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EDITORIAL
LEARNER FRIENDLY SCHOOL

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INTRODUCTION

Every child likes to play. Family provides the initial setting for play. The members of the family who play with the child become emotionally closer to the learner. Much of the learning at home, before joining a playschool/ kindergarten / Montessori school takes place through imitation and play. Learner friendly schools are expected to provide an uninterrupted extension of these types of activities to which learners are accustomed at home, before coming to a school. Schools in ancient India were in forests, where the students grew up in the lap of the nature. In 1904, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore (Mohanty 2004) started his learner friendly school at Santiniketan in West Bengal, at the time of foundation, a remote rural area. The school later grew up as Visva Bharati. In Odisha State, similar effort was made by Pandit Utkalmani Gopabandhu Das (Mohanty 1987) at Satyavadi Vana Vidyalaya (Forest School), near Puri. It was a short-lived experiment, as its founder had to be away from the school because of his arrest by the colonial government. Such efforts are also found elsewhere in the world. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Danish educationist N.V.S. Grundtvig initiated Folk high school movement. As per the Association of Folk High Schools in Denmark (2000, p. 26), in 1836, Grundtvig, for the first time published his ideas on folkehøjskole (Folk school) and in 1844, the first school - Rødding folkehøjskole in the Duchy of Slesvig Holsten was established. There are many forest schools (Williams-Siegfredsen 2011) in Denmark and in a few other countries which give stress on giving the opportunity to the learners to enjoy the life in the lap of the forest than learning to read and write. Many learner friendly schools are also located in urban areas, away from forests. Although learner friendly school is not a new concept, since three decades, a movement is being organised by the UNICEF to make nations focus on the concept. UNICEF manual for child friendly school (UNICEF 2009) mentions about varieties of

projects and programmes on this theme being practised in different parts of the world. A document of the UNICEF states that a learner friendly school (a) reflects and realises the rights of every learner; (b) sees and understands the whole learner, in a broad context; (c) is learner-centred; (d) is gender-sensitive and girl-friendly; (e) promotes quality learning outcomes; (f) provides education based on the reality of learner's lives; (g) is flexible and responds to diversity; (h) acts to ensure inclusion, respect, and equality of opportunity for all learners; (i) promotes mental and physical health; (j) provides education that is affordable and accessible; (k) enhances teacher capacity, morale, commitment, and status; (l) is family focused; and (m) is community-based. A learner friendly school is identified by a welcoming atmosphere that is friendly, warm and secure. It is noted for promoting social, intellectual, aesthetic, emotional, spiritual and physical development of the learner. The school not only focuses on continuous improvement of its existing facilities, but also takes active part in continuous and sustainable development of the sister schools and the community. In short, a learner friendly school provides a stimulating, vibrant, effective and broad based learning environment suitable for an integral development of the learner - physical, aesthetic, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual.

A FEW IMPORTANT AREAS OF ACTION OF A LEARNER FRIENDLY SCHOOL

A few important areas of action of a learner friendly school are: 1. Campus Atmosphere; 2. Physical Education and Sports and Health Care; 3. Learning Environment; 4. Learner Centred Strategies; 5. Inclusive Approach; 6. Co-curricular Activities; 7. Democratic Environment; 8. Material Resources; 9. Information to all stakeholders about the Current Status of the School and Its Expectations from Them; 10. Linkage with the Community. 11. Teacher Quality; and 12. Teacher Management and Continuous Professional Development of Teachers; 13. Teacher Evaluation for Teacher Development ; 14. Leadership and Collaboration. Details are elaborated below:

Campus Atmosphere

A learner friendly school has a homely and welcoming campus in a natural and spacious ambience. It has well maintained grass lawns on which learners can squat and roam about. Lawns are also used for various activities including teaching - learning. A learner friendly school is generally located in natural

surrounding with a beautiful garden, away from the noise of the vehicular traffic and from cell phone towers, which are health hazards. It has herbarium, aquarium, small pond with plants and animals, mini zoo, etc. which besides providing opportunity for direct observation as part of curricular transaction, enhance the beauty of the campus. Its classroom settings are attractive and rendered aesthetic by use of paintings, plants, bulletin boards, banners, warm colours, etc. Walls of its building are made educative and interesting with charts, posters, graphs, photos, newspaper cuttings, etc. Its building may not be costly but is kept neat and clean and is well maintained to give a sense of aesthetic perfection. The campus of a learner friendly school makes the learners feel safe and secure. It reduces the load of the school bag for a student. It makes provision in the school for keeping books and notebooks of the students in the classroom, so that students carry less load to home. In these types of schools, teacher bag is generally heavier than student bag, as the teacher bag may contain lap top/ iPod/CD/ cassettes, pen drives in addition to pictures, worksheets specially prepared for a class, etc.

Physical Education and Sports and Health Care

A learner friendly school provides quality and inclusive physical education classes every day. It does not have a holiday for physical education. All persons in the school participate in these programmes. The school believes in the principle that a healthy mind requires a healthy body. During weekly holidays and long summer or other holidays, the school keeps open its facilities for physical education. In the absence of the sports teacher, another teacher remains in charge of these activities. The school ensures that all teachers have the capacity to handle such activities. It makes its teachers and students jointly take part in physical education programmes. If required, it takes appropriate help from the community in organising physical education programmes. A learner friendly school takes proper care of health of the students. It carries out appropriate health check-up not only at the time of entry but also continuously, at appropriate intervals. It gives timely feedback to parents and guardians about any health-related issue observed in the school. For instance, a teacher, after observing that a student is failing to listen, even when seated in the front bench, reports to the parents about necessity for check-up by an ENT specialist. Health check-up is also related to the student taking part in different physical exercises in the school. A learner friendly school provides hygienic and clean toilets with

adequate running water and wash basins with liquid soaps. It has separate toilet for girls and special toilets for physically handicapped boys and physically handicapped girls. It has a hygienic and well-maintained dining hall for students to take food during lunch break. In case of mid-day meal supplied by the school, the food is tasty and hygienic. Its teachers and students take the same meal. It collaborates with government health care agencies for health-related drives.

Learning Environment

A learner friendly school has a joyful learning environment. The school does not use fear as an instrument for controlling the vital beings of the students, which have both bad and good impulses. There is no corporal punishment. If there is any case of indiscipline, the school explores the reason behind such an act and makes efforts to address the causal and contributory factors. It channelises the tumultuous energy of learners into harmless, cathartic activities in a climate of unconditional acceptance and love. It modifies the rough vital energies in the students in an atmosphere of love. Its teachers never show of anger or bad temper. It confers with the parents in taking various steps to control any act of indiscipline in a student. It also utilises student council activities in maintaining discipline in the campus. A learner friendly school stresses on teaching through strategies which make learning a joyful experience for the students. Game-based teaching approaches narrow the gap between the school and the home. Game-based teaching maybe carried outside the classroom, in the playground of the school or in areas outside the school. A good school educates the parents and other members of the community about the benefits of the game-based teaching approaches. It encourages parental involvement in such approaches as more than one adult person, in many occasions, become necessary for execution of such approaches. Mohanty (1980a, p. 12) in his writing about his visit to a British primary school at Linlithgo village in Scotland, United Kingdom stated that on the day of his visit, in the afternoon the school had club activity for forty five minutes. There were twenty-three clubs and a few clubs were managed by some mothers, who remain nearby. Game based approaches make the teachers take the students outside the classroom, may be to the playground of the school or to areas outside the school. In case of environmental studies at the lower classes, teaching outside the class is an essential strategy. As almost all initial teacher training programmes do not cover " Education Outside the Classroom", the learner friendly schools train their teachers on this instructional strategy.

A learner friendly school takes its students on study tours as part of the efforts to supplement learning of geography, science and social studies. It organises excursions to different places of cultural, geographical and historical interest. It arranges open air classes. While setting learning goals, it considers the interest, aptitude, abilities, past experiences, and the preferred learning styles of the individual students. It sets these goals in consultation with students. It develops in students a conviction that they can reach the learning goals set. It uses student evaluation as a tool for improving student learning. It makes efforts to grow as a learning community, in which every member can have the opportunity to grow at one's own pace. If it finds a student becoming regularly irregular in attending the classes, it explores the cause of irregularity and gives appropriate counselling to the guardians of the student. It provides coaching classes, free of charge to improve the level of preparation of their students for public examinations - school final examinations, scholarship examinations, etc. In case, the school has many under achievers, it provides extra class during sun days and long holidays with the help of the teachers not going out of station for personal work. It provides supervised study periods, when the students get additional opportunity to clear their doubts individually or to do their home assignments or to study with personal guidance and feedback from the teacher.

Learner friendly school employs innovative strategies to improve quality of teaching and learning. For instance, one school introduced the practice of daily assessment of a few students randomly selected on the lesson taught on the previous day as a strategy to ensure not only regular reading but also for boosting regularity in school attendance among students. The school notified that the final attainment of a student will be a composite measure consisting of 50% from daily assessments, 25% from the quarterly examinations and 25% from the final, annual examinations. Every classroom had a chart mentioning names of the students. Every teacher in the beginning of a class session asked a few questions related to the lesson taught on the previous day awarded marks for the answers. This practice made students who happen to absent themselves from the class during a day to study at home the lesson they had missed and come well prepared to face questions the next class, lest the s/he is asked to answer questions related to the lesson covered in the previous class. A learner friendly school does not limit its students' learning to the number of subjects prescribed by the examining body to which it is affiliated. Certain schools provide, free

of charge, instruction in foreign languages, dance, music, art, photography, Indian languages etc. It also provides opportunities for their students to get work experiences in the open-air involving farming, gardening, etc. This develops in the students, dignity for manual labour, respect for individuals engaged in manual labour and skills necessary for use in certain work situations. In addition to developing awareness about various techniques involved in certain work situations, it also develops deeper skills in certain crafts such as wood work, needle work, tailoring, weaving, etc. It adopts varieties of strategies to ensure punctuality among students. If a student remains absent continuously, it contacts the concerned parents. If the learner fails to come to the school due to parental reluctance, it sends its teachers to concerned parents to motivate them to send their children to schools. In order to improve the level of learning of the students, learner friendly schools located in low literacy areas, provide a greater number of instructional hours than found in other conventional schools. One school started its daily programme at morning 7, had its classes till 12 .30 after noon, had lunch break for 1 hour, followed by supervised study for 2 hours where the students completed their home tasks or did their extra study under the supervision of a teacher. After taking snacks, they had physical exercises and in at 5.30 in the afternoon left the school for their homes/ boarding.

Learner Centred Strategies

A learner friendly school is learner sensitive. It makes its students take active part in formulating their own learning plan. The teachers assist them in the process. In Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education at Puducherry, such activities are provided under their scheme of 'Free Progress System'. As this institution is neither affiliated to any Board of School Education nor prepares students for any specific course, such a strategy does not have any problem. In this institution, as the progress of a student in individual subject continues unhindered by restriction of annual plan of study specified by the institution, there are situations where a student studies one subject in one class level and another subject in a higher or a lower-class level. Because of non-detention policy, in all types of schools, it is possible that a class V might have a student of class II level. In such circumstances, administration of a common test over all students may be useless. Learner friendly school uses tests which are flexible enough to measure each student's academic growth. It gives

opportunity to students to carry out independently and collaboratively various projects which may cut across conventional subject or arts/science/commerce stream boundaries. In case of learners with special needs, a good school, in consultation with each student, develops individualised learning packages. It maintains appropriate class size so that there is proper communication between the teacher and the taught. It gives appropriate awards to its students based on their performance. It arranges special teachers to facilitate growth of any special talent. However, if the school is not rich to pay such extra teachers, it collects funds necessary for the purpose from the parents concerned.

Inclusive Approach

A learner friendly school is inclusive in approach. It does not differentiate learners based on caste, creed, sex, religion, physical or learning disability or income level of the parents. Because of Compulsory Education Act 2009 (MHRD 2009), each school admits a proportion of its students from disadvantaged population. Learner friendly school trains its teachers in specific pedagogy to equip them with skills to take care of learners having cognitive learning disabilities, emotional problems, physical handicaps, etc. In case of slow learners, it makes provision for them to have extra class hours. Sometimes, it also pairs such learners with their peers who are advanced learners and are willing to help. It provides specialist teachers to take extra care of blind, dumb and deaf learners and slow learners. It gives general training to all its teachers to make them aware of various types of learning aids used by dumb and deaf and blind students. It maintains a resource room for the purpose. It makes extra provision for comfortable movement of physically handicapped learners in the school campus. It takes help of resource persons available from the community to take care of learning of learners with special needs. Although E-inclusion is an under-theorised area, which has developed piecemeal over the last 30 years, certain learner friendly schools use it to enhance the learning of the learners with special needs. They also appropriately train their teachers for the purpose. With the expectation that parental help in schools can boost learning of students suffering from physical and mental handicaps, many learner friendly schools involve parents in the school programmes. Of course, they train the parents for the purpose.

Co-curricular Activities

A learner friendly school conducts several co-curricular activities: debates, one act plays, drama, quizzes, elocution contests, exhibitions, fairs, annual physical education demonstrations, inter house games tournaments, athletic competitions, etc. to develop various types of abilities in the students. In order to provide better opportunity for advanced level skills in talented students in certain areas like dance, music, games, etc., it provides extra classes, which are not compulsory for all. Such classes in certain schools function before the starting and after closing of the school. For instance, a school functions from morning 7. 45 to 11. 30 and again from afternoon 1.45 to 4.00. Its optional extra classes for music are held from morning 6.00 to 7.00, flute class from afternoon 1 to 1.30 and dance class from evening 6 to 7 and from evening 8 to 9. A learner friendly school has various types of musical instruments. It has multiple sets of musical instruments of any type depending on its use for special training. It organises recitals of various instruments. It organises an annual drama. Throughout the year, at intervals, it organises variety programmes which give opportunity for public appraisal of the talents of students in music, dance and drama and opportunity for getting feedback for improving talent. It starts its daily activities with morning assemblies which may include silence / concentration for a few minutes with or without recorded music, vocal prayers by all teachers and students, singing of a prayer by a group and others listening in silence or repeating it, reading of texts from scriptures in case of schools managed by religious organisations, having activities such as playing musical instruments, reading important news items, enacting short plays, reciting, and listening to guest talks, etc. In case of one learner friendly school, there is no general assembly. A recorded music is played over loudspeaker and during that period, all teachers and students maintain silence and concentrate, wherever they are, whether inside the classroom or in the common room. A learner friendly school has varieties of clubs. Certain schools have club activities conducted with active participation of suitable parents and guardians (Mohanty 1980). A learner friendly school organises several competitions on painting, drawing, playing musical instruments, singing, etc. and trains students for taking part in individual as well as group events. It is guided by the principle that every learner needs to get opportunity in participation in co-curricular activities appropriate for his / her emotional development. It organises cultural activities throughout the year. The activities are planned, keeping in mind local functions

and festivals. Certain schools become the venue for community celebration of festivals. The cultural activities provide opportunity for expression of the talents of the students in various fields of activity. A learner friendly school organises picnics that provide opportunity to students to enjoy and learn how to manage themselves in a group. It also invites outside guests to perform for the benefit of the students and teachers.

A learner friendly school trains its students in maintenance of discipline. For instance, in late sixties, author was teacher in a school that utilised senior students in maintaining discipline in the classrooms in the absence of the teachers. The school lunch break is half an hour for students and one hour for teachers. During the half an hour of teacher absence, senior students take control of the school. Students in a class are allowed either to sleep or read silently. The senior student taking care of them sits on the teacher's chair and keeps an eye on the class. Certain schools divide the whole school into several 'Houses'. Each House is assigned the responsibility of taking care of school programmes and activities for a day in the week. There is a House Monitor who manages the activities, under the guidance of a teacher. On the days assigned, the House helps the school by organising morning assembly, mentioning the time of arrival in the diaries of the late comers and keeping the campus neat and clean. Each classroom has names of students on a chart indicating the House to which s/he belongs. If a teacher finds a student doing certain activity that is worthy of praise, s/he mentions appropriate marks against the student's name. In case of undesirable activities, negative marks are given. Each House motivates its members to perform better so that it can become the 'Best House'. It organises talks and other activities as part of observation of national and international days to make students aware of various issues connected to such days.

Democratic Environment

A learner friendly school provides a democratic environment wherein the members of the management, teachers, students and parents have love and respect for one another and work in collaboration to achieve common goals. It has rules and regulations which are framed in the best interest of the students and are fair and transparent. It takes special care not to hurt the feelings of any student. If a student commits any error, it helps him / her to understand the psychology that gave rise to such errors. It develops appropriate skills in the

student concerned so that s/he does not repeat such errors. Its teachers and the head teachers do not act as authorities, but as collaborators, genuinely concerned in the continuous development of the learners. Its students are not afraid of presenting to the teachers or head teachers of the schools the difficulties being faced by them in the school or in their learning. Such an atmosphere at times results in making students complain to teachers against their family members or their home environments, with the feeling that the teachers love them more than their parents. In order to reduce the gap between the teacher and the taught, certain learner friendly school make their teachers addressed by students as brothers / sisters or uncle/ aunt instead of formal sir/ madam / miss. Democratic environment also makes community members share their problems with the teachers and head teachers of the schools. Certain good schools allow community members to utilise school facilities such as school playgrounds, school halls, school mike systems, etc. with or without any payment.

