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LEARNERS' PERCEPTION REGARDING HISTORY SUBJECT AT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

This research paper emerged on the basis of the pedagogical observations and interactions with school students as part of the internship program of final year students of a pre-service teacher education course. There seemed to be a huge lag in terms of the theoretical pedagogical concepts with which the interns were engaging at college and the pedagogy in practice which were being observed at the school level. Moreover, there has always been a biased perception that existed with Social Science as a subject in general, and History in particular. This study is an attempt to address these biases, understand the perception of elementary school going students towards History as a subject, provides an insight on the learners' historical understanding or their lack of it, and to know their opinion about the relevance of the subject at school and its future scopes.

Keywords: History pedagogy, school education, historical thinking.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching Social Science helps build understanding of diverse cultures and perspectives in learners. It encourages rational thinking, skills of analysis and interpretation, and so on. It has become important to know the learner's view in this changing world where more importance is given to teaching Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) to prepare younger students for the technological world. History is introduced at elementary school level so there is a need to know the progress of learners as envisioned by the various curriculum framers. This research study is conducted to know better the perception of elementary school going students towards History as a subject, to address biases regarding the subject if any, provides an insight on the learners' historical understanding or their lack of it, and to know their opinion about the relevance of the subject at school and its future scope.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The existing belief is that Social Science mainly transmits information and the focus is mainly on the textbook which is required to be memorized for examination. In a similar regard, the subject History is viewed as providing unnecessary details about the 'pasts' and also doesn't provide desirable job options ahead. It is perceived as a non-utilitarian and boring subject to study (NCERT, 2006a). But in reality, the nature of History is completely different. On the contrary, it is however a dialogue between the events of the pasts and progressively emerging future ends. The historian's interpretation of the 'pasts', selection of the significant and the relevant events, evolves with the progressive emergence of new goals. The selected

happenings are not to be merely narrated; instead, the causal relationships between them are to be analysed and interpreted based on evidence. Learners have to develop connections between processes and events of one place with another, understand interlinkages of different groups and societies, and the overall impact of historical processes in the contemporary world. Kumar (2001) describes how tacit knowledge about the history of family and community is learnt by children during early socialization which is not open to rational enquiry or questioning. Instead, the teaching of history should focus on developing historical thinking by understanding the job of a historian, basic ability to make sense of a text and a clear understanding of the timeframe and perspective, and examining events without being guided by the outcome.

In a foreword given at the start of History school textbook, it tries to address the question of 'Why study History?' It states how the subject is related to economics, social, political and cultural discussion and inquiry related to the past events and the changes therein (NCERT, 2006b). The gradual transformation of human societies and its strong impact in retrospect so that we can begin to see how and why these changes occurred. This enables us to develop important skills such as the ability to analyse and explain problems in the past, it positions us to see patterns that might otherwise be invisible in the present – thus providing a crucial perspective for understanding and analysing the problems that persist in the society. Andrews & Burke (2007) describes the 'five Cs of historical thinking' which they have applied to interpreting and critically challenging evidence-based learning of the 'pasts'. The five Cs would be studying concepts in History through the lens of Change over time, Context, Causality, Contingency and Complexity.

Another important objective of the study of the subject is to develop historical thinking through analysing and interpreting various primary sources; developing relationships between historical evidence and the construction of accounts involving multiple perspectives (Barton & Levstik, 2010). This would help the learners to develop investigative and collaborative skills which are essential for democratic participation. Thus, developing historical thinking in the learners helps them to develop skills which transforms them in an effective citizen of a pluralist participatory democracy. They would build the required skills to evaluate information grounded in evidence. Though there is no guarantee that all learners will develop into effective citizens, it does guarantee they will have taken part in some of its key activities.

The pedagogy considerations is the most crucial step for teaching and learning of any subject and for this the relevant activities and learning materials should be used in the classroom to make the experience interactive and meaningful. Grant and VanSledright (2014) emphasized on the importance of cooperative learning in the classroom as it benefits both types of students; those who learn slowly and those who are fast learners. The curriculum materials could include textbooks, newspapers, blogs, autobiographies, biographies, fictional narratives, children's literature, maps, video resources, to name a few. Practices like imparting factual information actually delay the development of historical thinking as it presents a fixed notion of the past which is to be rote memorized. Instead, the classroom should foster the practice of engaging with sources, investigative study of the pasts, question and debate backed by evidence, and provide logical interpretations. This way they are engaged in the activity because they own the process and the product of reconstructing their own histories (VanSledright, 2010).

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research of the study has been done in 3 phases. The first phase involved classroom observations of a Sarvodaya Bal Vidhyalaya situated in South Delhi. The interns did both participant and non-participant observations of social science classes at the elementary level. In participant observation, interns were the facilitators conducting the class over a period of three months. Non-participant observations were done when they observed social science classes of the school teachers over a period of two weeks.

In the second phase, interns conducted Group Discussions (GD) with a set of 4 questions to know the overall understanding and participation of learners. These discussions were held separately with learners of grades VI, VII and VIII. Each grade had two sections each so a total of six groups were there. The total number of students who participated in the GD is 162 students.

In the third phase, a questionnaire was designed based on classroom observations and group discussions. The questionnaire had document-based questions having excerpts and pictures. The excerpt was adapted from Eklavya Social Science Textbook, Class 6, Chapter 4 सबसे पुराने शहर -सिंधु- घाटी के शहर and the pictures were sourced from Eklavya Social Science Textbook, Class 6, Chapter 1 शिकारी मानव. A total of 18 students from the three grades filled the questionnaire. Based on the reading of the excerpt and interpretation of the visual, a list of questions was framed.

RESULTS

Learners acknowledged that they want to study the subject but they were not able to think of any pedagogical approaches that were used by their subject teachers. Rather than focusing on the pedagogical experiences, learners were reflecting on the topics which they found interesting in the class. Learners were found to hold the notion that History as a subject only transmits information. They had issues with the long chapters which were information laden and the focus during examinations to write long answers. The teacher seems to be providing all the information by making short notes which learners have to memorize for the examinations. This need to memorize for the exams made it a tedious task for the students and hence they were not able to develop interest for the subject.

After reading the excerpt learners were able to answer the questions which were directly given from the text like, खुदाई करने पर क्या-क्या चीजें मिली? It was a direct question that was given so that the majority of the learners could be able to list down the materials. Learners have much practice writing such questions where they have to copy the text from the passage or excerpt provided. For the understanding-based questions, learners were not able to interpret and hence faced difficulty in listing down the sources of historical information. This was a clear reflection that they were not familiar with source-based study of History despite this being an important aspect of the textbooks which they are engaging with. Most of the students were able to identify the historical events and processes that still continue in present times. But only a few of them are able to make interconnections between these events, processes, and lives of people at different time periods. For instance, they were able to identify the trading system, issues of gender and caste discrimination but only a few of them were able to explain the changes and continuities over time.

