

ISSN: 0973-9483

THE COMPASS

An International Peer-Reviewed Journal of
Education in Universal Human Values

Vol. 15, No. 1, October 2022

*The Journal of the Bahá'í Academy,
An Educational Institution Engaged in Research and Action in the
Field of Value Education for Institutions of Higher Learning*

**The Bahá'í Academy is a Recognized Institution of
Shivaji University
("A++" Grade re-accredited by NAAC, 2021, With CGPA-3.52)**

Editor: Dr. Lesan Azadi

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Bahá'í Academy
Shivajinagar, Panchgani- 412805,
Maharashtra, India
www.bahaiacademy.org
thecompass@bahaiacademy.org



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Editorial

Why do we want to discuss Tertiary Education Dropouts? Tertiary education that includes higher secondary, college, technical and vocational schools and higher education is, according to the World Bank, "instrumental in fostering growth, reducing poverty and boosting shared prosperity. It benefits not just the individual, but the entire educational system." (World Bank, 2021, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/tertiaryeducation>) Dropouts who discontinue their tertiary education constitute a sizable number of youths in India and many other countries. They are potentially an important driving force in the social and economic development of the country and the world, and in achieving the sustainable development goals, 2035.

In his book "Who Graduates from College? Who Doesn't?", Mark Kantrowitz writes about the United States Colleges: "The United States has a higher education system that is the envy of the world. Its breadth, its diversity and its near-universal access are the engine that has propelled the United States to become the world's economic superpower. Yet, it has a fundamental problem: More than half of students who enter the system leave with no credential to show for their investment in time and money. ... More than half of college students do not graduate on time. Three-quarters of college dropouts are first-generation college students, and more than two-thirds are low-income students." (<http://www.kantrowitz.com/books/college-graduation-rates/>)

Our own Indian scenario is disturbing too. Despite this situation, it's very difficult to find any thorough study on this topic to know why such a huge percentage of the youth drop out after secondary school, and what is the exact statistics. I have personally spoken randomly with some college authorities of the general disciplines of arts, commerce or science, about the difference between the number of the students who enroll in the first year, and those who complete their degrees. The answer: There is a very vast gap (Even sometime up to 40-50%, if not more!).

Usually, we talk only about enhancing GER (Gross Enrollment Ratio) in higher education, and now we talk about EER (Eligible Enrollment Ratio) but neither of the two tell us what the UN has called CR (Completion Ratio), i.e. those who are able to attain some degree of completion in tertiary education. This is what can reveal the number of the youth who enter tertiary or higher education and are able to complete it at certain level. The provision of multiple entry and exit that has been included in NEP 2020 can be used to its fullest potential in addressing the dropout issue.

Nevertheless, the challenge remains. Even suppose the number of the dropouts from tertiary education is brought under control and the completion rate soars high. Will these graduates have locally relevant skills that they need to take care of their lives and stand on their own feet? And there are several other questions to reflect upon? How to address the socio-

economic and family reasons why students drop out the tertiary education? Do students find the education they receive at tertiary education relevant to their life and their needs? How far the country's poorest and most marginalized groups, the girls and the minorities are included in the system? What are the opportunities available to reduce the rate of the dropouts and bring back the dropouts to education? Do skilling and distance education, both face to face and online, provide a silver lining to a brighter tomorrow?

Sincerely



Lesan Azadi (Ph.D.), Editor

**Education for The New Age of Technology
Insights by Prof. Dr. Ram Takwale
An Exclusive Interview with The Compass, Oct. 2022**



Prof. Ram G. Takwale

President of the I-CONSENT, Former Vice-Chancellor of University of Pune, IGNOU and YCMOU, and
Advisory Committee Member of the Bahá'í Academy, Panchgani

Primary Secondary and Tertiary are the divisions that are partly according to age development and partly according to skill development. Primary is childhood age Nursery up to 5th standard.

Then 6, 7, 8 is the upper primary. All these three levels have different approaches as the child is developing and is learning so many things through the family, environment, and others. So the approach is different. Child education brings you to 8th standard, higher primary. The next part is 9, 10th, 11th and 12th standards. These four years have to be concentrated on skill education.

Of course, this does not mean that skills should not be imparted from childhood age. They can be taught life skills and other small skills like how to help their mother, how to listen to her, and what will you do for your brother? And all these are the aspects of learning that the child learns. There is self-learning and there is family learning and both are very essential for education. Now question is those who do not have good families what will they learn? Those who have educated families, good families, the children are taken care properly. They learn differently. Now differences start right from that age. Therefore we will have to consider such an education system which will offer equal opportunities. Opportunity is important. How much is a child able to do and to rise through the opportunity is a different matter. So, access and success are rather different things. Access will be given to everybody, but success is what the child will have to achieve. What a child can achieve in the school is entirely dependent on the child himself and the school system, the environment and the teachers who teach. So, this is a complex issue.

At the moment let us concentrate on the 9th to 12th level which starts orienting children towards the job-related skill development. Because it is possible to find a job after 12th standard itself. After this standard various skill programmes are available and the new education policy states that these years are to be considered or rather focused around skill development. Having a skill alone will not work, you need to learn the theory behind it as well.

Gandhiji, Skill and Technology

Now, here I would like to say that Gandhiji was really great, and I will tell you why he was great? Because he has always spoken about skills. Gandhiji spoke about skill development linked with work either at factory or a small workshop. He said you learn those skills and learn the science behind each and every action. Learn how the plants are growing and producing cotton and how from cotton you will be stitching a cloth. So, all this is a process, skill does not mean only creating a thread; finding the right cotton, selecting the right thinness for the cloth and what climate is needed to grow cotton, all matter. Cotton will not grow equally at all the places; it survives certain conditions so this all is part of learning. Now when you think of skill development, skill is always accompanied by science and environment, science and the process of development and therefore skill has to be linked with scientific approach and natural development processes. If you allow these things to be present along with skill, this could be at higher education, or higher secondary education; both are the same.

Gandhiji gave this 'Moolodyog मूलोद्योग' concept which covers basic education part. Now what is the real meaning of basic education? What is necessary for your life? To earn a living is important; it shouldn't happen that I have learnt so many things and there is still no job for me. If after education you have this question, where will I find a job then this education is wrong;

this is not called education at all. Education has to be self-supportive. I should rather do something which is useful to the society, something which helps me in earning my bread; this is really a great idea. In the sense, while I am learning, I learn about nature also, learn about development processes also and learn about science and along with it learn how to sell my product to those who need it. I will find market also and I will earn something. This way I can make my education self-supportive. The New Education Policy gives great stress on the skill development. If this New Education Policy does not lead to my earning, to my self-supporting nature and helps me in learning, this will not be education; it is too deficient. We are rather coming out with a big framework and putting everybody in it.

Now we come out of local situation, with skills that are essential for life situation; here comes the life education. So our whole problem is we would like to link skills with life processes, in such a way that I rather survive with my education and learn something out of it, and can be self-supportive in learning in future. These are all Gandhiji's ideas, and they stand more important today than they were earlier, because there is always a problem of technology. Gandhiji used that technology to which the common man had access. If there is no access then technology will be aloof from him.

Men came to the cities leaving farming because he wanted to get into the factories and get some job. He did get the job but in the bargain his farming got lost. He could not earn anything out of it. So, the problem is whether the machines are taking away jobs from you? And earning from you?

Once someone was asked what do you do? The person said I go on fixing one thing every day and I get so much tired and exhausted. Then why are you doing this same thing over and over again? He answered because the conveyer belt has to move and therefore I must do the job. If now I fail someone else will come in and replace me; but this is a very non-creative job. Then is the factory not creating something? Yes, it is creating a car, and some other goods that are required by you and me but then how the entire product is created is not known to the worker. He is doing his own work in a routine way repeatedly. Such sorts of jobs are not the jobs that will shape the worker. The worker is part of a machine, but he should be able to do something creatively. These are again Gandhiji's ideas. He was perfect about all these things. Now technology is very big and is created in a centralized manner. In fact, technology came out of a machine, a steam engine. After that came petrol, kerosene, electric and so on. The machine size started becoming smaller and smaller. Steam engines required chimneys. You had to burn coal, boil water and under high pressure the machine would work. Then they were using steam engine everywhere -- rail, boat. Manchester became black due to steam. You are part of the machine, you cannot control it, and capitalists control the machine. They take the money, employ genius to do the work.

Now what is the role of this worker who goes every day, and works 8-10 hours a day? May be after coming home his creativity comes back to him, may be planting flowering plants and taking care of them would be creative for him. Many will not even have that, so they may feel very tired; the next day they will start again with the same routine. The whole point is that first

machine took away the muscle power from the human beings. Machine became very powerful and we started becoming smaller and smaller. Then car started getting manufactured, roads started becoming bigger, trams started to operate, now metros will be running. This is happening in this same world. It's not that we don't want this to happen. Not necessarily. We do want all this to happen because the entire world is moving ahead, and we want such support from machines, and they should work with us but they should not make us slave. This was again Gandhiji's idea. Therefore Gandhiji said that technology should be appropriate. Every person should have access to it and should be able to use it; now the same problem is today also. We need technology in such a way that it should be individually accessible. That's why even the mobile we use today is personal technology. So many points of access and process that we all use it.

Now let us come down to technology. Gandhiji was opposing technology at that time which was based on machines, cars; he said, "back to village". Go to village, live with nature, create with nature in addition make something new which can be sold outside. That was agrarian age. But no one prospered in agrarian nature to such an extent as to become capitalist. Capitalism came in a very different way, those who owned the factories, and the machines were earning money by sending their products all over the world as the world had become the marketing place. This is how things progressed after the first machine.

Nayi Talim: The New Education

Gandhiji had created Nayi Talim or the new education concept and formulated it in 1937. He had worked almost 40 years on this concept, first in Africa for 20 years then in Sabarmati for 20 years and then he realized that he should do it for the smallest person, the smallest place. That is the reason he came to a village called Sevagram. Here in the village, he started living with other people and practicing as well. To live autonomously, and independently were his ideas but this had limitations as rejecting technology completely cannot help. What we can try to do now is to focus on technology, which is part of our life now; it is an outcome of 500 years of scientific thinking. That thinking is a result of the human race development and superior ideas. For example, cause and causality relationship. Take rationality: what I should choose and what I should not and why? This sort of thinking came with science. This was there earlier as well, nearly 2700-2800 years back. Rushi Kunal had this idea. He said give me cause and effect and give me the process to implement; I don't need the help of God because my science will help everything! To that extent he went. Buddha had gone to him; his problem was different. He understood cause and effect, and was the first person to talk about causality, about rationality. And then he said now I can explain how the world is moving; to that extent he was powerful. So, it is not that only in Greece that they found out all these basic principles, but India too had found out these principles and they were presented through Ovi, Shlokas. That was the way of preserving the knowledge, which was done very well. That is the reason why we could grow to that extent. We had a basic idea of thinking and rationality-- this is good and that is bad. Understanding the difference between good and bad is rationality. This is ethics as well.

Philosopher 'Kant' said man is an ethical person or creator, he must understand what is good and bad. A person doing things for himself is a bad person, ethically corrupted. We have many definitions of human beings. Man is a laughing animal said, 'Oscar Wild'. Man is a social animal, but then many other animals also form a society, a group. They protect each other in a group. A famous example is an elephant herd. They protect the young ones and take care of them. Even though it is said that man is a social animal, animals are also social. Thus it is not a unique definition. A unique definition comes in when you come down to man as a tool-making animal. We started making tools. Once you start making the tool, you will understand its utility, the science behind making the tool, and the technology. You create technology out of it and therefore it becomes science-based, and technology becomes a part of your career.

Technology and Man

So, the machines became powerful, and the steam engine was the first machine. It started working automatically with coal. I still remember an incident regarding Kolhapur Chatrapati who was trying to compete with the steam engine from Meeraj to Kolhapur. Nearly 30 kms he kept on changing the horses. Kolhapur Chatrapati came first, and the machine lost. Initially, all this was fine but now this cannot happen; we have come far away from this scenario. The point is that machines have developed and have developed in such a way that entire industrial areas or cities have been built.

We need to understand one more point, these industries, tools, and techniques have changed our ways of working, ways of production, and ways of real utility in our life. Therefore, technology changes the ways of working, ways of living, and ways of creating your future, and hence technology is very important. But are you becoming a slave of the machine or the machine is your slave? The answer was clear at that time. I am the driver of a car I have, and I can drive. The machine is controlled by me so I am superior; the machine cannot own me. This was the case with the first machine. Whole nineteenth century has developed like that. But then the 20th century came in with smaller and smaller machines that started to spread in society. People liked to have a cycle that was a mechanical machine, then the motorcycle came in, then the car came in, and now we live differently. But all of them needed a road to travel.

So now technological age has started. Technology decides the nature of society. When was man living in a jungle-like a tribal-- what sort of technology were they knowing? They knew how to live in a jungle, how to protect themselves from wild animals, and how to know when they would attack you or not attack. They had their own culture and had to survive. But they were far more cultured because they did not kill or eat anything unless it was needed. So, they had their own culture; understanding their culture and nature was a part of their life. Therefore the 'Adimav' started living in caves, and trees and started using fire. Then they started befriending some animals like horses, and dogs; this was nearly fifty thousand years back. That was in the tribal age. Then came the agrarian age. This age was started essentially by women who used to bring grains from outside, prepare something, all would eat, and the remaining was thrown in the 'Parasbag'. Then she started observing that things were growing, and she tried to understand the science behind growing of seeds and what was the outcome

of it. This was the beginning of another chapter and then agriculture came in, trees were cut, and lands were prepared. Then people started to sow the seeds that they used to eat. The entire culture changed and agriculture became a culture and then growing crops became a need of the family. Slowly they started to capture the land, this became a way of living.

I have stayed in this kind of life in a village, wild boars used to come and ruin our fields but what could be done? Imagine 30 to 40 wild boars running through and eating your field. Till recently people were living this way. But then people thought village life was not good; they said let us go to cities. People used to bring things from the village, like coal and wood, but then slowly everyone moved to using gas. This is how people moved from agrarian society towards industrial society. There is a concept of human settlement, how tribal people were living? Before they came to the 'Pada' they created 10 to 15 houses together, created protection around them, and then lived there. This was tribal culture, then started agriculture with grains and domesticated animals. Life was different nearly ten thousand years, then came the new machine; it was a surprise to all, then cities were created. So first pada (limited community), village (larger community), cities (limited society) and now we are living in a digital society.

Digital society started practically in 1995 when the internet became a public service. From then onwards we started using the internet and digitization; the major processes were digitalization, virtualization, mass mobilization, working in a group, and self-mass mobilization. These were the key processes. During the last 20 years there are different revolutions; but what is the meaning of revolution? Every year if a revolution happens what will happen? But last 30 to 40 years revolutions are happening on a regular basis. Digitalization came in and mobile phones were made available. Initially, they were very costly but now they have become much cheaper than before. At that time, I had gone to London, where I saw the desktop; it was big, and we had to design a page to see how a page would look like. I could see some ladies and gentlemen who were the artists; they were doing a good job. We were starting our open university at that time so we thought this was a great opportunity and we must bring all that technology home. Then started the next phase of technology which was micro digitalization. Microscopic scale. Then the big things tabletops became smaller. We had our first computer at Pune University which occupied three-storied buildings. Now that technology is in my pocket and everyone else's pocket; they are more powerful. This is mobile technology. So first digital technology, then mobile technology, and now it is becoming AI technology i.e. artificial intelligence-based technology. It has taken hardly 20 years to change the technology. Digitization continued for 5 to 10 years then came mobile technology for the next 5 years and now artificial intelligence technology is going everywhere. By 2035 'AI' will occupy most things, robots will be functional, the internet will be easily available, and drones will be there. They will help you, me, and everyone around us. Teaching will be easier. There is one software called Alexa; Alexa's name has been derived from the library of Alexandria. This library was in Egypt, had myriad of books. I remember even Moscow library had plenty of books; you name it, and you would get it. Even books in Marathi were available. When they came to know that we were post graduate students, they gave us a special room to sit; it was written 'room for academicians and post graduate students'. We were confused why did they gave us such a

big room with a capacity of 125 to 150 seats. When we entered, we saw some old people were working there. When we sat there a heap of books were kept in front of us and we were told that we could have these books as long as we needed them; now you can go ahead and study. It was an amazing thing to happen. Such a respect to education; it was a wonderful feeling. This was the earlier age-- the age of books. This was the technology at that time; now things have become digitalized.

Now the digitalization is so much. People of our age are slow in using them, but our grandchildren are very fast in handling the gadgets and technology. I have this technology, you have it, everyone around has it. From the time technology has entered, our daily lives have changed. Processes of living and working have changed entirely. And this is the reason why this is called revolution, because this changes the nature of living and working. This is the technological revolution which is also called the third digital revolution. This revolution will be completed by the year 2035. Means it is said that by 2035 to 2040 the last man from the factory will go out. And people will be able to control the machines from their homes, will be able to observe and work from home. It will be AI based working and learning, we are moving towards that. Now this technology has come in everyone's hand. I can load this mobile and download processes that I want, so I can control it. Thirdly people are ready to give you services. Their jobs are to give you services and products that you need; so now my market becomes the world market. That's how whole thing has changed.

Now we are in an artificial intelligence based technological revolution, but this revolution is a decentralized revolution. Gandhiji wanted one thing. He opposed centralized technology because he believed that technology made slaves out of human beings. When we work on a conveyer belt we don't do anything but mechanically keep doing the same thing as a part of the machine. But now I am not a part of the machine; I get my machine as I like it, for the purpose that I like it, and I use the technology for my purpose. That's why Gandhiji's concepts are coming back again. Therefore, basically we are having three major processes of change, digital technology, the second one is cashless money transactions, the third one is wealth creation, those who can create wealth will be richer and those who cannot create will remain poor. That's why the digital divide is coming in. Therefore, this technology needs to go into everyone's hands, and that too to a person who is on the periphery, as a person who is on the periphery cannot come to center stage. In fact, digital technology can bring all the people and all the processes, make the people educated and bring them to the center stage; this is a very important process. Here simultaneously a number of things have started happening. We started going to the cloud. Just like this electricity that comes, you don't actually know where this is coming from, is it from Pune or Madhya Pradesh or somewhere else, but we know it is there. The same thing is happening with the internet cloud and now everyone wants to go on the cloud. This is how the things are changing.

What are the basic processes that are changing digitalization, cashless transactions, and communication. Now transactions are in the field of production, this field is changing completely. Production is of goods and services. They are producing that way and selling it to anybody. By sitting here, you can sell it to the world, so production and secondly

communication. I should be aware of what is in demand and start communicating with the entire globe which has started globalization. The third one is also transportation. Sitting here I can send things anywhere. Our children are learning all these things and when they start operating; they know many things.

I would like to tell you all a fine example of this. There is a village near Kolhapur, where slippers, or you may call it Chappals, were made without using any nails, they had a special way of making this footwear. Many people used to use it; it became a unique style of making these Chappals. Then one day someone from Italy contacted them and said, "you all have good skill sets, we will send you some samples of shoes try and make them as well". This village person actually made the exact shoe but made one change. He changed the place of the opening of the shoe, because according to him the original Italian design was giving unnecessary pressure and there was a risk of the shoe breaking after use. So, you see this person has really studied the human foot so well that he could suggest the exact solution for durability and comfort. When the shoe was sent back to Italy, the Italian person was angry due to the change in the design, then he realized that this change was done due to the tremendous knowledge that this villager had. He was amazed and said "Hats off to you" and then they started sending measurements to get more and more shoes made. Slowly the girls of the house started understanding where all in the world these shoes are getting sent. One day someone asked one of the girls what she would like to be, so she answered, "I want to become a pilot" he was amazed and asked her, "Do you know anything about becoming a pilot?" Instantly she answered, "Of course, there are special seats for girls from our social background to study and become a pilot. So, I want to become a pilot and due to family business, I know the places in the world now". She had gathered knowledge about the world.