Material Resources

A learner friendly school has appropriate and adequate material resources. It has playground of appropriate size. It has well lighted and well-ventilated classrooms, free from noise. The classrooms have seating arrangements that avoid chaos and can be modified quickly at the time of group activities. These are attractive with appropriate bulletin boards, walls, cup boards, teacher desks, etc. These have chalk boards of appropriate quality to be used with chalks of appropriate colour. There are also magnetic boards and marker boards. A portion of the classroom wall is ready to act as a screen at the time of use of PowerPoint, films, slides, film strips, opaque projectors and overhead projectors. A learner friendly school has facilities for movement of physically handicapped learners. It has halls for carrying out indoor assemblies at the time of rain. It has also stage on the ground to carry out morning assembly programmes as well as various functions. It has a well-maintained library with open access system which maintains topic index, author index and title index of books and journals and their contents. It has reading room. It also has Xeroxing facilities. Certain good schools, besides having classrooms, have computer lab, art room, music room, dancing hall, multi-purpose hall, rooms of silence, where a student can sit silently for meditation, concentration or study independently without any disturbance. Certain schools also provide rooms for collaboration, where a small number of students can have group discussion.

Information to All Stakeholders about the Current Status of the School and Its Expectations from Them

Many private fee charging schools advertise about the achievement of their students in public examinations so that they can increase their funds by having more donations for admission. A learner friendly school does not go for such tricks. However, it informs the stake holders about its achievements and limitations based on its self-evaluation or evaluation by recognised external assessment agencies. It indicates its plan of action to overcome the limitations. Periodically, it makes explicit the rights and responsibilities of various stake holders and the roles they are expected to play in the learning community of the school. If possible, it maintains a web site and gives all the data regarding the school in it and periodically updates it. It brings out newsletters that carry also massages for parents and articles of relevant to their role in proper upbringing of their chikdren.

Linkage with the Community

The nature and quality of the linkage of a school with the community is crucial in bringing the school closer to the learners. When the parents participate in school activities, the students accept the school as an extension of home. A learner friendly school maintains close relationship with the community. It utilises this relationship in developing its material resources and in maintaining and beautifying its campus. For instance, a school gets its class rooms built in memory of father/ mother of a member of the community. In this process, a good school may get library books, library book shelves, science equipment, computer, projector etc. While utilising appropriate community physical and human resources to enrich school activities, the school ungrudgingly spares its physical and human resources for community welfare. It also undertakes community development work such as cleaning roads and ponds, carrying out volunteer work at the time of fairs / festivals being organised by the community, etc. It educates the community about the importance of taking care of the learners. It may even educate the community about the pre-natal learning taking place in a womb. It also makes the community aware of lifelong learning skills and their use in updating knowledge and skills. Every good school has a Parent Teacher Association (PTA). It works as a support to the school. However, its quality of functioning depends on the quality of the parents-

their level of education and interest in education. A learner friendly school has alumni association, which keeps the contact of the ex-students alive with the school. There are 'Community Schools' in certain countries. The duty chart of teachers of such schools include visit to homes of students for helping students in their study and for interacting with their parents and guardians. Mohanty (1981) mentioned about a school in Scotland in UK (Dean's Community High School, Livingstone) providing educational, cultural and recre¬ational facilities to the members of the community. The school charges community members for utilisation of its facilities. The web site of the school accessed on May1, 2019 stated that "1st April 2019 will see the introduction of a £1.00 charge for Over 60's, Under 5's and Under 16's swimming. This new pricing includes all after school swims and Under 16's school holiday swim until 4pm, when full price will apply." Certain learner friendly schools give community liaison responsibility to specific teachers. In certain systems, such a teacher is called as "Homeroom Teacher". The teachers of these schools are spontaneous leaders of not only the school community, but also of the neighbourhood. They are loved by the community for their contribution to community welfare. A learner friendly school encourages its teachers to interact with the members of the community and utilise their expertise in classroom situations. It maintains a list of persons, with their qualifications, experience in teaching and expertise in various activities related to school programmes and time and day on which they can be made available to help the school. This strategy facilitates running the school in the absence of the teachers or as support to teachers. There are instances of teachers trying to help the community. Mohanty (1980b, p. 39) in his writing about his visit to a British single teacher school at Skirling village in Scotland, United Kingdom on February 21, 1979 stated that Mrs. Taylor, the teacher of this single teacher school "used to remain in the school, from 3.30 to 4.00 p. m. each Monday to provide library facilities to the local people."

Teacher Quality

A learner friendly school takes appropriate steps for selecting its teachers. It looks for attributes such as integrity, eagerness to learn, concern for others, leadership, emotional stability, enthusiasm / energy, sense of humour, etc. in the candidates. Besides taking note of the professional qualifications, the school also tests teaching aptitude, content knowledge and teaching skills of the applicants. It interviews the candidates to assess their level of commitment

to the teaching profession and interest to try out innovations. It school has faith in the capability of its teachers. It treats them as pedagogical experts and gives them autonomy related to transaction of curriculum. It involves them in formulation of school policy and in planning for the year and for the future. It gives freedom to teachers in choice of textbooks and in preparing instructional materials. It shares with them the financial management policy including details of income and expenditure pattern of the school. Since two decades, the governments of two countries - United States and United Kingdom have given freedom to selected schools to select appropriate individuals for teaching job in their schools and train them on the job, without making the aspirants go for university based teacher training courses (Dept. for Education, UK 2012, p. 10; Mohanty 2015, pp.20-24; Office of Assessment, Research, and Data Analysis, US 2012, p. 1; Office of Innovations and Development, US 2004, p. 7; Quigney 2010, p.54; The Open University 2013, p. 11).

A learner friendly school has highly motivated teachers. Its teachers are punctual. Its teachers reach the school daily at least fifteen minutes before school starts. In case of schools having students coming by buses, teachers receive them. The teachers having classes in the first period come earlier to ensure that the classroom is neat and clean and is in a position to welcome the students. In case, there is a necessity for rearranging the classroom for a certain activity in the first period, the teacher's early arrival becomes indispensable. Effective teachers are self-motivated to work efficiently. They have the zeal to upgrade their knowledge and skills and to innovate. If there is no Internet facility in the school or at home or in the locality, during the weekly holidays, they go to other places to browse Internet to get ideas and information to update their own knowledge and skill. On their own initiative, they try to observe teaching of other teachers in their own school or in other schools and try to utilise new ideas/ innovations, if any, that they can incorporate in their own classrooms. They subscribe to free mailing list of organisations / institutions giving information of use to school teachers. They carry out action researches with or without any collaboration from the peers and disseminate the outcomes and seek feedback for possible improvement. They also post their writings / experiences in appropriate web sites to get feedback. They possess insight, epiphany and empathy.A learner friendly school has well skilled teachers. Its teachers make efforts to develop

skills of learning in their students. The teachers are experts in varieties of teaching techniques. The sense of enjoyment in teachers gets transferred to students during their teaching. The teachers make their classrooms interesting and educative with appropriate audio-visual aids so that the students can go through them during the lunch break or when they come to the class before the arrival of the teacher at the stipulated time.

Teacher Management and Continuous Professional Development of Teachers

A learner friendly school, in addition to regular class/subject teachers, also has part/full time teachers for subjects like Art, Craft, Dance, Music, and Physical Education. It provides extrinsic incentives to its teachers for their punctuality and regularity of attendance and for better performance of their students in public examinations or in various competitions. As the initial teacher training programmes cannot take all possible steps in preparing a person to teach, a learner friendly school provides appropriate induction programmes for new teachers being recruited by it. It gives reduced teaching load to the beginning teachers and makes them free for certain hours to update themselves and observe teaching of senior teachers. It attaches new teachers to senior teachers for guidance and for giving feedback on classroom management skills, etc. It also provides varieties of teacher support materials in print and online form. It develops a repertoire of diverse classroom management practices by encouraging teachers to observe other teachers. It makes its teachers aware of the goals set by the school and accountability standards expected from them. Its teachers are consulted for setting these standards. Its teachers are rewarded not only for high performance of their students in public examinations but also for their innovations and action researches that help students overcome their social and emotional problems.

Teacher Evaluation for Teacher Development

A learner friendly school periodically undertakes teacher evaluation. It gives stress on formative evaluation and utilise evaluation outcomes as support for continuous professional development of its teachers. The evaluation bases on classroom teaching observation, study of student and teacher portfolios, student engagement, student performance, students' learning process, opinions of students and parents, etc. A good school provides individualised feedback to

teachers, considering the characteristics and competencies of individual teachers and the subjects and classes being taught by them. This helps in improving skills for handling classroom disciplinary climate and improving teacher self-efficacy. Teacher evaluation is associated with several cognitive as well as non-cognitive factors. It generally takes into consideration teacher knowledge, skill in teaching and attitude and handling other activities and intelligence, but also interpersonal relationships of the teacher with parents, other teachers and the head of the institution. In order to improve the quality of assessment skills, it makes provision for appropriate training for its head teacher. The skill of the student performance as an indicator of teacher performance is also not free from criticism as many school students learn simultaneously in private coaching centres in addition to learning in school. Hence, the teacher evaluation strategy may need to include the aspect of impact of shadow education. Again, entry level ability of the student is a crucial issue in case of student performance being treated as an indicator of teacher performance. In the era of non-detention policy during compulsory schooling stage, there may be a student without having even literacy skill getting admitted in class VIII. Qualifications and training received by the teachers may not make a teacher always perform efficiently, as performance is also related to various factors such as emotional level, mental and physical health of the teacher, teacher enthusiasm, etc. which change from time to time. Past record or even previous year's record may not hold good. Evaluation based on direct observations of classroom practice supported by video recordings by trained evaluators is considered as an effective measure. A good school goes for observation of may be four or more number of video recorded lessons. In certain schools. opinions of students, peers of teachers and members of the community including parents are also taken into consideration. Teacher evaluation strategies assume importance when the outcomes are related to teacher continuation in a job. Any single mode evaluation of teacher performance is not acceptable. Hence, a learner friendly school employs varieties of strategies.

Leadership and Collaboration

A learner friendly school is characterised by distributive leadership and collaboration. Its management is democratic in spirit and is based on the principle of collective leadership. It gives stress on collaboration among members of the school community. It has faith on its head teacher and gives him/her appropriate autonomy. Its head teacher performs various functions which contribute to

continuous improvement in the growth and development of the school. The school governing body / management plays a vital role in a learner friendly school. The most important task is the task of getting a competent head teacher for the school. The learner friendly school management provides facilities for the head teacher of the school to contribute to the qualitative growth of the school and in the process also to grow as an individual. It sends its head teachers for study tour of innovative schools in the country as well as outside the country. It periodically undertakes self -evaluation and organises evaluation of the school by external agencies so as to keep pace with developments at home and abroad.

CONCLUSION

Every school, in order to be of high quality, must be learner friendly. Making a school learner friendly requires collaborative effort of the management and the teachers. In case of government schools and government aided schools, it necessitates appropriate policy decisions. It also requires support of the community. A learner friendly school can optimise level of learning of the students and develop them into well motivated, disciplined and right-thinking individuals. It provides an enriched curriculum that promotes integral / whole development of the learners-physical, vital, mental, psychic and spiritual. Transaction of school curricula is today controlled by State controlled teacher recruitment policy, teacher training policy, and courses of study for various classes and nationalised textbooks. A truly learner friendly school has a learner centred curriculum. Hence, onus of making the schools learner friendly lies with the school education policy of the government. However, in spite of restrictions from the rigid education structure, there are schools which are learner friendly. Their number is growing mostly in unorganised private sector to attract public for choosing their schools instead of State-run schools.

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TEACHER EDUCATION IN SLOVAKIA: AN ANALYSIS AND INPUTS FOR INDIAN SYSTEM

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Ever emerging changes and challenges emancipating from society, economy and technology, demands that teacher education must shape teachers possessing multiple skills and competences. Following these demands, India, a country of 1.32 billion people, where 50% population is below the age of 25 and over 65% below 35, is looking for newer ways and approaches to improve their teacher education system to keep sync with current social, cultural, technological and economic situations. Far-away from India, Slovakia is also aiming to strengthen their teacher education system. Reflecting on these observations, it can be argued that a study of Slovakian teacher education system may also be useful in the Indian context. Extending this argument, the present research was conducted to: study the policies and practices of teacher education in Slovakia; analyze the strengths, challenges and recent debates in teacher education in Slovakia; and identify useful lessons from Slovakian system for benefit of teacher education in India.

BACKGROUND

Teacher education has gained special importance these days as teachers' abilities and qualities are identified as decisive to students' learning (Misra, 2014a). The 11th Education for All Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2014) makes it clear that good teachers are essential for enhancing the quality of learning, and teacher education is important because of its impact upon teacher quality. In addition to age old mandate of preparing qualified and humane teachers, the teacher education systems have to also take into account the ever emerging changes and challenges

emancipating from society, economy and technology, as observed by (Kasemsap 2017):

Teacher education is a continuous process, starting with preservice teacher education, followed by in-service education and continuing education. The aim of teacher education is to create a pedagogically thinking teacher with adequate amounts of theoretical background knowledge and a reflectively-critical attitude toward the challenges encountered in the teaching profession (p.307).

Following global trends and local demands, India, a country of 1.32 billion people, where 50% population is below the age of 25 and over 65% below 35, is gearing up to professionalize and modernize their teacher education system to keep sync with current social, cultural, technological and economic situations; and to produce quality teachers to bring improved student learning outcomes (Misra, 2014b, Misra, 2015). But, teacher education in India is facing a number of challenges such as: institutional inertia, brand inequity, quality crisis, overgrowing establishment, rare humane and professional teachers, poor integration of skills, alienated and incompatible modes of teacher education, little contribution to higher education, domain pedagogy mismatches, identity crisis, rare innovations, stake holders' non-alignment, inadequate technology infusion, little choice base, poor research scenario, vision and vision mismatches, non-scientific manpower planning, illusive laboratories, over activism of distance/open universities, invalid recognition and accreditation and no teacher education policy. (Goel &Goel 2012, p.231)

Far-away from India, Slovakia is also aiming to strengthen their teacher education system and bringing new approaches in terms of content delivery and mode of training. Talking about the teacher education scenario in Slovakia, Bacova and Popovicova (2011, p.19) point-out, "In Slovakia the policy reform aim at modernization, democratization

and humanization of education and training, though the critics point at the permanent underfunding of the reforms required and the inadequate professional support of in-service teachers." While, European Union's country-specific Report on Slovakia suggests "Making the teaching profession more attractive to talented young people and strengthening all phases of teacher education will be key to improving educational outcomes and reducing educational inequity" (European Union, 2016, p.2). Reflecting on these observations, it can be argued that a study of Slovakian teacher education system may also be useful in the Indian context. Extending this argument, the present research was conducted to:

1. Study the policies and practices of teacher education in Slovakia.
2. Analyze the strengths, challenges and recent debates in teacher education in Slovakia.
3. Identify useful lessons from Slovakian system for benefit of teacher education in India.

METHODOLOGY

This research is mainly based on the review and analysis of policy document and practices as well as other available literature and statistics related to teacher education in Slovakia. The researchers also had a number of discussions with teacher education specialists, policy-makers, and practitioners and these inputs have also been used to detail existing system and recent debates about teacher education.

SCHOOL EDUCATION SYSTEM IN SLOVAKIA

Slovakia officially the Slovak Republic is located in Central Europe. Slovakia became an independent state on 1 January 1993 after the peaceful dissolution of former Czechoslovakia. Slovakia has a population of over 5 million and its territory spans about 49,000 square kilometers. Slovakia is an advanced economy with a high human development index. The country maintains a combination of market economy with a

comprehensive social security system. Citizens of Slovakia are provided with universal health care, free education and one of the longest paid maternity leave in the OECD (Wikipedia,2018; Šikulová 2014). Describing the political system of Slovakia, Šiškovič and Toman (2015, p.14) write:

The Constitution of the Slovak Republic is the supreme law of the land. Slovak language is the official language. The constitutional system is comprised of the constitutional and the legislative power (National Council of the Slovak Republic), executive power (President of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Slovak Republic) and judicial power (Constitutional Court and other courts).

In the Slovak Republic, most of schools are owned by the state, although there are a few church affiliated and private schools as well. In fact, Church and private schools may be called semi-private, because they also receive financial support by the government. The majority of children attend public schools, although they are free to choose any school according to their interests and academic ability. Commenting about the education system in Slovakia, an OECD report highlights:

The Slovak education system is diverse, with both public and non-public (religious and private) school providers. Governance of the public education system is shared between the central government and local authorities. The national Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports develops educational goals and content. Municipalities are responsible for local administration and provide most pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education, and self-governing regions are in charge of upper secondary education (known as "regional education"). (OECD 2015, p.4)

School education in Slovakia is divided into three stages: Kindergartens or pre-school education (2.5-6 years), Basic education (6-15 years), and

Upper Secondary education (15-19 years). Basic education (6-15 years) in Slovakia lasts for nine years and compulsory education lasts 10 years. Basic school is divided into two stages of four (primary education) and five years (lower secondary education). Children start attending basic school at the age of 6 till 15. Upper secondary studies last for four years and higher secondary schools are attended by the students from the age of 15 to 19. The summary of school education providers in Slovakia are as follows:

- Primary education (ISCED 1) comprises years 1 to 4 and is offered in basic schools.
- Lower secondary education (ISCED 2) comprises years 5 to 9 and is offered in basic schools or in lower level of gymnázium (8-year academic secondary schools for children between 10 to19).
- Upper Secondary education (ISCED 3) starts at Year 10 and goes until Year 13 in gymnázium (4-year Grammar schools-preparing students for university studies).