Learners were not able to think historically before stating a reason. They were able to focus more on the consequences and not from a historical perspective. For the question, क्या उनको खुद से खुदाई कर लेनी चाहिए

थी, learners were actually considering only one perspective at a time, like the consequence of digging it themselves could be dangerous to them or they may find some kind of treasure. But they were not able to think historically or consider that any lay person digging an archaeological site does not have the expertise and could destroy any kind of evidence. It is mainly because they were not aware the work of an archaeologist nor the right process of excavating a historical site so that there is no distortion of evidence.

On the query regarding relevance of the subject, learners gave responses that studying History helped them understand the past and taught them to learn from mistakes of the past. A couple of them stated that the subject taught them about the freedom struggle and helps build nationalism in learners. Regarding future scope of the subject, many learners gave common responses like historians, archaeologists, teachers and civil services. A couple of them gave different responses like architecture, heritage guides and museum curators, supporting their responses with reasons. Though a certain awareness is seen regarding the subject, much needs to be done to build interest and career opportunities that can be available post the study of the subject.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, we can see that the school teachers were mainly focused on completion of the syllabus and heavily relied on imparting the textbook content to the learners. The textbook should not be treated as the only learning material, rather it should be seen as one of the many materials to be used in the class for developing learners' understanding. Not doing so produces the impression that the subject is textbook centred and needs reproducing the same in the examination. It is also important to reinstate the importance of the subject by not only highlighting their increasing relevance in the service sector, but also by pointing to their indispensability in laying the foundations of an analytical and creative mind.

Developing historical thinking in learners helps them to understand how history is reconstructed based on evidence and it is not about memorizing facts. Learners seem to be clueless as school teachers never focussed on involving them with the investigation and interpretation of primary sources. Classroom activities did not involve perspective building, interpretation, discussion or inquiry; instead, it is heavily teacher centred and lecture based. In order to make the process of learning participatory, there is a need to shift from mere imparting of information to involvement in debate and discussion. There is need to emphasize on conceptual understanding along with skills and values; interventions in pedagogy such as investigative and interpretative activities of primary sources discussion on considering multiple perspectives so that history does not become a myth for them; providing opportunities in the class space to describe, analyse, evaluate, and construct diverse interpretations of the past; and the relevance of context in writing and understanding of the 'pasts'.

The process of assessment needs to be revised with interventions such as the practice of investigating the past through source work. Students can be accustomed to the practice of document-based questions wherein a text, chart, graphs, maps, pictures can be given followed by interpretive questions. These would provide for both assessment of learners' substantive knowledge and also focus on building certain skills such as to question and interpret, challenge their notions regarding the subject that it needs memorization, help make the subject seem more meaningful and interesting.

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AN ANALYSIS OF PRIMARY TEACHERS' REFLECTIONS ABOUT THEIR MATHEMATICS CLASS

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ABSTRACT

Teacher education programmes play a prominent role when the quality of education is the main concern of the country. Among the long list of programmes focusing on preparing elementary teachers, Bachelors of Elementary Education programme is one of the programmes that gives immense spotlight on preparing reflective teachers who can think about their classroom practices regularly. Mathematics is treated as a subject that is very abstract in nature and demands extra efforts from the teachers' side. The paper aims to study and analyse teachers' reflections about their mathematics class. It is a qualitative study mainly aimed to study the role of reflections in the future classroom implications. Fourteen prospective teachers were selected to take part in the study who shared their reflective journals along with the observations of their classes. The result of the study showed that teachers' reflected upon the nature of activity, the teaching learning material and their students' responses when mathematics was planned and taught.

Keywords: Beliefs, Classroom Practices, Reflection

INTRODUCTION

Mathematics is considered to be the subject that deals with logic and includes topics like numbers, shapes, measurement and many more. There has always been a debate about its nature. On one hand there are views held by scientists and engineers who perceive mathematics as a static discipline like a store of various formulas, theories and results useful to solve any problem and passing the same store to the next generation. On the other hand, mathematicians recognise it as a dynamic and growing field of study that contributes to human civilization (Steen, 1988). The root of this distinction lies in the 4th century when Plato and Aristotle characterized its nature based on their philosophical ideas about knowledge. According to Plato, mathematics can be understood as an abstract mental activity and objects of mathematics are existent on their own in the sensory world beyond the ideas of the mind. Contrastingly, Aristotle believed in experiential reality therefore mathematical relationships can be formed through the collection and classification of information received through the senses and without the senses. Progressively, a lot of views and theories were presented by many thinkers following the dichotomy between Plato and Aristotle; however none of them provided a strong foundation for the nature of mathematics. Consequently, the modern view of mathematics perceives it as a human activity which is not governed by any school of thought but keeps the ideas in the focus that are derived or constructed during the process.

A great deal of mathematics learnt by students comes from their school education that is eventually formed by the classroom practices adopted by their mathematics teacher. According to Cooney (1985) as quoted in Dossey (1992), "the conception of mathematics held by the teacher has a strong impact on the way in which mathematics is approached in the classroom." For example, if a teacher views mathematics as an "instrumental knowledge", she tends to focus on the step by step procedure for a given task and helps her learners in reaching a fixed solution determined by those steps. Instrumental knowledge is the set of fixed plans in order to carry out a mathematical task (Skemp, 1978). While the teacher following a "relational knowledge" view of mathematics might focus on creating

opportunities for students to create multiple paths to perform a mathematical task. Relational knowledge can be defined as a collection of conceptual structures that a person uses independently to construct various plans or ideas to solve a problem (Skemp, 1978). Thus, the classroom practices are a reflection of teachers' conceptions of the subject, learner and teaching.

The quality of being a reflective practitioner always supports a teacher in making a sound decision, critically examining her experiences and generating new ideas. John Dewey also put emphasis on the process of reflection for learners by saying, "We do not learn from experience. We learn from reflecting on experience." This process is generally guided by writing the reflections regularly and making improvements based on that. A teacher who reflects upon her experiences like teaching in the class, thinking about the reasons of why a particular activity succeeded or failed, which kinds of material led to a useful discussion is the one making efforts to advance her interaction with students in a meaningful manner.

The present paper attempts to study the teachers' reflections about their mathematics class. One cannot overlook the fact that the nature of mathematics is significantly different from other subjects for the reasons that it is abstract, it has its own language and most of its topics follow a hierarchy. Further, the conceptions held by teachers about mathematics play a significant role in the classroom practices. Consequently, it becomes even more important to know how teachers look at their mathematics class as it might decide the future course of action to improve their overall teaching practice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

John Dewey was the one who started taking interest in reflection for the professional growth of the teachers. Dewey (1993) defined reflection as the "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends". He saw reflection as a form of thinking that a person deliberately has about an experience that ultimately helps him or her in learning from experiences. In a similar way, Boud et al (1985) explained reflection as a word assigned to intellectual activities where an individual is engaged in the exploration of experiences that direct them to new understandings. A number of thinkers might define it differently however all of them agreed to its importance for a teacher and in the teaching learning process.

Larrive and Cooper (2005) made a difference between reflective and non reflective teachers. According to them, a non reflective teacher is not able to consider all possible reasons affecting a situation hence blame learners for not performing in the class. Here, the teacher is rigid in adopting new techniques and solutions for the problems and affirm teaching techniques without exploring the remedies. Distinctively, a reflective teacher gradually generates the ability to consider all possible reasons to evaluate any particular situation related or not related to their class. This ability of regularly jotting down their mind helps in searching solutions for all kinds of problems and provides support in students' understanding.