You see the world of knowledge can create a different world for a person, then you add MOOCS to it, sources of new knowledge, Wikipedia, now it is free as well, then there are Wiki processes and many more. The world is changing rapidly due to this and we are creating a new world out of it. Now, what will be there in this new world? There will be robots working in the houses, IOTs will be there and many more things will be added to them, and then there will be drones. You see things will be so easy that even if two neighbors are discussing what food is made today at your house instantly it can be delivered from one house to another by a drone. It will happen in the future now. Society is going to change, in fact, a totally different society will emerge.

Technology, Values and Culture

Now the fundamental question is if the drones and robots will start working then what remains for us? What work will we be able to do? Are we supposed to just live, but a person who is just existing will develop bad habits and get into bad company and things go bad! The richest civilizations have been destroyed by internal conflicts. Self and social had the biggest conflict and the self has destroyed the social completely. Civilizations vanished because of this. Then the next question is about our civilization -- will it also get vanished like the others? But we should not let this happen, then what is required to be done? Well, the answer is creating a value system! We need to create wealth but at the same time creating culture is also equally

important. Then our culture should give a sustainable form to our society. This means, that the biggest part of the culture is morality. This morality should be the biggest part of your, mine, and our life. This morality should teach us what is right and what is wrong. We should not consider what others are talking about but follow morality instead. The choice between good and bad is a human choice and people who do not select the good option in the interest of the entire society will never be able to create culture, but people who do think of the entire society will be the essential aspect of our future society. We will have enough wealth and have the drones, robots, and IOTs which will be working for us. But you need to work towards building a culture and a society where you will make everyone happy, you make everyone cultured, happiness cannot be short term happiness, and there should be the satisfaction which is permanent and sustainable. It should be a lifelong process. This is all about the technology that we have been discussing. If this technology is taking your jobs away from you then what should be done?

Gandhiji had a very deep thinking about all of this, he was a very different person. He said when man and machine are compared with each other, that time you find out such a technology that can only be controlled and operated by a man and not entirely by the machine. Then what is this technique that only a man can possess and not a machine? Here then we turn towards yet another issue. What is the unique characteristic of a man? Man can think, but when does the deep thinking start, it starts when the need arises. Child starts crying when he doesn't see the mother around, once he cries mother comes and gives him milk, so he becomes happy. A similar thing is about the adults as well. So, J. Krishnamurthy who has created one definition said man must have something different than the machine, which machine cannot create and that is creativity, willingness, imagination. So imagination, creation and will to do something differently are the qualities of the human being and these are the qualities of mind and therefore man is different from the machine and this superiority of the man has to be maintained in the future society and the goal has to be, to become greatest person in the world. Creativity has no single way; it is showcased in a number of ways. And self-actualization is a good beginning to go ahead, because man is really great because he has a great mind. One must think of achieving this greatness and work throughout life.

In Indian philosophy there are three concepts. 'Knowledge', you should acquire the knowledge. You should do the 'karma'; work and karma are different. Work can be done by animals and machine as well, but human beings do karma when they put their mind in the activity; when mind is included in any activity it happens differently. The third concept is Bhav or Bhakti; he does everything with such a devotion, that this devotion becomes a part of life, part of his heart and mind. This devotion he applies everywhere; realization and acceptance of facts leads to bhakti. But Bhakti with scientific approach is different than Bhakti without challenging things. But then Dnyana, Karma, and Bhakti are the three qualities that human beings have to develop, and then they can rise to any level.

You actually don't need big factories, big amounts and other things. It's not that we don't need it at all; of course, we do. You may have it to live a luxurious life but it is not a necessity. So, technology is giving you different alternatives. I have spoken about mind earlier also, but the

mind is virtual, you can't see it, you don't know where the mind comes from. What is mind, you know potential energy and kinetic energy; potential energy converts into other forms of energy. Therefore karma, in which rather you devote your mind and your bhakti or Bhav into it, becomes a different form of work altogether. Therefore, work I should do in such a way that I am devoted to it, I can learn from it, I get knowledge, I can create a product which is dear to me, which is liked by someone else, and I can give it to them. So, my self-actualization can go to any level and there is no limit to it. It should not happen like Napoleon who said, I have conquered the world now there is nothing more to do. Not like this. Growth of mind is unlimited because of self-actualization.

Education for The New Age of Technology

So far, we discussed human settlement as the basic unit of society, and the industrial revolution because of which urbanization took place. After that came digitalization, virtualization, and new technology was introduced. Man became global. Technology has taken him around the world. Physically he is in one place but his mind takes him everywhere.

Now we are going through various digital revolutions. The first digital revolution is with virtualization followed by corresponding competence. And the second digital revolution is mobile technology and for that, we needed clouds also; the cloud is another way of describing global technology, and global connectedness. Now we are moving with small units in our pockets and their importance is really great. They provide you with a completely different way of living and working. And a number of new things have entered-- things like Wikipedia, and wiki processes are new things and knowledge society, virtual society, virtualization -- all these factors came in. Now we are going to go through two more stages. One is what is the new educational model? That we should adapt for such a situation. This is one point, the second point is in what way are we going to conceive or construct our society? So, there are two parts and Gandhiji said, "back to the village". But no one would like to go to that village which is old style because new technology has developed so much. So, we would like to look at it in a different way, and that concept is a city in a village. The city must go to a village, and that Cillage, a city in a village becomes an important aspect. Now, in that case for creating a model of education, we first need rather the definition of thinking and the definition of learning. We all know UNESCO's definition of learning to be, Learning to know, Learning to do, and learning to live together or work together. These are four different learning processes. One is knowing and acquiring knowledge. The second one is doing i.e. acquiring skills and converting them into some sort of work, which is really great and requires your mind to be involved in it. The third one is living together or working together to create value systems and contributing towards social development. Everyone has an output, and output rather makes these processes important otherwise it is simply learning. The fourth one learning to be, meaning how to develop myself, what to become, and what I want to be. All these issues are in front of the youth all the time. Youths keep on thinking about what they want to become. And that is the reason why they should first understand what they want to become. Secondly, they must think if they can become what they have decided to become. He should be able to understand the possibility, because if he imagines the impossible then he will not be able to achieve it. The next thing is he should understand what he should learn, and which skills to be acquired

which will enable him to become what he has decided to become. But in the end, the most important part is the life processes. All these four processes that I have mentioned before have included the life process.

Learning to know, gain knowledge. It may be the development of self. I am like this, I am able to do this, I know this all this is self-development. I still remember when my grandson came to visit us he was around 3 to 4 years old at that time. He would always be around in the kitchen when his mother would cook and keep on asking if she wanted any help. All the time he would say Aai, I will do it, I can do it, I can do it....then he would take things from his mother's hand and keep it in their place. I can do it, I will do it he would keep on saying this. He was very much determined to do things. Then I used to say let him do it. Just keep watching that he is not doing anything wrong. This is actually an attitude that states that I can do it, I will do it and through this, you shape your development, you create yourself. Self is also called 'Aatma' in Marathi. You actually cannot see it, or find it but it is true, and it is the self that you need to cultivate. But then again if you are too engulfed in your own self it can create problems for you. But then again you want to grow and develop all of this. It is learning to develop self. Self has two parts. One is thinking about own self-- this is mine, I will not give it to anyone, is commonly said. Then someone says, but you can share it with friends. Then this person gives his things to others, and they eat together. This is the part of the social self. Self and social self are the two parts of the self.

Learning to do, meant that you must work wholeheartedly, put your mind to it, if it is not happening properly, try harder till you become successful in doing it. Then when a person really puts his mind to the work and completes it with satisfaction, he actually starts jumping with joy. I did it! I did it! I could do it! This is part of his happiness. Getting happiness through knowledge is very important indeed. Another part of self is 'Karma'. Do your karma in such a way that you should enjoy every moment of doing it. From this karma you should gain knowledge as well. In skill development while doing the karma, the work, you should gain knowledge as well. This happens automatically. Since you are putting your mind to it the 'Bhav' or 'Bhakti' i.e. devotion also follows.

But your devotion or Bhakti should be limited to the scope of science only. It should not go beyond. For example, you have taken technology, you are using technology, but then when it gets outdated you must learn the new technology. The technology will get old but your learning will be of a higher level. Finally, the kind of technology is not important but by using it, how you are shaping yourself is important. We are living well, we are working well, we all are together, and we help each other; this entire value system is involved in the process. When a group of 4 to 5 students come together and go outside to work with different people together, work in close proximity to nature they start realizing this value system, and understanding of this is more important.

We had a group of girls from our village school who received an international award for their school project. The work done by them was excellent and original. This project was about the environment, the types of trees, their benefits, medicinal values, and what and how things can

be done? All this was included in the project. The organizers had found a tremendous difference between this entry and the other entries. The group received the first prize. Next year also they got the first prize. After that, the teachers couldn't cope and couldn't show much interest in the projects done by the students. All this means, if students are given creative work or made to work through concrete action, they can work brilliantly, and their creativity comes to another higher level. Searching for this creativity is a vital part of learning. All this is about Learning to be live together.

Finally, it is learning to be. If you ask someone, what did you become? And if that individual answers I can do this, I can do that. If you ask further then what? And if the answer is I am a good human being, I behave well, even though people sometimes do not behave properly still I do not go and fight, I behave well only. This is the kind of conversation we hear when an individual is learning to be. This individual is expressing how he is developing the self to be. That is why self-development and the societal development of the nation are very important.

The Kothari commission report was titled "Education and National Development". J.P. Naik had rather mentioned after 10 to 12 years that we had not really understood the real meaning of development here. We wrote to him that this was ideal behavior because it was accepted that the real meaning of development was not understood by us and that is the reason, we proved incomplete.

I have already mentioned Gandhiji; then came J. P. Naik. He had thought in detail about globalization and this was his unique characteristic. He had travelled around the world and had a sound knowledge of values. And then he presented a format of New Education, which had 2 to 3 characteristics. First it was technologically independent. He said technology should go to every common person. Then social development was the second characteristic-- learning for social reconstruction. How to reconstruct the existing society. The third point was learning to create a future. We have to build our future.

Creating a future is the purpose of the model of education. Because the question is why do I learn? To do the things already done in a better way? Maybe others have already done those things in a better manner, then now I want to create my own future. Creating future is a very crucial aspect and J.P. Naik has considered this in his model of education. His model was different than the Gandhian model. He had said bring in technology, use technology, let it be then whatever latest technology but work with it.

Based on his model we also created a new model of education. We added the summary of many aspects. First of all treat all the processes and results systematically-- this means think scientifically- i.e. process-result. But then unless there is input how can you go to the process? You cannot! But then what will you do with inputs, because everyone is not clever, everyone is not at the same level! Some people are better at something than others, some may have good schools, some may have a bad schooling system, but then what processes they will create is their own struggle. The result that will be expected can be achieved through many different ways. If an individual creates something from nothing then he deserves accolades for

this creativity. Some of them can not do it even if they have everything and some individuals do it without having anything. And that also in a better, unique manner and interestingly he has done it completely. Here it can be termed as innovation.

What we did was a copy of what J. P. Naik had said, **“treat everything as process-result based approach”**. **Secondly global local approach**. Now we have universal as well; things like what will you do when you will reach the moon? Of course life on the moon will be different, but till the time you are living in a country like India, things to consider will be from a global perspective.

Third one is use of pedagogy of social reconstruction; there are three pedagogies. Scenario-situation based learning. What is the scenario? Actually, situation is known to everyone and from that you create a scenario. In this pedagogy you learn how to change the existing situation; imagine how the changed situation will be and you actually try to create it. So, this is also one aspect of creating future.

Another aspect is what is my role in in? What role will I play to create all these changes? What new things I do? This is an approach of construction, what you do? Did you do it well? Were you better than others? Did you help others? If the answer is yes, then it means that the learning is at the level of construction. Now some will perform better in certain situations and others might excel in a better way if different situations are given to them.

Next one is problem- solving based learning. Here question can be asked by anyone, but can you solve it? How will you solve it? If the question is very difficult, try the simple question first, solve it. Or else derive your own interpretation in case you feel the question is difficult for you. Give meaning to your question and then try to solve it. Then now, whether the question is difficult or easy, it is up to others to decide because you have already applied your learning to solve it. These are parts of creativity, and this the pedagogy which says learning to know from problem solving. Learning to know from my participation of working, learning to know from doing or working, learning to know i.e. gaining knowledge. These are the part of the earlier definition that I have discussed.

The fourth process is very important, you should find out your own learning path, life path. There is a very nice definition of lifelong learning; it is from Gandhian time. Learning for self-development and social-self development are two parts. Learning for social development refers to everyone is working towards the betterment of the society. Learning for value creation or wealth creation, whatever was done should create some wealth, the importance should increase; get people involved.

Learning to be is about creating your own self. Now you should come to the level where you will say that I will not only look after myself, I will not be selfish, I will take what I want and share everything with everyone else. The value system has to change, because you have created your own self. So this is all is a part of life processes.

You need to find out a life path and you will be surprised to see that you are learning all through life. There is no end to learning, there is no end to development, and there is no end to self-actualization. There is no limit to self-growth or the growth of 'Atma'; you can keep growing to next higher and still higher level. Since you have done the things on your own your, learning will never go anywhere-- it is embedded into your mind. Lifelong learning and finding out your own learning path is most important.

Now we need to apply this because this is just not limited to an individual level; there is community, family as well. What the family is doing for me and what I am doing for them is important to understand. In this way learning can be connected to all aspects of our life. And if we connect all these things together then the children start developing, and if we really keep an account or try to find out how we have developed and what our life path is then we realize that the children are slowly and steadily cultivating growth mind-set in them and working towards self-development. Finally from the time that we are born till our death we need to develop and enhance our life path. **Now this is the model of lifelong learning**; so, where to apply it? The answer is human settlement; we all stay together, we need each other, we also need to work for a living, I need to earn for myself and my family. Of course I will do it, my children will do it, parents will do it, other relatives will do it and we will share things. Don't get anyone in trouble; help each other and live happily. What more do we need? There is a tremendous scope of development here.

In this scenario if someone wishes to be an engineer he can, and not necessary that he learns only theory-- he can even become skill oriented. I will give you an example of an engineer who is baking cakes and breads and that also delicious ones. He is so happy in perusing his creative side, and earning enough money as well. And this is a never ending business. This is an example of searching your own job which gives you satisfaction, happiness and money as well. Maybe a robot can come and help me with the bakery but can not have my creativity, happiness and satisfaction. So here the role of the person is important. When you have creativity and satisfaction in life you slowly start moving from self and start thinking about others as well. We start thinking about the society, village, city. Once we start considering others as ours, we help the bright children to go ahead in life, we let them study and develop. We encourage them to go abroad learn and come back to spread the development. This is the global learning aspect as well as local application aspect. Global local is very important.

I have discussed three aspects of making future, which includes situational part, i.e. we will try to develop the situation of which we are the part of. Participation and development will be considered. What were the questions and how did you solve them is equally important, your creativity is important, sharing is important. This pedagogy of social reconstruction considers many aspects like lifelong learning and development of life path.

Now the question could be asked how much money you require, but now the answer is why we need anything excess; we have everything what we want, we live together, no one remains hungry. If someone wishes he go ahead and earn more, but important thing is acceptance of me, we and us. This is New Education.

Do you know, what is the meaning of 'New' in 'New Education'? This means 'Nitya Nootan' everyday something new. Yesterday I did it his way but today will be different approach. When you do things in a different manner every day, you find everything different, you feel excited to learn, to work and this is where the greatness of a human mind starts developing; and then you ask the question how great a person is? You will find an answer in Indian philosophy, which states when a person starts thinking less about the self and more about the others, and gives himself to others, gives away his 'Atma' to the family, village or the entire world, that person will be considered as a great person. Whatever the wealth you have created share with others-- what is not required what is excess. So, when you give your 'Atma' to others it becomes 'Par-Atma' i.e., the atma becomes of others, and I get closer to 'Parmatma' -- we don't need to go anywhere to search for it, it is within us, you need to realize it. It should not be taught as philosophy; a person should realize it while working for others. Some people then realize that I am not doing anything for myself, but still, I am not hungry as others are also giving me. This is the structure of a society, this has not appeared through imagination. Almost from 3000 years it is in existence.

Now let us think again about local and global; how do I become global? In the virtual space, I can contact anyone anywhere. I can reach out to others, my mind will travel but physically I am situated in one place. People travel around come together, discuss ideas and try new things. Find out what the others don't have and create new things. We will establish relations. People who can afford to pay we will charge them; those who cannot, we will not snatch their money. Our future society needs to be created in this way. That's the reason why we are slowly removing our self away from everything, because when everyone around me is helping me to live and sustain, I don't need myself. I live happily with others. They guide me, the coax me to do good, we all work together. The value system of creating our culture is important. It is not necessary just to earn money; we are not going to take anything with us, we all receive money when we require. So creating a value system is above all.

Now we need to think about Cillage development; how will be the digital society in the digital era? And how will I be able to live in this society? I must work well in the world; I must earn; I should not fall short in anything; if required technology should be utilized; I will use and give you also to use; we all will work together. We will try and do something better than what is happening in this world. But the question is how can I create this Cillage? I live in a good city, go to a good school, have a good learning environment, but what about those who do not have schools, what can be done? Will they also get the same opportunities? Of course, they should get all these opportunities. Once you start thinking about them you realize that they should be the ones who should get these opportunities, otherwise what is the use of this technology? Let the technology go free in their hands, then who should do it? Well, the answer is society should do it, government should do it. What about the youth then? Yes, they will use it well. Now where did we know that a group of 4 to 5 village girls, coming from poor background will win the first prize at national competition and get prize money of Rs. 1 lakh (i.e. one hundred thousand). This all can happen in a straight way, they get opportunity, they get tools to work and proper direction and on top of it they actually willingly do a good job, as the girls

did. And we need to reconstruct our society in such a way that children/youth get these opportunities often.

Now, the question is about selfish people, because this kind of a system will hamper their desires. They won't be able to eat money! That's why digital society is beneficial because everything will be recorded. Of course, using technology such people try to save tax. Why did this happen, why did such a software was created, why people who knew about it did not object? Were they selfish? Are they taking bribes? All these thoughts come into the minds of the youth and that is the reason why we must start from them. We must teach them to love properly, not to be selfish, make them understand that they will receive everything that they want but have patience. And if they don't then, all of us together with hard work will try to achieve it. Let the youth grow, let them become great persons. All these things will be incorporated in a cillage. Then there will be a networking, you cannot stay isolated for a very long period, you need networking around you. And this is how a network of global-local is established. That can be called global network through which we will come to know what is happening in the world. The learners will do it. And then we will understand how to work for creation, how-to do-good Karma, and how to reach out to the world, give products, give services and new procedure will start emerging. As an outcome of all of this, if really some more things are required for the society, we all will sit together and work for it. Will do the hard work. All these things can come under cillage. I am saying "they can", maybe not in this exact way but they can. Some people may feel that all the authority is going away from our hands, so let us oppose to everything; in this case what will happen? We ourselves should try and find out answers for our questions. After all questions are theirs! So this is all a part of the cillage and we need to reconstruct a new society out of this. And at the bottom if there is third tier of democracy, In India village is the third tier of democracy, then they should use their rights, there are so many rights given to them, but they have not reached to them, people in between try to create obstacles. Rajiv Gandhi had once said if we send 100 Rupees for the poor, not even 20 Rupees reach to the needy. With technology the middle system is not required; the money will go directly to their account. So you will be able to use technology in many different ways. So, people will get caught.

The point here is very simple; we need to create a good society which is based on morality, culture, where it will be required to follow ethics, required to give less importance to the self, and to become Parmatma will be most important aspects. Many questions will be answered due to this. All should get an opportunity to go around the globe, do good work and to create something.

Now you may think about applying what I have said to the problems of education. For example, can social reconstruction provide a possible solution to reduce the dropout rate?



A STUDY ABOUT THE ROLE OF TERTIARY EDUCATION: ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO REDUCE THE DROPOUT RATE

Mrs. Sayali Dubash

Programme and Curriculum Development Officer, Bahá'í Academy, Panchgani,

Email: sayalidubash@bahaiacademy.org

Paper Receipt Date: 14th August 2022

Peer Review Date: 22th September 2022

Paper Publication Date: 31st October 2022

Similarity Report: 0%

ABSTRACT

Tertiary education has been considered the next logical step after secondary education in school. Here the curriculum is designed to offer higher learning objectives and skills. Students opt for tertiary education for a number of reasons including finding better prospects for job opportunities, gaining knowledge, or sometimes, simply achieving a basic university degree or vocational certificates.

