and other staff as it would help further strengthen the linkages between these and various school practices related to gender differentiation.

### **Chapter 3: Socio Economic Background of the Respondents**

After Family, the school is another primary socializing agent and the practices in family. The impressions that are built in this age has a lasting effect on the child. The social and economic factors in the family play an important role in transmitting gender among boys and girls. As a result the chapter focuses on understanding the background of the students, teachers and counsellors that are part of the school ecosystem. The chapter then provides the data in different dimensions such as sex, age, education, income, marital status, religion, parental family, spouse, their upbringing like the games they played in childhood, socialization patterns etc. with the help of various tables and charts for all the three categories of respondents. The data analysis provided interesting insights such as

- Most of the teachers in private schools were female and young. They came from well-educated background and were at the least second-generation learners whereas the teachers of public school were of older age group, were mostly male and were first generation learners.
- Mothers of children in private schools were mostly working and some of them as teachers whereas in the case of children from public schools the mothers were mostly housewives.
- For all the three categories of respondents the mother was primary person of attachment whereas the father disciplined the children.

### **Chapter 4: Gender Differentiation in School Practices**

The author states that understanding of gender distinctions and inequality is produced as we observe people during their social interactions and analysing the impact of their social context on the interactions. It is embedded within the social structure and is a part of taken for granted reality in the form of social institutions such as family, school, marriage, religion, etc. The author further elaborates that school as a social system is a place where values are imbibed in the

children as they spend most formative years in the institution. School practices indirectly play a very vital role in communication of gender appropriate behaviour to the children. The author presents 9 domains where the information is collected and analysed. They are

- Classroom activities: Sitting arrangement, role assignments and leadership roles
- Academic performance
- Rewards and Punishment system
- Professional aspirations for boys and girls
- Hobbies encouraged for boys and girls Bias in school curriculum
- Differentiation in co-curricular activities: Art education, and; Health and Physical Education
- Teacher's trainings on gender sensitization
- Celebrations of festivals

The author finds that there is clearcut gender-based segregation in the government schools, the private schools were keener to provide equal opportunities and making conscious efforts to reduce gender differentiations. It was also observed that both private and public schools were giving punishments to children, the punishments in public schools was harsher than that in private schools. It was also observed that the punishments were harsher for boys than the girls in both the schools. The study also revealed that female teachers were more accepting variety of roles for the girl child as compared to their male counterparts. Also, the male teachers in private schools were more open in shunning gender stereotypes than their counterparts in public schools.

### **Chapter 5: Gender: Stereotypes and Biases**

Stereotypes and biases are commonly observed in school teachers and children. Stereotypes often become a base for oppression and is seen to be natural and hence gets accepted. The study found that in both the male and female teachers the stereotypes and biases were fixated as natural and the responses to various questions more or less confirmed what we normally see in the society. It was also observed that female teachers were more open to accepting a possibility of behavior that is contrary to the stereotypes. A good point that was observed by the

author during the discussions with the teachers that there was emergence of a positive deviation from the commonly accepted notion of e.g. deterring men from crying. The author found progressive and gender friendly trends emerging during discussions that expected everyone, male or female, to have emotions. The private school teachers were more open and progressive in thinking about gender stereotypes and biases while their counterparts in public schools were more traditional about the gender stereotypes. The author attributes the reasons to overall efforts made by the school management and training and exposure received by the private school teachers. Other reason could also be because the teachers in private schools were younger than the teachers in public school.

As regards children in the school, they challenged the commonly accepted compartmentalization for the two sexes and were found to be very analytical in their opinions. They spoke of adverse impact of bottling up the emotions. There was high level of awareness about gender issues and the children were very vocal about equal opportunities to both the sexes. The author also finds that even in the school administration and roles given to male and female teachers, gender distinction and biases were observed. The author then raises a very pertinent question about the ability of teachers themselves transferring the gender-neutral behaviour to the children when the children actually are observing gender specific roles to the teachers and administration of the school.