Schon (1983) differentiated between 'reflection in action' and 'reflection on action' that worked as an important criterion to make sense of the teachers' actions and decisions in most of the research. The reflection in action is the thought process that takes place during the activity. Schon also stated it as "we may reflect in the midst of action without interrupting it". This helps the teacher in reshaping their thinking about what they are doing while doing it. This 'stop and think' type of reflection allows us to choose the path on the spot (Manen, 1991). It allows a teacher for the 'moment to moment'

monitoring of actions and considers it as an individual process. On the other hand, the reflection on action is the process that takes place after the event and the teacher reflects back on every detail of the event, the strengths and weaknesses, evaluation of the used teaching strategies and material and decides the future course of action that might improve the result. Schon (1987) explained it as “we may reflect on action to discover how our knowing-in-action may have contributed to an expected outcome”.

Ernest (1988) noted that teachers’ reflection about their mathematics class is one of key elements that influence the mathematics teaching. He further stated that teacher’s conceptions about the nature of mathematics and its meaning are the foundation of what happens in their mathematics class. Reflection, specifically in mathematics, supports teachers to develop coherent rationale for their views and actions which make them aware about the feasible solutions just like a vehicle for knowledge growth. Chamberlin (2009) also stated that, “teacher’s reflections were more aligned with teaching for understanding when they thought about their mathematical learning experiences in the role of a learner before considering implications for their teaching”. This also supports the findings that the role of conception about the nature of mathematics is important for mathematical classroom practices. Peterson and Williams (2008) shared that understanding of mathematics in the teaching and for the teaching are very much affected by experience of teaching as a student teacher and the conversations and/or reflection about the same.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The research intends to focus on the following objectives:

- To analyse prospective teachers’ reflections about their mathematics classes
- To study the role of reflections in future classroom practices of mathematics

METHODOLOGY

It was a qualitative study. The aim of the study was to understand how teachers reflect on their teaching practices and students’ understanding of mathematics. Since the focus was given on studying the experiences of each teacher’s classroom practice, a qualitative approach was found appropriate for the present study. Moreover, the nature of mathematics is so different from other subjects and the study deals with mathematics in a school setting that becomes the vital reason for choosing a qualitative approach.

Participants

The data has been collected from the prospective teachers who are presently in the final year of Bachelors of Elementary Education, Mata Sundri College for Women, University of Delhi. The Bachelor of Elementary Education (B.El.Ed.) is a four year integrated professional degree programme of Elementary Teacher Education offered after the senior secondary stage of school. The final year students teach at primary level for four months as part of their internship practicum. They teach Mathematics, Hindi and Environmental studies in an integrated manner. Reflective journal writing has been considered as an essential component of the programme therefore students start writing reflective journals right from the first year. There were a total of 49 students in the final year, out of which 14 were chosen for the study on a voluntary basis after they expressed their willingness to participate in the study.

Instruments

Final year students' reflective journals about their mathematics class are used as the main instrument for the study. They were asked to write reflective journals about the mathematics class that they think was successful and what were the reasons for its success. Apart from this, their mathematics classes were observed as part of their internship programme and discussions were also conducted in smaller groups about the mathematics classroom practices. These discussions did not centre on a particular class but overall classroom practices related to the subject.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

All the data received through reflective journals show that teachers have shared the details of mathematics class that they like along with the challenges faced during the discussion part. They have shared details of the overall lesson including the introduction part, reasons for taking up a task, interaction with children and many more. The table number 1 given below shared the class and topic details of all the teachers that they shared in the reflections. All the teachers have been assigned a number which is used in the analysis part to share their experiences:

Table 1: Details of classes and topics taught by prospective teachers

S. No.	Teacher	Class	Topic
1	Teacher 1	IV	Patterns
2	Teacher 2	IV	Fraction
3	Teacher 3	IV	Measurement
4	Teacher 4	V	Measurement(Length)
5	Teacher 5	V	Fraction
6	Teacher 6	III	Measurement(Length)
7	Teacher 7	III	Shapes
8	Teacher 8	IV	Mapping
9	Teacher 9	II	Pattern
10	Teacher 10	V	Area and Perimeter
11	Teacher 11	III	Shapes
12	Teacher 12	IV	Shapes and Spatial Understanding
13	Teacher 13	IV	Pattern
14	Teacher 14	III	Pattern

This section discusses the various components of those reflections and their classroom practices of mathematics based on observation and discussion with them.

- **Activity sets the rhythm of the lesson**

As per the details received in the reflective journals, the success of mathematics class largely depended on the selection of the activity that was decided by the teachers keeping in mind the topic.

Teacher 1_u had asked her students to bring a piece of cloth for the pattern activity. She shared:

'For the introductory activity, I asked the learners to bring any piece of cloth from their homes or any other object which might have a particular design or pattern drawn/printed on it. It was an observation based activity, where the learners had to observe the object they have brought on the basis of difference between designs and pattern'

Teacher 2 shared,

'I noticed that some of the students had difficulty in understanding the fraction concept. When asked to represent the shaded part, some children wrote $\frac{5}{4}$ instead of $\frac{5}{9}$. Similarly, some of them wrote $\frac{5}{2}$ instead of $\frac{2}{5}$ that showed they had no clarity of denominator and numerator. So, to help them I showed them about 20 flashcards of the figures with shaded parts and their fractional representation written along with the figures drawn and I asked them to observe each card carefully.'

In both the cases, teachers were able to reflect upon the reasons for their selection of the activity. Teacher 1 was clear that she needed to focus on the difference between design and pattern therefore she began the lesson with an observation activity. Further, she gave a choice to students to bring the cloth or object of their choice that would help them relate the subject with their daily life activities. The teacher seems to have a constructivist perspective as she tried to create an opportunity for learners to build mathematical knowledge. The position paper on 'Teaching of Mathematics' based on the National Curriculum Framework, 2005 also states that 'Making mathematics a part of children's life experience is the best mathematics education possible'.

The decision of teacher 2 shows that she reflected back on the children's previous construction of knowledge about fractions that also included some misconceptions regarding representation of fractions and decided the future course of action i.e. an activity that can strengthen the visualization of various fractional parts in children's mind. Since students wrote $\frac{5}{4}$ instead of $\frac{5}{9}$, it shows they had no understanding of part-whole relationship and they only represented the ratio of shaded and not shaded parts. The selection of flash cards activity by the teacher to show various fractional parts with the symbolic form communicates that the teacher knows the importance of establishing base for any concept in order to follow the hierarchical nature of mathematics. Here, the teacher is able to think about the ramifications of these gaps in learning of a concept through reflective writing.

Some of the teachers even used questions to create conflict in children's minds so that they can think about those questions while doing the planned activity.

Teacher 3

'Let's find out how many centimetres are there in one meter. Students started getting the answers with the help of paper strips of different measurements and gave various responses like 112cm, 84 cm and 94cm'

Teacher 4 wrote a question while teaching measurement in the class

'How can we measure the distance between school and home?'