Integral parts of educational system are also various educational facilities (e.g. for out-of school education, for extracurricular education) and school and education supporting centers and centers of prevention and counselling. For children and pupils with special-educational needs, there exists system of special schools in Slovakia. Pupils with special-educational needs are integrated either in mainstream schools, or they are educated in special schools (depending on the character of their special-educational needs) (Kurincová 2012).

Teacher education in Slovakia has broader aims, as observed by Gadušová, Malá and Zelenický (2008):

Experts in education find it vital to change aims and contents of teacher training [education] in such a way that not to be focused just on knowledge learning and acquisition but they require changes in the teacher training graduates profile which should reflect changes in professional attitudes, skills and abilities (p.6).

There is a long-term tradition of teacher education programmes offered by universities (teacher training faculties) or educational institutions in Slovakia. Adding to this pre-service training, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic guarantees the professional development of in-service teachers (Ješková et al. 2014).

Initial teacher education

According to existing provision, the kindergartens (pre-primary teachers) teachers are required to be qualified graduates at least of a secondary pedagogical school (or after school leaving exam at secondary school to enter bachelor study programme and preschool and elementary pedagogy at teacher training faculties). While, all primary and secondary school teachers must have higher education qualification i.e. master's degree (Eurydice, 2018). In other words, becoming a teacher in Slovakia requires a university education (Bacova and Popovicova 2011). Teachers for pre-school and primary level get their training in Faculties of Education, while, Faculties of Arts, Faculties of Humanities and Faculties of Natural Sciences prepare teachers for secondary level. There are also Faculties of Education with programs preparing teacher for pre-primary, primary and secondary education. Upon completing the school-leaving examination at secondary schools, there are three different ways for students to obtain a teaching qualification in Slovakia (Shewbridge, Bruggen, Nusche, & Wrightet 2014, p.72):

- Students may enrol at teacher education faculties, where they can complete Bachelor and Master level teacher education. This qualification makes them eligible to teach all subjects at primary level of basic schools and specialised subjects at secondary schools.
- Students may enrol in a different study field and concurrently complete supplementary additional pedagogical study. This concurrent additional pedagogical study qualifies them to teach subjects of their professional focus at relevant secondary schools.

- Students may enrol at a higher vocational education institution and have to complete an additional pedagogical study. This qualification makes them eligible to teach relevant vocational subjects at secondary vocational schools.

Requirements and admission procedure for initial teacher education

Highlighting the entry requirements in a teacher education programme in Slovakia, an OECD report highlights, "Admission to a teacher training programme in the Slovak Republic is based on the results of the secondary school leaving exam, and individual faculties can apply further selection criteria, such as a written test"(OECD 2015, p.11). Every year, Universities offering teacher education programmes publish information on the offered study programmes, study combinations, admission examination requirements and dates. They also publish information about number of applicants to be admitted to the respective study programmes. An applicant willing to undergo teacher education has to submit an application including his/her curriculum vitae and health certificate. Application forms to Universities are submitted individually in January, February and the admissions usually take place in July (Eurydice 2018). In case of non-availability of enough applicants, Universities offer the possibility to submit applications form in July or August and admissions take place in September.

Teaching, training and examination provisions in initial teacher education

Traditional content of education and training of future teachers in Slovakia is comprised of theoretical academic training in educational sciences and the taught subject areas; and the professional didactic and practical preparation. Pedagogical practice is an integral part of the professional didactic and practical preparation. Students will take part in demonstration, mentoring, and teaching practice. Studying at Bachelor degree (lasts for 3 to 4 years) is concentrated more on general knowledge

about the particular subject and prepares students to be experts in their field. Besides, theoretical components, students at Bachelor level are required to go for at least one week compulsory teaching practice or more. During this time, they mainly observe the lessons of school teachers and also act as assistants to teachers teaching the class. Here it will be useful to clarify that this description is more valid for 'subject oriented' teacher training. The preprimary and primary teacher education programmes have different scheme and offer more integrative curriculum consisting both theory and practice.

After finishing Bachelor level of studies, graduates are well educated in their subject, yet they cannot work as full- time teachers (but, they can enter profession of an educator e.g. in an out-of school education). In case they want to be qualified teachers, they need to continue to Master level. But this is not universal as every University is free to amend and modify the study scheme and devise own modalities for teacher education. The content of initial teacher education is drawn up from the point of view of educational theory and needs of practice, and is explicitly expressed in the graduate's profile. Accordingly a study plan is derived which is specified in the syllabi of individual subjects with required and recommended literature needed for examinations, marked credit or credit indicated. At the end of study the student demonstrates in his/her thesis and at the State examination if he/she creatively mastered the required content and extent of knowledge, skills and capabilities necessary for performance in practice. Requirements for students' practical performance are defined by following professional competencies (Eurydice 2018):

- project competence (planning of teaching)
- communicative, organisational and managerial competencies (management of learning processes)
- diagnostic and intervention competencies (diagnostics of individuals or group, management of pupil's individualised learning)

- reflexive competences (work self-reflection, changes and self-improvement)

Employment procedure, categorisation of teachers, and career Progression

After completing initial teacher education, teachers are hired into schools through an open recruitment procedure led by the school leader. The prerequisites to access the professional status of teacher are outlined in the Act 317/2009 on Pedagogical Employees and Specialist Employees. This includes professional and teaching qualifications, and civic and moral responsibilities. There is a clearly defined career structure for teachers in Slovakia: beginning teacher, independent teacher, teacher with first certification level, and teacher with second certification level. Explaining this structure, an OECD report highlights:

Since 2009, a new career model has been in place, which allows teachers to progress across four career steps. Upon entry into teaching, they start as beginning teachers, receiving mentoring support and induction courses. Within two years, beginning teachers have to pass a school evaluation, allowing them to progress to independent teacher. Teachers climb further up the career ladder by acquiring professional qualifications, and they receive corresponding financial rewards. (OECD 2015, p.11)

CPD requirements and provisions for school teachers

According to the Act 317/2009 on Pedagogical Employees and Specialist Employees, the teachers and specialists are required to preserve and develop their professional competences through continuing education or self-learning. By completing the continuing education, the teachers fulfil requirements for being ranked at the appropriate career level or career position, and update their professional competences. Usually, accredited programmes of the continuing education are organised during working hours, or within the leisure time of teachers, depending upon its provider (Eurydice, 2018). School leaders are responsible for the professional

development of teaching staff. They prepare a professional development plan for the teachers of school (including key priorities, a time schedule and a budget proposal), submit it to the school founder, and act upon after approval.

Digital technologies and teacher education

According to Eurydice's key data on Learning and Innovation through ICT at school in Europe, in Slovakia there are national strategies covering training measures and research projects in the areas of ICT in schools, e-learning, and e-skills development and research projects in digital and media literacy. The report observes, "At primary and secondary education level support is provided in all ICT hardware areas, except for virtual learning environments, and for all ICT software categories" (European Schoolnet and University of Liège, 2012, p.4). These provisions have a positive impact on ICT literacy and skills of teachers in Slovakia, as observed in the OECD TALIS 2013 survey that the high proportion of teachers are using information and communication technology for students' projects or class work (OECD 2014).

Professional and societal expectations from teachers

Hanesova (2016) highlights that teachers in Slovakia are expected to develop three key competencies (i) competencies needed for communication with pupils (ii) competencies connected with the educational process, and (iii) competence of self-development. Talking about the professional expectations from teachers in Slovakia, Valica and Rohn (2013, p.2) suggest:

The teaching is a creative and reflective profession, which assumes that the teacher is able to reconcile the normative demands that are placed on his professionalism with a dynamically varying situation in the educational reality with regard to the transformation requirements for humanization and personalization of the state curriculum.

The expectations that society has towards teachers are many facet. Hanesova (2016) point-out that societal expectations from teachers in Slovakia are rising, although, she did not elaborate further about these societal expectations. But other researchers (Evans 2008; Goodson and Hargreaves 1996; Robertson, 1996; & Snoek 2010) provide the answer. According to them, present day post-modern, neo-liberal and market and technology oriented society emphasize that teachers must have accountability, rationality, competitiveness and control. And, Gluchmanova presents a different perspective about the role and commitment of the teachers in Slovakia, in her words, "Teachers at all levels of education should ensure the cognitive, intellectual and moral progress of their students and show them appropriate respect and appreciation" (Gluchmanova 2015, p.512).

Teacher educators

The required qualification for teacher educators preparing the future teachers is the same as that for other university teachers. It is the university education of the second level (Masters) in the specialisation he/she teaches and Ph.D. degree. In other words, every University teacher in Slovakia is qualified to act as a teacher educator. The posts of teacher educators at higher education institutions are filled through selection procedures. The way of selection procedures is stipulated by the internal order of a higher education institution or a faculty (Eurydice 2018). In fact, the concept of 'teacher educators' is not much prevalent in Slovakia as all the teachers teaching in Universities are qualified to teach future teachers in his/her areas of expertise. Officially (according the act) "teacher educators" are only those, who are employees of Methodological-Pedagogical Centre (MPC). Instead of Ph. D. degree, these employees are allowed to have second certification level.

SALIENT FEATURES OF SLOVAKIAN TEACHER EDUCATION

Some components of Slovakian teacher education system are highly appreciated and praised in different research reports and policy

documents. Discussing about teacher education in Slovakia, V. Kurincová (Professor of Education, Univerzita Konštantína Filozofa v Nitre, personal communication, June 26, 2018) views following as strengths of the system: "(i) Very positive fact regarding teacher education is that the full university study (bachelor + master degree) is compulsory for teacher profession (teachers for basic and secondary schools);(ii) Educational programmes are also devoted for preparation of educators in out of school centres; and (iii) Very good experiences are linked to existence of pedagogical and psychological modules and various types of educational practice, which are compulsory within the study programmes for teaching profession." Extending these discussions and observations, following may be termed as the salient features of Slovakian teacher education system:

Well defined career progression structure

As discussed earlier, there is a clearly defined career structure for teachers in Slovakia: beginning teacher, independent teacher, teacher with first certification level, and teacher with second certification level. At the end of the first two years of employment, beginning teachers have a compulsory appraisal within the school. This includes periodic classroom observation and a final observation by an internal examination board. To progress to the first and second certification levels, teachers must first achieve sufficient credits in professional development and then apply for certification. This involves an external appraisal by a Ministry appointed committee, but is not linked to internal, regular appraisal and does not include classroom observation (Shewbridge et al. 2014). Elaborating these provisions further, a write-up underlines:

The act [317/2009] on professional and pedagogical employees introduced career pathways, career grades and career positions into the career system. It introduced a set of rules of career advancement and motivation rewards. Career grades distinguish [beginning] teachers, independent pedagogical and professional employees, and pedagogical

and professional employees with the first and second attestation. At the same time, a career system is set up, which guarantees pedagogical and professional employees the salary growth within the salary scale, possibility of bonuses as well as provision of time off required for training or taking certification examination. (Eurydice 2018)

Freedom to choose pedagogical methods and teaching approaches

The new career system for teachers in Slovakia grants teachers the freedom to choose pedagogical methods and training approaches. The Act 317/2009 on Pedagogical Employees and Specialist Employees guarantees freedom to teachers to choose pedagogical methods and teaching approaches. And this freedom has helped teachers to prepare well for their profession, as indicated by a report from OECD (2015):

Compared to the average of their peers across TALIS [Teaching and Learning International Survey] countries, more Slovak teachers feel very well prepared for teaching their subject content (71%, compared to the TALIS average of 60%) and in pedagogy (54%, compared to the TALIS average of 45%). (p.11)

Linkage of qualifications and performances with salary and promotion

Slovak government has created a salary and career system based on teachers' qualifications and a bonus system based on performance or on credits gained from professional development training, for example if a teacher decides to further his/her qualifications to take a specialised role such as mentor teacher, he/she is entitled to receive a bonus pay. These provisions are governed by the Act 317/2009 on Pedagogical Employees and Specialist Employees. This Act specifies qualification requirements for school staff and their rights to professional development. This Act created a salary system based on teachers' level of qualification (their academic qualification and career level and responsibilities), as well as a system of bonuses (based on performance or credits gained from

attending professional development training). In addition, this system prevents the habit of complacency among teachers as they always need to improve and update them professionally to move to the upper ladder (Shewbridge et al. 2014).

Internal teacher appraisal system

Internal teacher appraisal is other strength of Slovakian teacher education system. There is long tradition of observing, coaching and mentoring of beginning as well experienced teachers. Internal teacher appraisal focuses on improvement with classroom observation, feedback, an evaluation dialogue and a link to teachers' professional development. The performances of a teacher are usually observed by mentor teachers or head teacher of the school. The observed performance and improvements in classroom teaching help a teacher to improve their classroom practices, uplift teaching standards, and update him/her at professional level. The other notable aspect is that school-based regular appraisal of teachers is complemented with external appraisal of teachers. The idea that teachers should be evaluated is widely accepted as it helps a teacher to grow systematically and professionally.

Opportunities to specialize for different positions

Teachers in Slovakia can specialise for different types of positions such as class teacher, educational advisor or prevention coordinator. Generally, there is no special appraisal procedure for this, but school leaders decide on whether or not teachers obtain specialisation. In some cases, teachers may qualify for specialisation by taking particular professional development courses. The appraisal format is dependent on specific conditions defined by the accreditation of the particular educational programme.

CHALLENGES BEFORE TEACHER EDUCATION IN SLOVAKIA

There is a popular saying that no system is hundred percent perfect and this is equally applicable to the teacher education system of Slovakia.

The Slovak Chamber of Teachers in an opinion points to a range of issues related to teacher education including: a shortage of assistant teachers and of teacher trainers; insufficient preparation of teachers for pedagogy; poor inter-ministerial cooperation; and no systemic approach to social inclusion (Slovak Chamber of Teachers 2017). Seeing these challenges from other perspective, L. Hajduk (Head, National Institute for Education, Bratislava, personal communication, May 16, 2018) comments, "There are weaknesses within the system, for example, leaving of teacher for other fields, irregular participation of teachers in further teacher training..." The other issue is utility of bachelor's degree for teaching profession. Bachelor's degree is still not popular because it does not fit to earlier convention and tradition of central Europe where higher studies was supposed to integrated and longer. In comparison with other OECD countries, Slovakia produces too high amount of masters and too less number of bachelors. Slovakia is among OECD countries also a country with the longest average length of study (Klátik & Tunega, 2017). Considering these and other observations, following may be listed as prime challenges before teacher education in Slovakia:

Attracting talent to the teaching profession

Slovakia is facing the shortage of talented candidates for teaching profession. In other words, strengthening the attractiveness of the teaching profession is a key challenge in Slovakia. Teachers' salaries are low compared to earnings in other professions that require tertiary qualification and this has been seen as a reason by European Commission, "Low pay is another important factor that makes teaching unattractive as a profession to talented young people. It contributes to shortages of qualified teachers in fields such as English and ICT, and in rural areas and disadvantaged schools" (European Commission 2016, p.8). Adding to these observations, V. Kurincová (personal communication, June 26, 2018) highlights, "There is still not very high interest from the secondary schools' students (especially the best ones) to enter faculties of education

and study teacher training programmes." Explaining this situation further, Pupala (2017) writes:

We may have lots of universities, teacher education programmes and student teachers, but fewer and fewer students want to become teachers and many will not enter the teaching profession. The number of secondary school pupils wishing to become teachers and for whom the faculty of education is their first choice is shrinking. At the education faculties we find that year after year we are admitting weaker students, many of whom do not have the motivation to undertake difficult studies. The dense network of universities training teachers is suddenly finding it has fewer students (p.87).

Quality of Initial Teacher Education

Policy documents point-out that initial teacher education in Slovakia does not devote a high proportion of time to practical training. The duration of the initial teaching practicum and the quality of interaction with schools are usually seen as point of criticism. It has been noted that teacher training programmes neither fully correspond to the actual needs of teachers nor help in improving teaching quality and achieving better educational outcomes and equity (European Commission 2016, p.8). Echoing the same sentiments, an OECD report highlights, "Further improving the attractiveness of the teaching profession is also a key issue, as are improving the quality of interaction with schools during the initial teacher training practicum and increasing its duration" (OECD 2015, p.4). Supporting this claim, V. Kurincová (personal communication, June 26, 2018) observes, "There should be more time devoted to teaching practice." Seeing this situation from a philosophical perspective, Pupala (2017) notes:

Western teacher education policies may formally be aimed at promoting highly qualified teachers, but they are also moving away from the existing conservative model of university teacher education. The political priority

is for teacher education to be oriented towards practice, towards methods that ensure it is associated with practice and towards the relationships that form an alliance between the academic world and the practical world of the school or working environment and the labour market generally (p.90).

Societal and Economical recognition of teachers

Value of teaching profession in society is other major challenge in Slovakia. Only a handful of teachers in the Slovak Republic agree that their profession is valued in society. An OECD report claims that in international comparison of how societies value the teaching profession, teachers from Slovak Republic were found most pessimistic (only 4% of lower secondary teachers reported that they agree or strongly agree that teaching profession is valued in society, compared to 31% internationally) (Shewbridge et al. 2014). Considering that societal recognition is one of the most important parameter to attract younger generation to any profession, policy makers and social leaders need to found ways to increase the societal recognition of teaching profession in Slovakia.