However, it is observed that not all students complete their tertiary education successfully. (Government Of India, 2020) The National Statistical Office (NSO) of the government of India states that the ratio of dropouts is 8:1, this is a matter of great concern. There are many reasons behind dropouts and significant research is going on in this area to find out actual problems and valid solutions.

Furthermore, there are people who have successfully completed their tertiary education and alongside have observed a number of experiences that can provide a different perspective on the issue of tertiary dropouts. This research is conducted to find out real-life experiences of people who are successfully educated but simultaneously have observed certain positive points as well as points of improvement in tertiary education. They have been asked to advise certain practical solutions for reducing the rate of dropouts. This study is expected to share practical and viable solutions to find out ways to help students successfully complete their tertiary education.

INTRODUCTION

Education regardless at any level is a fundamental right of every Indian citizen. At the primary level, the provision of equal learning opportunities has been made by the government of India. The scene however starts changing once students go to secondary and higher secondary

schooling. It is at the college/university level where tertiary education begins and a number of challenges are faced by the students.

As the age increases so do the responsibilities and expectations. It is very crucial at this juncture that a student receives proper guidance and support for selecting a field of study which will enhance their inbuilt capacities and talents, and at the same time provide employment/career opportunities for the future.

However, the role of education is sometimes considered to have a very limited scope. At times it is merely considered the path to achieving basic qualification requirements for employment. Many times, it is considered a mandated process rather than a fruitful experience of self-development. The second aspect of education is also often neglected that is, becoming capable to contribute towards the progress of society, this is called the “Two-fold moral purpose of Education” as mentioned in various Baha’i writings and, is actually applicable in various ways to all education systems all over the world. According to the two-fold moral purpose, there needs to be a holistic development of a student during the formal years of education and tertiary education provides that opportunity to enhance personality and to build capacities, skills, and attitudes which will enable the students to also contribute to the betterment of society.

Unfortunately, some students have to leave tertiary education in the midst of challenges, difficulties, or at certain times self-will to be different from others or to perform differently. At times they are successful in running their own business, start-ups or joining family-owned enterprises. But the percentage of such success stories is very less. Several of these students join short-time or vocational courses so that they can work to achieve financial stability. It has been observed, that in the case of girl students, many times marriage is given priority over education. After marriage without proper family support, these students are unable to continue their higher education due to various reasons.

Then, there are students who despite difficulties, and challenges at the personal or family level successfully complete their education. They are the ones who remain longest under the influence of Tertiary education. At times they experience certain difficulties at the personal level, or institutional level, peer pressure, family pressure, etc. These students find ways to come up with positive solutions. No doubt many times they are benefitted from a certain position in their families, financial freedom, level of intelligence, government schemes, easy access to university, better living conditions, and conducive learning environments to name a few, but the longer time spent by them in tertiary education makes their opinions and views equally important, their observations and suggestions extremely valuable.

Thus this study is based on real-life experiences of people who have completed their tertiary education successfully while doing so have experienced certain positive points about tertiary education in the life of individuals. Similarly, they have observed certain points of improvement. Through this study, the researcher also wishes to find out certain practical solutions to reduce the dropout rate.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What role can tertiary education play in the lives of students?
2. Can there be practical solutions to reduce the rate of dropouts?

OBJECTIVES

The survey is conducted on people who have successfully completed their tertiary education, keeping in focus the following objectives:

- To know their views on tertiary education
- To find out their positive experiences with tertiary education
- To identify the points of improvement that they have observed in tertiary education
- To compile together certain practical solutions that they suggest in order to reduce the rate of dropouts

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

An article published on the website of “The World Bank” (The World Bank, 2022) well illustrates the meaning of tertiary education. It explains in detail that tertiary education is to be considered after secondary school education. This type of education primarily includes Universities, which could be public or private in nature, certain trade bodies, and institutes that are technical or maybe imparting vocational training. Further in the article, the characteristics of educated people have been described, also this article explains why tertiary education is needed to establish economic balance. This article also states the world statistics of tertiary education students as of October 2021. The interesting factor about this article is the factual information and well-illustrated point of world view. The last two paragraphs suggest a number of viable solutions and the need for a connection between the local requirements such as economy, labour demand, local developmental aspects, and curriculum development. This is indeed an interesting article to gather a wholesome view about tertiary education.

The website of the UNESCO- Institute of Statistics (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, n.d.) has a page dedicated to higher education. There are a number of case studies, recent developments, and higher education-related information published in the form of articles, statistics, and digital representations of the data related to the global flow of students in tertiary education. In 2019 an e-Atlas was published to indicate the gender inequality in education which unfortunately influences tertiary education girl dropouts worldwide.

The article published on the e-copy of “India Today” (India Today, 2020) explains some of the factors that are responsible for the slow progress of education in India, some of the main reasons that have been mentioned are categorized as increasing cost of education, less focus given on the Indian languages creating language barriers, There has been a lot of misuse of the resources and unfortunately, the nature of the curriculum is unable to establish real-life application creating educated jobless people. This is a very interesting article indeed.

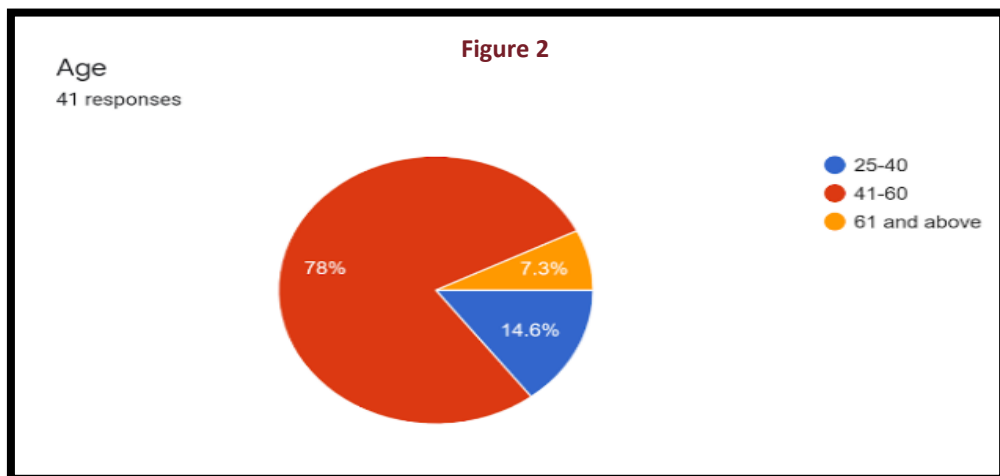
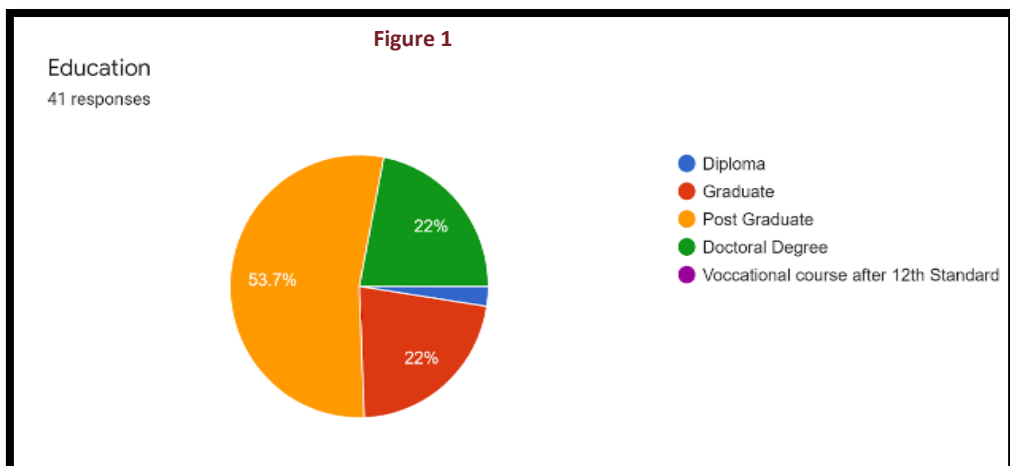
Another article discusses problems faced by the youth in India, (STUDD, 2018) unemployment, depression, the wrong influence of social media, and among the main reasons that students do not wish to continue with their tertiary education as they feel it is pointless.

There are a number of other informative articles about the Government of India's initiatives to encourage students to continue studying and to enroll them into learn and earn schemes but the exact stage of implementation is not very clear. Also, the level of awareness about these schemes needs to be investigated further. There are a number of organizations in India such as Nehru Yuva Kendra Sanghata and CYDA- Center for Youth Development and Activities which provides guidance for students, vocational training assistance, and education-related services.

Going through the literature review the researcher realized that the problems of tertiary dropouts are varied and steps have been taken for remedial action but at the same time it is important to find out what can be viable and sustainable solutions to reduce the rate of dropouts.

SAMPLE

Total 41 responses were received:



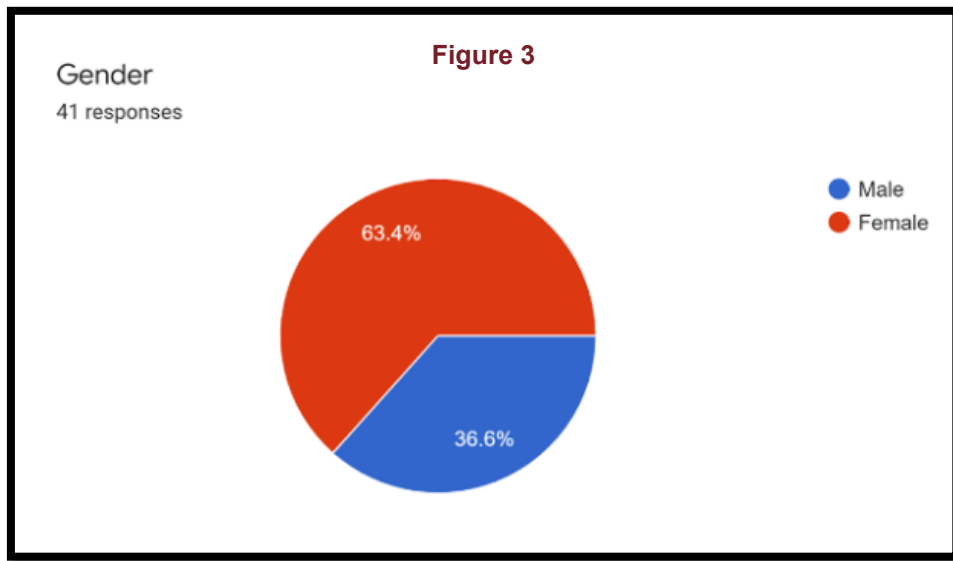


Figure 1 states the gender of responder: 63.4% female, 36.6% male

Figure 2 states the age group: 78% belonged to age group 41-60, 7.3% belonged to 61 and above, 14.6 belonged to age group 25-40.

Figure 3 states that 53.7% have completed the post-graduation, 22% Doctoral degree and 22% are graduates, 2.3% Diploma holders

This was a random selection of samples. People who have completed tertiary education successfully participated in the survey.

Current occupation	Number of people
Service	10
The teaching professionals include: Professors, Teachers, HOD, Principals	12
Dentist	3
Self-employed	5
Developmental pediatrician	1
Homeopathy doctor	1
Chartered Accountant	2
Civil Engineer	1
Internal Auditors	2
Educational inspector	1
Academic coordinator	1
Housewife	2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is mixed-method research. The quantitative and qualitative data have been gathered. A Google survey questionnaire was created and 100% of responses were captured virtually through this form.

DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative Data:

Statement: In my opinion, Tertiary education (College/University education) is essential because (multiple-choice selection):

Table 1

Options	Percentage of preferences (Out of 41 Total responses)	Percentage of Female responses (A total of 26 responses)	Percentage of Male Responses (A total of 15 responses)
It provides direction to one's career and life	93%	96%	93%
It gives the opportunity to enjoy learning with peers	51%	58%	47%
It offers solutions to real-life problems	39%	42%	33%
It helps to form lifelong philosophies	27%	35%	13%
It provides status in the society	24%	66%	6%
My reason is not mentioned here	5%		
No! I do not think Tertiary education is essential at all	0%		

Table 1: illustrates that 93% of people felt that tertiary education is essential because it provides direction to one's life and career. It is interesting to note that 51% of them have selected the option of the opportunity to enjoy learning with peers. 39% feel that it offers real-life solutions whereas, 27 % feel that tertiary education is essential because it helps to find lifelong philosophies. 24% because of tertiary education one gets status in the society and on the other hand, 5% feel that they have different reasons to state. It is noticeable that no one feels that tertiary education is not essential at all. In the above table, a gender-wise analysis of the answers is also provided. It is noticeable that **66% of the females feel that tertiary education is essential because it provides status in society** compared to male responses which are 6%. Also, 35% of females feel that it helps in creating lifelong philosophies compared to 13% of males.

Statement 2: I have successfully completed my Tertiary Education (College/University education) because

Table 2

Options	Percentage	Female responses total 26	Male responses total 15
It is supposed to be completed by every individual	7%	6%	8%
My family members wanted or expected me to do it	5%	0%	20%
I wanted to complete my education for personal development and better prospects in life	88%	94%	72%
My reason is not stated here	0%		

Table 2: reflects an interesting personal opinion by the people 88% have selected the option that they wanted to complete their education for personal development and better prospects in life out of which gender-wise 94% of females have opted for this option compared to 72% of the males. Whereas 5% have mentioned that **they had to complete their education due to wishes or expectations of their family members. If we look at the gender-wise analysis it is noticeable that 20% of the males have selected this option** as compared to 0% of the females.

Question 1: Some of the best ways to implement formal Tertiary Education (Multiple answer selection)

Table 3: Total responses 40

Options	Total percentage of preferences	Female preferences	Male preferences
Any field of study + Value Education + Community Service	70%	69%	73%
Any field of study + Related on job training	56%	54%	66%
Any field of study + Earn and Learn schemes	63%	77%	40%
Any field of study + Option to change the field if necessary	63%	65%	66%
None of the above	0%		

Table 3: indicates interesting results, 70% of the people feel that the **value education along with community service is the best way to implement formal tertiary education, however, the gender analysis shows that 69% of women and 73% of men feel this way.** 63% of them feel that the option to change the field if necessary and earn and learn schemes are some of the best ways to implement this education. However, noticeably **77% of the women feel that earning and learning is the best option compared to 40% of men.** Also,

for **66% of men, on-the-job job training is the best way compared to 54% of women.** Interestingly the preference percentage for an **option to change the field if necessary has a very slight difference i.e. 65% of women and 66% of men** feel the same.

Question 2: Are you in the same field as per your Tertiary Education if No, then please state the reason

Table 4

Yes	No	Reasons
81%	19%	No job opportunities in the same field- Frequency 5 Change of interest- Frequency1 Better opportunities in different areas- Frequency1 As per work demand – Frequency 1

Table 4: indicates that 81% of the people are in the same field as their tertiary education however 19% are not and the reasons for that are mentioned above.

Question 3: The rate of college dropouts is affected by which of the following reasons (Select multiple answers)

Table 5

Financial difficulties	85%
The inability of teachers to create a conducive environment of learning	51%
Educational policies	37%
Personal disabilities	29%
Lack of interest in the college subjects	66%
Less scope for creativity	49%
A disconnect between curriculum and real-life situations	68%
Peer pressure	20%
Poor access to technology and the internet (During Covid)	29%
Language and communication barrier	41%
Other	2%

Table 5: indicates that 85% of the people feel that students drop out because of financial difficulties, whereas 68% feel it is a disconnect between the curriculum and real-life situations. 66% feel that students drop out due to a lack of interest in college subjects. 49% feel it is due to a lack of creativity and 41% have opted for language and communication barriers.

QUALITATIVE DATA

Question 1: Things that appealed to you most during your Tertiary Education?

- **Joyous learning experience due to peer interaction**
17% of the people mentioned that their interaction with peers appealed to them the most. There was good bonding, learning from each other was joyous, and sometimes the peers belonged to cosmopolitan areas & backgrounds creating ample opportunities to learn from each other.
- **Learning healthy attitudes, soft skills, and hard skills**
It has been observed that 20 % of the people felt that inculcating healthy attitudes and skills such as management skills, communication skills, self-discipline, hard work, and remaining focused on achieving goals, persistence, and appreciation were most appealing to them.
- **Knowledge generation and opportunities to learn something new**
Interestingly 17 % said that generation of knowledge about new things, and working knowledge of how certain things happen or are created in reality has been a fascinating experience. Learning about new technologies has also been found captivating and appealing.
- **Teacher-student interaction**
27% of the people have shared that they were influenced by the teacher-student relationship. The teachers had a good connection with the students encouraging them to build stronger bonds of friendship. Teachers helped students to remain focused and whenever necessary secure an industry job. The teachers in rural areas were appreciated for helping the students to remain on the path to success.
- **Participating in extracurricular activities**
It is noticeable that 15% of the people felt that being a part of extracurricular activities, helped them cope with studies and gave them occasions for artistic expression. Music has been mentioned to make learning enjoyable along with other options such as spoken English, drawing, dancing, “Sanskarbharati” classes, and so on.
- **Real-life application of education**
Some people felt that their education provided a chance to solve real-life issues. A total of 12% felt that the education they received gave them hands-on training on the issues concerning day-to-day life. Also, it provided an opportunity to earn and learn.
- **Other aspects**
12% of people have mentioned other appealing aspects such as a chance to meet different sections of the society, a broader understanding of world issues, a well-developed curriculum, competitions, quality of education, and availability of different subjects.

Question 2: Things that needed to be changed as per your observation during your Tertiary Education?

- **A disconnect between education and real-life application.**
It was experienced by 35% of the people that there was very less connection between what they were learning and the real-life situations around them. The theory was given importance and the application was considered to be a part of their future job. It was observed that some of the students did not understand why they were learning certain

subjects. The purpose of education itself was not made very clear. The utility of their education was also a question mark sometimes. Students did not understand their society and how they can make difference with their education.

- **Lack of innovative teaching and learning approaches**

The problem of appointing new teachers occasionally created interest issues for the students. The teachers were unable to create a conducive learning environment in a short period of time. Knowledgeable teachers were appointed but did not possess the skill of teaching. Teachers were not able to adapt to innovative teaching styles keeping the curiosity alive. 20% of the people felt this way.

- **Lack of vocational/Industrial/ Practical training**

A total of 42 % of people felt the lack of hands-on training, practical-based application, and vocational or industrial training which should be looked into.

- **Lack of motivation for students**

7% of people felt students who were facing difficulties lacked motivation from teachers or peers. The collaborative work was missing.

- **Lack of flexibility**

12 % of people stated that they felt that the education system was rigid and did not provide flexibility in terms of changing subjects, opting for different learning styles, and answering in a creative manner. It was observed that students did not have options to change certain topics if they were facing difficulties. The exam pattern and evaluation systems were very inflexible too.

- **Lack of moral education/ life skills**

In total 17% of the opinions reflected that there was a lack of moral education. It was observed by people that knowledge can be acquired from even surfing the internet but how to behave is something which was not taught during their tertiary education. How to set goals in life, and how to develop perseverance were some of the issues that were never tackled.

- **Others**

On-campus facilities, basic amenities, exam patterns, evaluation systems, student activities in the community, career guidance

Question 3: Some famous people are college dropouts but they still made it big in life, in your opinion what things did they do differently?

They did stop tertiary education but did not stop learning, they had opportunities and required suitable skill sets.