I also observed one of the teachers using questions while teaching the concept of volume. She asked

"How many small cups can fill this big bucket?"

It is just a chance that all the examples focused on the concept of measurement (length and volume). However, all the questions promote the use of estimation skill among children which is one of the essential skills a mathematician can build over time. These teachers are able to reflect upon the topic specific demands of the lesson and use appropriate questions to develop the required skill. This is a clear example of what Shulman (1986) has defined as Pedagogical Content Knowledge that centres on the ways and techniques to teach a specific topic so that it becomes easy and useful for children.

It can be concluded that the teachers' selection of activities for different topics was determined on the basis of children's previous knowledge, to provide remedy to errors or misconceptions formed by them, to enhance a particular skill specific to the concept and to strengthen the relationship between school and out of school knowledge. All these aspects mirrored in their reflective journals and classroom practices.

- **Teaching Learning Material works as a bridge between abstract concepts and real life applications**

It was found that all teachers gave importance to the teaching learning material and these materials took a central spot in their mathematics lesson. A variety of material like games, real objects, fraction kits, pattern kits and even classroom space was used as a learning material. The teachers reflected upon the importance of the TLM in their writing as

Teacher 5 while teaching fractions to class 5 gave some pieces of different fractional parts to form complete circles by finding the correct piece. She shared,

'Most of the groups were able to make two circles from the given parts. The interesting thing to be noticed is that the students from the group were exchanging the parts of the circle with each other to form their own circles. It happened when a student informed me that she had seen a part in another group which she could use in her group to complete her circle and then asked if she could ask the group for the same. This is how the idea of exchanging parts of circles to each other as groups began. It was amazing to see their cooperation and collaboration with each other.....During the activity, I observed that the students tried every given piece in all the ways possible to form a circle, and eventually it helped them to easily find and locate the parts of the circles to form and complete them.'

Teacher 6 while teaching measurement of length to class 3. She shared,

'I gave students some material like different lengths of pencils, different lengths of paper strips, cloth cutting, notebooks and books, some wrappers of things like chips, toffees, chocolates, milk etc and asked them to put the things in two categories: long and short. Once they categorized material in two categories we had a discussion about it'

Teacher 7 while teaching shapes to class 3 students used a game which had different levels of tasks based on difficulty level that provided a chance to develop understanding of shapes among students. She shared,

'I moved on to the game, where almost all the students identified the shape of the object (picture card) correctly although a few of them got confused between square and triangle for which I asked them to look at the picture carefully and then decide its shape. Also, most of the students faced difficulty in identifying the edges and corners of a circle and to make them understand that a circle has no corners and one curved edge, I took the help of colour pencils and made a square using them. Next, I asked students to identify the sides as well as the corners connecting the sides/edges. Then I asked students if we can make a circle using these pencils to which all of them replied No'

All the above examples show that teaching learning material is an inseparable part of the mathematics classroom. Teacher 1 was able to reflect about the holistic learning that the TLM provided to her learners when they could learn to cooperate with each other and the concept of sharing with each other got strengthened. This was the additional learning of cooperation provided by the fraction kit other than understanding the concept. The teacher 2 had used real life objects to introduce the concept

of short and long. The teacher used the material as a medium to develop the concept of measurement instead of telling them the actual length of the pencils in abstract form. She focused on developing the ability of comparison among students so that they can divide the material based on the differences found. Both the teachers were able to make decisions about the material required to help children understand the topic of fraction and measurement that shows they were aware about the relevant pedagogical techniques as I have also observed them using different materials for different topics in the class. Behr et al (1992) also used an analogy to discuss the importance of teachers' ability to identify a useful technique as "In the same way that children are encouraged to discuss similarities and differences between various isomorphs of mathematical concepts, teachers should be encouraged to discuss similarities and differences between pedagogically related actions in various mathematical contexts". Here, the teachers are doing this with the help of reflective journals where they get a chance to think about their actions and instructions in the class.

The use of the game by Teacher 3 along with the decision taken during the activity to develop and strengthen students' understanding about shapes and their properties can be put clearly in the category of 'reflection in action' defined by Schon (1983). During the lesson, whenever she found her students struggling with the concept, she immediately used the material and game to explain the concept. Here, she was able to analyse her children's thoughts and errors and used teaching learning material as a tool to discuss the concept in the concrete form. The relevant questions asked by her also supported the understanding of the concept as mere material would not be sufficient for the learning.

Another teacher (8) used her classroom as a resource to discuss mapping and direction. While teaching her class 4 this concept, she shared,

'It was fun for the students because often children are given more pencil and paper work to explore problems in a mathematics classroom. I started my class with basic directions wherein children were divided in the pair of two. Each pair had a partner and one of them needed to guide them and make them reach the destination of the class. I was happy because I was able to use my classroom as a resource. Later I used a maze wherein one of the children was blindfolded and other need to give the direction to cross the destination'

It is important to note that Teacher 4 is very well aware about the resources to be used for a particular concept and she has a wide understanding of the teaching learning material. Since the concept of mapping and direction is used when we go from one place to another, the teacher used the same example to make the connection between school and daily life activities. Additionally, she also had an idea that one activity is not enough to build any concept therefore she used another maze activity for the same.

Overall, it may be said that teachers understand the importance of material in developing the mathematical understanding among students and are proactive enough to take decisions and conduct meaningful discussion during the activity that shows the use of reflection in action.

- **Children's responses give direction to the teacher**

All the teachers gave immense value to students' responses in their reflective journals as these responses helped them execute the lesson plan properly and guided them in future preparation also.

Teacher 8 shared,

'One of the interesting questions that was raised by a student ma'am how is it possible that my left is her right and right is her left....I learnt that we often impose the language and terminologies on the children during teaching learning process like I repeatedly told my students to use left and right which I think was not much required at that stage as they focused more on the landmark'

Teacher 1 shared,

'One of the students classified design material as pattern but it was a design. So another student questioned him, "ye pattern kaise hoga....agar aap isko dekho to yahan ek design wali line miss ho rahi hai baki to repeat ho rhi hai lekin ye line nahi ho rhi hai"(How can it be a pattern.... If you look at it carefully you will find that one line is missing whereas other lines are repeating but this line is not repeating)....this child got the idea of pattern and asking others also to identify the same in every design'

Teacher 2 wrote,

'When I asked them to write the fraction of shaded part, one of the students raised query and asked "hum hamesha coloured wala part hi kyu likh rahe hain...jisme colour/shade nahi hai wo bhi to fraction mein likh sakte hain"(why are we always writing the fraction of coloured part...Those non shaded parts can also be represented in the fractional form)....Because of this response, I gave them problems in which they have to find the fraction of the non shaded part so that learners will not form this misconception that only shaded part can be represented in the form of fraction'

Teacher 3 shared,

'During the measurement activity, I asked learners to measure the kilometre also with paper scale. So one learner replied that kilometre is a huge number so it will be difficult to measure with paper scale. When I asked that how she knows this, she said her father's workplace is 6km away from her house and her father goes there by bicycle which takes a lot of time'

In all the examples shared above, children's responses act like a medium that tells the teacher whether she is doing it right or not and how she can move ahead with that understanding of the concepts. Looking carefully at the examples, we noticed sentences like 'I learnt that we often impose.....', 'I think was not much required.....', and 'this child got the idea of.....', 'because of this response, I gave this problem.....' We can say that teachers' decisions are mainly dependent on students' responses. In the example 1 where the child had difficulty in dealing with direction and specifically with 'right' and 'left', it tells the teacher that she does not need to focus too much on the terminology at this stage. The second example communicates the teacher about how keenly children observe and question if some new concept or example does not fit into their schemas. Peterson (1991) also discussed in one of his principles on Cognitive Guided Instruction that teachers need to analyse children's thinking by asking them appropriate questions and listening to their responses carefully.