It has also been observed that the salaries of teachers are particularly low compared to other professions in the Slovak Republic. For example in 2015 Slovak teachers earned only 57% average salary of workers with university degrees, average of OECD countries is 80% (Rehúš & Zoman, 2015). This has a direct bearing in attracting young people to the teaching profession. In Slovakia, pre-primary teachers earn 75% of the salary of similarly educated workers, and primary and secondary teachers earn 57% (compared to the OECD average of 78% for pre-primary, 78% for primary, 80% % for lower secondary and 82% for upper secondary). Besides, the difference in salary between teachers with minimum qualifications at the beginning of their career and teachers with maximum qualifications at the end of their career at lower secondary level is one of the lowest all OECD countries (USD 5 753, compared to the OECD average of USD 19 401) (Shewbridge et al. 2014).

Teacher appraisal

Often one's strengths become his/her weaknesses, and this is the case with Slovakian teacher education. Continuous teacher appraisal has been seen as strength of the teacher education system but at the same time it also poses challenges. The reason is that there are a multitude of teaching standards and criteria and this makes the situation complicated. Besides, questions have also been raised about appraisal competencies of school leaders. In addition to these observation, an OECD report point-out about other aspects of teacher appraisal, "…regular formative feedback is completely disconnected from the formal, external appraisal within the certification procedure. Teacher progression is, therefore, dependent on increased qualifications but does not consider observed performance and improvements in classroom teaching" (Shewbridge et al. 2014, pp.32-33).

Continuing professional development of teachers

Offering need based and useful continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities to teachers have been seen as challenge in Slovakia. It has been observed that participation of teachers in continuing professional development is low (73.3% in the Slovak Republic, compared to the TALIS average of 88.4%) and the offered courses often do not correspond to the needs of participants (OECD, 2014). The availability of adequate professional development opportunities for teachers is another challenge. At this time there is big discussion that how to improve professional development system for benefit of teachers. The biggest teacher professional association in Slovakia – Slovak chamber of teachers (Slovenská komora učiteľov) realises that system does not work properly and teachers do not have motivation to attend programs because of their own professional interest and development (Slovak Chamber of Teachers 2015). It has also been pointed that teachers mainly want to have credits for having higher salary rather than academic gains.

SUGGESTED INPUTS FOR BENEFIT OF INDIAN TEACHER EDUCATION

Slovakia and India have different socio-economic conditions and cultural settings, and accordingly their teacher education systems also differ. But teacher education systems across the globe have one thing in common, producing quality and humane teachers. Therefore, measures adopted in one country to improve teacher education can also be helpful in another country. Extending this argument, some useful lessons that emerged from analysis of policies, practices and debates in teacher education in Slovakia, and may be helpful for improving Indian teacher education are as follows:

Adopting measures to increase the attractiveness of teaching profession

Like Slovakia, attracting best talent to teaching profession is also a prime concern in India. Highlighting this concern, Pritamkabe (2011) writes, "The top young talent in India aspire to be engineers, doctors, lawyers, consultants, Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers etc; and only if/when they fail to make it in their fields, do they think of entering the teaching profession." Therefore, measures suggested for attracting and retaining best talent in teaching profession in Slovakia such as: providing adequate working conditions, offering them a professional environment and professional services from the authorities and teacher professional, devising a proper teacher appraisal system, having a system of performance based bonuses (OECD 2005; Shewbridge et al. 2014) can be equally helpful to increase the attractiveness and raise the status of the teaching profession in India.

Strengthening the system of 'University-based' teacher education

In Slovakia, teacher education is an inseparable part of University and except those who wish to teach at pre-primary or kindergarten level, all others, wishing to teach at primary or secondary level must have to attend the University education to earn the professional qualification.

At a different note, teacher education in India is spread across different sectors and there are different professional qualifications (15 recognised programme listed by National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) in India) and different providers of teacher education like District Institute of Education and Training (DIET), primary teacher training institutions, secondary teacher training institutions, University departments of education, open Universities, etc. These multiple choices make more harm than good and may be attributed as one of the main reasons for hampering the quality of teacher education in India. Therefore, taking clue from Slovakian system, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and NCTE (apex institution for teacher education in India) can plan to club all these programmes and bring them under University education

Providing more continuing professional development opportunities for teachers

Providing continuing professional development (CPD) for a large number of teachers is another prime concern in India, as observed by Tyagi and Misra (2017, p.17882), "Countries world over are adopting different polices, strategies, methods, techniques, and modalities to help their teachers to engage in fruitful CPD experiences. In comparison, in-service education of school teachers is still not on priority on educational agenda in India." Therefore, CPD debates in Slovakia that teachers should be provided more and more CPD opportunities and professional development of teachers should be moved under universities may be helpful in Indian context too. Besides, establishing Methodological-Pedagogical Centre (Metodicko-pedagogicke Centrum- a centrally administered organisation of Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic) like facilities in different parts of India can be helpful to meet the CPD needs of teachers. As reference, this Centre (i) provides further education of pedagogical and non-pedagogical staff; (ii) guarantees expert methodological activities in the field of further education of pedagogical and non- pedagogical staff; and

(iii) carries out research in the field of further education of pedagogical and non- pedagogical staff (Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic 2018).

Systematising teacher appraisal

Evaluation of teaching and learning quality is central to provide feedback to the teachers to analyze and improve. Unfortunately, Indian system lacks any proper mechanism to evaluate and appraise the teachers, whereas, Slovakia has a well-established teacher appraisal system. Therefore, the other feature that Indian teacher education system can emulate from Slovakia is internal and external teacher appraisal mechanisms. Following internal appraisal of teachers' mechanism of Slovakia, Classroom observation, observation of teaching, and feedback to individual teachers can be made a compulsory element of teacher appraisal in India. One can suppose that this teacher appraisal system will be helpful to cultivate a culture of sharing classroom practice, providing professional feedback to each other, improving peer learning, and ultimately improving learning outcomes. Similarly, the external appraisal of teachers mechanisms that comprises outside subject experts and government representatives may also be adopted to bring a new perspective in the teacher appraisal system in India.

Promoting the culture of career-long professional learning

Career-long professional learning recognizes that teacher education is a continuous process from the point a student teacher begins their qualification and continues throughout a teacher's career. This career-long learning is integral to professionalism of teachers. Instead of such importance, concept of career-long professional learning for teachers is not fully embraced in India. There is no specific institutional mechanism to support teachers to continue to develop their expertise and experience across all areas of their professional practice (Misra 2015; Tyagi and Misra 2017). In contrast, Slovakian system revolves around the concept of career-long professional learning. For example, the career structure

for teachers in Slovakia: beginning teacher, independent teacher, teacher with first certification level and teacher with second certification level, and then provision of accumulating credits to progress further and get salary benefits, indirectly assures that teachers must keep learning through-out their careers. Therefore, taking clue from Slovakian system, policy planners in India can devise appropriate ways to inculcate a culture of career long professional learning among teachers in India.

CONCLUSION

There are two established notions about teacher education, first, every country designs teacher education according to their socio-economic, political and cultural contexts, and second, hardly any country is satisfied with their existing teacher education programmes. In this back drop, learning from each other can help different countries to improve their teacher education systems, as observed by Oscarsson (2007), "Teacher education has traditionally been closed within national borders … International cooperation is a major step to be taken towards more openness in this field." Following this argument, the present research was conducted with hope that how teacher education in Slovakia is encountering different demands, concerns and dilemmas of today can be of great benefit for policy makers and researchers in India. Researcher hopes that analysis of teacher education policies, practices and debates in Slovakia and suggested inputs will help the government agencies and policy planners in India to make teacher education more relevant and quality oriented.

GRANT

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SUPERVISING INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCHES – A RAINBOW OF EXPERIENCES

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Supervising interdisciplinary researches in education is a challenging and hence an enjoyable experience. Stepping on the path not trodden in research is an adventure and demands competence on the part of the scholar. Regular and interdisciplinary researches are divided by a sharp line only. Routine researches on curriculum, pedagogy, learning, evaluation, scholastic achievement and the like constitute regular researches, while researches on management education, women studies, language education, science education, health education, etc., are interdisciplinary in nature. Since education is an applied science, wherever education concepts are applied in subjects other than education for research purpose, interdisciplinary research emerges. This paper is an attempt to share the variety of experiences the author had while supervising scholars with varied academic and professional backgrounds. Of the 29 doctoral research scholars supervised, 21 were from interdisciplinary areas like public health education, women studies, child care studies, English education, music education are to mention a few. Thanks to the Research Advisory bodies of Alagappa University, Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu, for encouraging scholars to take up Ph.D. in interdisciplinary areas. This policy facilitated the scholars to seek placements either in the subject education or in their specialization subject. For instance ,one lady from Egypt got placements both in an Arts college and a college of education. But 55% of marks at M.Ed. level were a necessary condition for appointment in colleges of education. Truly interdisciplinary candidates were already well settled in their profession. For example, one scholar who was an artist in All India Radio was already an 'A' Grade staff. Each topic has been described with a focus on the supervisor's experience. It is expected that interdisciplinary researches will pave way for innovation and expansion of knowledge in the concerned fields. Hence, this experience sharing attempt.

INTRODUCTION

Education as a discipline is interdisciplinary in nature because any subject may be brought under its broad umbrella. During a period when the research supervisors were focusing on regular topics related to pedagogy, curriculum, examination, achievement, various levels of education, teachers and learners, it was challenging to even think of researches in interdisciplinary areas like language education, science education, women's studies, management education, music education, health education, child care education, mathematics education, engineering education and the like. The line between regular and interdisciplinary education researches is very sharp on account of the nature of the subject education. With this assumption only this paper has been written; supervising a colorful team of scholars with various academic and professional backgrounds was a thrilling and an enjoyable experience.

The desire to supervise interdisciplinary researches emerged out of the demands from scholars with varied professional and academic interests. It was never my policy to suggest areas for research because I strongly believed in scholars themselves coming out with felt problems so that they would work with total involvement. This was the genesis of interdisciplinary researches in education at Alagappa University. Some supervisors feel that they can guide only in areas where they are competent and hence confident. There is nothing wrong in this approach; but the thrill of probing into areas untouched by researchers is lost. If research gives a plenty of scope for learning, then why stick on to only already explored areas? There can be no gainsaying the fact that repeated researches in the same area is bound to make one an authority in that research subject, say, for example, 'emotional intelligence' or 'meta cognition'.

Whenever the author (Supervisor) sat with the scholars intending to work on a new area of research, anticipated challenges were reviewed in the

form of literature availability, access to sample, constructing appropriate tools for data collection, applying relevant statistical techniques, etc. But we were ready to face them. This paper is an account of a variety of experiences undergone by the author, presented with the intension to promote interdisciplinary researches by overcoming the phobia for topics other than pure education subjects mentioned earlier.

OBSERVATION ON RESEARCHES SUPERVISED

1. Developing Health Education Strategies for Minimizing Absenteeism among Leprosy Patients in Devakottai Revenue District

Since the candidate had been serving the cause of leprosy patients, he wanted to work in this area. An initial survey revealed the following: 1.There were no studies relating to public health issue and education; 2. Only Microbiology studies and clinical researches could be come across in this area; 3. In medical researches focus was mainly on curative research rather than preventive studies from the view point of educating public; and 4. Since leprosy is a contagious disease, this area did not draw the attention of educational researchers. The survey also revealed that in Devakottai Revenue District, incident of leprosy was the maximum in Tamil Nadu. The candidate had received Award from Lions Club International for his services for the cause of leprosy patients. It was a challenging task to transform a social worker into an academic researcher as he was serving a school with limited exposure to research. It was difficult to make him fit his work with the demands of a doctoral research. The study included all the 60 patients from Devakottai Revenue District, who were long term absentees, which was found by verifying their monthly attendance in Primary Health Centres for getting medicines. Those who did not visit the PHC for six months to one year constituted the sample which was divided into experimental and control groups after randomisation. The experimental group was divided into three subgroups based on the intervention strategies. They were: 1. Home visits 2. Post

card campaigns and 3. Interaction seminars with cured patients who were regular in taking medicines. Data collection went on for a year. Each patient was treated as an individual subject for the study to ensure depth of interaction. The intervention strategies were effective in minimizing absenteeism; in fact, there were no absentees. The three strategies were found to be equally effective in improving the attendance of the patients. Post-experimental observation revealed that all the patients, except two, who died of old age, got cured on account of their regularity in taking medicines from the PHCs. This study shows how one can do meaningful socially relevant researches. This public health education research was a pioneering one and the candidate could not quote a single research study. He could collect the etymological and pathological details of leprosy and presented them in the chapter on 'review of related literature'. This has been the problem of scholars who work in areas not researched by others despite the significance of the topic.

2. Determinants of Performance of Tamil Nadu Candidates in Civil Services Examinations

Again this is a pioneering study selected by the candidate herself. Her brother was repeatedly trying to clear the Civil Services Examinations but could not. Later on, he could clear it. Those days the performance of Tamil Nadu was poor in such examinations, the percentage of those who cleared this examination during 1990 to 1995 ranged from 4 to 7.5; this felt need gave an impetus to probe the factors determining the performance of the candidates. The candidate interviewed IAS officers and collected details regarding their preparations for such examinations. She developed a profile of successful candidates based on interviews with the IAS officers and personally met IAS aspirants who cleared the first and second levels of examinations and waiting for the final interview. She found success ratio among those whose chose mother tongue as an optional subject was high and factors such as family background, school-college environment, and techniques of preparation for the three levels of examination facilitated the candidates to clear the examination. Personal

motivation was found to be a driving force. The samples were mostly drawn from Government and private coaching centres; some were drawn from candidates using public libraries. There were no related research studies for this topic also. Whenever my scholars feel dejected over this issue, I encourage them by telling," You need not quote others' studies. Let everyone quote your research as you are the pioneer and you should feel proud of this".

3. Contribution of the Institute of Correspondence Education, University of Madras towards Education of Women

The scholar who worked on this topic was serving the Institute of Correspondence Education, University of Madras. Since he was already a Ph.D. in History, he presented a historical account of women enrolled for a selected period, but he was made to understand that education as a social science subject demanded empirical observation and interaction. He was told tracing historically the contribution of ICE was not enough, though details of enrolment, percentage of those who completed the various programs were required, the focus should be on women studies. He was suggested to collect data from women candidates doing Undergraduate and Postgraduate programs through the ICE, University of Madras. The contribution in terms of academic, social, economic and professional uplift was assessed through interviews and questionnaires. Findings showed a significant improvement in selected dimensions.

4. Availability and Utilisation of Child Care Services and Child Care Needs of Women in Organized Sector

This was a qualitative study involving observation of children in different contexts. Event sampling was done; that is, instead of selecting the sample from various organizations like schools, laboratories, banks, insurance companies, where women were employed, sample selection was based on who gives care to the children like maternal grandmother, paternal grandmother, children's day care centres, full time baby sitters, part time assistants, relatives, mothers or fathers applying for long leave.

Observing children at various points of time – when the mother is at office, when she is with the baby sitter - was a tough job indeed. The voluminous data had to be condensed in order to derive meaningful inferences. The findings pointed out the need for Government sponsored day care programs for children so that there will be real empowerment of women. In one case the grandfather was giving care to his grandson. In some cases where the mother in law- daughter in law conflict was present, children somehow received care from the grandmothers. In one case the mother fixed up a house near the work spot and managed the problem of childcare.

5. Self – Learning Packages for Minimising Errors in Written English Committed by College Students

This study was on English education. This topic helped the candidate with the choice of getting appointment either in a college of Arts or Education as she was from Egypt, the first overseas scholar of Alagappa University since the degree was interdisciplinary in nature.

6. Effectiveness of Instructional Modules in Calculus on the Performance of Underachievers at the Higher Secondary Level

This study was on Mathematics education demanding a sound knowledge of the subject on the part of the scholar. The problem is that the supervisor was not having any background in mathematics but the scholar was senior to her having three decades of experience. Both the teachers and the students felt Calculus as a tough topic and hence the scholar wanted to develop a set of instructional modules for the subject. It was found that these modules were effective.

7. Effectiveness of Memory and Training Models to Improve English Pronunciation at Higher Secondary Level

This is a study on English education attempting to improve pronunciation applying a combination of two models of teaching. The results were amazing with significant improvement in pronunciation. He developed

sounds in Tamil which resembled pronunciation of various English sounds and gave drill. This was having good impact. The sample consisted of eleventh class pupils from rural areas who have the common problem with diphthongs and consonant clusters.

8. Quality Education Model for Secondary Schools

The scholar was the Director of Indian Navy Public Schools and wanted to apply his administrative experience in order to develop a quality model for secondary education. He developed fifteen indicators and tested them empirically. The assumption of this study was if few strands of a rope are strong, then the entire rope would be strong. He had to restrict to 15 dimensions because quality is an all comprehensive concept. Classroom transaction was one of the main components.

9. Subject Specialisation as a Factor in Teaching Effectiveness of Teachers of English in High Schools

This work was carried out at a time when it was insisted that only those with English as their main subject and have opted for English as double optional subject at the B.Ed. level should handle English classes for school children. Those who studied English as one of the two optional subjects were to take classes only in their major subject. For example, a teacher with B.Sc. B.Ed. can handle classes in science subject only. But for several decades English was handled by those who have taken English as one of the two optional subjects during the B.Ed. training program, irrespective of what their major subject was. So it was decided to compare the English teaching effectiveness of teachers with English as their major subject and those who have taken other subjects, but handling English classes. It was found that teachers with English performed better than their counterparts but experienced teachers with major subject other than English also did well. The comparison was done between equivalent groups of teachers with reference to variables such as experience, age and the like.