- Creativity 3 %
- Passion 11 %
- Perseverance 6%
- Consistency 2%
- Hands-on experience 5%
- Self- motivation/ Self-learning 11%
- Practiced freedom of learning 1 %
- Focus/ dedication/ Goal setting 8 %

- Emotionally stronger 1%
- Connected with the needs of the society 3%
- Took risk 5%
- Hard work 6 %
- Decision-making ability 1%
- Communication and management skills 2 %
- Vision 3%
- Discipline 2%
- Self-belief 1%

Question 4: In your opinion can there be an alternative to Tertiary Education? If yes, please explain

20% mentioned that there is no alternative for tertiary education, whereas 48% of the people said that there could be an alternative if on-the-job training is given, earn and learn schemes are introduced, vocational, practical based training is given, and home learning and self-learning is encouraged. Interestingly 7% said they are unable to decide.

Question 5: Practical suggestions about how can the rate of college dropouts be reduced.

- **Finance-related 29%**

It has been suggested that the financial structure of the courses should be transparent. Education loans and scholarships can be promoted and offered on a larger scale.

- **Counseling for students and parents is a must 24%**

It is recommended that the students receive career guidance and counselling before they join tertiary education. Every student should know their options and requirements for the courses beforehand.

Separate sessions should be conducted for parents, to make them understand the importance of education and other resources that are available. Also to remove prejudices and gender biases from their lives.

Alumni meets can be arranged frequently to discuss various issues with students and to find out positive solutions.

- **Flexible education option 12%**

In case a student is unable to continue with the course due to unavoidable circumstances, can be given a certificate of half completion and can be given re-admission once the student is able to join back. The option of changing subjects should also be kept open for genuine cases. The flexibility of time also can be an influencing factor.

- **Moral education and life skills development 22%**

Every student should be encouraged to behave in a proper manner. They should be taught how to create visions, have goals, and work towards them persistently. Many famous people did not complete their tertiary education but they are all engaged in self-learning, lifelong learning. Students should also be made aware of their society, and the

needs of others and engaged in social activities. Education should not be based on caste and religion it should be universal in nature.

- **Make education relevant through practical/training-based projects 27%**
This is the most voted answer by the people.
- **Teacher refresher courses 8%**
Teachers need to update their knowledge and teaching skills often. They need to learn how to help and guide students in the right direction. How to use social media for positive impact. They must learn online teaching and other relevant teaching tools so that students can keep their enthusiasm and interest high.
- **Vocational courses to be imparted at an earlier age 8%**
This is another practical solution to reduce dropouts by doing this in case students are unable to continue with the degree still they can earn a livelihood and re-join the course as things settle. Some examples of these courses are culinary art, stitching, mobile repair, beauty parlor training, basic car repairs, basic computer knowledge to name a few.
- **Language classes 2%**
Many students have inhibitions with regard to language. Language classes for English and Hindi can be made compulsory to help the students overcome their limitations.
- **Proper infrastructure and amenities 2%**
Another requirement that is extremely crucial for a happy learning environment.

CONCLUSION

All the responses were gathered from people who have successfully completed their tertiary education, the lowest degree has been a diploma and the highest has been a Ph.D. degree. It is also noticeable that there have been 12 professions represented. The responses from females are more in comparison to the male. Age groups 41-60 have participated with a maximum percentage of responses. 93% of people in the survey feel that tertiary education is essential because it provides direction to one's life and career. Interestingly **66% of the females feel that tertiary education is essential because it provides status in society.** Whereas 51% have said that it is essential for it provides an opportunity for peer learning. There has been not a single negative response.

88% of the people have said that they wanted to complete their education for personal development and better prospects in life. Whereas 5% have done it because their family wanted them to do so. **Gender-wise 20% of men have selected this option compared to 0% of women.** This is a significant percentage in men.

Noticeably, 70% of the people have said that some of the best ways to implement tertiary education are the selection of choice of field along with value education and community service. This is followed by earn and learn schemes and options to change the field if necessary at 63% each. On-the-job training and hands-on experience are given importance by 56 % and the same has been mentioned in the practical solutions for reducing the rate of dropouts. While the gender-wise analysis has provided interesting results. **Value education along with community service is the best way to implement formal tertiary education,**

was selected by 69% of women and 73% of men. Noticeably 77% of the women feel that earning and learning is the best option compared to 40% of men. For 66% of men, on-the-job job training is the best way compared to 54% of women. However, an option to change the field if necessary has a very slight difference i.e. 65% of women and 66% of men feel it is necessary.

Among the reasons to drop out, financial difficulties have received 85% preference followed by a disconnect between the curriculum and real-life situations selected by 68%. People in this survey have felt that lack of creativity and language/communication barriers are also equally responsible.

While stating the reasons on what things appealed to them during their tertiary education chief among them was the joyous learning experience due to peer interaction. Opportunities for knowledge generation and learning something new. The student-teacher relationships were also a positive factor for many.

According to the answers received it is evident that the people from this survey wanted the gap between educational curriculum and real-life application to be filled with meaningful practical-based projects, community action, and artistic expressions. Art also needed a boost and inclusion in the regular curriculum. There was a need for an innovative teaching-learning process. Moral and life skill education was needed.

It was concluded that some of the world-famous people did not complete their tertiary education but became successful in life, this was due to the fact that they self-educated themselves, remained motivated, goal-oriented, displayed perseverance, hard work, had a vision in life, were innovative thinkers, and could connect with the needs of the society. They took risks and had a bit of luck factor due to the situation that they were in. Unless dropout students have these qualities, attitudes, skills, and knowledge it is very difficult to achieve success.

Interestingly 48% of the people from the survey said that there can be an alternative to tertiary education only if the education is vocational, job oriented, and has on-the-job training.

Some of the practical suggestions to reduce dropouts are as follows: Provide financial aid, scholarships, easy loans, Counselling to students and parents, Teacher refresher courses, and Moral as well as life skills education to be imparted. Flexibility in the courses and education structure all are advised.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher would like to recommend the following:

- Further study should be conducted to find out specific difficulties faced by people who have completed their tertiary education and how they overcame the same. This may open up new possibilities and solutions for the dropouts.

- Career guidance and counseling sessions should be made a part of secondary education which will enable students to manage their tertiary education.
- The dual purpose of education should be embedded and practiced by students at an early age.
- A dedicated cell to be set up at every college to work for student support, arrange regular and healthy interaction between peers, assess the student progress, and have one on one dialogue. It should also be associated with legal bodies and the human rights commission.
- The cell should introduce topics of discussion such as removal of prejudices from the college campus, helping each other, and what can I do. Who am I and so on, to trigger responsible behavior, curiosity, camaraderie, and create a conducive environment for learning. It should motivate the students to continue learning.
- Value education and community engagement should be part of curriculum design for creating a lifelong learning culture and real-life application of education.
- The alumni should be encouraged to be active and regularly participate by sharing experiences, solutions, guidance, and even imparting industry expertise and skill training to students.
- Teachers should be encouraged to take up value education courses, learn innovative ways of teaching, and create learning environments that are based on cooperation and collaboration.
- Regular health check-ups and addiction check-ups should be done to inculcate a healthy body- healthy mind concept.
- Education without religion, cast, or gender discrimination should be provided to all.
- Girl students should be given special counseling along with parents to establish the importance of girls' education.
- Earn and learn schemes can be further designed to accommodate the requirements of girl students
- In the researcher's opinion, the best way to reduce the dropout rate will be, to connect the learning of the tertiary level student with extended family, community, and society at large, this will provide real-life learning opportunities and immediate application of education.

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DRIVING FORCE: WOMEN WHO DROPPED OUT OF TERTIARY EDUCATION AND REVIVED THEIR CAREERS

Kaurobi Ghosh¹, Dr. Megha Uplane²

¹ Research Scholar, Department of Education and Extension,
Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune, Email: kaurobighosh@gmail.com

² Professor and Head (Retd.), Department of Education and Extension,
Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune, Email: meghauplane@gmail.com

Paper Receipt Date: 18th July 2022

Peer Review Date: 10th September 2022

Paper Publication Date: 31st October 2022

Similarity Report: 3%

ABSTRACT

According to the “All India Higher Education Survey” conducted in 2019 - gender gap in higher education is reducing in India with 53% women having completed their undergraduate degrees, 69.6% with M. Phil Degrees and 41.8% with Ph.D. Degrees. Despite this, in an economy which is estimated to grow and have a working population of over 800 million in 2050, the participation of women in the workforce is at a dismal 19.9 % compared to men at 76% (World Bank Databank, 2020) (Women in the Workforce: India .;////(Quick Take), 2022). Women are underrepresented in many of the core sectors of the economy and drop out of higher education due to many reasons such as marriage, cultural norms imposed on them, safety and wage disparity related concerns and unavailability of flexible work options which allow them to manage both family and work. Notwithstanding all the challenges they face, some women in India are striving to re-join the workforce.

This survey research paper is a study about women who had to drop out of tertiary education due to various reasons but managed to make a comeback into the mainstream by resuming tertiary education and also taking up careers or occupations. Through in-depth interviews conducted with ten women in the age group of 30 to 55, the researchers have sought to explore the reasons which made these women drop out of tertiary education; the motivators both internal and external which made them resume or complete their education; the key challenges they faced when wanting to do so; and the people who supported them in this journey.

KEY WORDS

Driving Force, Women, Drop Outs, Tertiary Education, Revive, Careers, Challenges, Personal Characteristics or Attributes, Social Support, Belief, Continuing Education

INTRODUCTION

According to Om Priyadarshi (2020), “there are more than 50 million women in India who are neither going to work nor to study”. According to the “All India Higher Education Survey” conducted in 2019 - gender gap in higher education is reducing in India with 53% women having completed their undergraduate degrees, 69.6% with M. Phil Degrees and 41.8% with Ph.D. Degrees. Despite this, in an economy which is estimated to grow and have a working population of over 800 million in 2050, the participation of women in the workforce is at a dismal 19.9 % compared to men at 76% (World Bank Databank, 2020) (Women in the Workforce: India (Quick Take), 2022). Women are underrepresented in many of the core sectors of the economy and drop out of higher education due to many reasons such as marriage, cultural norms imposed on them, safety and wage disparity related concerns and unavailability of flexible work options which allow them to manage both family and work. Notwithstanding all the challenges they face, some women in India are striving to re-join the workforce.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In order to boost the participation and retention of girls and women in Education at all levels the Indian Government has taken several measures which includes setting up a ‘Gender Inclusion Fund’ under the NEP 2020; ensuring safety and security of children at school; taking up gender sensitivity sessions in schools with parents and providing opportunities for women to upskill themselves and develop employability skills through the ‘Skill India’ movement (2015). While the economic contribution of women in India is half the global average (Dixon, Annette, 2018) there is a slow but sure effort towards women striving to remain part of the workforce both through systemic provisions (maternity leave, provision for crèche at the workplace, working women’s hotels) and at the micro (family) level (shared responsibilities by males and females). Hence, there is a miniscule but positive shift away from the perception that women cannot work once they get married or need to drop out of the workforce due to motherhood. There is ample research to prove that when women join the workforce they not only improve the quality of their personal life but also positively impact the lives of those around them (Reddy Krishna) while improving the overall quality of life and contributing to National GDP. This research study therefore looks at women from diverse backgrounds who despite facing various familial and societal obligations have managed to prioritize their own needs, overcome their own unique hurdles to continue their higher education and to remain employed. The study is significant because it looks at first hand lessons shared by women about what and who has been the driving force in their journey as individuals who contribute to not only their families but also to the nation.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study is an attempt to find out the reasons which make women drop out of higher education. The study also attempts to explore the reasons which make women want to continue after a gap, the role of people in their lives and their own personal beliefs and characteristics which becomes their driving force.

CONCEPTUAL & OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

The conceptual and operational definitions of the key words identified by the researchers for the present study are provided below:

Driving Force

- **Conceptual:** It refers to someone or something that has a strong influence on people and makes them do something (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2022)
- **Operational:** The circumstances, thoughts, beliefs and people behind women who have resumed higher education and revived their careers

Women

- **Conceptual:** Adult female members of a society
- **Operational:** Indian women in the age group of 30 to 55 who dropped out of Tertiary Education and continued after a gap

Drop Outs

- **Conceptual:** A person who stops participating in formal school or college
- **Operational:** Women who discontinued higher studies for various reasons

Tertiary Education

- **Conceptual:** All formal post-secondary education offered by public or private educational institutions such as universities, colleges, technical and vocational training institutions

Revive

- **Conceptual:** To take up something again; to resume
- **Operational:** To bring back women into the mainstream education and workspace

Careers

- **Conceptual:** An occupation, trade or profession taken up by a person for a significantly long period of time with possibility for progress and growth
- **Operational:** Occupations, professions or trades taken up by women

Challenges

- **Conceptual:** According to Collins dictionary (2022), challenges refer to new and difficult situations which require great determination and effort to overcome or deal with
- **Operational:** Difficulties faced by women with respect to learning gaps, lack of continuity and compromises made in order to take up studies and work

Personal Characteristics or Attributes

- **Conceptual:** Character traits, habits, attitudes that describe a person such as honesty, responsibility, determination, etc.
- **Operational:** Character traits, habits, attitudes which help women deal with the difficulties of resuming their studies and work

Social Support

- **Conceptual:** Bloom et al have defined Social Support in terms of Structural and Functional Support that a person receives. Structural Support refers to the network of relationships that connects a person with his or her community. Functional Support refers to help received in the form of information, tangible help and emotional support.
- **Operational:** Support from close family members, relatives, friends and co-workers in taking up studies and work after a gap

Belief

- **Conceptual:** To accept or believe something to be true even though it may not be based on evidence
- **Operational:** A personal thought process which a person believes to be true

Continuing Education

- **Conceptual:** According to Cooper, it refers to all the learning activities that people take up after they complete their basic education
- **Operational:** Broad term which refers to any education taken up post-secondary school education

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify the reasons which make women drop out of tertiary education
2. To determine reasons that make women resume their education and work
3. To recognize the type of challenges faced by women in their attempt to study and to work
4. To ascertain the type of social support received from people in their lives in their decision to study again and work
5. To ascertain some of the personal characteristics or attributes and beliefs that help women overcome the challenges they faced

SCOPE

This study was open to women who are currently working or studying and have continued their studies after a gap. The study included women in India living in urban cities.

LIMITATION

This findings of the study are limited to the responses received from ten women who participated in the study through in-depth interview session.

DELIMITATION

This study is delimited to Indian women in the age group of 30 to 55 years who have resumed their higher studies after a gap.

SAMPLE

A total of ten women were considered as sample for this study. Purposive sampling method was used. Only who were willing to participate in the interviews were considered in the study. The respondents included an Army Officer's wife who is a Social Worker and a Celebrity in her field; a Cancer Survivor who is an IT professional and a Yoga Instructor; a Fashion Designer for Celebrities; a College Teacher who is also an International Salsa Artist; a Kannada Language Teacher; a Lawyer pursuing her PhD degree; a Teacher Educator; a Home Maker; an IT Teacher turned Yoga Instructor; and a (Doctorate) Student pursuing her Second Masters Degree.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What motivates women to resume studies after a gap?
- What challenges do women who resume studies after a gap have to face?
- What kind of social support do women get when they decide to study and work again?
- What personal characteristics or beliefs help women overcome challenges to revive their careers?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE/ RESEARCHERS

According to a PhD Study conducted by Sharma Narotam (2020) titled- 'Work Life Balance of Working Women- A Comparative Study on Higher Education and IT Sector' a majority of married women working in the IT sector have difficulty balancing their personal and professional lives and most of them end up working more than 12 hours a day. The major factors that lead to stress are long working hours, targets to be achieved at work, day to day domestic duties, looking after aged parents and children and travelling to and from to work.

In 2020, Prabha M conducted a PhD level study titled 'Need and Constraints of First Generation Women Learners in Higher Education'. The researcher has compared how women studying in Government colleges fare as against their peers who study in Private Colleges in terms of constraints faced from home, educational, psychological and social constraints. The researcher found that there is need to build awareness about the benefits of higher education for women among families in rural areas. She also found that families of women studying in Government colleges did not want to send their daughters far from home to study. Also it is important that the father be literate, else women find it very difficult to convince their parents for higher education.

In 2018 Ramsheena conducted a PhD level study titled 'Gender and Higher Education – Mapping the Experience of Muslim Women in Kerala'. While the study focuses on Muslim women it brings out the fact that although women take up higher education, they are encouraged to take up safe professions by their parents which support their domestic roles rather than allowing them to choose careers on their own. This is in contrast to the freedom given to male children to choose their careers and to the corresponding willingness to invest more in their education than that of their daughters. There is also very little expectation from girls to contribute financially to their families, their education and role is seen as a supportive role to their spouses.

This paper will look at what drives women to overcome the challenges of life to resume their studies and to restart their careers.

PLAN AND PROCEDURE

This Social Research, was conducted as an 'Exploratory Study'. The researchers used Survey Interview method for collecting primary data from 10 respondents. The respondents were selected through purposive sampling method, based on willingness of the respondents to participate and share their life experiences through an in-depth interview.

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS AND METHODS

The interviews were conducted in online mode - through telephonic interviews with seven participants while three respondents preferred to respond in writing in their own time on a Google Form link shared by the researchers.

Prior appointment was taken and in-depth unstructured interviews were conducted with each respondent. The interviews lasted anywhere between 45 Minutes to 1 Hour.

A set of questions was used to guide the interview, such as –

- At what level of education did you discontinue your studies? What were the reasons for discontinuing at that time?
- After how many years did you resume your education? What were your reasons for wanting to restart again? What were your internal and external reasons for doing so?
- How did you go about restarting? What course/ courses did you take up? Did you have to change your stream? What were your feelings at that time?
- What role did the people in your life play in your decision to restart your education/ career?
- In what ways has your decision to resume your education and career impacted your life in the present?
- What qualities in yourself do you think helped you to deal with the various challenges that came up for you?

The challenge for the researchers was to be receptive to what was being shared and to redirect the course of the discussion to bring out relevant points; to be perceptive to what is being omitted and to probe tactfully. Each interview was intensive because the respondents spoke about their present situation and then shared about their life history. Towards the end they summed up about the people who supported them or didn't and the key attributes of their own personality and beliefs that has helped them face challenges. The researchers also had to rely on their ability to integrate the information received and to thread the same together.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data obtained from the interviews was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The responses were categorized according to the research questions – reasons for taking a gap, reasons for resuming studies, challenges faced, support available and personal beliefs that helped them cope. The frequency with which certain responses were received was also calculated to understand the various types of responses that emerged from the interviews.

FINDINGS

- **Demographic Description of the Respondents**

All the ten respondents were in the age group of 30 to 55 years, with only one respondent in the age group of 30 to 35 years; three in the age group of 40 to 45 and 5 in the age group of 45 to 50 years and one in the age group of 50 to 55 years. With the exception of one respondent who is divorced, and one who has separated from her husband, all the respondents who participated in the survey are married. Seven of the respondents have only one daughter, and three respondents have two children each- one son and one daughter.

- **Educational Background of the Respondents**

Four out of ten respondents hold a PhD Degree, two of the respondents are pursuing their PhD Degree and the remaining four have additional professional degrees in addition to a Masters' Degree. All the respondents have both parents who are educated, in fact several respondents shared that their mother was qualified but could not follow a profession due to family responsibilities which inspired the respondents to make something out of their own lives.

- **Reasons for Taking Gap in Education**

Marriage and Child birth and the consequent responsibility of looking after children emerged as the primary reasons for a gap in education. All ten respondents had completed their graduation and at least four of them had enrolled for their Masters' degree when they got married, two of them had completed their Master's degree and then got married. Nine out of ten respondents discontinued their job after getting married, especially after their first child was born. The gap taken by respondents in continuing their education varies between 4 years to maximum 7 years, the primary reason for the break has been birth of children and primary responsibility of bringing up children. Most of the respondents were not able to complete their Master's degree in the stipulated time period and took 3 years to complete the degree.

- **Reasons for Resuming Education**

All the respondents shared that they wanted to do something with their qualifications; eight out of ten said they needed to be financially independent and wanted to be able to provide financial support to their families. They all shared that while looking after their children was a clear priority it was also necessary to upgrade themselves so their skill sets are relevant with the workplace requirements and they are able to earn better as a result of better qualifications. Six out of ten respondents took up teaching as a profession, this was primarily done to manage looking after their very young children since the work hours are lesser and there are substantial holidays also, even in that they have upgraded their qualifications for better positions at the workplace and all of them are passionate about teaching.