The third example is clear evidence of a teacher displaying her conceptions in the classroom while teaching the concept of fraction when she was not aware about providing only typical examples to represent fractions i.e. fraction of the shaded part. The way she had studied the representation of a fraction where only a shaded portion is always asked in the fraction's problem, a child pointed out and questioned it. The teacher got the right direction and tried to include other possible cases of non shaded parts also.

Some of the teachers also mentioned about the errors made by students either verbally or while performing an activity that also gave them a chance to build their discussion in the right direction. Teachers also found it challenging to respond to children's doubts as it was difficult for them to think about an answer or they were not fully prepared for the conceptual discussion. It is also seen in their reflective journals that they did not discuss a lot about the future course of classroom practices as their reflective journals ended abruptly in most of the cases.

CONCLUSION

The prospective teachers pursuing the Bachelor of Elementary Education Course and soon will be teaching in a school as a regular teacher are able to reflect upon their mathematics classroom pedagogies and think about the reasons that contribute in developing students' understanding and smooth transaction of activities. The role of teachers' conceptions about the nature of mathematics is very important as it decides the way of dealing with the subject in the classroom. However, one cannot overlook the role of professional education that guided them to consider child psychology hence the nature of the subject is built with a holistic approach. These teachers reflected upon the nature of activities and teaching learning material that led them to a constructivist approach of knowledge. Narrating a story on weight, interaction with real life material for shapes and measurement, observing patterns on clothes, playing games on fractions and shapes concept were some of the activities that they conducted in their primary classes followed by discussion on important parts. Teachers also faced a number of challenges in executing their mathematics lessons like less support from the school for innovative activities, insufficient subject knowledge about some topics like decimals, measurement etc, inadequate teaching time because of the excessive examinations in the form of unit tests and term exams. Teachers reflected upon these reasons and tried to find solutions by discussing the concept with their classmates and teachers at the college for subject clarity, they used waste material for activities and taught students in the first or the second half of the school time during examinations. The practice of daily writing reflective journals supported self evaluation and greater thinking among prospective teachers and it even helped more for subjects like mathematics.

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THE EFFECT OF AVARTAN DHYANA ON THE STRESS LEVEL AND RESPIRATORY RATE AMONG WORKING WOMEN IN THE MINISTRY

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ABSTRACT

*Stress levels are increasing rapidly in women. Working women are more stressed than nonworking women. There is an increase in stress at both their office and their homes, as well as its Effect on the house and family environment, which impacts their feelings, mental, and overall Health. To fill this Gap, Avartan Dhyana (Meditation) is a unique technique that helps reduce the overcome stress and balance the respiratory rate. The present study showed the Effect of Avartan Dhyana on the stress level and respiratory rate among working women in the Ministry. A total number of thirty-one females working in the Ministry, with the age range of 21 to 45 years, were selected conveniently. The avartan dhyana was used for intervention for three months, five days a week. The single group pre-post design was used for this study. Results showed that after Avartan Dhyana, the significant improvement to decrease in stress at ($p < 0.05$) level and respiratory rate ($p < 0.05$) level. **Conclusion:** Avartan Dhyana is a healing intervention for elevated stress. Avartan dhyana is a best practice for overall Health.*

Keywords: Avartan Dhyana, Stress, Respiratory rate, Ministerial Women.

INTRODUCTION

Work-related stress is a significant factor in medical issues across the globe. Psychological Health constitutes one of the most critical public health problems because it represents 14 per cent of the overall worldwide burden of disease (Panigrahi et al., 2014). Teaching staff in academic institutions, such as colleges, Ministries are also subjected to severe stress, which undoubtedly impacts their performance, self-happiness, respiratory rate, anxiety, stress and well-being, and relationships with family (Rodríguez-Jiménez et al., 2022). Since ancient times, gender inequalities have always been present. Masculine and feminine work roles have historically been clearly defined. The concept of "work" and "domestic" or "home" area was segmented with industrialization whenever these two categories were considered to be highly distinctive. A man and a woman in residence were "breadwinners" and "housewives." Household duties and care for children were supposed to be the woman's duty, whereas the man was expected to go out and work to feed the family. There were minor changes in the family situation over time, but as Connell brings it, it's simply a "perfect husband" who works to help with the household work (Raj Lakshmi & Oinam, 2021). Nowadays, contemporary women working in each sector also fulfil their home responsibilities. But due to multitasking work in both the office and housework, the stress level and work pressure seem to be increased in women. Women working in the Ministry face elevated work stress and increased respiratory rates due to lengthy processes, targets, technology challenges, and crucial papers works in Ministry. To fill the gap Avartan Dhyana is a unique practice for overcoming stress. Various studies documented that yoga can help nurses enhance their general Health and provide improved care for patients

(Sis Çelik & Kılınç, 2022). The objective of the research is to see the Effect of avartan dhyana on the stress level and respiratory rate among working women in the Ministry.

Avartan Dhyana includes sets of postures, awareness, and relaxation techniques such as instant, quick, and deep relaxation techniques. Avartan Dhyana combines stimulation and relaxation, with the relaxation period lasting longer than the stimulation period..This practice is founded on two principles: depth of perception and awareness expansion. Depth of perception is an important aspects of vision and plays a vital role in many everyday tasks such as sports and navigating through the environment. Awareness expansion refers to the process of expanding one's conscious awareness beyond its current state. It involves becoming more aware of one's thoughts, emotions and surroundings, as well as developing a deeper understanding of oneself Avartan Dhyana activates the parasympathetic nervous system and relaxation (Anupama V, 2022).

METHODOLOGY

1. Research Design

A single experimental group with a Pre-post research design was used for this study. The total number of thirty-one working women in the Ministry aged 21-45 years was selected conveniently for this study. Avartan Dhyana was used as an Intervention module for this study. The intervention was conducted for three months, five days a week, for thirty-five minutes during lunch hours at Ministry premises. Data were collected pre and post the intervention. Before starting the intervention, permission was taken from the Director of the Ministry and participants filled out a written consent form with signed consent. The institutional committee approved the research study.