## **Chapter 6: Social Work Intervention in Schools**

The author establishes with various references that the Social Worker/ Counselor work as an important link between all the stakeholders in the school system, be it student, teachers, administrative staff or parents and society at large. The author then goes on to emphasize the need for social workers to be gender sensitive and promote equality while overcoming stereotypes and biases. The author then sought the opinions of these social workers on following parameters

- Gender and School System—bias in school curriculum, academic performance of male and female students, professional aspirations for students.
- Commonly accepted gender biases and stereotypes—masculine and feminine traits, restriction on expression of emotions for men, role aspirations for students, myths related to food habits.

- Awareness about gender issues prevalent in society at large— female foeticide, violence against women.
- Gender concerns in the school system

It was observed that while the social workers themselves were aware of the gender issues many of them still accepted traditional expectations of roles to be performed by the males and the females. The author also observed that many of the schools did not provide a separate room for the social workers to be able to perform their tasks right. It was also observed that these social workers themselves did not have enough clarity of the role that they were expected to play in the school.

### **Chapter 7: Conclusion**

In the concluding chapter, the author summarizes the findings of the whole exercises and presents her own analysis. The author also presents the recommendations at four different domains as below

- Individualistic Level- The author emphasizes the importance and need for continuous training for teachers. The need for support of the teachers who are enthused to implement gender friendly ideas is also highlighted.
- Interactionist Level- These deal with practices being followed at the school. The author emphasizes the need to ensure that the gender differentiation should be consciously eliminated during the co-curricular activities and a need to recruit female sports teachers. The author also recommends that all art activities should be made mandatory for all children, male or female.
- Institutional Level- The author highlights the lack of infrastructure leave alone gender friendly infrastructure that becomes an impediment especially when the girl child comes to the school. The author also recommends monitoring at government level that the norms are being followed at each school.
- School Social Work—Training and Practice- The recommendations in this area are mainly about defining proper role and providing salary and benefits for the social workers along with the need to involve them in the parent teacher association. Emphasizing on the need to have gender internalization through the curriculum for the course of social workers is another important recommendation by the author.

## **Conclusion:**

Book is research work done by author. The author has done very systematic in-depth research making the results found by the author immensely valuable. Author has carried out literature review of previous work done on this and related topics and has provided references to those resources in the book. A comprehensive glossary of terms used is also attached in the book. As the author has collected data through interview method, she has shared the interview schedules in the book. The book provides a great amount of data and a variety of charts to put forth the points that the author wants to make, in line with the objectives. The book also contains various government policies and emphasizes that the government policies were always intended to ensure that there is no gender discrimination in the education however the social issues are the ones that keep the girl child away from education as well as nutritious food vis a vis the male child.

National education policy 2020 states gender-based bias often affects an individual's ability to develop and hampers the nation's growth and progress. National education policy has provision for equitable access to quality education for all students.

Though the year of publication of the book is 2013, but one can clearly see some of the suggestion given in the book in the National education policy 2020 making it relevant even after a gap of about a decade. The book focusses on the role of school system through which young children take gender qualities and school practices so it is a practical guide to improving gender-based decision.

The Concluding chapter is an attempt to

- Integrate and analyze to entire gender differentiation in school practices
- Number of recommendations given by author are, very useful to reduce gender inequality.
- The book is very useful researchers, scholars, academicians, policy makers, school educators, undergraduate and post graduate students pursuing various courses in the field of education.

As a librarian of B. Ed. college, I have observed that there is no change in attitude of school teachers about gender equalization as mentioned in the book so even today this book is very useful to readers. I would certainly suggest the work by Dr Meenu Anand and the Book 'Gender and School Education' as a reference book to these students. This book is one of the most valuable additions to my collection.





## **TRIBUTE TO PADMA SHRI DR TEMSULA AO (1942-2022)**

**By- Prof. Dr. Vibhuti Patel**

With passing away of Padma Shri Dr Temsula Ao on 9-10-2022, the world of literary movement, women's rights movement and women's studies movement have lost a valuable member.