Half the respondents have not restricted themselves to one field, but have also explored different options in terms of educational qualifications in order to see what works best. Two out of ten respondents, one an IT professional and the other – a teacher, are qualified yoga teachers and have taken it up actively along with their existing careers to begin with- in response to their own personal health issues and later to spread the knowledge and

benefits of yoga to others. They are hopeful that someday they will be able to make yoga their mainstay profession.

CHALLENGES FACED IN TAKING UP EDUCATION AND WORK

Family responsibilities have prevented nine out of ten respondents from continuing their education at a stretch and to continue to hold jobs. Health has also been a key reason for many of them to reconsider how much work and nature of work they can take up outside the home front. Almost all respondents reported not getting adequate support at the workplace when they had children, not having any crèche facilities, insensitive behavior from senior colleagues, inability to take up strenuous travel and physical strain as reason for taking a break or changing jobs.

SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR CONTINUING TERTIARY EDUCATION AND PROFESSION

There was mixed response about the role of husband from the respondents who were interviewed. Five out of ten respondents reported that they had to take up work and constantly strive to do something to remain financially independent because of their spouse's mismanagement of finances at home and due to lack of planning and cohesiveness between the couple. One respondent reported that when she wanted to study it was seen as a way of 'keeping her occupied' without any real expectation or belief that she can make any substantial contribution at home. Of the remaining five, one reported that she felt pressurized to work by her spouse even though she did not feel up to it health wise, this pressure is more due to status reasons than for any financial need. Four respondents shared that they were able to resume studies and join back work due to the support they received mainly from their spouses with one sharing that her husband took up a night shift so that he could remain at home to look after their young daughter while the respondent went to work during the day.

All the respondents shared that they had the support of their parents and in-laws (eight out of ten) even after marriage to study further and to work. Six out of ten respondents reported that their mothers were qualified and unable to work due to family responsibilities which inspired the respondents to work and fulfill their mother's dream. Nine out of ten respondents (one child being too young), shared that their children support and encourage their mother's decision to study, to learn, to work, to create an identity for themselves and to live their lives on their own terms. Three respondents also reported the support of their siblings especially eldest brother and younger sister (someone they had supported in receiving education) in continuing their education after a gap.

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES AND BELIEFS

Their key personal attributes that drove all the women interviewed are: self-belief; their willingness to prioritize child care and rearing especially during the child's younger years; their strength to give up their own professional needs at that time; their willingness to adjust and make changes to their educational and professional life in order to accommodate their family responsibilities and their ability to challenge themselves to resume each time they have been compelled to take a break. Additionally, their ability to endure hardships, and their dedication towards their family seems to have reinforced the support they are receiving from their

immediate family members. Their belief and clarity that looking after children and family responsibilities is as a 'non-negotiable' aspect of life seems to have ensured that in the present they are all satisfied and don't have regrets about the time and sacrifices made to look after the children or in-laws and parents. All the respondents also equally hold the belief that their own learning needs and reasons to work outside the home are just as important as family responsibilities. They all admit to the importance of being financially independent and being contributing members of their respective families. This clarity enables them to pick up from wherever they are and to keep striving to upgrade themselves and give their best at the workplace and at home.

CONCLUSIONS

A self-belief that is rooted in a realistic outlook towards life; ability and a compulsion to make sacrifices for the overall wellbeing of the family; ability to adapt to personal and professional changes; perseverance through trying personal and professional circumstances and a strong belief that they are social and economic contributors have ensured that women are striding forward to make a better life for themselves and those around them. It is critical that such spirit is met with proper support at the workplace and in educational institutions which ensure that women don't have to succeed at the cost of 'compromising' on their personal ambitions and health and 'over burdening' themselves with responsibilities. While women carry out their responsibility towards child rearing, support from their spouses would go a long way in ensuring smoother and faster progress of the family and women's participation in the economy. According to an article published by Arun et al in the *Feminist Economics* (Vol 4, 2014) titled "The effect of career breaks on the working life of women", women who take a break and rejoin the workforce have to face different types of penalties with respect to losses in pay, compromising on job roles depending on the number of hours they can put in. This is a challenge for women in India and other countries too.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

This study is unique because the researchers have initiated an exploration into what helps women drop-outs resume tertiary education and the various personal and social factors that enable them to do so. It is suggested that large scale research studies may be carried out with women both in urban and rural areas which help in identifying key personal attributes that drive women to resume their studies and their work time and time again. The research studies may explore the kind of support needed to help women complete their studies and pursue steady careers – in the form of career counseling at an early age for women and their families; options for offline and online studies; options for upskilling and hybrid models of work.

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IMPACT OF INITIATIVES TAKEN BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF MIT-WORLD PEACE UNIVERSITY, PUNE FOR THE TERTIARY EDUCATION DROPOUTS

Prof. Milind Patre¹, Prof. Manasvi H. Patil², Prof. Madhu Jagadeesh³

¹ Associate Dean, Faculty of Peace Studies, MIT-World Peace University, Pune,

Email: milind.patre@mitwpu.edu.in

² Assistant Professor, School of Peace Studies, MIT-World Peace University, Pune,

Email: manasvi.patil@mitwpu.edu.in

³ Assistant Professor, School of Peace Studies, MIT-World Peace University, Pune,

Email: madhujagadeesh@gmail.com

Paper Receipt Date: 20th July 2022

Peer Review Date: 10th September 2022

Paper Publication Date: 31st October 2022

Similarity Report: 3%

ABSTRACT

The United Nations has set noble goals in the form of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for the wellbeing of the world. Tertiary Dropouts issues can have an impact on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and hence needs attention to help solve or avoid the same. The paper will focus on exploring ways on how the Universities can create awareness amongst the students about this issue and inspire them to creatively think of the possible solutions. The paper will also share the various ideas provided by the students to help solve or avoid Tertiary Dropouts as part of the “Humanities, Ethical, Moral & Social Sciences” under mandatory Peace Curriculum at MIT-World Peace University. The paper will also share the various platforms by MIT-World Peace University like the National Teachers Congress, Bhartiya Chhatra Sansad, National Women’s Parliament, World Parliament of Science, Religion and Philosophy that can be leveraged to help create the awareness and collaborations to work towards solving various issues including Tertiary Dropouts.

Keywords –Peace Program, Tertiary dropouts, MIT-World Peace University, humanity.

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations has set noble goals in the form of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for the wellbeing of the world. All the goals have an impact on each other. SDG 4 Quality

Education is a critical goal that has a direct impact on all the goals. The issue of Tertiary Dropouts has an impact on all the SDGs.

The paper will focus on exploring ways on how the Universities can create awareness amongst the students about this issue and inspire them to creatively think of the possible solutions. The paper will also share the various ideas provided by the students to help solve or avoid Tertiary Dropouts as part of the “Humanities, Ethical, Moral & Social Sciences” under mandatory Peace Curriculum at MIT-World Peace University. The paper will also share the various platforms by MIT-World Peace University like the National Teachers Congress, Bhartiya Chhatra Sansad, National Women’s Parliament, World Parliament of Science, Religion and Philosophy that can be leveraged to help create the awareness and collaborations to work towards solving various issues including Tertiary Dropouts.

Education is a key to escape poverty and enabling upward socioeconomic mobility. Significant progress has been made in boosting access to education and school enrolment rates at all levels, particularly for females, over the last decade. Despite this, approximately 260 million children were out of school in 2018, accounting for nearly a fifth of the global population in that age group. As the COVID-19 pandemic spread over the world in 2020, a majority of countries declared temporary school closures, affecting more than 91% of pupils globally. Close to 1.6 billion children and teens were out of school by April 2020.

By 2030 the goals of SDG 4 are to ensure all get complete, free, equitable and quality primary and Secondary education. All get access to affordable and quality education, vocational and tertiary education and all learners acquire the knowledge and skills of sustainable development and lifestyles, including among others, human rights, gender equality, promotion of culture of peace and non- violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity.

The MIT-World Peace University believes in holistic development of their students. Hence, as the name of the University itself is MIT-World Peace University, the Peace Program has been introduced to all the students who are admitted to MIT-WPU. The Peace Program majorly focuses on the ethical and overall development of the students. The Peace program is spread across all the three or four years of their graduation and two years of their post-graduation courses. The various peace modules offered to the students. In the peace program on Peaceful communication and collaborative human dynamics, the students learn positive methodology of communication, stress management, anger management, time management, emotional quotient, empathy, physical quotient, intelligence quotient and spiritual quotient. Students also learn how to communicate with self and to the outside world. Group dynamics reflect the relations of individuals with their parents, grandparents, friends, acquaintances, society, workplace, etc. This module helps the students to understand the feelings of oneself and others.

The peace program on Humanities – Ethical, Moral and Social Sciences introduces to the students’ importance and scope of Ethical, Moral and Social Sciences. It provides an insight into the nuances and essential elements of Ethics, Morals and Social Science Principles. It is

an attempt to explore the application of teachings and the principles of above sciences, to effectively implement in day to day life. It helps to understand the immense contribution of this subject towards overall life of an individual, and society at large. The significance of Humanities and its various aspects to help students to enhance their social quotient to deal with the social challenges and opportunities. Students absorb an overview of Humanities as a branch of knowledge, list of subjects related with Humanities, Importance of human aspect, history, evolution and how it has covered every field. Impact of Humanities on human life.

What is personal ethics? How it is important to live an individual life, its impact on personal and professional life, understanding and application of both personal and profession life. How Professional Ethical practices helps to society at large and to Nation and ultimately to world. Study of Core Values, Principles and Moral Values to make human life better. What is moral education and Moral Science? How it is helpful to build a character and society at large, importance of parenting and Moral Values through story telling. How education helps to develop better moral principles through moral education. An overview to Moral Science and its application in day to day life. An understanding of Social Science and its aspect. Introduction of various subjects under social science. Responsibility of an individual towards betterment of society and its need at large. United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals, its Values and application. An overview of Burning issues of Environment, Gender Equality, Education for all. Idea of वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्. Everyone working for betterment of world, World is one Family.

TOOLS AND DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

As part of the Peace Course, the students were provided the below assignment for 10 Marks to create the required awareness, and also for them to creatively think on what could be the possible solution to avoid this issue. The Peace Faculty explained the activity to them and the assignment was provided such that they had to discuss with people who may be serving them and family (House maids/Drivers/House-keeping Staff in Society/Security Guards etc) or members in the world family and understand their views about education and the challenges they may be facing while educating their young children. They had to document learnings from these discussions. Along with this, some other thought provoking questions were also included as part of the form.

Activity Tertiary Dropouts (10 Marks)

Activity Tertiary Dropouts (10 Marks) Background Information Tertiary education refers to all formal post-secondary education, including public and private universities, colleges, technical training institutes, and vocational schools. Tertiary education is instrumental in fostering growth, reducing poverty, and boosting shared prosperity. A highly skilled workforce, with lifelong access to a solid post-secondary education, is a prerequisite for innovation and growth: well-educated people are more employable and productive, earn higher wages, and cope with economic shocks better. Tertiary education institutions prepare individuals not only by providing them with adequate and relevant job skills, but also by preparing them to be active members of their communities and societies.

(<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/tertiaryeducation#1>)

India has 47 million youth of secondary and higher secondary school-going age dropping out of school, according to a report by the Montreal-based UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Global Education Monitoring. The 47 million young men and women dropped out of school by the 10th standard, according to the 2016 report. (<https://www.thehindu.com/education/percentage-of-school-dropouts/article25909306.ece>)

Form:

<https://forms.gle/n5c1b7rwa9HwSAfr7>

The following questionnaire was shared with all the graduation students of MIT-WPU studying in the third year of their specialization:

1. Were you aware of this issue about Tertiary Dropouts before this activity?
2. Please discuss with the people who may be serving you and family (House maids/Drivers/House-keeping Staff in Society/Security Guards etc.) or members in the world family and understand their views about education and the challenges they may be facing while educating their young children. Please document your learnings from these discussions.
3. What are the challenges you think may arise due to Tertiary Dropouts?
4. How do you think we can help the Tertiary Dropouts?
5. What do you think could be the solutions to avoid Tertiary Dropouts?
6. Is there something that the students can do to help the cases of Tertiary Dropouts at your individual level?
7. Please justify the response provided in the above question
8. Did this activity help you in some way to become aware of the challenges faced by some members of the world family?

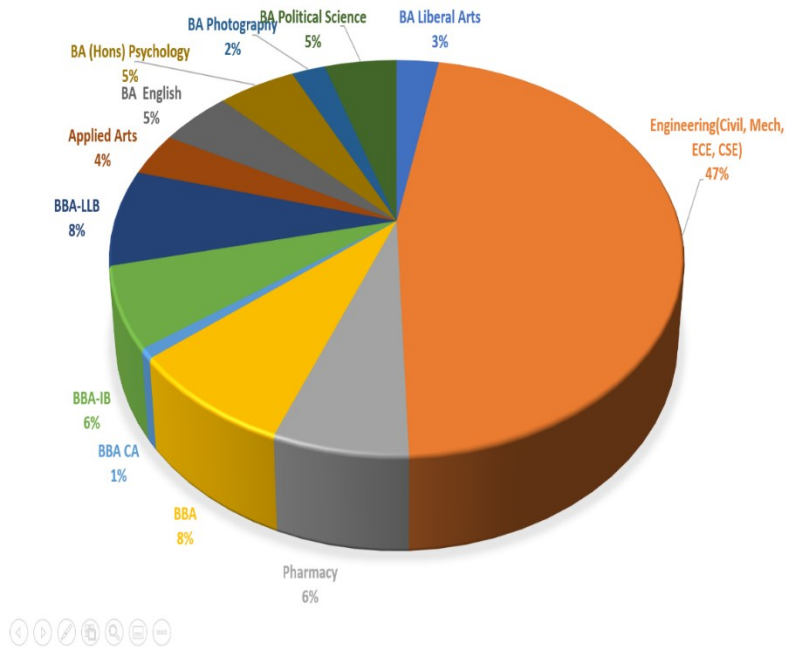
Activity Tertiary Dropouts (10 Marks)

Were you aware of this issue about Tertiary Dropouts before this activity? * ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Care ☐ Don't wish to	How do you think we can help the Tertiary Dropouts? * Your answer	Did this activity help you in some way to become aware of the challenges faced by some members of the world family? * ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure
Please discuss with the people who may be serving you and family (House maids/Drivers/House keeping Staff in Society/Security Guards etc) or members the world family and understand their views about education and the challenge they may be facing while educating their young children. Please document your learnings from these discussions. * Your answer	What do you think could be the solutions to avoid Tertiary Dropouts? Your answer	Did this activity in any way make you feel grateful to the opportunity you have to complete your education? * ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure
What are the Challenges you think may arise due to Tertiary Dropouts? * Your answer	Is there something that the students can do to help the cases of Tertiary Dropouts at your individual level? * ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Other: _____	Did this activity in any way make you get inspired to take some small steps to help others in the world family? *
	Please justify the response provided in the above question * Your answer	

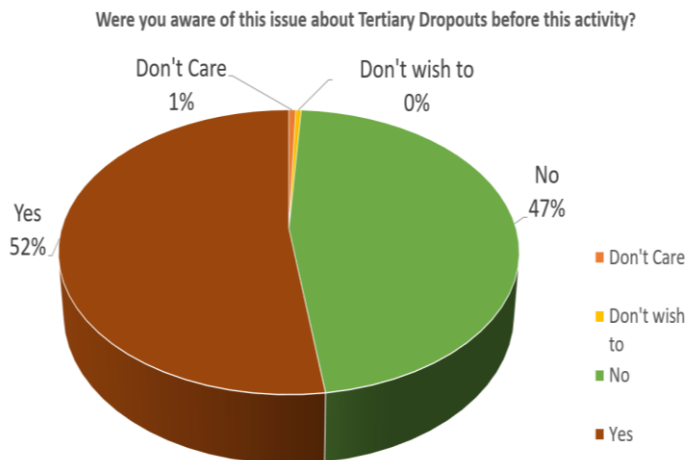
RESULT ANALYSIS

A total of 884 students submitted the responses. These are students of first / third year Engineering (Civil, Mech, ECE, CSE), Pharmacy, Humanities (English, Psychology, Photography, Political Science), Liberal Arts, BBA (CA, IB, LLB)

Field	No of Responses
BA Liberal Arts	25
Engineering(Civil, Mech, ECE, CSE)	412
Pharmacy	57
BBA	72
BBA CA	7
BBA-IB	58
BBA-LLB	70
Applied Arts	32
BA English	42
BA (Hons) Psychology	46
BA Photography	20
BA Political Science	43
Grand Total	884

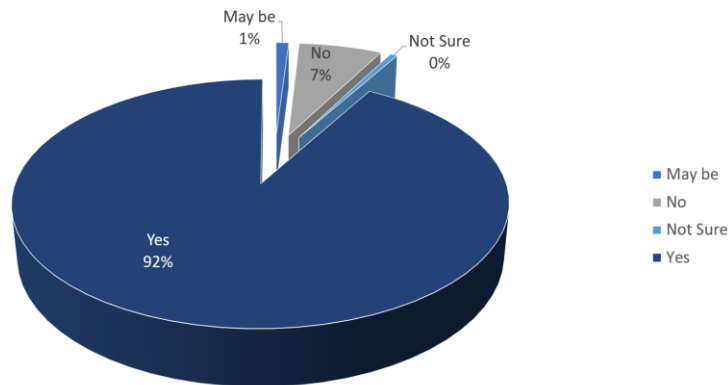


1. There were around 52% of the students who knew about Tertiary Dropouts before this activity.



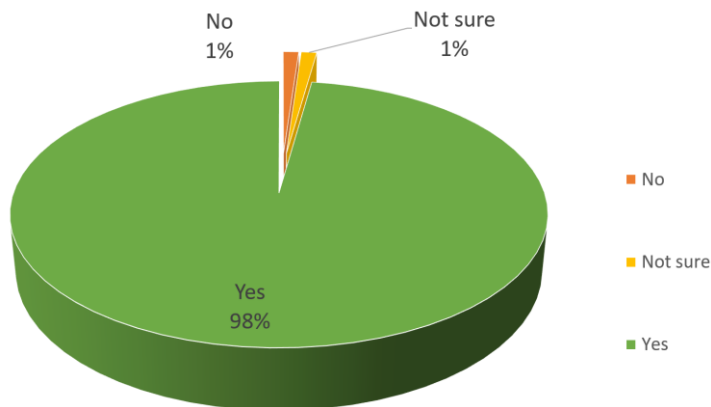
2. 92% of the students felt that something can be done to help the cases of Tertiary Dropouts at their individual level. It is very heart-warming to see that 92 % do feel that they can work towards solving this issue. This has the power to influence the other 7 % cases who consider that they cannot do anything to solve this issue. If the student realizes that self has the power to contribute in solving any of the problems the world, this will go a long way in making a paradigm shift in the way we see the problems. This can become challenges for creativity and innovation and also help develop the feeling of empathy to care and help others of world family in whichever way one can based on one's capability.

Is there something that the students can do to help the cases of Tertiary Dropouts at your individual level?



- 98% of the students felt that this activity helped them in some way or the other to become aware of the challenges faced by some members of the world family. This is great that the attention of 98% of students has been drawn to this critical issue. As its said that where attention goes energy flows. This will help to draw the attention of the energetic young minds to collectively think and work on solving this problem as well.

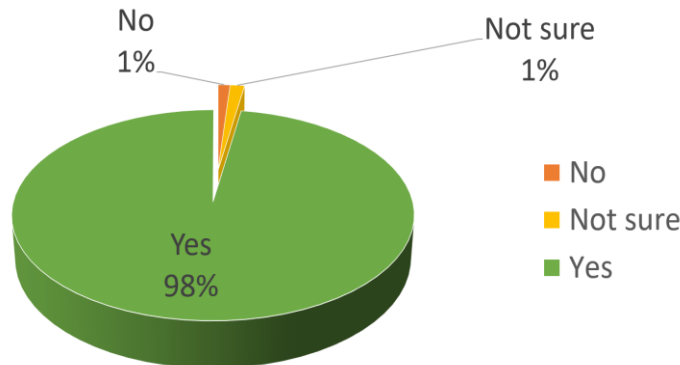
Did this activity help you in some way to become aware of the challenges faced by some members of the world family?