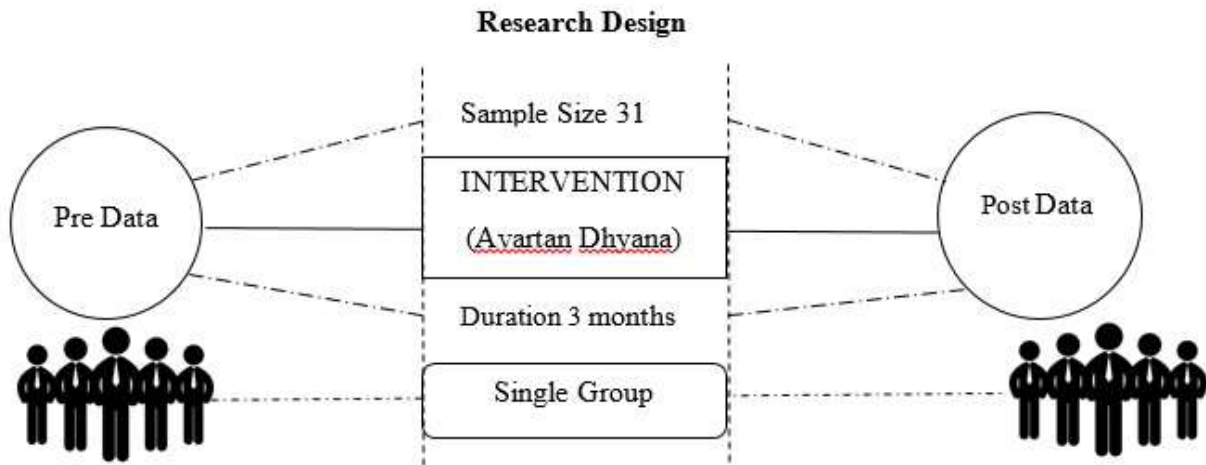


Figure 1 : The figure shows the research design

1.2 Intervention Module

Avartan Dhyana is a unique practice that combines mind and physical body movements. Avartan Dhyana is based on stimulating and relaxation techniques. This technique was coined by Dr Hr Nagendra (Nagendra & Pradhan, 2010). The duration was 35 minutes.

1.3 Assessment Tools

ADSS (Anxiety Depression Stress Scale) Questionnaire was used to assess the stress levels of women working in the Ministry. This tool was developed by (Pallavi Bhatnagar, Megha Singh, Manoj Pandey, 2005), and the Counting method (Breath per Minute) was used for assessing the Respiratory rate (RR)—the total no of 48 items in this Questionnaire.

1.4 Data Analyzed

Data was entered in the excel sheet and analyzed by SPSS software using the paired t-test to analyze the Stress levels and respiratory rate. The sample size was calculated through G-power software, and Zotero software was used to cite the references.

Table 1 : The table shows the eight steps of Avartan Dhyana.

S.no.	Activity	Duration (Min)	Remarks
1	Opening Prayer	1 min	
2	IRT (Instant Relaxation Technique)	1 min	Relaxation
3	Standing postures	5 min	Stimulation
4	QRT (Quick Relaxation Technique)	3 min	Relaxation
5	Sitting Postures	5 min	Stimulation
6	DRT (Deep Relaxation Technique)	15-20 min	Relaxation
7	Resolve	1 min	Silence
8	Closing prayer	1 min	
TOTAL		35 min	

FINDINGS

Result Tables

Table 2 : The table shows the level of Stress & Respiratory rate of working women in the Ministry

Phase	Mean	SD	Sed	T Value	Level of Significance
Pre Stress	5.23	3.27	0.113	2.27	0.05*
Post Stress	4.97	3.25			
Pre Respiratory Rate	18.16	5.34	0.696	4.406	0.01**
Post Respiratory Rate	15.10	4.37			

df = 30

[Note: The level of significance at ($p < 0.05$)* and ($p < 0.01$)** level.]

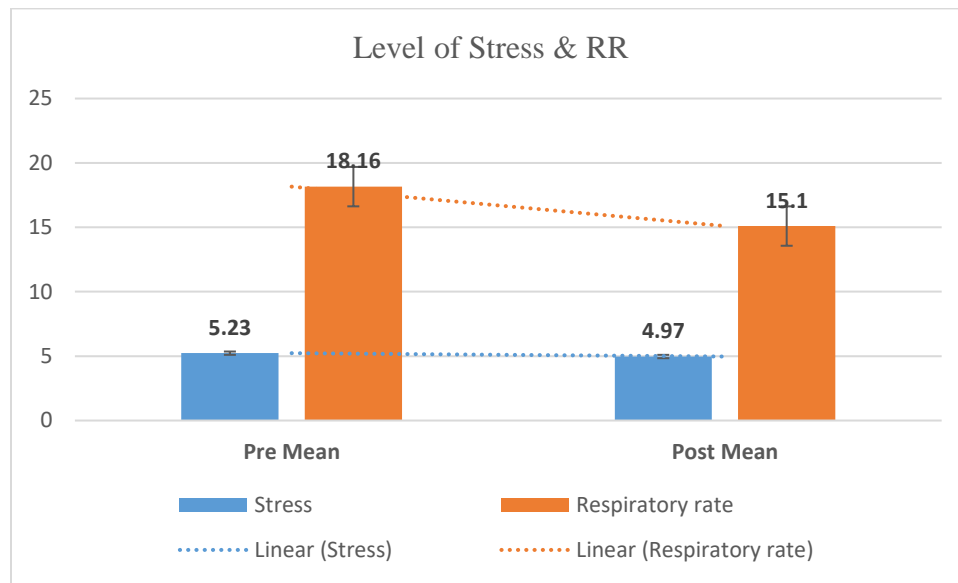


Figure 2 : Graph Showing Stress and Respiratory Rate of Working Women in the Ministry.

DISCUSSION

The Present study showed that before and after the Avartan Dhyana Intervention, the pre-Mean \pm SD (Standard Deviation) score of stress was 5.23 ± 3.27 , and the post-Mean \pm SD score was 4.97 ± 3.25 . The t-value of stress was 2.27; hence Avartan Dhyana showed a significant improvement in decreased stress level at ($p < 0.05$), and the pre-Mean \pm SD score of RR (Respiratory rate) was 18.16 ± 5.34 and post-Mean \pm SD score was 15.10 ± 5.37 . The t-value of RR was 4.406; hence Avartan Dhyana significantly decreased the respiratory rate at ($p < 0.01$) among working women in the Ministry.