Former chairperson of Nagaland State Commission for Women, academician, renowned writer and Padma Shri Dr Temsula Ao passed away on 9-10-2022 in Dimapur at the age of 80 years.. Through her creative writings of fictions and stories, powerful poetry and ethnographic researches; Dr. Ao played a pivotal role in popularising the great Naga culture. Her public speeches on customary laws, human trafficking and women's reservation were backed by in-depth research and grass work connections. Her literary contributions are translated into Hindi, Assamese, Bengali, German and French. In 2007, her pathbreaking contribution towards the literary movement of the North East India was rewarded with Padma Shri. She was a recipient of several awards some of which included Nagaland Governor's Award for Distinction in Literature, Meghalaya governor's Gold Medal and the Sahitya Akademi Award.

As a teacher at the North Eastern Hill University (NEHU), she made remarkable contribution in mentoring next generation of students and scholars. After her retirement from NEHU in 2010, at the age of 68, as professor of English and dean of School of Humanities and Education NEHU.

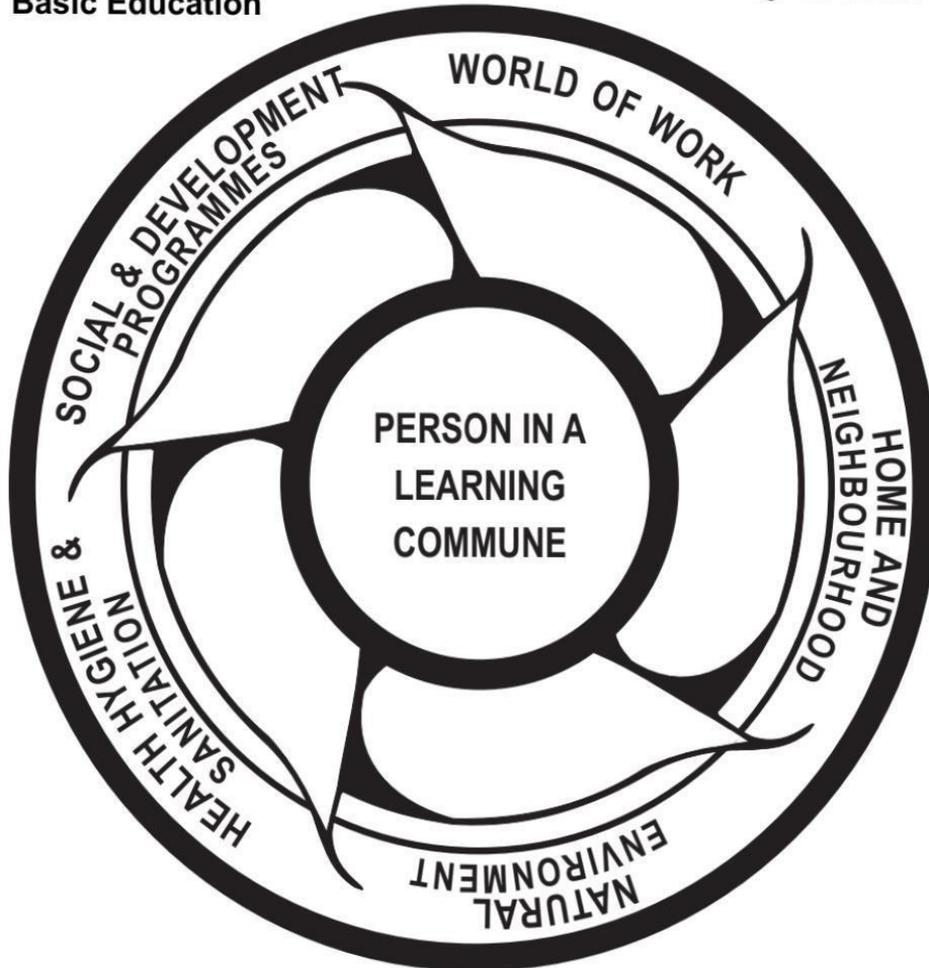
Salute to Dr. Temsula Ao for her lifelong commitment to Naga culture, human dignity and women's rights.

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- b. Students and teachers participate actively in the community services such as adult education, promotion of better health, hygiene and sanitation etc.
- c. Curriculum provides for self-directed learning and
- d. Education concerns itself with the development of the human person.

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