10. Effectiveness of Enriched Curricular Inputs to Enhance Teaching Competence of Social Science Teachers in Kendriya Vidyalayas

This research was carried out with the exclusive intention of enriching the existing Social Science curriculum prescribed in Kendriya Viyalayas. Initially teachers were interviewed to assess their need for enrichment and subject experts were consulted for inclusion of enriched units and a revised curriculum was developed and validated. Then the teachers were given an intense 21-day training to enhance the competencies for teaching Social Science, especially, the enriched units. This topic demanded a thorough knowledge of social science subjects. The training program made a significant impact on the performance of social science teachers.

11. Developing a Set of Competencies for Teachers of English in Engineering Colleges

This research was born out of the felt need to identify the competencies needed for teachers of English working in technical institutions. Before the study was undertaken, it was presumed all the general skills necessary for a teacher of English would be sufficient for one who teaches in an engineering college. The scholar with over 15 years of experience as a teacher of English in a technical university felt strongly that there was a need for identifying competencies specifically for teachers of English in technical institutions. Interactions and interviews with senior teachers of English in technical institutions endorsed this. Subject experts from Arts, Science and Engineering colleges helped in collecting a number of competencies for English teachers in technical institutions. Then the competencies were pooled, categorized into general and specific, exclusively required of those working engineering colleges. 76 competencies were identified and validated. A curriculum including these competencies and ways to train teachers to develop these

competencies was designed and validated. The very idea of researching in an area like this received appreciation in an international conference held at Malaysia.

12. Determinants of Professional Mobility of Women Teachers in India and Sri Lanka

This study implied exploration of a combination of institutional organizational factors and women studies. The educational, psychological, domestic, intra-organizational and extra-organizational factors contributing for the professional growth of women teachers were analyzed based on their response to interviews and questionnaires. Of all the determinants, the domestic and intra-organizational factors were facilitating professional growth of women teachers. It was found that there were no differences between teachers of India and those of Sri Lanka.

13. Factors Associated with Successful Balancing of Professional and Domestic Commitments by Women Professionals with Special Reference to Teachers

This piece of doctoral research was carried out at a period when professionally successful women were portrayed as failures in the family life. Scientists, doctors, teachers and lawyers were interviewed and made to fill in a questionnaire seeking details of how they were doing the balancing act. Individual commitment, family support, especially spouse support and workplace encouragement made these women shine in their profession. The study brought out aspects of women empowerment, thus interdisciplinary in nature. The candidate was 75 years old when she came for registration and as a qualified Homeopath, she had several patients from various professions and hence the sample was a purposive one.

14. Effectiveness of Activity-Oriented Approach in Improving the Performance of Backward Learners in Mathematics at Secondary School Level

This research was done with a view to give a feedback to the Government of Kerala, which implemented activity-oriented approach in learning. The candidate selected a topic (Algebra) which was generally felt difficult both by the teachers and the students and planned a number of activities to make the child learn a single concept, providing a choice of activities. The sample was his class students from IX standard, though the focus was on backward children. There was remarkable improvement in performance by all the children- both backward and bright learners. The bright children were also included to minimize the Hawthorn effect and to make the intervention as natural as possible. The diffusion Effect was controlled by keeping a single group as the sample. These children continued to perform well in the 10th, 11th and 12th Standards also.

15. Value Education Concepts as Reflected in Srimad Valmiki Ramayana

The candidate was a good Sanskrit scholar and wanted to explore Ramayana from an educationist's perspective. This study was carried out at a period when researches on affective domain were rarely attempted. All the 26000 verses in Ramayana were translated into English and transliterated and values were identified wherever they are reflected in the verses. If the same value occurs in more than one verse, that was also listed. The values reflected in the verses were classified into those meant for students, those for teachers and the common ones for all. A comparison with the list of values given by NCERT was also made. All the key values could be found in Ramayana and that is why it is an Epic.

16. Effectiveness of Neuro-Linguistic Programming in Enhancing Reading Comprehension Ability among Students with Dyslexia

Research on special children was a nightmare for many a scholars on account of practical difficulties in getting the sample, establishing

cooperation, carrying out interventions, developing appropriate tools and employing suitable statistical technique. The candidate wanted to do some concrete work for the cause of the dyslexic children who very often go unnoticed in the class and took up this challenging topic. Involvement of neurolinguists, special education experts and language experts made this piece of work an interdisciplinary research. The findings were encouraging and all those who are working with such children may try this NLP package developed by this scholar who is heading the Centre for Differently Abled Persons, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli.

17. Enhancing Understanding of Science Concepts through Self Learning Science Experience Activities at Primary Level

There is not much interdisciplinary content in this study except for the science component. This topic was generated when the primary teachers of Sivagangai District expressed difficulty in carrying out 25 science activities suggested under SSA (Education for All Scheme) in the school campus. The complaint was that they could not find time to carry out these science experience activities. The self learning science activities will save time for the teachers and children can also learn the concepts.

18. An Investigation into SSA Functionaries with Special Reference to Role Expectations and Role Performance

Concepts of role expectation and role performance are from the subject Institutional Organization and Management. During the early stages of implementation of SSA, there was role confusion among elementary school heads because in higher secondary schools where primary sections were attached, the heads were not willing to share relevant details with a lower cadre head. This resulted in difficulties to get data relevant for SSA implementation. The study showed there was role confusion among some heads leading to non cooperation. Performance is bound to be affected by expectations as shown in this study.

19. Effectiveness of Intervention Strategies to Minimize Risk Factors Associated with Low Backache Among Higher Secondary Students

This is an interdisciplinary study involving physiotherapy and education. Though the candidate could not complete the work on account of his assignment in the United States, it took nine hours-the longest in my history to prepare the design of the study. The candidate was a professional Physiotherapist and was adamant to work under my guidance only, though repeatedly I was insisting on doing this work in the Department or College of Physical Education of Alagappa University. But for the fact that I was a physiotherapy patient, I had no knowledge about the subject. Nothing could dissuade the candidate; it was difficult for him to think on educational research methods as he did not have any degree in education. He was out and out a physiotherapist. Several hours of discussion crystallised in a topic as stated above. The list of the reasons for back pain among higher secondary students were heavy backpack, ergonomic structure of the furniture and postural defects. The scholar was imagining every teacher as a physiotherapist; As any curative action was not possible, focus had to be on preventive aspect only. At this point the disciplines education and physiotherapy merged beautifully! This is real learning for the guide also. The scholar developed a manual for teachers educating and informing the reasons for back pain and techniques to prevent it. Unfortunately, the candidate had to leave for US and could not continue.

20. Effectiveness of South Indian Classical Carnatic Instrumental Music in Enhancing Attention, Memory and Scholastic Achievement of Learners at Upper Primary Level

This is an interesting research, truly interdisciplinary in nature never carried out in any part of the world. The scholar, an 'A' grade Veena artist from All India Radio, Thiruchirappalli with 17 years of experience in Radio station and having experience in informal teaching of music, but without any formal qualification in education came to me. He

selected sixth standard children with interest in music. For six months on a daily basis for an hour he made the children listen to classical Carnatic instrumental music. Veena, Violin, Nagaswaram, Clarionet, Flute, vichitra veena were the instruments. To make the music content free, instrumental music was chosen as an experimental variable. Results were amazing indeed! These children showed significant increase in attention and memory, which were tested initially also. This increase facilitated the children to improve their scholastic achievement. One or two children were assessed for their brain activity by a neurosurgeon. An interesting thing was that those children who were found to be not interested in music also developed interest in music. This was quite unexpected. Experimental intervention was carried out only during free activity period, where children are free to choose any thing they like within the permitted ones such as drawing, painting and such activities.

21. Effectiveness of Intervention Strategies in Enhancing Self-Esteem through Communicative Competencies among Engineering Students

This is a combination of educational psychology and English language education; the target group was first year engineering students who are mostly first-generation learners as far as higher education is concerned. The scholar took her own students as the sample because she was familiar with the demographic background of the students. An assessment of self-esteem of these students revealed that it was low and they were very hesitant to speak; even to answer teacher's questions was difficult for them. An assessment of communicative abilities also showed poor score for these students. Hence a package to enhance communicative skills was developed, validated and implemented. After the results showed improvement, the self-image also was enhanced through confidence building exercises. The students started participating in English language activities voluntarily and their enthusiasm continued to remain even during second, third and final years of engineering course. Given are a

few inferences which new learning experience for the supervisor are and hence shared.

A FEW INTERESTING OBSERVATIONS

1. All the candidates except two were part time scholars having a minimum professional experience of 10 years. Their experience ranged from 10 to 30 years. For interdisciplinary researches the subject competence of candidates is necessary for maintaining quality. As they had practical experience in their subjects and had sound theoretical orientation, they had confidence to work in interdisciplinary areas.

2. It was possible to venture interdisciplinary researches on account of proven expertise of the scholars. The expertise may be listed as follows: 1. Winner of several awards for his services for the cause of leprosy patients; 2. A author of 60 books and some of his publications were prescribed as textbooks in some universities; 3. Experience of 14 years of English teaching in University of Alexandria; 4. Director for in-service programs in Social Sciences for Kendriya Vidyalaya teachers; 5. Experience of 15 years of English teaching in SASTRA University; 6. Aged 74 at the time of Ph.D. registration, was already producing Ph.D.s in Hindi as a Professor in University of Madras; 7. Experience of Sanskrit teaching for over two decades; 8. Experience of 8 years in the US for back care programmes and was the principal of a College of Physiotherapy; 9. An 'A' grade artist of All India Radio and had performed several concerts all over the world. 10. In charge of development of soft skills in a college of engineering and was heading the Department of English in that college. The purpose of giving details of the scholars is to draw attention to the fact that strong theoretical background and practical experience were necessary in order to carry out interdisciplinary research.

3. Intervention strategies implemented in all the experimental studies had long term effect as shown by periodic post-experimental observations by the scholars. We have seen that in some studies the effect of experimental variables vanishes the moment data collection was over! This is because research is generally done for getting positions, promotions and monetary considerations. Ph.D. work should not be considered as an ornament for the individual and the institutions. Genuine research is bound to bring long term impact. If research is defined as a pursuit of truth, then both the guide and the ward should be honest.

4. Since the tools used to assess different variables were not readily available, the scholars designed their own instruments for data collection. Special care was taken to validate the tools of data collection.

5. Care was taken to validate the intervention strategies also as many of them were original; empirical validation was done through field try-outs and expert validation was also done.

6. Absence of related research studies was a common problem in many pioneering researches. Scholars could present only conceptual framework giving definitions, descriptions, quoting a few seminar papers and some opinion-based articles.

7. Supervising interdisciplinary researches was a challenging task demanding a basic understanding of the subject which could be developed through interaction with these scholars.

8. The pleasure of learning new subjects was immense and provided a thrilling experience both to the scholar and the supervisor. Interdisciplinary studies promote creativity and expand the knowledge in the subject.

9. Preparation of a panel of external adjudicators – both Indian and foreigners was another challenging task.

10. Scholars in general presented both instructional and indirect benefits of the intervention strategies. This will promote further probing in areas not much researched.

CONCLUSION

Ministry of Human Resource Development and University Grants Commission should provide funds for interdisciplinary research projects liberally so that new policy recommendations will emerge. To quote an example, as the outcome of the study in Music Education, it was recommended to start a separate University for Music which was materialized in the year 2015. Supervisors should be trained in more qualitative, innovative and interdisciplinary research methodologies so that they will overcome the hesitation to work in unknown horizons of research.

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LEARNING AND INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES: POLICIES AND GROUND REALITIES ON INNOVATIONS IN CLASSROOMS

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Learning strategies can be understood as thoughts and behaviors in which a learner is engaged and which intentionally influence the learner's encoding process (Weinstein & Mayer 1983, p.1). Innovative instructional and learning strategies (ILS) are a proactive approach to integrate new teaching strategies that promote learner's engagement and improve learner's ability to apply what they learn. NCFTE (NCTE 2009, p.iv) gave certain recommendations regarding the ILS, but even after 9 years of those recommendations, the classroom's realities present a different picture. This research paper is an endeavor to delve into the reasons, why classroom instructional and learning realities are different from the policy recommendations and also what are the problems that learning-facilitators face while trying out these innovative strategies with the existing facilities. The study also tries to investigate the gaps that exist below the surface level which policymakers are unaware of. A qualitative approach was used for this study as the reality for each learning-facilitator is different. The semi-structured interview schedule was used as a tool for collecting the data from the learning-facilitators about their instructional strategies and learning strategies of their learners. By analyzing the responses obtained, this study tries to identify the gaps present in the policy recommendations as well as ideal innovative measures and the classroom realities in the current scenario. The findings of this paper are useful in providing possible solutions that can help in bridging these gaps.

INTRODUCTION

Before doing anything, one must understand what actually innovation is and how it is then related to education. Innovation can be defined simply as a new method, device or idea. But one question that is always asked with relation to innovation in education is why there is a need to innovate in education? If at a particular time the education system seems to be well suited for the existing society (Nisbet & Collins 1978, p.2). However, to answer this question, Long (1974) argues that society is changing rapidly and if a society is supposed to survive in the modern world it must also change with the time, and the individual of that society must be able to adapt the change. Thus, the education system must also develop qualities of flexibility and adaptation to meet the needs of changing society so that the education system offers experiences which are meaningful to students and an individual's life. It can be seen that the education system needs innovations to keep up with the pace of society but this is not the only aspect to bring innovation in the education system. Many scholars have tried to define educational innovations in various set of words. Nisbet (1974) defines educational innovations as "any new policy, syllabus, method or organizational change which is intended to improve teaching and learning" (p.5).

Bassett (1970) gave six types of innovations in education that are as follows:

New ideas about educational practices which were not there before
Extension or modification of previous ideas;
Changed conditions i.e. class size, resource materials etc.;
Changed attitudes of teachers and administrators;
New situations, better mobilisation;
Changes resulting from the newly accepted ideas.

These definitions serve an important function of giving an inclusive idea of innovations in education rather than relating it to just methods or ways of teaching as innovation does not take place in a vacuum.

In a country like India, innovations are also needed to improve the whole education system in the first place. Various efforts have been done to improve the condition of the education system in India; innovations in instructional and learning strategies remain one of the major aspects of these improvements. In the recent times various recommendations and insights have been provided by National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 (NCERT 2005, p.viii) and National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) (NCTE 2009, p.vi) about the teaching and learning strategies and how a shift can be made from traditional methods to innovative methods of teaching and learning. Though the teaching and learning should not be delimited by the four walls of a classroom (Kanvaria 2016, p.5), but has the teaching-learning fraternity reached to the point where it can be said that Indian education system is innovative in itself?

The experiences from the school depict the gaps which exist in the classrooms of the Indian education system. While having the knowledge of innovative instructional and learning strategies there were problems in the transaction of the plans. The problems were there due to various reasons and this was one of the major reasons to study the gaps which exist in the innovations in the Indian education system and the existing classroom realities. Also, it was interesting to analyze how and why policymakers are unaware of these realities and why policies recommendations are not made keeping in mind the existing scenario of Indian classrooms.

This study is significant as it gives a comprehensive idea of innovative education, identifies the gaps and also provides certain implications which will help in bridging those gaps.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Systemic Changes

For any innovations to succeed, the education system needs certain well-

planned changes in the existing system. According to Naik (1974, p.1), first major part is the resource mobilization which includes the necessary requirement of resources to implement the innovations in the classroom. Having scarcity of resources leads to the inconsistency of innovation in teaching and learning. The second requirement is structural changes which talk about the establishment of certain regulatory or statuary bodies like the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) etc. for the improvement of school education. The third thing that is needed for innovation in the curriculum and instructional techniques. Curriculums have to be designed in a way that it gives the space to teachers to use various instructional methods in the classrooms also to include different content and activities for children. Teacher education is important for the success of innovations in education. Lastly, it is suggested that innovations should be evaluated from time to time to see whether they are working or not.

The Relationship between School Education and Teacher Education

NCFTE talks about the symbiotic relationship of school education and teacher education and elaborates the idea that mutual development of school education and teacher education is necessary (NCTE 2009, p.iii). The framework for teacher education was designed keeping in mind the necessities of the school curriculum and expected roles of teachers. The framework talks about the changes in the curriculum which includes foundations of education, pedagogy, and school practice. The framework also talks about making a shift from the traditional methods, a departure from the existing methods by the teacher. So, this framework was developed placing importance on teachers so that a humane and professional teacher can be developed.

School Education Curriculum

NCF 2005 majorly focuses on the curricular reforms but provides guidelines on teaching as well. It gives 5 guiding principles for curriculum

and teaching (NCERT 2005, p.viii), which are: (a) connecting outside experiences of the child to school; (b) shifting of teaching and learning from rote methods of learning; (c) going beyond textbooks; (d) flexible examination; (e) democratic identity. In the later chapters, it also talks about the teaching of four familiar areas of the curriculum which are language, mathematics, science and social science. Various changes in the teaching of these subjects have been suggested to make education more relevant to the present day and to make it compatible with future needs. On one hand, it is said that the NCF 2005 was one of the major steps in the educational reforms of India but, on the other hand, it can also be said that while it does provide guidelines for teaching and learning, it does not talk about the reality of Indian classroom and education system.

Process of Innovation

The theoretical and literature aspects have been explored on the acceptance and rejection of innovation in education in classroom realities various models of innovation in education are examined also a case study has been discussed about the innovation in social science teaching in Queensland school. It was concluded that the biggest barrier to the adoption of innovative methods is the philosophy where everyone has been given a limited role. Primacy has been given to the process rather than the beneficiaries (Nisbet & Collins 1974, p.1).