According to (Kumari & Ghosh, 2015), this Study," Effect of cyclic meditation on quality of life and perceived stress in female adolescence", found that after one month of cyclic meditation practice, the pre-Mean \pm SD and post-Mean \pm SD increased by 18.58 \pm 3.5 to 20.0 \pm 3.3; hence there was no significant improvement in decreasing perceived stress at ($p>0.05$) level among fifty-eight female adolescents.. According to (Dr. V. Vallimurugan & J. Vijay, 2021), in the study" Influences Of Blood Pressure And Respiratory Rate Response To Yogic Programme Among Women Badminton Players" found that after six weeks of yoga training, the pre-Mean \pm SD and post-Mean \pm SD was decreased 18.85 \pm 1.57 to 17.50 \pm 1.57; hence there was significant improvement to reduce in Respiratory rate at ($p<0.05$) level among twenty women badminton players. According to (Dr.Babu.P., 2019), this Study," Effect of Swami Satyananda Saraswati Yoga Practices On Coordinative And Physiological Variables Among College Women Athletes", found that after eighteen sessions of SSY practice, the pre-Mean \pm SD and post-Mean \pm SD was decreased 12.68 to 11.05; hence there was significant improvement in heart rate reduction at ($p<0.05$) level among ten women. According to (Anderson et al., 2017), "Using Yoga Nidra to Improve Stress in Psychiatric Nurses in a Pilot Study" found that after six sessions of yoga Nidra intervention, the pre-means stress score was 1.82 and the post score was 1.00. Hence there was no significant change in stress levels at ($p>0.05$) among women working in Hospitals. According to (Kirca & Pasinlioglu, 2019), the study" The Effect of yoga on stress level in infertile women. *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care*" found that after Six weeks of yoga practice, the pre-means of (the COMPI) fertility problem stress scale was 23.55 and post mean was 44.94 in experiment group and control group the pre mean of COMPI fertility problem stress scale was 25.83 and post mean was 29.14. There was no statistically significant change ($p>0.05$) among sixty-four women.

Hence, the Present study proved that the Effect of Avartan dhyana on stress levels significantly improved to decrease at ($p<0.05$) and respiratory rate ($p<0.01$) levels among working women in the Ministry.

CONCLUSION

Avartan Dhyana is a healing intervention for stress reduction in the corporate sector. This study implies that Avartan Dhyana has anti-stress properties and that combining yoga postures interspersed with relaxation reduces arousal more than alone. As a result, Avartan dhyana is a best practice for integrative stress management and overall, Health. Further research should be conducted with various clinical variables for better outputs.

AUTHOR STATEMENT

There was no conflict of interest.

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APPENDICE

2 | Consumable Booklet of ADSS-BSPSA

Sr. No. क्र. सं	Sr. No. कथन	Yes हाँ	No नहीं	Marks प्राप्तांक
1	I am aware of the dryness of my mouth मुझे अपने मुँह सूख जाने के बारे में पता चल जाता है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	I feel difficulty while breathing (e.g. excessively rapid breathing, breathlessness in the absence of physical exertion) साँस लेने में दिक्कत महसूस करते हैं (जैसे साँस का तेज चलना, बिना काम किए साँस में दिक्कत होना)।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	I am not able to feel good. कुछ भी अच्छा महसूस नहीं कर पाते/पाती हैं।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	I find it difficult to relax. मुझे आराम करने में दिक्कत होती है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	I feel that I get upset easily. मुझे लगता है कि मैं बहुत जल्दी परेशान हो जाता/जाती हूँ।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	I often feel that I am not able to do anything. अक्सर ऐसा महसूस होता है कि मैं कुछ नहीं कर सकता/सकती।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	I often have a feeling of numbness/shakiness in my hands and legs (e.g. legs going to give away) अक्सर मुझे ऐसा लगता है कि मेरे हाथ-पैर काँपते हैं (पैरों में जान नहीं है, पैर जवाब दे रहे हैं)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	I find myself getting restless if delayed in anyway. किसी भी प्रकार से देरी हो जाने पर बेचैनी होने लगती है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	I feel that I have nothing to look forward to. मुझे ऐसा लगता है कि जीवन में कुछ बचा ही नहीं है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	I often feel downhearted and sad. मुझे ऐसा लगता है कि बिल बैठा जा रहा है और मैं दुःखी हूँ।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	I often get the feeling of faintness. मुझे अक्सर ऐसा महसूस होता है कि मुझे बेहोशी आ रही है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	I feel that I am rather touchy. मुझको चीजें जल्दी खुरी लग जाती हैं।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	I am not able to enthusiastic about anything. मुझे किसी भी चीज में जोश नहीं आ पा रहा है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sr. NO.	1	2	7	11	14	15	18	3	6	9	10	13	4	5	8	12	16	17
Score																		
Total Score																		

Consumable Booklet of ADSS-BSPSA | 3

Sr. No. क्र. सं	Sr. No. कथन	Yes हाँ	No नहीं	Marks प्राप्तांक
14.	I perspire heavily even in the absence of physical exertion and high temperature (e.g. hand sweaty) मुझे काम न करने या गर्मी न होने पर भी पसीना ज्यादा आता है। (जैसे हाथ पसीने से भीग जाते हैं)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.	I get scared without any good reason. मुझे बिना किसी ठोस वजय के डर लगता है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16.	I find as if am difficult for me tolerate any interruptions in what ever I am doing. मैंने पाया जैसे मैं बहुत चिड़चिड़ा हो गया/गयी हूँ।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17.	I find it hard to calm down after getting upset. मैंने पाया कि किसी बात से परेशान होने के बाद मुझे शांत होने में मुश्किल होती है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18.	I have difficulty in swallowing. मुझे निगलने में दिक्कत होती है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19.	I find that it is difficult for me tolerate any interruptions in whatever I am doing. मैंने पाया कि मेरे काम में टोका-टोकी होने पर उसे बर्बाद करने में मुझे परेशानी होती है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20.	I am worried about those things in which I might panic and make a fool of myself. मैं उन चीजों के बारे में परेशान रहता/रहती हूँ जिनमें मैं भरे घबराहट के कहीं कुछ गड़बड़ न कर दूँ और मेरा मजाक न बन जाए।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21.	I feel more nervous and anxious than usual. मैं बहुत ज्यादा घबड़ाहट और बेचैनी महसूस करता/करती हूँ।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22.	I have difficulty in taking the initiative for any new task. काम को शुरू करने में पहल करने में दिक्कत होती है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23.	I find myself getting agitated in everything. मैं अपने आप को बात-बात में उत्तेजित पाता/पाती हूँ।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24.	I am bothered about headaches, neck and back pains. मैं सिर, गर्दन और पीठ के दर्द से परेशान रहता/रहती हूँ।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25.	I feel weak and get tired easily. मैं कमजारी महसूस करता/करती हूँ और जल्दी थक जाता/जाती हूँ।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26.	I feel sad and depressed. मैं दुःखी और निराशा महसूस करता/करती हूँ।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27.	I feel that I am losing interest in almost everything. मैं महसूस करता/करती हूँ कि मेरा किसी चीज/काम में मन नहीं लगता है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Serial. No.	20	21	24	25	28	32	34	35	22	26	27	31	37	19	23	29	30	36
Score																		
Total Score																		