- 98% of the students felt that this activity made them feel grateful to the opportunity provided to them during their education. When a person has gratitude and realizes the importance of what the person has been gifted an opportunity to get educated which many don't have, the person values the opportunity more and the probability of giving up the education is less. Moreover, the person will also try to make the most of the opportunity that is available and will also empathize with many who may not be that privileged to complete the education. The person also empathizes and not feel superior to those who

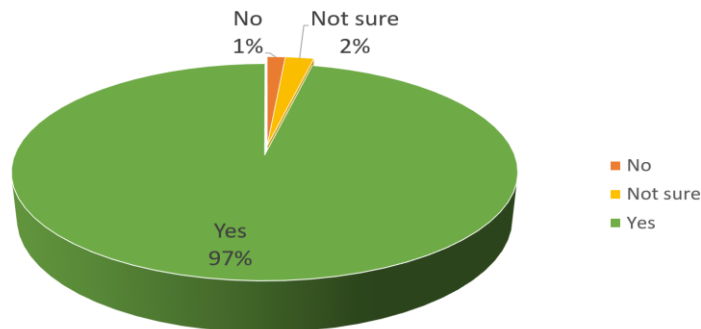
may not have had the opportunity to complete the education and may treat the people with respect irrespective of their educational background.

Did this activity in any way make you feel grateful to the opportunity you have to complete your education?



5. 97% of the students got inspired to take some small steps to help others in the world family. This will go a long way in sowing the seeds of helping others in world family in future too and this attitude of all being a part of one World Family and all working towards supporting each other will also help us in achieving the UN SDGs as well.

Did this activity in any way make you get inspired to take some small steps to help others in the world family?



Some of the Responses to the subjective questions

6. Please discuss with the people who may be serving you and family (House maids/Drivers/House-keeping Staff in Society/Security Guards etc.) or members in the world family and understand their views about education and the challenges they may be facing while educating their young children. Please document your learnings from these discussions.

Summarized below are some of the common learnings from the various discussions by students with people from their connections – Parents, Domestic Staff, Housekeeping, Security, Grocery store Shop keeper.

a) Financial – All most all the documented that financial is the primary reason

- **Poverty** The family is poor and not able to afford the education and prioritizes the basics of food, clothing and shelter over education
 - **Expensive Education:** Though the education provided by government is subsidized in some cases, the resources required for completing the education are not affordable like text books, laptops, notebooks etc.
 - **Earning Early:** Some have mentioned that the education is financially not viable and they would prefer to take up some jobs so that they could contribute financially to support their family
 - **Unemployment:** Due to Covid some lost their jobs and making them prioritize basic survival over education
- b) **Unaware of the importance of Education:** Not being aware of the importance of the education is also cited as one of the reasons why they chose dropout option.
- c) **Gender Bias** – Some of the responses mentioned how they prefer to have their male child complete the education and have the female child either get married off or get them engaged in domestic work
- d) **Lack of Family Support**
- e) **family mobility**
- f) **Belief Systems** -
- **Family job over education** - Some believe that it's better to get employed early in the family profession and drop out of the education to follow the family profession
 - **Females not be educated** – Some believe that females are to be married off and hence need not complete their tertiary education
 - **Education is not useful:** Some believe that some may not get jobs post education and also that it's not useful.
- g) **Accessibility:** Some of the people have mentioned the reason of dropouts as the education institutions being far and this distance and at times inaccessibility as the reason
- h) **Lack of Guidance:** Some are clueless as to what choices needs to be made for continuing with the education
- i) **Low Quality of Education:** Some have attributed to this cause mentioning that they cannot provide guidance to their children and the inability of the children to understand and cope with the demands of the education and competition
- j) **Addictions:** Some have also cited the reason as different types of addictions – alcohol, drugs, social media, internet, games as the cause of dropouts.
- k) **Malnutrition:** Malnutrition impairs learning ability and this is also cited as the reason by some.
- l) **Lack of good Infrastructure:** Lack of infrastructure at their end and or at the educational institutions also is one of the causes. Lack of toilets also causes some dropouts especially for the female students.
- m) **Pedagogy:** Way of teaching and learning in college is different than school, and students need to study more on your own which causes a completely different way of learning and not handled by some students

7. What are the Challenges you think may arise due to Tertiary Dropouts?

Some of the responses are summarized below:

- Increased Poverty
- Lack of Skilled Workforce. There will be a shortage of skilled workforce. It will basically lead to increase in the costs and will increase the overall budget!
- Crime: Higher probability of increased crime. higher rates of resorting to criminal activities, getting into bad influence,
- Impact on Economy of the Country
- Happiness
- Inferiority Complex but this affects the society at a national level
- Health: Mental health problems, poorer health and higher rates of mortality, increased dependence on public assistance. The people who are forced to drop out of tertiary education due to their circumstances are unable to achieve their full innate potential that they might have, if only they had gotten the opportunity to successfully complete their education and then gotten good employment opportunities. The frustration and sadness thus arising out of broken dreams and living a harsh reality can and has embittered many such people, leading to unhappy citizens and relationships on personal and society levels.
- Increased unemployment- Since tertiary dropouts do not have a degree certificate, employers will definitely not even consider them for a job, thus they may remain unemployed for a long time until they get a petty job.
- A new generation of potential uneducated children living below poverty line- Dropouts will create families who probably might remain un-educated too.
- An increased burden on the government, to create employment for such people and also provide them with basic necessities.
- An intellectual loss to the country- Since these people won't complete their education, they won't be able to give back to their country by contributing towards its development, rather they would be a liability for the country.
- Low earning potential.
- Difficulty in finding employment
- Increased competition for jobs
- Less likely to vote
- Hardships to support one's family and household
- Less Innovations & Technology
- Generations in poverty: If we are not able to convince that what might be a bright future prospect then it may be a possibility that the generations are still working for the same without any upliftment.
- Incomplete understanding of Hygiene relating to certain diseases: Apart from the financial and technical prospect another factor playing a major role can be of not understanding the basic hygiene properties which could relate in mass disease in the local area.
- Lack of knowledge for managing finances
- Missed opportunities

- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Social problems
- Lack of confidence
- Inferiority complex, start to doubt their abilities and this can make an effect on their mental well-being

8. How do you think we can help the Tertiary Dropouts?

Some of the responses are summarized below:

- Creating awareness about this issue and seeking support from all
- Encouraging them, and enlightening them about
- Donate books and study materials
- Teach dropouts on weekends and holidays
- Providing guidance of the importance and also the various choices that they can make in education
- They should be provided the career and technical guidance to make interesting and meaningful. they should be given multiple pathways for graduation like they should be provided with online courses so they graduate early and in credit recovery.
- On a community level, we hold guidance or mentorship sessions for them to choose the correct career path, which will lead them to pursue their graduation till the end.
- Scholarships and making people aware of the various schemes.
- Affordable education
- Support from NGOs for the economically under privileged.
- Volunteering efforts to support in teaching
- Not judging them on their circumstances and hardships
- Support their mental health
- Be mindful about nutrition
- Making the underprivileged aware about the various loans and Government policies that Government provides
- Educators and policy makers should find ways to ensure the systems meet the needs of all youth, including those at-risk of dropping out.
- A key to intervention and prevention is a well trained and equipped staff that is capable of mentoring and observing those at risk, and utilizes available resources
- Donation drives, Skills teaching workshops
- Build a relationship based on trust and honesty
- Involve in extracurricular activities
- Provide financial aid to rejoin the and guide & motivate them to choose a field in which they are interested

9. What do you think could be the solutions to avoid Tertiary Dropouts?

Some of the responses are summarized below:

- Governments should make genuine efforts to help this case and as citizens, we need to be aware of these programmes /schemes/policies and in turn make people aware of them.

- Scholarships
- More resources allocated to the programs catered towards the less fortunate
- Less school fees. Fees for female should be lower at least in rural public schools. Opening of more schools and colleges. Encouraging education in regional languages.
- Organizing drives to collect the necessary resources.
- Talking to parents and guardians to convince them to continue their kid's
- Stay in touch with school, talk to them, encourage them for breakfast instead of dropout support them
- Increase the retention rate of tertiary level by increasing the vocational and skill-based portions of the syllabus. This will encourage them to stay in school as those skills will help them get better jobs and thus higher wages.
- learning more relevant
- Talk to them about career realities. (Talk to your children about your own career path and the paths of others. Help them see the differences between gaining a high school diploma/college degree and how many more doors open for them at each level. When talking about what they want to do with their professional lives, teach them how to find out what all level is required for interesting jobs.) Support their mental health.
- Ask for help from your lecturer or tutor
- Speak to your family
- Provide opportunities to stimulate interest and imagination
- Involve parents so they help motivate their child
- students at an individual level that is us, we can tell them about their experiences, though we're also students and not much have much experience but there won't be an age gap so the child will feel more assured and will be more open talking to someone their age rather than someone who's way older. We can help create awareness about the harsh reality that is after dropping out. And ultimately try to find a solution to their problem and encourage them to not give up
- Offer mental health support, Involve in extracurricular activities.
- If there is someone who is struggling with studies, the fellow students can help him with it and hope to maintain his/her interest in the field
- Students can help these students by providing & sharing study materials with them. Then helping such students in their studies by providing them with the proper knowledge. Students should try to involve such students in various activities in the colleges & they must be helped when needed by seniors, classmates, friends etc. Students can bring such students in notice of teachers & college staff so that they can get the important guidance of our teachers.
- Students can teach them at evening classes. Also mandatory student activity in colleges to help tertiary dropouts.

INITIATIVES BY MIT-WPU

There are various platforms at MIT-WPU which help the students and people across the world to get involved and become aware of various social issues, gain insights of Science and Spirituality, Philosophy and all subjects and to get connected with the experts across various areas to collaboratively work together to help create a sustainable and peace world. All the below platforms are open to all in the world to contribute as Participants, Speakers and audience and deliberate and discuss and work towards a peaceful society. Tertiary Dropout issues can also get included as a topic in the below platforms to create the required awareness and collaboration to solve this effectively,

a. **Bhartiya Chhatra Sansad**

Bhartiya Chhatra Sansad is held every year specially for the students across the country who participate in various sessions relating to the society and ultimately to achieve the sustainable development goals. These are resolved during the youth to youth connect sessions of the BCS.

b. **National Teachers Congress**

National Teachers Congress is held every year especially for the Teachers across the country. There are various sessions scheduled wherein the teaching pedagogy is discussed, student's perspective and how to deal with it. Methodologies inculcated amongst the students for their holistic development and well-being.

c. **National Women's Parliament**

National Women's Parliament focusses on the rights & the capabilities of women in various domains and fields. This is also held every year for the well-being and development of Womens.

d. **World Parliament of Science, Religion & Philosophy**

World Parliament of Science, Religion & Philosophy is held every year at the World Peace Dome, Loni. There are various scholars, philosophers, Saints and Sages who participate in it and share their views on various domains.

CONCLUSION

If the educational institutions can create enough awareness amongst the students for the various problems faced by humanity and SDGs and seek support from the students and inspire them to put think of the possible solutions, a youth movement can get created. This status study will also help the students to help think of creative solutions and collaborate in future to solve and avoid tertiary dropouts. If the attention of the youth is diverted to solving the critical issues like tertiary dropouts it can also help them raise their voice and influence the governments to make policy decisions to help redress the issues faced by students and families who may risk to become tertiary dropouts. Students also have the power of technology and social media and can help create the necessary awareness of the causes and also the solutions of this issue. Today's students also become the leaders in various fields like business, education, NGOs, Political, Administration, Government etc. and can possibly make the required changes in the system too in future. This activity can also help create the

necessary empathy and compassion amongst students to contribute in supporting the world family in avoiding tertiary dropouts and help in creating a peaceful and sustainable world.

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मुक्त विद्यापीठातून आदिवासी महिलांचा पदवीपर्यंतचा प्रवास: एक अभ्यास

डॉ. संजीवनी महाले¹, डॉ. सुभाष सोनुने², डॉ. विद्यादेवी बागुल³

¹ सहयोगी प्राध्यापक, शिक्षणशास्त्र विद्याशाखा, यशवंतराव चव्हाण महाराष्ट्र मुक्त विद्यापीठ, नाशिक,

Email: sanjivanimrmahale@gmail.com

² सहाय्यक प्राध्यापक, शिक्षणशास्त्र विद्याशाखा, यशवंतराव चव्हाण महाराष्ट्र मुक्त विद्यापीठ, नाशिक,

Email: sssonune@gmail.com

³ सहाय्यक प्राध्यापक, ब्रम्ह व्हॅली, शिक्षणशास्त्र महाविद्यालय, अंजनेरी, नाशिक,

Email: vidyadevibagul@gmail.com

Paper Receipt Date: 24th August 2022

Peer Review Date: 13th October 2022

Paper Publication Date: 31st October 2022

Similarity Report: 8%

ABSTRACT

भारतीय संविधानाने महिलांच्या सबलीकरणाला प्राधान्य दिलेले आहे. विविध शासकीय आणि अशासकीय संस्थांमार्फत महिलांच्या सबलीकरणासाठी शिक्षणाच्या संधींची उपलब्धता, कौशल्य विकास, व्यवसायाभिमुख बनणे इ. बाबींचा विचार केला जातो. सन 2011 च्या जणगणनेनुसार आदिवासी समाज 8.6 % आहे. त्यातील महिलांचे प्रमाण 49.7% आहे.

यशवंतराव चव्हाण महाराष्ट्र मुक्त विद्यापीठाची स्थापना 1989 साली झाली. विद्यापीठाचे मिशन ‘reach to unreach’ आहे. हे मिशन साध्य करण्यासाठी विद्यापीठाने एक उद्दिष्ट “ग्रामीण भागातील व्यक्ती, महिलांच्या शैक्षणिक गरजांसाठी विशेष लक्ष देणे” असे ठरविलेले आहे. विद्यापीठाला महिला आयोगाकडून आदिवासी महिलांच्या कौशल्य विकसनासाठी अनुदान प्राप्त झाले होते. त्या अनुषंगाने नाशिक जिल्ह्यातील पाच आदिवासी तालुक्यातील महिलांसाठी दोन दिवसीय निवासी कार्यशाळा विद्यापीठात राबविण्यात आली.

कार्यशाळेच्या समारोप प्रसंगी तत्कालीन कुलगुरू मा. ई. वायुनंदन उपस्थित होते. आदिवासी महिलांना मार्गदर्शन करताना कुलगुरूंनी आणि इतर तज्ज्ञांनी त्यांना उच्च शिक्षणासाठी प्रेरित केले व त्यांच्यासाठी मोफत शिक्षणाची सुविधा उपलब्ध करून दिली. त्यातील 21 महिलांना विद्यापीठातील अभ्यासकेंद्रावर प्रवेश देण्यात आला. परंतु त्यातील काही महिलांच्या कुटुंबाकडून प्रवेशासाठी सहकार्य न मिळाल्यामुळे त्यांना ही संधी घेता आली नाही. तीन आदिवासी तालुक्यातील 20 ते 48 वयोगटातील सहा महिला होत्या. प्रत्येकीची कौटुंबिक पार्श्वभूमी भिन्न-भिन्न होती. विद्यापीठातील समंत्रक आणि सहाध्यायी महिलांनी एकमेकींना विविधांगी आधार दिला. त्याच दरम्यान कोविड – 19

ची परिस्थितीही उद्भवल्यामुळे त्यांना प्रत्यक्ष विद्यापीठात संपर्कसत्रासाठी येणे शक्य नव्हते, त्यावेळी विविध संपर्क माध्यमांचा वापर करून समंत्रण करण्यात आले. बी.ए. शिक्षणक्रमासाठी प्रवेश घेतलेल्या सहा महिलांपैकी चार महिलांनी विद्यापीठाचा बी.ए. पदवी शिक्षणक्रम यशस्वीरित्या पूर्ण केला. या आदिवासी महिलांचा यशवंतराव चव्हाण महाराष्ट्र मुक्त विद्यापीठातून उच्च शिक्षणाच्या प्रवासात आलेल्या अडचणी आणि त्यांनी त्यावर केलेली मात प्रस्तुत शोधनिबंधात मांडण्यात आलेली आहे.

मुख्य संकल्पना

आदिवासी महिला, मुक्त विद्यापीठ, संपर्कसत्र, समंत्रक, अभ्यासकेंद्र

प्रस्तावना

भारतीय राज्यघटनेत डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकरांनी भारतातील दलित, आदिवासी व स्त्रियांना सन्मानाने जगता यावे यासाठी मूलभूत हक्क आणि आरक्षणाची तरतूद केली. आदिवासींसाठीच्या पाचवी व सहावी अनुसूचीत आदिवासी समुदायांना सामाजिक, आर्थिक व शैक्षणिक बाबतीत विशेष संरक्षण पुरविण्यात आले आहे. भारतीय संविधानातील कलम 14 मध्ये मूलभूत हक्कांची तरतूद करून कोणत्याही व्यक्तीचा जात, धर्म, लिंग व भाषेच्या आधारे भेदभाव करता येणार नाही. आरक्षणाची तरतूद करून अनुसूचित जाती आणि जमातींसाठी सकारात्मक भेदभावाच्या माध्यमातून त्यांच्या विकासाच्या संधी उपलब्ध करून दिली. त्यामुळे आदिवासी समाजाला विकासाच्या मुख्य प्रवाहात आणण्यासाठी मदत झाली. भारतीय राज्यघटनेच्या कलम 366 (25) व कलम 342 नुसार आदिवासी समुदायाचा प्राचीन वारसा, सहज प्रवृत्तीने निर्माण झालेली संस्कृती, बुजरेपणा किंवा लाजाळूपणा भौगोलिक अलिप्तता आणि मागासलेपणा ही वैशिष्ट्ये सांगितली आहेत, आदिवासी समाजाची लोकसंख्या भारताच्या लोकसंख्येच्या प्रमाणात 8.6 टक्के इतकी आहे. 2011 च्या जनगणनेनुसार आदिवासी जमातींची लोकसंख्या 849.46 इतकी आहे. त्यातील महिलांचे प्रमाण 49.7% आहे. जागतिकीकरणामुळे आदिवासी समुदाय जमीन, जल आणि जंगल यापासून दूर फेकला गेल्यामुळे हा समुदाय समग्र विकासाच्या प्रक्रियेचा बाहेर फेकला गेला आहे. (देशमुख, २०१५)

यशवंतराव चव्हाण महाराष्ट्र मुक्त विद्यापीठाची स्थापना 1989 साली झाली. विद्यापीठाचे मिशन 'reach to unreach' असे आहे. हे मिशन साध्य करण्यासाठी विद्यापीठाचे एक उद्दिष्ट हे ग्रामीण भागातील व्यक्ती, महिलांच्या शैक्षणिक गरजांसाठी विशेष लक्ष देणे असे आहे. विद्यापीठाला महिला आयोगाकडून आदिवासी महिलांच्या कौशल्य विकासासाठी अनुदान प्राप्त झाले होते. त्या अनुषंगाने आदिवासी महिलांमध्ये कौशल्य विकासासाठी नाशिक जिल्ह्यातील पाच आदिवासी तालुक्यातील महिलांसाठी दोन दिवसीय निवासी कार्यशाळा राबविण्यात आली. महिला विद्यापीठात निवासी राहिल्यामुळे पुन्हा शिकावे असे विचार त्यांच्या मनात येऊ लागले. (महाले स., २०१९)

पूर्व साहित्य आणि संशोधनाचा आढावा

“महिला सुशिक्षित झाल्याशिवाय कोणत्याही समाजातील लोक शिक्षित होवू शकत नाही” असे विविध आयोग आणि समित्यांनी मांडलेले आहे. (नरवणे, १९९९)