Analysis and Reflection by the Teachers

According to Leinwand (1998, p.330), teachers, and school administration too, do not focus on much analysis and reflection of day to day realities. He talked about 3 things that hinder the actual teaching and learning in his article. The first thing that he mentions is that it is assumed in the classrooms that one thing which worked earlier will work every time and do not try to change the existing practices. Second thing is that how many students really understand the process and the concepts that are going on the classrooms whether the teachers are teaching from

innovative methods or not. Last thing, which he considers the most important, is that a teacher, generally, does not accept his/her mistakes and try to avoid those as much as he/she can. He elaborates that a teacher must not expect himself/herself to be perfect rather use mistakes as a learning opportunity.

Struggle and Voices of Teachers

McConaghy (1993, p.811) beautifully explained the struggles of teachers. He basically talks about the situation of the education system in Canada of 1980s where the Canadian education system had a plethora of innovative measures in the education system but instead of taking the teachers experience in account it came as the directives to the teachers. He also talks about a document called 'Trying to Teach', which gave a platform to the voices of the teachers where they talked about their experiences of classroom realities. He argued that if given support, teachers would gladly welcome the changes but without proper support, these practices will go in vain.

The review with respect to various aspects like system, education, curriculum, process and teachers reflect that there is a much need of digging more the actual ground in the labs of education i.e. schools to learn about the ground realities, as far as innovations in teaching-learning is concerned.

THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to identify the reasons, why classroom instructional and learning realities are different from the policy recommendations and also what are the problems that learning-facilitators face while trying out these innovative strategies with the existing facilities. With the above-stated aims the study tries to answer the following research questions:

What are the problems that primary and elementary teachers face while trying out the innovative strategies in the existing Indian education system?

What are the gaps that exist between policy recommendations and classroom realities?
What can be the possible solutions to these gaps as explained by the teachers?

METHODOLOGY

Delving into the classroom realities through teacher's and learning facilitator's eyes need the researcher to keep his understandings and perception aside and understand their perceptions according to their realities. That is why qualitative approach was found to be suitable to this study as the realities are different for each facilitator.

Sample and Sampling

A total of 17 male and female teachers, who were teaching primary and elementary grades in Delhi, formed the sample for this study. The technique used was convenient non-random sampling. An effort was made to keep the sample heterogeneous by including teachers from different schools of both primary and elementary levels. Out of these 17 teachers, who were interviewed for the data collection, the 12 teachers i.e. approximately 67% (10 primary level and 2 elementary level) were females, and 6 teachers i.e. approximately 33% (1 primary level & 5 elementary level) were males. The aim of the study was made clear to the participants and consent was taken beforehand of the interview.

Table 1
Sample

Teachers	Primary Level	Elementary Level
Male	1	5
Female	10	2

Tools and Data

Semi-structured interviews were considered to be an appropriate tool for data collection as it gives participants the freedom to express themselves and their struggles in their own words and helps the researcher to collect the pure data. Participants were asked broad questions about the problems they face and why these still exist. Certain themes that emerged out of the responses of participants were then analyzed. Those themes were also divided into two categories, first, what gaps are there? And, second, why are these gaps existing, and why policymakers are unaware of these realities?

The data collected from the teachers have been represented into the following tables:

Table 2
Gaps that exist in the policy recommendations and classroom scenarios

Sl. No.	Issue and Gap	Number of Teachers, who found the Issue to be Significant
1.	Lack of resources and teaching learning materials	17
2.	Limited Classroom structure and space	17
3.	Problems of seating arrangement	14
4.	Number of students admitted in single classrooms	15
5.	Overburdened teachers in terms of syllabus	13

6.	Non alignments of parents and guardian from the pedagogy	16
7.	Lack of help from the parents/ community	12
8.	Fixed timeline for syllabus	7
9.	Previous knowledge of algorithm	4
10.	No/lack support or in-service training by administration for the teachers	10
11.	Faulty concept of innovation	9

Table 3
Reasons for the prevailing gaps

Sl. No.	Reason	Number of Teachers, who found the Reason to be Significant
1.	Lack of teachers say in policy making	16
2.	Researches and survey data are not used	13
3.	Faulty recruitment process	4
4.	Ignorance towards education sector	8
5.	Policy makers are not directly related and bureaucratic system of decision making	7

The themes that emerged from the responses to existing gaps are: 1.Unavailability of resources; 2.Classroom infrastructure; 3.Teacher-

pupil ratio; 4.Syllabus completion pressure; 5.Fear of a competitive environment in higher classes; 6.Knowledge of standard algorithm; 7.Lack of in-service training and workshops for teachers; 8.Lack of parental/community help; and 9.The problematic concept of innovation;

The themes that emerged from reasons of why policies and policymakers are unaware of these gaps are: 1.Inconsideration towards education sector; 2.Following the western practices; 3.No say of teachers in policy and curriculum making; 4.Inappropriate recruitment of teachers; and 5.Survey data not used for improvement;

The above-stated themes are analyzed and discussed in the discussion and analysis part.

Delimitation

One thing, that has to be kept in mind, is that, in this study, teachers from the urban area only were picked to talk about innovative ILS, where the education and schooling system is privileged than the rural area. For better results this study can also be executed in rural areas, too, to get insights about the problems of their contexts.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

In general sense, barriers and resistance always occur whenever a change is taking place whether it is in a society, in an individual or in a school or educational setup. While talking about innovation in education, it is quite obvious that innovation does not take place in a vacuum. It has to be backed up with resources, progressive thinking, and adaptation to change and change in attitudes of various stakeholders. In affluent countries, the launching of innovations is comparatively easy because financial aid can be readily provided. But in a developing country like India, the scarcity of resources adds greater intensity to the challenge of change (Naik 1974, p.2). These intensities lead to the gaps that still exist between the ideal innovative measures and classroom realities. The themes, which

emerged under the category of gaps, can be discussed and analyzed as:

- Unavailability of resources: All the respondents who were interviewed for this research said that unavailability of resources material is one of the major causes which stop them from using innovative methods in the classrooms efficiently. One teacher who was teaching science to elementary classes said that equipment and resources provided by the school are not sufficient for a class of 35-40 students; even if the equipment is arranged the space in a science lab is not that much so that 35 students can be accommodated into that. The science lab is just there to show off to concerned authorities. The almost the same condition was prevailing in other subject areas too, as stated by the other teachers. Few of the teachers working with grade 2nd and 3rd said that it is very hard sometimes to work with limited resource materials as children get restless and classroom management gets affected.

- Classroom infrastructure: Again, each and every respondent said that the infrastructure of the classroom is not favorable to innovative measures which hold for using innovative methods in the classrooms. One of a teacher taking class 5th mathematics said that although they do try to use as much innovative instructional strategies as needed it is not that much fruitful as it is supposed to be because they cannot give equal attention to each and every child. The teacher cannot be mobile in the classrooms because the classrooms are not spacious and have been packed with the desks. The desks do not have space for children to keep their bags so children keep their bags on the floor which adds to the difficulty and shrink teacher's mobility in the classrooms. One thing which is important to point out that there are studies which suggest that there is a number of schools which doesn't have even basic infrastructure and facilities. In the Annual Status Education report 2016, 3.5% of schools in India had no toilet facilities. 24.5% of schools had no

library and 25.9% of schools had no water facilities. Also, schools lack the required infrastructure like ramps, proper desks, fans, or proper classrooms in some places (Pratham 2016, p.56).

- Teacher-pupil ratio: Out of 17 teachers 14 teachers pointed out this issue of the student-teacher ratio in the classroom. Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 fixed the Teacher-pupil ratio (TPR) for primary and upper primary classes at 30:1 and 35:1 respectively (MHRD 2009, p.8). The respondents who were teaching primary classes shared that they were teaching classes with approximately 35-40 students in each class. Teachers shared that while teaching in the classes it is impossible to give individual attention to each and every child because of this TPR. This increased TPR adds to the workload of teachers which also hold teachers back to use innovative measures in the classrooms as innovative measures take much more time and effort than the traditional method.

- Syllabus completion pressure: Teachers (majorly elementary teachers) pointed out this issue as a major reason due to which teachers are not able to use innovative ILS in the classrooms is the pressure of syllabus completion. In the name of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) as prescribed by the CBSE, schools just organize a number of tests (Unit Test, Chapter Test, Formative Assessment-FA, Summative Assessment-SA, etc.) to assess student performance and learning. Teachers have to complete the syllabus of those tests so that student can prepare for the test. Within this process, the innovative ILS and actual learning get lost. In some schools, a guideline is provided which contains a yearly calendar along with chapters or topic. So, the focus of the teacher tends to shift towards the completion of the syllabus rather than learning.

- Fear of a competitive environment in higher classes: Majority of the elementary teachers listed fear of competitive environment as a gap due to which parents, as well as teachers, do not support Innovative ILS. The board exams of class 10th and 12th has scared parents and teachers so much that they feel the pressure of these exams cannot be handled by innovative ILS as children do not get to practice much. One of the teachers shared that the school in which she is working do not take whole course examinations with fixed time till primary classes. They just have FA and SA in the classrooms only. But when these children are promoted to class 6th, where they have regular tests and an examination at the ends on fixed time, their performances get affected. This also affects the motivation levels of children.

- Knowledge of standard algorithm: As already discussed that the majority of children are taking tuitions nowadays and the tuition teachers make children do/learn the chapters before it takes place in the schools. Children already know the standard algorithm or the concepts/stories of the chapters. So, while conducting the activities the children do not take much interest in the processes and tend to jump on the standard forms, which somehow cause disbelieve in the teachers from the student's side. This issue can be related to the issue of non-alignment of parents/community with innovative ILS. Also, there is so much access of internet to children and parents nowadays that they tend to search everything on it which gives them the standard forms, definition etc. which adversely affect the classroom processes.

- Lack of in-service training and workshops for teachers: It was seen that teachers do feel the lack of in-service training. 10 teachers pointed out the lack of in-service training and courses which enable teachers to use innovative ILS. Teachers shared that in their subject group there are teachers who are in the teaching business for more

than 15 years. There have been a lot of changes in teacher education since then and sometimes it is difficult to reach at any point regarding innovative ILS due to the difference in viewpoints. Very few workshops are arranged for teachers working in a government school. A similar situation is there in private schools except for a few schools. Also, these courses and workshops provide few of the possible solution to tackle the problems and the gaps which are there in using innovative ILS and provide motivations to teachers as well.

- Lack of parental/community help: All the 17 respondents again pointed out this issue and regarded it as the major problem of using innovative ILS. A teacher, teaching language in primary classes, said whenever they start a new chapter, they try to connect it to a theme then try to give relevant experience to children relating to that topic. Reading that chapter is a part of this process but parents always complain that question answer should be done on the blackboard after the chapter and teachers must dictate the difficult word and make them practice by writing those words 5 times etc., due to these complaints they started taking dictation as a filler activity and try to discuss question answers but still parents are not satisfied. Many of the children are taking tuitions nowadays, along with parents they are also not aligned with the pedagogy which deepens this problem, there have been no major efforts done regarding this issue.

- The problematic concept of innovation: Almost 50% of the respondents said that the concept of innovation that policy recommendations suggest and the concept that many people understand are different. One teacher stated that few of their co-teachers think that if they have used props in the story or made students sit in a circle that alone is innovation, no doubt that above stated things help but the innovation should be in ideas, in motives. If teachers are ultimately asking students to write down the question

answers and expects them to write exactly the same answer in the tests or exam, then there is no benefit in using these props. The above statement can say to be perfectly capturing the reality of innovation in the Indian education system.

The above-discussed issues reveal that there is a wide gap between the policy recommendations and the classroom realities and also gives us insights that what problems teachers face even if they want to try out innovative ILS. Now it is also important to know why policymakers are unaware of these realities?

The themes that emerged out of teacher's responses for why these problems are not taken into consideration while formulating the policies have been discussed next:

- Inconsideration towards education sector: India is one of the largest democratic countries in the world where education should in the top priority for the government but the same is not the case in India. Some teachers said that corruption plays a key factor here and Education, which is the base of any country's development, is getting budget cuts in India when the need is the exact opposite. The government needs to invest in the education system but is not. So, policymakers may be even aware of classroom realities but are not able to do much about it because even they do not have the power to do so.

- Following the western practices: Approximately 50% of the teachers said that in the making of policies and curriculums or even designing the aims of our education system we tend to just follow the western practices without thinking of the rationale and context. Indians, as members of a nation, are unable to create something new on its own because they are not taking the Indian context into their considerations.

- No say of teachers in policy and curriculum making: Majority of teachers said that the policies are made according to the suggestion given by administrators and bureaucrats who have no direct link to the classrooms and children learning styles. Also, they are not aware of the daily struggles that teachers have to face while engaging with students and parents. In the schools also the majority of decisions are taken by the principal, administration or managing committees, teachers are just informed about the orders. Teachers, who are one of the major stakeholders of the education system, are lost in the day to day transaction on innovative ILS and their voices are lost into those classrooms only. In the recent policies and curriculum framework many of the teachers have incorporated but what population do they represent and how much their suggestions are valued are some questions that are worth finding answers for.

- Inappropriate recruitment of teachers: Although only 4teachers said that recruitment plays a major role in why teacher's voices are not taken seriously. In India, teachers are recruited to the majority of the schools without proper procedure and through faulty measures. Many of the teachers recruited on a contract basis do not even have an educational degree. They got into the profession as there are no proper measures to check the reliability of teachers, also as teaching do not have a professional status in India people do not pay keen attention to it. There have been many cases where it was visible that teachers recruited do not know the basic spellings etc. If the recruited teachers are not able to teach how they are supposed to voice out the concerns regarding innovative ILS?

- Survey data not used for improvement: Many of the teachers pointed out that it has been years since NCF-2005 came. But it can be seen that even after a number of surveys made by the government and various organization like District Information System for Education

(DISE) and Annual Status of Education Reports (ASER), pointing out certain loopholes prevailing in the education system. But those haven't been rectified completely till now. If those identified areas haven't been rectified till the present, how these areas, which only a few people are aware of, will be got rectified.

Through the analysis, it can be seen that teachers are not the only one, who are responsible, but the whole education system is responsible for the innovations in ILS. The above-stated issues are the actual gaps which are holding innovations to happen in the classrooms. For bridging these gaps, teachers' voices need to be heard out as they are the one who is struggling with this issue on a day to day basis.

CONCLUSION

This study delves into the gaps which are there in the policy recommendation regarding innovative ILS and the classroom realities. The study focuses here on the teacher's perception as teachers are considered to be responsible for the transactions that are taking place in the classrooms. Through data collection and analysis of teacher's views and opinions, this can be said that for the innovations to take place in the classrooms there is a number of factors that need to be considered. NCFTE (NCTE 2009) focuses on the teacher education and preparation so that better and humane teacher can be prepared but, it is visible that innovations cannot take place in vacuum and teacher alone cannot do much to bring innovations in the classrooms. Teacher's voices need to be heard out and taken into consideration into the policies. The issues and struggles that teachers face call for an action where these ground-level realities can be addressed. As stated by various teachers, efforts should be made in order to bring innovation in the ideas and in the motives of educational ideology which promote creativity rather than following the established ways and methods. This can be done by making the in-service teacher education and workshops compulsory.

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POTTED SPROUT MODEL OF TEACHING – LEARNING TOWARDS EXCELLENCE

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The quality of educational institute is in the hands of the faculty, students and the management. The contribution of faculty plays a major role for enhancing the quality of the institute. Their commitment and sincerity to instructional activity maximise student's learning. Faculty development and innovative learning activities with shared leadership and focus towards the quality of institutional excellence is tested through this study. Hundred and nine respondents participated in the survey. All the respondents were experienced, full time faculty members from higher education institutes. A model is a created to understand the importance of the variables contributing the excellence of higher education. Two testing is conducted. One is to find out the perception on the effect of independent variables like faculty development, learning activities, shared leadership and goals to the cause of excellence. From the regression analysis it is found that there is a relationship between the variables which shows that faculty members accepted that there is a relationship between the variables. The second study is to find the response from the faculty members regarding the practice of these variables in their respective organisation. The result is disappointing. Institutional excellence is possible is possible by investing in faculty development, with innovative learning activities, shared leadership and with committed goal. This is proved in this study.

INTRODUCTION

The teaching practice must be improved by preparing faculty with knowledge and skills. The primary effort in an educational institution is the instructional activity. The effectiveness of it to the key receivers is vital for the success of the institution. This achievement is possible not only with the effort of the faculty and students but also with the support of the investment by the institution. A leadership role with a proper

direction and strategies helps to achieve individual and organisational goal. The Faculty development programme should be an on-going process in the educational organisation. The outcomes of the faculty as a result of these programmes should contribute to the advancement of students. The effect of the development programmes should contribute to the rippling effect in the teaching-learning process. The faculty development should have an impact on the learning activities of the students. The outcomes of teaching must be assessed from the achievement of the students. The practices must be updated, and the assessment method has to be evaluated and changes have to be brought to it based on the requirement. The goal to achieve teaching excellence has to be instilled in the mind of the teaching fraternity. This will inspire the teachers to take their activities to the next level to the coming generations. A good leadership direct the development of the faculty to the performance of students. Shared leadership provide autonomy to execute the assigned duty to students effectively. The awareness that institutional quality can be improved through faculty development investment is an underlining fact. Utilisation of resources, commitment to teaching excellence and improving instructional – learning quality leading to institutional excellence to be achieved by building a culture that encourages faculty development with applicable assessment.