सिंधी एस. (2012) भारतीय संविधानामध्ये 20 पेक्षा जास्त कलम हे दारिद्र्य रेषेखालील व्यक्तींना सुयोग्य वातावरण निर्माण करण्यासाठी मांडलेले आहेत. याच लेखामध्ये त्यांनी भारतातील जनसंख्या प्रामुख्याने ग्रामीण भागात राहात असून आदिवासी समाजाला शिक्षण, इलेक्ट्रिसिटी, स्वच्छ पिण्याचे पाणी, आरोग्य सेवा आणि वाहन व्यवस्था अशा

विविध सुविधा मिळत नाहीत असे नमूद केले आहे. आदिवासी समाजातील महिला कष्ट करून कुटुंबाच्या आर्थिक व्यवस्था आणि व्यवस्थापनामध्ये मदत करतात असे म्हटले आहे. (Sindhi, 2012)

लक्ष्मी (2016) यांनी आदिवासी समाजाचे शाळेतील आणि उच्च शिक्षणातील गळतीचे प्रमाण मांडताना त्याची कारणे गरीबी, शिक्षणाचा आशय, आदिवासी भागांमध्ये पुरेशा आधारासाठी शैक्षणिक संस्था उपलब्ध नसणे आणि अनुपस्थिती मांडलेली आहे. आर्थिक स्तरकमी, कुटुंबात शिक्षणाबाबत, लिंग समानता याबाबत सामाजिक वातावरण नसणे त्याचप्रमाणे त्यांच्या बालपणापासूनच त्यांना पुरेशा शैक्षणिक सुविधा मिळत नाहीत. म्हणून महिलांना उच्च शिक्षण घेता येत नाही. (Laxmi, 2016)

कौर, आर, (2020) यांनी आदिवासी महिलांना राहण्याचे निश्चित ठिकाण नसणे, नियमित आर्थिक स्रोत नसणे, त्यांचे राहणीमान, गरीबी आणि मूलभूत गरजाही पूर्ण न होणे, शेतीविषयक कृतीमध्ये त्यांचा सहभाग असणे, त्याचप्रमाणे हस्त व्यवसायांमध्ये सहभाग देणे आणि त्यांना सततचे काम नसणे अशा समस्या मांडलेल्या आहेत. (R.K., 2020)

रजनी, एन. (2011) आदिवासी महिलांच्या शिक्षणाबाबत आलेल्या अडचणी कौटुंबिक जबाबदाऱ्या, कमी वयात लग्न, भेदभावाची वागणूक, गरीबी, अनुदेशन कार्यनिती उपलब्ध नसणे, अध्ययन-अध्यापन साहित्य उपलब्ध नसणे, शिक्षकांची कमतरता, भौतिक सुविधा उपलब्ध नसणे, मूल्यनिर्धारण कार्यनिती अचूक नसणे, शैक्षणिक कृतींचा अभाव अशी विविध मांडलेल्या आहेत. अडचणी दूर करण्यासाठी त्यांनी पुढीलप्रमाणे उपाय मांडलेले आहे. महिलांमध्ये संप्रेषण कौशल्य विकास, गरीबी आणि मागासलेपणा दूर करण्यासाठी आधार सेवा, मुलींमध्ये शिक्षणाबाबत जाणीवजागृती करून देणे, मुलींना समान हक्काबाबतची जाणीव करून देणे, स्वतःच्या रागावर नियंत्रण करणे. असे विविध उपाय मांडलेले आहेत. (Rani, 2011)

नाईक आर. (2017) यांनी आदिवासी समाजाच्या शिक्षणाबाबतच्या मांडलेल्या अडचणी पुढीलप्रमाणे भाषा माध्यम, गावाजवळ शाळा नसणे, आर्थिक परिस्थिती, पालकांची शिक्षणाबाबतची अभिवृत्ती, अध्ययन -अध्यापनाविषयी अडचणी आणि योग्य नियंत्रण सुविधा नसणे. या अडचणी निराकरणासाठी त्यांनी काही सूचनाही मांडलेल्या आहेत त्या पुढीलप्रमाणे स्थानिक भाषेमध्ये साहित्य उपलब्ध करून देणे, स्थानिक महिला शिक्षकांची नियुक्ती करणे, विद्यार्थिनींना सामाजिक संरक्षण देणे आणि योग्य नियंत्रण करणे. (Naik, 2017)

महाले स. आणि इतर (2019) यांनी महिलांच्या धोरणाविषयी पुढील विधान मांडलेले आहे. महाराष्ट्र शासनाने 1994 मध्ये पहिले महिला धोरण जाहीर केले, तर दुसरे 2001 आणि 2014 मध्ये तिसरे महिला धोरण निश्चित करण्यात आले आहे. भारतातील शैक्षणिक नियोजन कर्त्यांनी स्त्री व पुरुष यांच्यामधील दरी कमी करण्याकरिता रणनीती ठरविली. 1950 मध्ये या कार्यक्रमाचा दृष्टीकोन 'कल्याण' हा होता तर 1970 च्या सुमारास 'विकास' हा झाला व 1990 पासून 'सबलीकरण' हा दृष्टीकोन झाला. (तवंतकर, २०१६)

लक्ष्मी (2016) यांनी महिलांना बहुमाध्यमाची (Mass Media) उपलब्धता यांचा विचार केला असता 67.22 % महिलांना अत्यंत कमी मास मीडिया उपलब्ध होतो, मध्यम स्वरूपात 22 % महिलांना उपलब्ध होतो आणि 10.55% महिलांना सहज उपलब्ध होतो. हे प्रमाण अत्यंत कमी असल्यामुळे त्यामुळे त्यांना तंत्रज्ञानामधील विकास कळत नाही म्हणून त्यांना त्याबाबतचे हे सहकार्य करणे आवश्यक आहे. (Laxmi, 2016)

राष्ट्रीय शैक्षणिक धोरण 2020 मध्ये भारतीय शिक्षण व्यवस्था आणि नियमित शासन धोरणे यांनी शालेय शिक्षणातील सर्व स्तरात लिंग आणि सामाजिक संवर्धन यातील दरी भरून काढण्यासाठी मांडणी केलेली आहे. माध्यमिक स्तरावर सामाजिक व आर्थिक मागासलेले गट हे शिक्षणात कालानुरूप अपरिचित आहेत हे गट म्हणजे लिंगावर आधारित विशेषतः मुली आणि तृतीयपंथी व्यक्ती, सामाजिक सांस्कृतिक ओळख असलेले अनुसूचित जाती, अनुसूचित जमाती, इतर मागासवर्गीय आणि अल्पसंख्यांक होत. त्याचप्रमाणे भौगोलिक ओळख असलेले खेड्यातील मुल, लहान गावे आणि आकांक्षी जिल्हे इत्यादी. या मुलांची पटनोंदणी ही इयत्ता पहिली ते बारावीमध्ये सतत कमी होत असली तरीही सामाजिक आणि आर्थिक वंचित गटांमध्ये ठळकपणे जाणवते तर मुलींमध्येही उच्च शिक्षणात नेहमी प्रकर्षाने जाणवते.

पाटील, स. आणि महाले, स. (2017) यांच्या मते सामाजिक माध्यमांमुळे शिक्षक आणि अध्ययनार्थी यांच्यामध्ये विचार आणि कल्पनांची देवाणघेवाण तात्काळ आणि सहज होऊ शकते. त्यांनी सामाजिक माध्यमांचा अध्यापनशास्त्रीय विश्लेषण व अध्यापनशास्त्रीय महत्त्व पुढीलप्रमाणे मांडलेले आहे ते असे विद्यार्थ्यांच्या गरजा लक्षात घेऊन त्यांचे शैक्षणिक मूल्यनिर्धारण करणे, समुदायाचे संघटन करून कल्पना, दृष्टिकोण, स्त्रोतांची अदलाबदल करणे, विद्यार्थ्यांची प्रगती वर्गातील सहज सहभागामुळे होते, विविध साधनांद्वारे माहितीचे व्यवस्थापन करणे सहज शक्य होते. ज्या विद्यार्थ्यांना पारंपारिक पद्धतीने अध्यापन जमत नाही त्यांच्याशी संपर्क साधणे विद्यार्थ्यांमध्ये आत्मविश्वासाची भावना निर्माण करणे शक्य होते. समुहा माध्यमांमुळे अध्ययन-अध्यापन प्रक्रियेला सुलभता येते. हे सहयोग आंतरक्रियात्मक संप्रेषण साधन आहे. (Patil, 2017)

संशोधन प्रश्न

१. आदिवासी महिलांच्या शिक्षणात कोणकोणत्या कौटुंबिक, सामाजिक आणि आर्थिक अडचणी येतात?
२. आदिवासी महिलांना अभ्यासात खंड पडल्यामुळे कोणकोणत्या अडचणी येतात?
३. विविध वयोगटातील आदिवासी महिलांना समंत्रण करताना कोणकोणत्या अडचणी येतात?
४. शैक्षणिक सुविधा उपलब्ध करून दिल्यास आदिवासी महिला शिक्षण घेतात का?

संशोधनाचे महत्त्व

मुक्त विद्यापीठांमध्ये या महिलांचे दोन दिवसीय निवासी कार्यशाळा घेण्यात आली. त्यांच्याशी अनौपचारिक मुलाखतींमधून आदिवासी महिलांच्या शिक्षणावरील अडचणी जाणून घेण्यात आल्या. वरील सर्व अडचणी पूर्व लेखांमधील अडचणींचे सुसंगत आणि योग्य होत्या. त्यावर कशी मात करता येईल याबाबत कार्यशाळेसाठी आलेल्या तज्ञांशी चर्चा करण्यात आली. महिलांना मुक्त विद्यापीठांमधून पदवीला प्रवेश देता येऊ शकेल का याबाबत माननीय कुलगुरूंची चर्चा करून त्यांना विनामूल्य प्रवेश मुदत संपल्यानंतरही ऑफलाईन पद्धतीने विद्यापीठातील 'ज्ञानज्योती सावित्रीबाई फुले अभ्यासकेंद्र' येथे प्रवेश देऊन महिलांना शिक्षणाची संधी उपलब्ध करून देण्यात आली. त्यांना विनामूल्य स्वयं-अध्यापन साहित्य देण्यात आले.

संशोधन शीर्षक

आदिवासी महिलांनी उच्च शिक्षणातील खंडानंतर पदवी प्राप्तीसाठी समंत्रक आणि समन्वयक यांनी विविध माध्यमांद्वारे केलेल्या सहकार्याची उपयुक्तता

उद्दिष्टे

१. मुक्त विद्यापीठातील बी. ए. प्रथम वर्ष प्रवेशानंतर कोणतीही कृती न करणाऱ्या आदिवासी महिलांच्या अडचणींचा शोध घेणे.
२. आदिवासी महिलांच्या प्रवेशानंतर अनेक वर्षे कालखंडानंतर आपण विषय निवड, अभ्यास कसा करावा याबाबतच्या मार्गदर्शनाचा अभ्यास करणे.
३. आदिवासी महिलांच्या कौटुंबिक, आर्थिक आणि सामाजिक पार्श्वभूमीचा अभ्यास करणे.
४. Covid-19 च्या परिस्थितीत आदिवासी महिलांच्या संपर्कासाठी वापरण्यात आलेल्या व्हाट्सअप संपर्क माध्यमाची उपयोगिता अभ्यासणे.
५. अंतिम परीक्षेचे स्वरूप बदलाबाबत केलेल्या मार्गदर्शनाचा अभ्यास करणे.

व्याप्ती आणि मर्यादा

व्याप्ती

१. सदर संशोधनमुक्त विद्यापीठात प्रवेश घेतलेल्या आदिवासी महिलांपुरते होते.
२. सन 2018-2021 या कालावधीतील पदवी शिक्षणक्रमासंबंधी होते.
३. सन 2018-2021 या कालावधीतील पदवी शिक्षणक्रमातील आदिवासी महिलांनी निवडलेल्या अभ्यासक्रमाशी संबंधित आहे.

मर्यादा

१. सदर संशोधनमुक्त विद्यापीठातील अभ्यासकेंद्रावर प्रवेश घेतलेल्या 21 आदिवासी महिलांपुरते मर्यादित होते.
२. सन 2018-2021 या कालावधीतील मुक्त विद्यापीठातील बी. ए. पदवी शिक्षणक्रमासंबंधी होते.
३. सन 2018-2021 या कालावधीतील पदवी शिक्षणक्रमातील आदिवासी महिलांनी निवडलेल्या प्रथम वर्ष 6, द्वितीय वर्ष 3 मराठी, मानसशास्त्र आणि तृतीय वर्ष 2 मराठी आणि राज्य शास्त्र अभ्यासक्रमाशी संबंधित आहे.

नमुना निवड

सदर संशोधनासाठी एकूण 21 आदिवासी महिलांची निवड करण्यात आलेली होती. परंतु त्यातील फक्त सहा महिलांनी सदर शिक्षणक्रम पूर्ण केला. या आदिवासी महिलांची वैशिष्ट्ये पुढीलप्रमाणे होती. सहा आदिवासी महिलांपैकी पाच विवाहित आणि एक अविवाहित होती. त्यांचा वयोगट 20-48 असा होता. त्या विविध तालुक्यात राहणाऱ्या होत्या. कुटुंबातील अनेक अडचणी सोडवत सर्वांनी एकत्रितपणे शिक्षणक्रम पूर्ण करण्यासाठी एकमेकींना प्रेरणा दिली. स्वाध्याय लेखनाबाबत मदत केली. अंतिम परीक्षेच्या वेळी गेस्टहाउसमध्ये राहून एकमेकींना आशय आपापल्या भाषेत समजावून सांगण्याच्या प्रयत्न केला.

संशोधन पद्धती आणि माहिती एकत्रीकरणाची साधने

विद्यापीठातील प्राध्यापक आणि आणि विद्यावाचस्पती शिक्षणक्रमाचे विद्यार्थी यांनी आदिवासी महिलांना संमंत्रण करावे असा निर्णय घेण्यात आला. या महिलांना प्रत्येक रविवारी विद्यापीठात येणे आर्थिकदृष्ट्या शक्य नसते म्हणून महिन्यातून एक दिवस संपर्क सत्रासाठी याचचे निश्चित करून त्याचे वेळापत्रकही त्यांच्या सोयीनुसार करण्यात आले. प्रत्येक महिन्याला कोणत्या घटकाबाबत संमंत्रण होणार आहे याबाबतची माहिती त्यांना प्रथम संमंत्रणात देण्यात आली. या महिला, विद्यापीठातील संमंत्रक आणि समन्वयक यांचा एक व्हाट्सअप ग्रुप तयार करण्यात आला. या

ग्रुपद्वारेही या महिलांना आणि इतर संबंधित व्यक्तीला सूचना, पत्र देण्यासाठी उपयोग करण्यात आला. विद्यापीठातील संमंत्रक आणि समन्वयक सतत त्यांच्याबरोबर असल्यामुळे आदिवासी महिलांना मानसिक आधाराची संधी उपलब्ध झाली. त्यांच्यापुढे आलेल्या अडचणीवर मात करून त्यांनी अभ्यासाला सुरुवात करू पदवी पदवी प्राप्त केली. आदिवासी महिलांचा सखोल अभ्यास करावयाचा असल्याकारणाने या संशोधनासाठी व्यष्टी **अभ्यास पद्धतीने अभ्यास** करण्यात आला. तीन वर्षात केलेल्या विविध कृतींचा सविस्तर अभ्यास करण्यासाठी अनौपचारिक मुलाखत हे साधन वापरण्यात आले. महिलांशी बोलताना आवश्यकतेनुसार प्रश्नामध्ये बदल करण्यात आले.

उद्दिष्टानिहाय माहिती एकत्रीकरणासाठी पुढील साधनांचा वापर करण्यात आला. ते कोष्टक क्र. १ मध्ये दिलेले आहे.

कोष्टक क्र. १ उद्दिष्टानुरूप माहिती एकत्रीकरणासाठीची साधने

क्र.	उद्दिष्ट	साधने
१.	प्रवेशानंतर कोणतीही कृती न करणाऱ्या आदिवासी महिलांच्या अडचणींचा शोध	अनौपचारिक मुलाखती
२.	विषय निवड आणि अभ्यास कसा करावा याबाबत मार्गदर्शन	वाचन सवयी आणि स्वयं अध्ययन कौशल्यांचा विकास कार्यशाळा
३.	कौटुंबिक, आर्थिक आणि सामाजिक पार्श्वभूमीचा अभ्यास	अनौपचारिक मुलाखती
४.	Covid-19 च्या परिस्थितीत सन्मान तरुणासाठी वापरण्यात आलेल्या व्हाट्सअप संपर्कमाध्यमाची उपयोगिता अभ्यासणे	व्हाट्सअप संपर्क माध्यम सूचना आणि पत्रव्यवहार
५.	अंतिम परीक्षेचे स्वरूप बदलाबाबत केलेले मार्गदर्शन	अनौपचारिक मुलाखत

उद्दिष्टानिहाय माहितीचे विश्लेषण आणि अर्थनिर्वचन

प्रतिसादकांकडून मिळालेली माहिती गुणात्मक होती. त्यामुळे विश्लेषण गुणात्मक पद्धतीने करण्यात आलेले आहे.

उद्दिष्ट १- मुक्त विद्यापीठातील बी. ए. प्रथम वर्ष प्रवेशानंतर कोणतीही कृती न करणाऱ्या आदिवासी महिलांच्या अडचणींचा शोध घेण्यासाठी या महिलांचे अनौपचारिक मुलाखत घेण्यात आल्या. वीस ते पंचवीस वर्षांनंतर शिकू शकते का? शिकत असताना घरातली कामे कोण करतील? मुलांच्या शिक्षणाकडे लक्ष कोण देईल? व्यवसायामध्ये ही मदत कमी होईल का? असे अनेक प्रश्न प्रवेशानंतर कुटुंबातील प्रमुख व्यक्तींनी त्यांच्या समोर उपस्थित केले होते. या प्रश्नांची समाधानकारक उत्तरे त्यांना देता आली नाहीत.

अन्वयार्थ कुटुंबातील प्रमुख व्यक्ती पुरुष होत्या, त्यामुळे महिला स्वतः निर्णय घेऊ शकत नव्हत्या. या महिलांनी विविध पद्धतीने आपल्या कुटुंबातील प्रमुखांशी चर्चा केली परंतु कुटुंबातील प्रमुख व्यक्तींकडून त्यांना शिक्षणाबाबत नकारच ऐकावा लागला.

निष्कर्ष-कुटुंबातील प्रमुख व्यक्तींनी शिक्षणासाठी सहकार्य न केल्यामुळे १५ आदिवासी महिलांच्या पुढील शिक्षणासाठी तयारी दर्शिलेली नाही.

उद्दिष्ट २- विषय निवड, अभ्यास कसा करावा याबाबतचे मार्गदर्शन: एफ.वाय.बी.ए.साठी विषय समान होते. परंतु एस. वाय. आणि टी.वाय.साठी या विद्यार्थिनींना विषय निवडीबाबतची संधी होती.

वर्षनिहाय विषयाबाबतची माहिती कोष्टक क्र. २ मध्ये दिलेली आहे.