Faculty Development

It is found that faculty development has an impact on teaching quality, students' interest in studies, student outcomes and ultimately on the quality of the institution. Faculty development plays acrucial role in impacting the pedagogy and syllabus. It also has an indirect effect in student involvement, understanding and learning. Improvement in teaching has a great influence on the student's performance. Effective teaching improves the interest of student towards the subject and can extend beyond the subject learning. Enhancement in teaching methods, knowledge and adaption of technology are very essential in the

development of the institution. Institutions that look for the up gradation in quality concentrate on the development of the faculty. Attractive curriculum with committed faculty members can reduce the absenteeism of students and failures. So a lucrative pay with incentives can draw talented, committed teachers to the institute. Faculty need to be motivated continuously with resources, grants and support to enhance teaching effectiveness. There should be continuous learning from the faculty and should have keen interest in the development of students. Continuous monitoring and mentoring encourage the students to be the best achiever. A trained faculty express high level of confidence in front of the class and can invite the attention of the whole class. There should be a focus from the side of the faculty to have a focus that directs the student to a promising future from the current reality. The development of faculty assessing using an appropriate tool is also essential. Enhancement has to be encouraged and appreciated. Appropriate feedback mechanism could gear the corrective measures for the quality improvement

Effective Learning Activities

Teachers continuously develop innovative teaching methods so that learning is effective. They conduct researches based on that and implement the best practices for students to develop. Assessing the outcomes provide the effectiveness of the learning methodology adopted in the organisation. Based on this grading can be conducted to identify the performers from the poor performers. Collecting the feedback from the learners can confirm the appropriate method that they are comfortable for improving their performance. Identifying the best practices that are aligned to bring out the excellent outcome is a challenge. The criteria for grading have to be informed well in advance and have to be designed in such a way that assessment has to be associated to it. The procedure has to be fair and transparent for the acceptability of the new practices introduced in the organisation. Action oriented feedback add value to it. The practices followed in the organisation must be based on the output of the research or from intellectual sources or based on the experience of the

faculty regarding the effectiveness of the teaching (Ambrose et al. 2010). The various assessment measures of students have to be in association with the faculty development. There are researches that established the association of success of students and faculty development. (Seidman 2013).

Institutional Commitment through Shared Leadership

Shared leadership involves empowering human resources and encourage taking leadership in the respective expertise areas. In this context, shared leadership could link infrastructure with faculty members and administrators for decision making. The effectiveness can be brought about by unifying teaching and non teaching fraternity effort by giving emphasis on the teaching. According to Kezar and Holcombe (2017) present developing institu¬tions require new appearance in campus leadership. There is a collective effort from faculty and administrators to support and improve in teaching style and content delivery. This cooperative initiative of teaching fraternity and learning centres will drive the effort to success. Continuous evaluation, enhanced delivery methods and reasonable endowment together can result in significant impact. Faculty development emphasis on the quality of teaching and success of student would result in the reputation of the organisation. There are some factors that contribute for the success of the institution include continuous faculty development initiatives, endowments for teaching endeavours and linking teaching and learning process for increasing the success rate of students. Rising the bars of achievement contribute to institutional gains. The quality bars can be improved only through unconditional agreement towards quality improvement from faculty and funding their efforts from the institution's side. Increased quality of faculty will remain as an asset to the organisation and reap the gains in future for the organisation. Excellence in teaching has to be considered as a strategic precedence and investment to increase teaching quality has to be a constant effort. Increasing challenges in higher education can be met by improving the quality of teachers and will be allied to organisational mission.

The goal to achieve teaching excellence

The goal should be to achieve success by adjusting the roles of faulty to the changing students' expectations and calibre. In this fluctuating and interconnected, technology driven environment the faculty role must be escalated to adjust with student's requirement. The institution, faculty and students have to influence each other to achieve the success. A culture of excellence in teaching has to be created to ascend the quality of teaching to greater heights. Teamwork is considered as an important way in which learning happens (Barkley, Cross & Major 2014), even collaborative learning has high impact on learning (Kuh 2008). Different methods that are found to be helpful have to be adopted to achieve success.

Institutional Excellence

The excellence is achieved due to the best practices adopted by the companies. The teaching- learning success is the achievement for the individuals and for the organisation. The interest of success starts from individuals and the relationship of assistance are building and a culture of cooperation is created in the organisation. Cooperation, consultation and feedback create a good environment of excellence. Teaching development helps the faculty to climb the ladder of career. It helps students to be successful in academic performance, all leads to institutional excellence. Small networks and communities of practice provide feeling of achievement. Cooperative model demonstrates efficient teaching - learning outcomes (Richlin & Cox 2004).

POTTED SPROUT MODEL OF TEACHING – LEARNING TOWARDS EXCELLENCE

The institutional excellence can be considered to the preparation of a pot with germinating plant.Into the pot different kinds of gravels, manure and water are added. These preparations represent the preparation of a higher education institute towards excellence. The faculty development, effective learning activities, institutional commitment through shared leadership, goal to achieve teaching excellence are the ingredients in

the pot. If the condition is favourable with all the ingredients added in the pot, sprout emerges from the pot. Same way if the environment is favourable for higher education with all the ingredients mentioned above practiced well would result in excellence.

1. Medium sized rocks – Faculty development
2. Small rocks – Effective learning activities
3. Sand – institutional commitment through shared leadership
4. Mixture of water and manure – the goal to achieve teaching excellence
5. Emerging of sapling – Institutional excellence

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in selected higher education institutions to find out the unique practices followed in the organisation and the acceptance level of the 'Potted Sprout Model of Teaching – Learning towards Excellence'. The data were collected from 109 faculty members working in the different higher education institutes to find out the incorporation of faculty development, alignment of learning with instruction, shared leadership and the goal to excellence resulting in institutional excellence. Around eighty questionnaires were distributed and forty-five completely filled questionnaires were received. Meanwhile emails were sent to different known and unknown faculty members to collect the data. All put together, filled hundred and ten questionnaires were used for analysis. All the respondents were highly qualified and experienced in higher education.

ANALYSIS

All the faculty members participated in the study were full time employees with minimum five years of experience in the same institute. Eighty five percent respondents were males and the rest females. All faculty participated in the survey was teaching in higher education. Fourteen respondents were having doctorate degree. Fifty-six respondents were with a post-graduation and M. Phil. degree. Others cleared national

eligibility test along with post-graduation. Most of them were in the process of doing their doctorate.

From the received data, analysis was conducted to find out the descriptive and inferential aspects of the variables considered.

Linear regression is conducted to find out the acceptance level of different independent variables like faculty development (fd), learning activities (la), shared leadership (sl) and goal to teaching excellence (gte) with the dependent variable institutional excellence (ie).

The study is done to find out the perception of the faculty towards the institutional excellence, linear regression is conducted.

Table 1
Regression Coefficients

Variables	B	SE B	B	T	P
faculty development (fd)	1.65	0.15	.35	3.01	.004
learning activities (la)	1.72	0.12	.40	3.49	.002
shared leadership (sl)	1.91	0.08	.52	3.86	.000
goal to teaching excellence (gte)	1.99	0.09	.64	3.99	.000

Dependent variable: institutional excellence (ie)

The non-standardised beta B represents the slope of line between the independent and dependent variable. For one unit increase in one variable of independent variables like faculty development, learning activities, shared leadership and goal to teaching excellence causes the dependent variable increases by 1.72, 1.91 & 1.99 units. The larger the standard error, less likely the significance will be. The standardised beta value range from 0 to 1 or -1. Sign depicts the direction and relationship decides whether it is positive or negative. The variable goal to teaching

excellence has the strongest relationship. t test statistic helps to calculate p value. The p value is significant for all the variables as the values are less than 0.05.

The result shows that all faculty members participated in this study unanimously agreedthat faculty development, learning activities, shared leadership and goal to teaching excellence contribute to institutional excellence.

But it is found that not all colleges practice or follow some of the best practices to improve the institutional excellence.

Table 2
Responses of individuals from different colleges

Variables	College 1			College 2			College 3			College 4		
	E	A	P	E	A	P	E	A	P	E	A	P
Faculty development	3	10	13	2	16	8	5	15	9	5	12	11
Effective learning activities	3	12	11	0	20	6	2	15	12	5	15	8
Shared leadership	2	12	12	2	16	8	4	16	9	5	15	8
Goal to excellence	0	12	14	4	13	9	3	15	11	3	15	10

E-Excellent, A-Average, P-Poor

The response from different respondents who participated in the study related to different variables is represented in the table no.2. It is found that respondents have rated excellence rarely compared to average and poor. This is the reality in most organisation. The faculty development,

learning effectiveness, shared leadership and goal to excellence are in average or in poor state. But the regression test reveals that all respondents agree to the fact that the respondents perceive that there is a relationship between institutional excellence and other independent variables. The awareness related to the importance of these variables are well known among the faculty but are missing in most of the organisation is clear in this study.

DISCUSSION

It is obvious that student learning activities and faculty development must be concentrated for institutional excellence. Investment in faculty development would provide excellence to the institution. As student's learning activities is considered as a core activity of an education organisation, training and supporting the instructional activity of a faculty is essential for improving the quality. The institute leaders have to encourage and garner the talent in the faculty to exhibit before the students for their development and for the organisation. From the study it is apparent that faculty members from different education institutes have accepted the importance of development of faculty, learning activities of students, shared leadership with commitment and having a goal towards teaching to transform the institute into an excellent organisation. It is found that faculty development activities are not given much importance in most organisations as the investment towards it is high and organisation is not interested in it. Faculty development is considered as an unwanted expense by most educational organisation. Teachers' training must be professionalised with the aim to improve the teaching quality of the organisation. Faculty development must rise as a continuous, independent activity centre in the educational institution. The assessment of individual activities and measuring it based on the set objectives with an effective feedback will contribute to the organisational progress (Linse 2017).The approach to bundle different evaluation methods for the individual success results in organisational development. The strategic plans related to organisational growth of the organisation

has to be aligned to faculty development and learning activities of the students. The goals and vision of the faculty development should be linked with the students and the educational institution. The chosen goals should be specific, measurable, achievable and timely and relevant. The goals of every individual should focus towards the success of the institution. The faculty development should have its effect on the student learning. The assessments make sense only when evaluation of faculty improvement and students' learning are in alignment. (Nilson 2013). The student's progress and commitment in education contribute to the faculty engagement with students (Jankowski 2017; Arum & Roksa2010). A proper leadership can direct the organisation through effective programmes. Continuous faculty development with shared leadership and innovative learning activities for students leads to success of the organisation. Faculty should be empowered and given responsibilities to educate students with innovative methods. A culture of commitment and dedication help to attain the goal of quality. All the ingredients like faculty development, innovative learning activities, shared leadership and the feeling of commitment to attain the goal towards excellence lead to excellence of the organisation.

CONCLUSION

The study confirms the importance of teaching learning outcome. The relationship of student outcome with that of instruction of faculty has to be linked to improve the performance of students. The support and resources must be provided to develop faculty instructional quality. The faculty outcome is linked to the financial support from the institution. Faculty development involves large financial support from the institution. The cooperation of faculty, institution and student community can bring excellence to higher education. Empowering individuals and providing responsibilities to improve themselves and supporting fellow individuals for leads to the betterment of the organisation leads. Shared leadership gives an opportunity to own the responsibility and heighten the commitment towards the organisation. Assessment based

on research on learning-teaching has to be designed and implemented in the organisation. Innovative assessment sessions and activity centric assignment should be justifiable (Joyce 2011) and providing feedback to student's performance (Angelo & Patricia 1993) improves the quality of learning process. The improvement is required in the grading method also. Grades should not be assigned based on the learning outcome of other students, but it should be related to the criteria chosen in relation to the learning outcome (Covington, Linda & Dominic 2017; Nilson 2016). Creating a creative learning culture where there is much interaction between student and teacher. The interactions should be concerned with discussions, interruptions to clear a problem, solving disagreements, constructive dialogue can result in student's personal growth and intellectual development (Saunders & Diana 2016; Steele 2010). The model created help to understand the concept of excellence in higher education aptly.

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COGNITIVE STYLES, STUDY HABITS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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The overall objective of the study is to find out the study habits and cognitive styles of the sample students of Central University of Kashmir and difference among them in study habits and cognitive styles due to variation in locality, gender and type of family; also aiming to know the influence of these factors on academic achievement of students. This is a correlation study and it correlates academic achievement with cognitive styles and study habit. The present study revealed that significant differences were observed in the Study Habits of Male students in relation to their counterparts. The present study reported that urban students have better cognitive styles than rural students. Likewise, the study also discovered that students from joint families have better study habits than students from nuclear families.

INTRODUCTION

Cognitive style is a term used in cognitive psychology to describe the way individuals think, perceive and remember information or their preferred approach to using such information to solve problems. Cognitive style differs from cognitive ability (or level) the latter being measured by aptitude tests or intelligence tests. Controversy exists over the exact meaning of the term cognitive style and also as to whether it is a single or multiple dimension of the human personality. However it remains a key concept in the areas of education.

The problem most students have that contributes to their poor performance in tests and examination is lack of proper Study Habit. For an excellent performance, there is need for the student to form good study habit. A student, who wants to study well, needs to choose a suitable place for his/her studies. Where to study is as important as what to study and how to go about studying. In higher educational institutions, high academic performance has been attributed to student's effective study habits. This is the reason why the teacher tries to adopt many techniques to help the students to learn. The learner's Dictionary has defined study as a "mental effort to obtain knowledge". This means that studying is an art of learning which helps the individual not only to acquire knowledge but also the skill and the habit to study. The term "Study Habit" implies a sort of more or less permanent method of studying. Study-habits are the essence of a dynamic personality. A proper study habits enables an individual to reap a good harvest in future.

Cognitive style is a preferred and habitual way to organize and represent information (Riding & Rayner 1998, p.27). Cognitive style affects the process of decision-making that subsequently affects the social attitude, thinking and responses to life events. Miller (1985, p.82) described the cognitive style as "it is a consistent strategy that a person displays in attempting to solve problems. Spinath (2012, p.486) emphasizes the importance of academic achievement with regard to different perspectives. Hattie (2009, p.98) provides an overview of the empirical findings on academic achievement by distinguishing between individual, home, and scholastic determinants of academic achievement according to theoretical assumptions. Spinath (2012, p.481) points out that it is more appropriate to speak of "predictors" instead of determinants of academic achievement because the mostly cross-sectional nature of the underlying research does not allow causal conclusions to be drawn.

Academic Achievement is an important factor for vocational and general success. Academic Achievement is the pivot and centre of educational

growth and development. It encourages the students to work hard and learn more and choose the right course or stream. Academic Achievement is the outcome of education, which helps a teacher in grouping the students.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Study Habits and Cognitive Styles have been given fewer consideration than they deserve, keeping in view their significance towards the performance of individuals in day-to-day tasks. Comparatively insignificant research has been conducted on Cognitive Styles and Study Habits academic achievement in relation to locale, family type and gender. Since university is hub of diversity and there is a need to study the differences in cognitive styles, study habits and academic achievement of university students and to facilitate the important areas associated with the teaching and learning.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the difference between Cognitive Styles, Study Habits and Academic Achievement and Gender of Students of Central University of Kashmir.
2. To study the difference between Cognitive Styles, Study Habits and Academic Achievement and Locality of Central University of Kashmir Students.
3. To study the difference between Cognitive Styles, Study Habits and Academic Achievement and Family Type of Central University of Kashmir Students.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This research to study the study habits and cognitive styles of students of Central University of Kashmir in relation to a few selected variables that is place of living, parental educational status and job, gender, age and type of family. The cognitive styles are measured by using the cognitive styles inventory. The main purpose of the study was to study

the cognitive styles of students of Central University of Kashmir and to find out whether differences in gender, place of residence and type of family would amount for significant differences in their cognitive styles. Based on the analysis and discussion of the results implications are drawn. Even though, maximum care has been taken to avoid faults, the following limitations may be entered in the present study. The present study is confined to the students of the Central University of Kashmir. Due to practical constraints, the sample size was limited to 244. Though there are several other variables which directly or indirectly affect the Academic Achievement, this analysis considered Learning Styles and Study Habits only. However, it is felt that despite of the above mentioned limitations the findings of the study can be generalised to a great extent, since care was taken to make every step in the procedure of the study as objective as possible.

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Kirk (2000, p. 27) found that field independence was significantly correlated with problem solving, academic and laboratory achievement; better attitude towards the social benefit and problems accompany scientific progress which was significantly correlated with higher achievement on all the academic measures of chemistry. Rayner & Riding (2003, p.5) found that for overall learning behaviour, there was an interaction between working memory capacity and cognitive style with the wholist analytic style dimension, memory made a marked difference for analytics but had little effect for wholists; and with the verbal imagery dimension verbalisers were affected but not imagers with the school subjects, these differed in terms of their sensitivity to gender, memory and style. Kenth (2009, p.28) found that examination mastery along with cognitive style and imaginative style was found to be a good predictor of academic achievement. Nagaraju, Manchala & Sumalatha (2002, p.98) identified that the boys differ significantly with girls in their study habits. Hence, sex has significant impact on the study habits of the pupils.

Rajendran (2004, p.255) identified that there was significant difference in the study habits possessed by boys and girls. Addington (1997, p.49) found that parental involvement in student's academic lives influenced students' mathematics achievement. Sharma (2007, p.11) found that high achievers had high problem solving ability in comparison to average and low achievers; there exist positive relationship between achievement, problem solving ability and scientific attitude. Rajendran (2007, p.255) found that there was no significant difference between achievement of boys and girls in the post test, when the parents education was taken into consideration; there was no significant difference among achievement of zoology students in the post test, when the parents education is taken into consideration; there was no significant difference among the achievement of boys and girls of experimental group in the post test, when their parents education is taken into consideration.

Most of the studies under review used cognitive style tool that assess field dependent and field independent category and hardly any study was conducted on cognitive style that assess systematic, intuitive, integrated, undifferentiated, and split cognitive style. Most part of these studies revealed positive correlation between field independent and academic achievement and a negative correlation between field dependent and academic achievement. A few studies revealed no significant relation between these variables. It should be noted that population of these studies were different such as gifted, student with specific subject and specific area.

From the review of related literature, it is obvious that the topic, "Cognitive Styles, Study Habits and Academic Achievement of students of Central University of Kashmir" selected for the study in new are in this kind and different from earlier studies. More of the study has clearly pointed out the combined relationship between Cognitive styles, Study habits and Academic achievement of students of Central University of Kashmir.

Hence, the present study might give a new insight in understanding the Cognitive styles, Study habits and Academic achievement of students of Central University of Kashmir; it will contribute to the existing ocean of knowledge. It is clear from review of literature, that a few studies have been carried out in the area of study habits. But by and large except on a few variables, results obtained are not coinciding and hence warranting further exploration.

METHODOLOGY

This is a correlation study and it correlates academic achievement with cognitive styles and study habit. In the present endeavour, the researcher has used the descriptive research method. Descriptive research methods are used when the researcher wants to describe specific behaviour as it occurs in the environment with respect to one or more variables.

Population

The present study was carried out on all the 3rd semester students of 13 teaching departments totalling of 450 students from the Central University of Kashmir. The researcher took Central University of Kashmir as the population due to operational ease. Therefore it was not possible to collect the data from the entire population, so the researcher selected randomly 3rd semester students from the University.

Sample

A simple random sample is a subset of a statistical population in which each member of the subset has an equal probability of being chosen. Consequently a sample of 244 students was selected randomly from of the 3rdsemester students of 13 departments of Central University of Kashmir. The detail of the department wise final sample has been given in Table 1.

Table 1
Department wise sample

Sl. No.	Department	N
1	Department of Law	20
2	Department of Management Studies	17
3	Department of Tourism Studies	19
4	Department of Education	20
5	Department of English	14
6	Department of Urdu	19
7	Department of Economics	19
8	Department of Religious Studies	19
9	Department of Politics and Governance	20
10	Department of Convergent Journalism	20
11	Department of Animal Sciences (Zoology)	19
12	Department of Physics	19
13	Department of Mathematics	19
	Total	244

The detail of the composition of final sample has been given in Table 2.

Table 2
Structure of the sample

Variable	Category	N	Total
Gender	Males	114	244
	Females	130	
Location	Urban	99	244
	Rural	145	
Family	Nuclear	167	244
	Joint	77	

Variables Used in the Study

(a) Independent Variables - Cognitive Style and Study Habits
(b) Dependent Variable -Academic Achievement

Operational Definitions of the Key Terms

- Cognitive Style: Operationally, the cognitive style is defined as the scores obtained by the subjects in Cognitive Style Inventory standardised by Jha (2001).
- Study Habits: Operationally, the study habit is defined as the scores obtained by the subjects in Study Habit Inventory standardised by Mukhopadhyaya and Sansanwal (1992).
- Academic Achievement: Operationally, for this proposed study, academic achievement is the aggregate marks percentage obtained by the subjects in their last two semesters.

TOOLS

- Cognitive Style Inventory (CSI): CSI designed and standardised by Jha (2001) measures the ways of thinking, judging, remembering, storing information, decision making and believing in interpersonal relationship. The CSI consists of five dimensions of cognitive style viz. systematic, intuitive, integrated, undifferentiated and split cognitive style.

- Study Habits Inventory (SHI): SHI designed and standardised by M. Mukhopadhay and D. N. Sansanwal (1992). It is a scale, where in the covert behaviour like concentration, comprehension, task orientation, study sets are measured in order to analyse the study habits. The inventory is comprised of 52 items on a five point Likert scale wherein 34 items are affirmative and the rest 18 items are negative.

DATA COLLECTION

The data for the present study was collected by the investigator through the personal visits to the 15 department of Central University of Kashmir.

Statistical Techniques Used for Data Analysis

In order to analyse the obtained data following suitable statistical techniques were employed. That is mean, standard deviation and t test.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The data analysis of the current study was carried quantitatively with the help of both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistical techniques like mean, standard deviation and for the inferential statistics correlation were used during data analysis. The following results have been retrieved after analysing the data, keeping in mind the objectives of the study.

Analysis and Interpretation based on Gender

Sub Objective 1.1: To study the difference between Cognitive Styles and Gender of Central University of Kashmir Students.

Ho1: Male and female students of Central University of Kashmir do not differ significantly in the Cognitive Styles.

Table 3
Differences between cognitive styles and gender

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t
Cognitive Styles	Male	114	130.63	31.37	.86NS
	Female	130	131.27	27.37	

NS = Insignificant

Table 3 delineates the estimation of the responses, which was used to assess the difference between Cognitive Styles and Gender. The said table describes the mean score and the t-value between Cognitive Style and Gender of CUK Students. The stated table displays that there is insignificant difference between cognitive styles of male and female on Cognitive Style Inventory (CSI) as the as the calculated t value is .86; ($p > .05$). Therefore, Ho1 is accepted.

Sub Objective 1.2: To study the difference between Study Habits and Gender of CUK Students.

Ho2: Male and female students of Central University of Kashmir do not differ significantly in the Study Habits.

Table 4
Difference between study habits and gender

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t
Study Habits	Male	114	160.97	27.05	2.04*
	Female	130	154.34	23.46	

* Significant at .05 level

Table 4 describes the estimation of the responses, which was used to assess the difference between Study Habits and Gender. The said table describes the mean score and the t-value between Study Habits and Gender of CUK Students. The stated table displays that there is significant difference between Study Habits of male and female on SHI as the as the calculated t value is 2.04; ($p < .05$). Therefore Ho2 is rejected.

Sub Objective 1.3: To study the difference between Academic Achievement and Gender and CUK Students.

Ho3: Male and female students of Central University of Kashmir do not differ significantly in the Academic Qualification.

Table 5
Difference between academic achievement and gender

	Gender	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**t**
Academic Achievement	Male	114	2.24	.63	.17NS
	Female	130	2.23	.70	

NS = Insignificant

Table 5 describes the estimation of the responses, which was used to assess the mean difference between Academic Achievement and Gender. The said table describes the mean score and the t-value between Academic Achievement and Gender of CUK Students. The stated table displays that there is insignificant difference between Gender and Academic Achievement: the calculated t value is .17; (p >.05). Therefore Ho3 is accepted.

Analysis and Interpretation based on Locality

Sub Objective 2.1: To study the difference between Cognitive Styles and Locality of CUK Students.

Ho4: Rural and Urban students of Central University of Kashmir do not differ significantly in the Cognitive Styles.

Table 6
Difference between cognitive styles and locality

	Locality	N	Mean	SD	t
Cognitive Styles	Urban	99	137.76	21.33	3.22**
	Rural	145	126.55	32.88	

** Significant at .01

Table 6 delineates the estimation of the responses, which was used to assess the difference between Cognitive Styles and Locality. The said table describes the mean score and the t-value between Cognitive Style and Locality of CUK Students. The stated table displays that there is insignificant difference between cognitive styles of Urban and Rural on CSI as the as the calculated t value is .3.22; (p <.01). Therefore Ho4 is rejected.

Sub Objective 2.2: To study the difference between Study Habits and Locality of CUK Students.

Ho5: Rural and Urban students of Central University of Kashmir do not differ significantly in the Study Habits.

Table 7
Difference between study habits and locality

	Locality	N	Mean	SD	t
Study Habits	Urban	99	153.97	22.30	1.85NS
	Rural	145	159.89	27.16	

NS Insignificant

The Table 7 describes the mean score and the t-value between Study Habits and Locality. The stated table displays that there is insignificant difference between Study Habits of Rural and Urban Students of CUK on Study Habit Inventory (SHI) as the as the calculated t value is 1.85; ($p > .05$). Therefore Ho5 is accepted.

Sub Objective 2.3: To study the difference between Academic Achievement and Locality of CUK Students.

Ho6: Rural and Urban students of Central University of Kashmir do not differ significantly in the Academic Achievement.

Table 8
Difference between academic achievement and locality

	Locality	N	Mean	SD	t
Academic Achievement	Urban	99	2.28	.70	.85NS
	Rural	145	2.20	.64	

NS Insignificant

Table 8 describes the estimation of the responses, which was used to assess the mean difference between Academic Achievement and Locality. The said table describes the mean score and the t-value between Academic Achievement and Urban and Rural Students of CUK. The stated table displays that there is insignificant difference between Academic Achievement of students of Rural and Urban Students; the calculated t value is .85; (p >.05). Therefore Ho6 is accepted.

Analysis and Interpretation on the Basis Type of Family

Sub Objective 3.1: To study the difference between Cognitive Styles and Family Type of CUK Students.

Ho7: Students hailing from Joint Family and Nuclear Family of Central University of Kashmir do not differ significantly in the Cognitive Styles.

Table 9
Difference between cognitive styles and family type

	Family Type	N	Mean	SD	t
Cognitive Styles	Nuclear	167	133.01	27.69	1.60NS
	Joint	77	126.18	32.15	

NS Insignificant

Table 9 delineates the estimation of the responses, which was used to assess the difference between Cognitive Styles and Gender. The said table describes the mean score and the t-value between Cognitive Style and Family Type of CUK Students. The stated table displays that there is insignificant difference between cognitive styles of students of nuclear and Joint families on Cognitive Style Inventory (CSI) as the as the calculated t value is .1.60; (p >.05). Therefore Ho7 is accepted.

Sub Objective 3.2: To study the difference between Study Habits and Family Type of CUK Students.

Ho8: Students hailing from Joint Family and Nuclear Family of Central University of Kashmir do not differ significantly in the Study Habits.

Table 10
Difference between study habits and family type

	Family Type	N	Mean	SD	t
Study Habits	Nuclear	167	154.52	25.24	2.48**
	Joint	77	163.07	24.07	

** Significant at .01

Table 10 describes the estimation of the responses, which was used to assess the difference between Study Habits and Family Type. The said table describes the mean score and the t-value between Study Habits and Family Type of CUK Students. The stated table displays that there is significant difference between Study Habits of Students of Nuclear and Joint families on Study Habit Inventory (SHI) as the as the calculated t value is 2.48; ($p < .05$). Therefore Ho8 is rejected.

Sub Objective 3.3: To study the difference between Academic Achievement and Locality of CUK Students.

Ho9: Students hailing from Joint Family and Nuclear Family of Central University of Kashmir do not differ significantly in the Cognitive Styles.

Table 11
Difference between academic achievement and family type

	Family Type	N	Mean	SD	t
Academic Achievement	Nuclear	167	2.22	.68	.45NS
	Joint	77	2.26	.61	

NS Insignificant

Table 11 describes the estimation of the responses, which was used to assess the mean difference between Academic Achievement and Family Type. The said table describes the mean score and the t-value between Academic Achievement of Students of Nuclear and Joint Families of CUK. The stated table displays that there is insignificant difference between Academic Achievement of students of Nuclear and Joint Families: the calculated t value is .45; ($p > .05$). Therefore, Ho9 is accepted.

DISCUSSION

Cognitive Styles and Gender: It is clear from the result of the objective 1.1 that there is insignificant difference between the cognitive styles of male and female students of CUK. Talukdar (2003, p.101) reported that boys and men tend to be more proficient than girls and women.

Study Habits and Gender: The results from the objective 1.2 state that there is a significant difference between study habits of male and female students. The study habits of male students were found significant in relation to their counterparts regarding their studies. Because Study habits not only cover the devotion, but it also entails the time, reading habits, learning techniques, memory, time schedule physical conditions. The findings of the stated objective contradict with the results of Reddy & Nagaraju (2001, p.44) that found that sex has no influence on study habits; both boys and girls have similar study habits.

Academic Achievement and Gender: It is clear from the result of the objective 1.3 that there is insignificant difference between Academic Achievement and Gender. The findings of the study are in accordance in with the findings of Goni, Wali, Ali and Bularafa (2015, p.18) who also found that there is no significant difference between academic achievements of male and female students. Meta-analyses have consistently shown that there are no significant gender differences in general cognitive abilities. Thus, although cognitive abilities are significantly and positively related to school achievement, they cannot explain gender differences in school achievement. (Spinath, Freudenthaler & Neubauer, 2010, p.481)

Locality Wise Discussion

Cognitive Style and Locality: It is clear from the result of the objective 2.1 that there is significant difference between the cognitive styles of rural and urban students of CUK. Asthana (2000, p.94) found that rural-urban residential background significantly influences the cognitive functioning of children. The finding of the present study contradicts those, which show no impact of locale on cognitive style. Sangwan and Chhikara (2000, p.47) indicated no significant impact of locale on cognitive abilities.

Study Habits and Locality: The results of the Objective No. 2.2 states that there is insignificant difference between Study Habits of rural and urban students studying in Central University of Kashmir. The 21st century has brought a revolution about education. The launch of new educational policies have developed an interest among general masses, with the result there is no significant difference in Study Habits of Rural and Urban. The study contradicts with the study of Guravaiah and Reddy (2004, p.49) who discovered there is no significant difference between rural and urban Students.

Academic Achievement and Locality: It is clear from the result of the Objective 2.3 that there is insignificant difference in between academic

achievement of rural and Urban Students of CUK. The possible explanation for this result is that there is a paradigm shift not only in the policies of the government but also in the mind-sets of rural people. Another reason could be availability of social media, which has transformed the vision of the rural people. In addition to that due to advancement rural Parents expose the lives of their wards to cities in order to get competent education, with the result they are able to receive good education, unlike before. Alspaugh (1992, p.2), Snyder & West (1992, p.87), and Haller, Monk & Tien (1993, p.66) failed to find any statistically significant differences between the two groups of students.

Type of Family Wise Discussion

Cognitive Style and Family Type: It is clear from the result of the Objective 3.1 that there is insignificant difference in cognitive style of CUK students belonging to joint and nuclear families. The finding of the present study is in accordance with the following studies.

Study Habits and Family Type: It is clear from the result of the Objective 3.2 that there is significant difference between the Study Habits of Nuclear and Joint family students of CUK Students from Joint families have better study habits than Students from Nuclear families. We are all well aware of the fact that Study habits are habitual way of exercising and practicing the abilities for learning. In nuclear families a child can become aware of one or two study habits and thereby learns only those (For Example, observation and concentration). While as on the other in joint families a child learns various study habits mainly due to the presence of various family members, where in his study behaviour gets influenced by many members and are able to develop study habits like concentration, motivation, keen observation, adjustment in school, networking and many more.

Academic Achievement and Family Type: It is clear from the result of the Objective 3.3 that there is insignificant difference between the Academic

Achievement of Nuclear and Joint family students of CUK. The insignificant difference could be due to the continuous encouragement and confidence of both the family types as both types of the families remain much attached and involved with their children. The attachment and the involvement of both the families significantly affect the academic performance of the students. The results are in consonance with the findings of Bilal, Tariq, Aleem, Shabbir & Parveen (2013, p.76).

CONCLUSION

The present study revealed that significant differences were observed in the Study Habits of Male students in relation to their counterparts. Moreover, the present study reported that Urban students have better cognitive styles than Rural students. Likewise, the study also discovered that Students from Joint families have better study habits than Students from Nuclear families. In addition to that in the stated study that there is insignificant difference between Cognitive Styles, Academic Achievements of Male and Female students of Central University of Kashmir. Further, the current study also exposed that there is insignificant difference in the Study Habits and Academic Achievement of Rural and Urban students studying in Central University of Kashmir. Besides that the study also discovered that there is insignificant difference in Cognitive Style and Academic Achievement of Central University of Kashmir students belonging to Joint and Nuclear families.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The study habits play a vital role in the academic achievement of students therefore; it is essential to inculcate the good study habits among the students.
- It is suggested that regular study habit training programmes in the institution must be arranged to improve the study habits.
- It is suggested that teachers should help the students to frame the time- table for study. They should be instructed to adhere to it.

- Parents should check whether their wards study in a quiet place away from disruption and disturbances.
- It is suggested that teachers should correlate the subject matter with the life situations of the pupils, in order to make the subject matter interesting for the pupils.
- It is suggested that university should make it mandatory for their students to visit the library; borrow books, magazines, newspapers and their visit should be marked with attendance there.
- It is suggested that Parents and teacher would do well to exercise great vigilance with regard to the formation of the good study habits among the pupils.
- It is suggested that Teacher should take special steps to increase and develop the reading skills of the pupils.
- It is suggested that teachers should make their classes lively by adopting modem techniques of teaching and learning.
- It is suggested the distractions for study are minimized. Hostels as well as study rooms should be designed away from highways so as to facilitate better study.
- The habits are thought rather than taught and a congenial and healthy attitude and environment are pre requisite for its cultivation.
- The study habit programmes both of preventive and remedial must be arranged in accordance with the abilities of the pupils.
- The parent teacher associations must be arranged, where in they should get awareness of inculcating good study habits.

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