कोष्टक क्र. २ विद्यार्थिनींनी वर्षनिहाय निवडलेले विषय

क्र.	एफ. वाय. बी. ए. विषय	एस. वाय. बी. ए. विषय	टी. वाय. बी. ए. विषय
१)	स्वयं-अध्ययन कौशल्यांचा अधिष्ठान अभ्यासक्रम	वाड:मय प्रकार	वाड:मय प्रकार
२)	सामान्य ज्ञान व सामाजिक जाणिवांचा अधिष्ठान	स्वातंत्र्योत्तर वाड:मय प्रवाह	मध्ययुगीन वाड:मय प्रवाह
३)	मराठी भाषेचा अधिष्ठान अभ्यासक्रम	भारतीय राजकारणाची प्रक्रिया	प्रसार माध्यमांसाठी लेखन कौशल्य
४)	मानव्यविद्याचा अधिष्ठान अभ्यासक्रम	आपले हक्क व त्यांची परिपूर्ती	राज्यशास्त्राचे स्वरूप
५)	हिंदी व इंग्रजी भाषांचा अधिष्ठान अभ्यासक्रम	मी आणि माझे वर्तन	राजकीय संरचना
६)	सामाजिक शास्त्रांचा अधिष्ठान अभ्यासक्रम	बालसंगोपन व बालविकास	आधुनिक भारतातील राजकीय वारसा

अन्वयार्थ महिलांशी ज्यावेळी चर्चा केली त्यावेळी मराठी भाषेबाबतचे ज्ञान अधिक मिळावे अशी त्यांची इच्छा होती. म्हणून मराठी हा विषय त्याचप्रमाणे बालकांचे संगोपन कसे करावे हे माहीत झाल्यास गावातील इतर महिलांना त्याबाबत मार्गदर्शन करता येईल असे त्यांना वाटत होते, म्हणून मानसशास्त्र हा विषय आणि गाव विकासामध्ये या महिलांचा सहभाग वाढल्यामुळे गावाची प्रगती चांगली होते म्हणून राज्यशास्त्र विषय त्यांना घ्यावेसे वाटत होते. तर टी. वाय.साठी मराठी आणि राज्यशास्त्र या विषयांची निवड केली.

आदिवासी महिलांच्या अभ्यासात अनेक वर्षांचा खंड पडलेला होता त्यामुळे अर्थपूर्ण वाचन कसे करावे, टिपणी कशी काढावी आणि महत्त्वाचे मुद्दे कसे लक्षात ठेवावे याबाबत त्यांना अर्धा दिवस चर्चात्मक कार्यशाळा घेऊन मार्गदर्शन करण्यात आले. त्याचप्रमाणे विषयनिहाय प्रत्येकी पाच स्वाध्यायाची उत्तरे स्वतःच्या भाषेत कशी लिहावी, त्याचे उपयोजन कसे मांडावे याबाबतही त्यांना मार्गदर्शन करण्यात आले. त्यामुळे त्यांच्या अभ्यासाला एक विशिष्ट दिशा मिळाली. त्यांना इंग्रजी विषयाची प्रचंड भीती होती. या विषयाच्या संमंत्रकांनी काही कृती विकसित केल्या आणि त्यामुळे इंग्रजी विषयाबाबतची त्यांची भीती कमी व्हायला मदत झाली.

निष्कर्ष- आदिवासी महिलांना विषय निवडीबाबत आणि अभ्यासाबाबत अचूक मार्गदर्शन मिळाल्यामुळे त्यांना अभ्यासाची सवय लागली.

उद्दिष्ट 3- कौटुंबिक सामाजिक पार्श्वभूमी, आर्थिक पार्श्वभूमीचा अभ्यास - या सहा महिला तीन आदिवासी तालुक्यातील होत्या. प्रत्येकीची कौटुंबिक, सामाजिक आणि आर्थिक पार्श्वभूमी ही भिन्न-भिन्न होती. त्या वेगवेगळ्या वयोगटातील होत्या. एकमेकींना कधीही अगोदर भेटलेल्या नव्हत्या. त्यामुळे त्यांच्यामध्ये एकजिनसीपणा आणण्यासाठी त्यांना महिन्यातून एक दिवस विद्यापीठातील अभ्यासकेंद्रावर संपर्क सत्रासाठी बोलविण्यात येत असे. संध्याकाळच्या वेळी विद्यापीठातील संमंत्रक स्वतःच्या गाडीने त्यांना बस स्टॅण्डपर्यंत सोडत असत. त्यांच्यातील एक वरिष्ठ महिला इतर महिलांचा डबा स्वतः आणत असे.

अन्वयार्थ सत्रामध्ये त्या एकमेकांशी मोकळेपणाने बोलू लागल्या, आपापल्या अडचणी एकमेकींना सांगून त्या कशा सोडवता येतील याबाबतही चर्चा करू लागल्या. या कृतीतून त्यांच्यामध्ये सहकार्याची भावना निर्माण झाली. एकमेकींना कशी मदत करता येईल याबाबत त्या सतत विचार करू लागल्या. महत्वाच्या प्रश्नाबाबत केंद्र समन्वयकांचे मार्गदर्शन घेऊ लागल्या. सहाध्यायी विद्यार्थ्यांमध्ये सलोख्याचे वातावरण निर्माण झाले त्यामुळे त्या एकमेकींना अभ्यासातही मदत करू लागल्या. विद्यार्थिनींची एफ.वाय.बी.ए. अंतिम परीक्षा विद्यापीठातील परीक्षा केंद्रावर घेण्यात आली. आणि या विद्यार्थ्यांनीना अल्पदरात गेस्ट हाउसला राहण्याची सोयही करण्यात आली.

निष्कर्ष- आदिवासी महिलांची कौटुंबिक सामाजिक आर्थिक पार्श्वभूमी भिन्न होती.

उद्दिष्ट 4 - Covid-19 च्या परिस्थितीत वापरण्यात आलेल्या व्हाट्सअप संपर्क माध्यमाची उपयोगिता - Covid-19 च्या परिस्थितीमध्ये एस. वाय. बी.ए. सुरु झाले. त्या विद्यापीठात संपर्क सत्रासाठी येऊ शकत नव्हत्या. म्हणून त्यांना व्हाट्सअप द्वारे स्वाध्याय प्रश्न व त्याबाबतच्या सूचना पाठविण्यात आल्या.

अन्वयार्थ- विद्यार्थिनींनी व्हाट्सअपद्वारेच स्वाध्यायाची उत्तरे लिहून पाठविली. परीक्षकांनी ती ऑनलाईन पद्धतीने तपासली आणि विद्यार्थिनींना प्रत्याभरण देण्यात आले. स्वाध्याय परीक्षेत मिळालेले गुण आणि त्यांना एफ.वाय.मध्ये मिळालेल्या गुणांच्या आधारे एस. वाय. बी.ए.चे गुण त्यांना देण्यात आले.

निष्कर्ष- आदिवासी महिलांना शैक्षणिक मार्गदर्शनासाठी व्हाट्सअप संपर्क माध्यम उपयुक्त ठरले.

उद्दिष्ट 5 - सन 2021 मध्ये या विद्यार्थिनींचे परीक्षा ऑनलाईन पद्धतीने घेण्यात येणार होती. त्यांना अगोदर टी.वाय.बी.ए.चे स्वाध्याय लिहून विद्यापीठात पाठवण्यास सांगण्यात आले. त्यांनी एफ. वाय.चे पेपर दीर्घोत्तरी पद्धतीने लिहिले होते. परंतु टी.वाय.बी.ए. चे पेपर हे बहुपर्यायी पद्धतीने ऑनलाईन घेण्यात येणार होते. या विद्यार्थ्यांना बहुपर्यायी प्रश्न कसे असतात, त्यांचे अचूक उत्तर कसे शोधायचे याबाबतचे प्रशिक्षण देणे आवश्यक होते त्यासाठी काही मुद्दे तयार करून ते त्यांना व्हाट्सअप ग्रुपवर पाठविण्यात आले. हे मुद्दे वाचल्यानंतर महिलांना आलेल्या अडचणींबाबत दूरध्वनीवर वैयक्तिक मार्गदर्शन करण्यात आले.

अन्वयार्थ- चार महिलांनी टी. वाय. बी.ए.चे पेपर दिले. परंतु एका महिलेला अँड्रॉइड फोन उपलब्ध न झाल्यामुळे तिला पेपर देता आले नाही. परंतु विद्यापीठाने परीक्षा न देऊ शकणाऱ्या विद्यार्थ्यांसाठी पुन्हा एकदा संधी उपलब्ध करून दिली होती. त्या विद्यार्थिनीला पुन्हा संपर्क साधून दुसऱ्या व्यक्तीचा अँड्रॉइड फोन घेऊन उत्तर कसे उत्तरपत्रिका कशी सोडवावी याबाबत वैयक्तिक मार्गदर्शन करण्यात आले. मात्र एका महिलेच्या घरी मोठे कुटुंब असल्यामुळे या महिलेला अंतिम परीक्षा देणे शक्य झाले नाही. सर्वात लहान असलेली विद्यार्थिनी दोन पेपरमध्ये अनुत्तीर्ण झाली परंतु इतर सर्व चार महिला प्रथम श्रेणीमध्ये उत्तीर्ण झाल्या.

लक्ष्मी(२०१६) आणि इतर यांनी मांडलेली आदिवासी मुली आणि महिलांच्या शिक्षणातील गळतीची कारणे विद्यापीठ प्रशासन आणि संमंत्रकांनी मातकरून महिलांना पदवी प्राप्त करण्यास मदत केली.

संशोधनाचे मुख्य निष्कर्ष

१. आदिवासी महिलांच्या बाबतीत अनेक कुटुंबामध्ये उच्च शिक्षणाबाबत अनास्था दिसून येते.
२. मुक्त विद्यापीठाने आदिवासी महिला आणि मुलींना विनामूल्य पदवी शिक्षणक्रमासाठी प्रवेश देऊन त्यांची आर्थिक अडचण दूर केली.
३. आदिवासी महिलांना विनामूल्य स्वयं-अध्यापन साहित्य देण्यात आले. आवडीनुसार विषय निवडण्याची संधी देण्यात आली. आवडीचे विषय असल्यामुळे मनापासून अभ्यास केला.
४. विद्यापीठातील अभ्यासकेंद्रावर त्यांचा प्रवेश करण्यात आला. त्यामुळे विद्यापीठातील सुविधा विनामूल्य उपलब्ध झाल्या. मुख्यालयात त्यांची एफ. वाय. बी. ए. ची अंतिम परीक्षा घेण्यात आली. त्यामुळे आर्थिक खर्च कमी झाला.
५. विद्यापीठातील गेस्टहाउस अत्यंत कमी खर्चात निवासासाठी उपलब्ध करून देण्यात आले. संमंत्रकांनी शहरातील त्यांच्या प्रवासाची सुविधा स्वतःच्या वाहनातून उपलब्ध करून दिली.
६. संमंत्रकांनी Covid-19 च्या परिस्थितीत संपर्क माध्यमांचा वापर करून विद्यार्थिनींच्या संपर्कात राहून त्यांना प्रेरणा दिली.
७. टी.वाय.बी.ए.चे पेपर हे बहुपर्यायी पद्धतीने ऑनलाइन घेण्यात येणार हे लक्षात आल्यानंतर संमंत्रकांनी त्याबाबत मार्गदर्शन केल्यामुळे आदिवासी महिला पदवी प्राप्त करणे शक्य झाले.

सारांश

आदिवासी महिलांनी पदवी प्राप्त केल्यानंतर पुढील प्रतिक्रिया दिल्या. मुक्त विद्यापीठाच्या माध्यमातून अपूर्ण शिक्षण पूर्ण करता आले. शिक्षण घेतांना आजूबाजूचा परिसर, वातावरण संमंत्रकांचे विचारांचा अनुभव मिळाला. शाळा आणि बालपणीच्या आठवणींना उजाळा मिळाला. लवकर लग्न झाल्यामुळे शिक्षण घेण्याची इच्छा अपूर्ण होती. ती मुक्त विद्यापीठामुळे पूर्ण झाली. अंतिम परीक्षेच्या वेळी विद्यापीठात राहण्याची व्यवस्था झाल्यामुळे अभ्यासासाठी वेळ मिळाला. वेळेवर परीक्षेला उपस्थित राहून संपूर्ण पेपर सोडविता आला. वेगळे काही करण्याची हिम्मत आमच्यात अजूनही आहे आणि आम्ही ते करू शकतो ह्याची जाणीव निर्माण झाली. ज्ञानगंगा घोरोघरी ह्या ब्रीद वाक्याचा पुरेपूर फायदा झाला.

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- आभार : (मा. कुलगुरुप्रा. ई. वायुनंदन यांनी आदिवासी महिलांच्या सन २०१८-१९ या वर्षासाठी बी.ए. प्रथम व द्वितीय वर्ष प्रवेशासमान्यता दिल्यामुळे आम्ही हे कार्य करू शकलो. निबंधलेखक माननीय कुलगुरु ऋणात राहू इच्छितात.

(या विद्यार्थिनीना संमंत्रक म्हणून पुढील प्राध्यापकांची कार्य केले. डॉ. संजीवनी महाले, प्रा. नागार्जुन वाडेकर, डॉ. प्रवीण घोडेस्वार, प्रा. विजयकुमार पाईकराव, डॉ. सुभाष सोनुने, श्रीमती. विद्यादेवी बागुल, धनंजयमुंदे, राहुल ढेरे कार्य केल्याबद्दल वरील सर्वांचे ऋण व्यक्त करीत आहे.)

ACT LOCALLY, THINK GLOBALLY, REVISITED

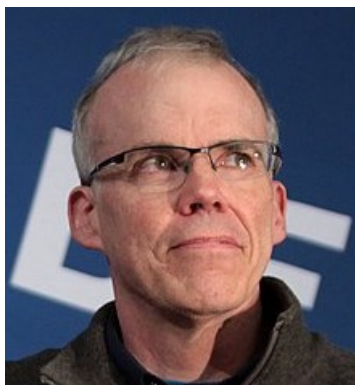


Image Source:

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/8/88/Bill_McKibben%2C_2016_%28cropped%29.jpg/220px-Bill_McKibben%2C_2016_%28cropped%29.jpg

At the heart of Bill McKibben's new book is the contrarian idea that rapid and widespread economic growth is not the key to global well-being and prosperity.

Rather, he argues in *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future*, the overarching emphasis on economic growth by governments, corporations, and most consumers is not merely bad for the planet (it leads to global warming) but also mostly unsuccessful at providing the human happiness it seems to promise.

"Growth is bumping against physical limits so profound — like climate change and peak oil — that continuing to expand the economy may be impossible; the very attempt may be dangerous," writes Mr. McKibben.

"But there's something else too, a wild card we're just now beginning to understand: new research from many quarters has started to show that even when growth does make us wealthier, the greater wealth no longer makes us happier."

Compellingly argued with statistics and anecdotes from around the world, Mr. McKibben says humanity must move towards an updated version of community-based economics that emphasizes buying and selling at the local level first.

Specifically, humanity should shift to eating more locally grown food, to using more locally produced energy, and, even, to new local financial arrangements — such as currencies issued by municipalities. The term he coins for these ideas, taken from the phrase "deep ecology," lends the book its title.

Such a shift, he believes, would reduce carbon emissions by reducing the energy used to transport food while at the same time serving to de-couple food and energy production from centralized, oil-intensive sources. It would also, he suggests, open the door to a rediscovery of the joys of community life, which he believes lies at the foundation of human happiness, as opposed to the endless consumerism and "hyper-individualized" approach to life that is currently marketed worldwide as the epitome of civilization.

"Given all that we now know about topics ranging from the molecular structure of carbon dioxide to the psychology of human satisfaction, we need to move decisively to rebuild our

local economies,” Mr. McKibben writes. “These may well yield less stuff, but they produce richer relationships; they may grow less quickly, if at all, but they make up for it in durability.” He also believes such an approach can do more in the long run to eliminate global poverty than growth-intensive programs promoted by economists like Jeffery Sachs who argue that “the only way to relieve the planet’s grim poverty is to speed up the cycle of economic expansion.”

His main argument against the paradigm of endless (and mindless) economic expansion comes when he examines what might happen if the current growth paradigm succeeds on a global level. What would happen, he asks, if China and India were able to achieve the economic prosperity currently experienced by Americans.

He lists what China alone would consume by 2031, when its economy at current rates will have theoretically “caught up” with the United States and adopted its lifestyle. On its current path, China would consume the equivalent of two-thirds of the world’s entire 2004 grain harvest; 99 million barrels of oil a day, which is 20 million more than current world demand; and more steel than all of the West combined.

“Trying to meet that kind of demand would stress the earth past its breaking point in an almost endless number of ways.”

Then he asks: has all of the “stuff” provided by the American lifestyle — which the rest of the world desperately wants to emulate — actually achieved its underlying goal of making people happier. For Americans, he writes, the evidence is that it has not. He notes, for example, that studies suggest that while the United States was the happiest country among advanced economies in 1946, now it ranks 10th.

“All that material progress — and all the billions of barrels of oil and millions of acres of trees that it took to create it — seems not to have moved the satisfaction meter an inch.”

Mr. McKibben strives to practice what he preaches. His second chapter describes a year spent eating only food grown or produced in his region of Vermont. He says while he may have paid a little bit more and had fewer fresh fruits and vegetables in the winter, he was able to enjoy a surprising variety of foods, from locally brewed beer to venison burgers. Moreover, he says, the exercise meant meeting dozens of new people. “Every meal comes with a story,” he writes. His vision extends far beyond Vermont. He tells of the successes of the New Farming movement in Bangladesh, where a regional experiment in organic farming has been successful at reducing exposure to dangerous pesticides and dramatically increasing the varieties and quality of locally grown grains, fruits, and vegetables.

“Local economies would demand fewer resources and cause less ecological disruption; they would be better able to weather coming shocks; they would allow us to find a better balance between the individual and the community, and hence find extra satisfaction,” he writes.

For Bahá'ís, there is much in Mr. McKibben's overall vision to agree with. There are numerous passages in the Bahá'í writings that support the idea that human happiness will never be found in purely material pursuits, but rather in stronger connections with our neighbors — not to mention the Creator.

The Bahá'í writings also emphasize the importance of agriculture and a “human” scale of living. “The fundamental basis of the community is agriculture, tillage of the soil,” said ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. “All must be producers.”

And, certainly, Bahá'ís would say that a successful, sustainable global civilization must be much more deeply rooted in a rich community life at the local level — albeit one that is also tightly connected to the “global village.”

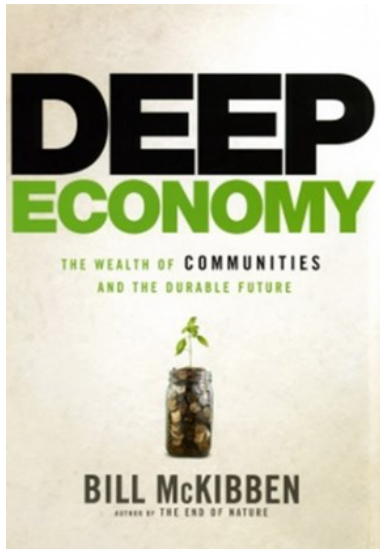
On this last point, however, Bahá'ís would suggest that Mr. McKibben's ideas fall short. His plan for creating a more “durable” future is hopeful and inspiring, but he neglects to discuss the kinds of real world changes that must be made to the structure of global institutions if the world is to succeed in any serious effort to eradicate poverty, halt environmental degradation, and create true global prosperity.

The most difficult problems facing humanity today are tightly interconnected and global in nature. While individual lifestyle changes and community-based reforms are surely part of the answer, it seems unlikely that such steps can heal humanity's deeply rooted sicknesses — from global warming to ethnic conflict to hopeless poverty — without strong global coordination. Bahá'ís would say that if humanity were truly unified, with appropriate governance structures, all kinds of new scientific, sociological, and spiritual expertise could be unleashed to address any and all such problems.

The next question is what can motivate such widespread transformations? Mr. McKibben is asking people to give up a huge part of what they currently feel defines the “good life” — whether that means out-of-season fresh fruit or a gas-guzzling luxury vehicle.

Such transformations will be difficult to achieve without a much deeper understanding of the spiritual side of human life. All of the world's religions teach the necessary principles: detachment, sacrifice for the common good, and the fact that true happiness comes from beyond the material realm.

For Bahá'ís, such imperatives are further fortified by a conception of faith that includes the idea that God has sent down a new divine Revelation to knit humanity into a unified entity, with the aim of creating an “ever-advancing civilization.”



Deep Economy is a timely and important book. Written in a voice and style that engenders readability, the book is a treasure chest of ideas for how humanity might ameliorate the dark side of consumption. It is, at the least, a positive prescription for how to live more lightly on our small planet.

Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future By Bill McKibben, Times Books/ Henry Holt and Company, New York

Source: One Country: Newsletter of the Bahá'í International Community, Volume 19, Issue 2, January-March 2008, <https://www.onecountry.org/story/act-locally-think-globally-revisited>