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Sr. No. क्र. सं	Sr. No. कथन	Yes हाँ	No नहीं	Marks प्राप्तांक
28.	I can feel my heart beating fast. मैं अपने दिल की धड़कन का तेज होना महसूस करता/करती हूँ।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29.	I am slow to respond. मुझे किसी बात का जवाब देने में समय लगता है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30.	I feel extremely upset if exposed to events that remind me of similar stressful event. किसी भी ऐसे काम या घटना का सामना करते में मुझे बहुत विवकत होती है। जो मुझे वैसी ही किसी घंटी हुई पेशानी की याद दिलाती है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31.	I feel I am not losing interest in almost everything. मैं खुद के बारे में बहुत बेकार महसूस करता/करती हूँ।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32.	I get feelings of numbness and tingling in my fingers, toes. मुझे लगता है कि हाथ-पैर की उँगलियाँ सुन हो रही हैं और उनमें झनझनाहट हो रही है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33.	I have no expectations/hope from the future. मुझे आगे आने वाले कल से कोई उम्मीद नहीं है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34.	I am bothered by stomachs and indigestion. मैं पेट दर्द और खवहजमी से परेशान रहता/रहती हूँ।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35.	I have empty my bladder often. मुझे जल्दी-जल्दी पेशाब करने जाना पड़ता है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36.	I have repeated unwanted memories of the stressful event. न चाहते हुए भी मुझे बार-बार बुरी घटनाओं की याद आ जाती है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37.	I feel that my life is meaningless. मुझे लगता है कि मेरी जिवनी का कोई मतलब नहीं है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38.	I am not able to handle/control my feelings. मैं अपने गुस्से पर काबू नहीं रख पाता/आपा नहीं रहता।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39.	I have nightmares मुझे डरावने सपने आते हैं।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
40.	Often my mind goes blank. अक्सर मुझे ऐसा लगता है कि मेरे दिमाग खाली हो गया।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
41.	I have heavy pressure in the chest. मुझे सीने में दबाव/भारीपन महसूस होता है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
42.	I often have crying bouts without any good reason बिना किसी कारण के अक्सर मेरी रुलाई फूट पड़ती है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sr. NO.	39	41	45	47	37	38	42	44	48	40	43	46
Score												
Total Score												

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Sr. No. क्र. सं	Sr. No. कथन	Yes हाँ	No नहीं	Marks प्राप्तांक
43.	The stressful events cause problems in my relationships with other people. उस घटना के बाद से दूसरे लोगों के साथ मेरे रिश्तों में खटास आ गई है। (तनाव या परेशान करने वाली घटनाओं के बाद में कुछ समय तक मेरे रिश्तों में खटास आ जाती है)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
44.	often I want to be alone. अक्सर अकेले पड़े रहने का मन करता है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
45.	Sometimes my vision is blurred. अक्सर मेरी आँखों के सामने अंधेरा सा हो जाता है या धुंधलापन छ जाता है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
46.	I have difficulty in concentrating. मुझे ध्यान लगाने में विवकत होती है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
47.	Often I have feeling of nausea. अक्सर मेरे जी मिचलाता है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
48.	I feel unwell. जीयत गिरी-गिरी सी रहती है।	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sub-scale	Anxiety			Depression			Stress		
Page	2	3	4	2	3	4	2	3	4
Score									
Total									
Percentile									
Category									

EXACERBATING GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE TIME OF COVID-19 CATAclysm IN INDIA

ANALYZING THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON GENDER EQUALITY IN INDIA.

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ABSTRACT

The hands that rock the cradle, the hands that serve the dishes, are the same hands that bear excruciating barbarity all over the world. One of the essential Sustainable Development goals is to "ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN," which seems to be a fantasy as we enter a new decade. As the pandemic hit the domain, we have been unclasped to a new regular, which has secluded the concerns of vulnerable sections of the society. This research scrutinizes the impact of the COVID-19 microcosm as a shadow pandemic for women in the form of increased household burden, intimate partner crimes, sexual assaults, and domestic violence. An inductive qualitative methodology has been used in this exploratory research, with primary and secondary sources as instruments of data collection. The primary data collected by an online survey of 214 intellectuals from different professional and regional backgrounds showcased that the consequences of COVID-19 are so far-ranging that it is developing into a SILENT pandemic, which needs to be confronted as soon as possible. This research calls for tackling women-related issues exacerbated due to the pandemic and keeping the victims as the prime center for COVID-19 revival policies.

Keywords: Sustainable Development goals (SDGs), COVID-19, Gender Equality, Intimate partner crimes, Sexual assaults, Domestic Violence

INTRODUCTION

Reverberating off the Indian Households, where we tick mark the schools and careers for males and decide whether the female should be conceived or not, tutored or not, or entitled to work or not. The pursuit of a woman's life today has not only been accustomed to rock a cradle but to calibrate its oscillatory motion too. One of the critical sustainable goals remains "Achieving Gender Equality and To Empower All Women and Girls," which seems like a focal point for the new decade. Men and women often diverge in their biological characteristics, yet the world at large uses this bare-bones difference as a premise for the women's captivity. In a country like India, which is experiencing a youth bulge, this social handicap needs to be prioritized and studied well.

Nevertheless, every epidemic or pandemic adds to the societal dilemma of whether women are safe at home or not. Since 23rd March 2020, we have embraced a new normal, which tends to be an anomaly for females. According to the National Commission for Women, domestic violence cases increased almost twofold since the lockdown, with almost 70% of the cases going unreported (The National Commission for Women(NCW)). Moreover, intimate partner crimes, sexual, physical, and emotional abuse, increased household burden, wife battering were some common issues.

This study analyzes the impact of lockdown due to the COVID-19 or Coronavirus pandemic on gender sensitization and the cataclysmic picture it presents before the world. This study further analyzes and tests

various variables as a premise for gender difference to address the gaps in gender inequality. Besides some traditionally established variables such as patriarchy and social norms, newer variables rising out of the COVID-19 have also been analyzed.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Every day thousands of ominous headlines such as minors getting pregnant (THE HINDU, 2021), a man out on parole homicides a 2-year-old (THE TIMES OF INDIA, 2020), menacing of wife with an acid-attack (THE TIMES OF INDIA, 2021), clearly shows a lot of effort must be effectuated for attaining gender equality. According to the Crimes in India Report, 2019, India experienced a 7.303% increase in crimes against women from 3,78,236 cases in 2018 to 4,05,861 cases in 2019. Most of the cases against women out of the IPC crimes were reported under "Cruelty by husband or his relatives"(1,26,575, 31.18%), followed by "Assaults on women with intent to outrage her modesty"(89,292, 22%). Further, dowry deaths were 7,162 out of total dowry cases (13,674) reported under Dowry Prohibition Act,1961, and rape cases were 7.94% (32260) out of the prevalent crimes. Nearly 30% of the women have faced sexual, physical, or emotional abuse at the core worldwide. (Crimes in India Report, 2019)

Into the bargain comes a blind spot such as the Coronavirus pandemic, exacerbating the existing reticence of women all over the world. Surviving pandemics for a woman goes beyond the risks of infection. Taking instances from the Ebola Virus Disease that shook Liberia in 2013, men were not sensitized regarding gender-based violence, and cases of wife battering, verbal abuse, rape, non-reporting of plights, sexual assaults, and victim-blaming attitudes were a common scenario (Dala T. Korkoyah, 2015). In India, the Government imposed a complete lockdown from March 23, 2020. During just a few months of lockdown (March 23 to May 30), the cases of domestic violence spiked from 22% to 47.2%, according to the data collected by the National Commission for Women (NCW). In just 20 days of initial lockdown, 239 cases of domestic violence were reported, which is only 1% of the total cases (The National Commission for Women(NCW)). Prior studies have also recorded most of the cases going under-reported, which has been referred to as "the iceberg of Domestic Violence" (Gracia, 2004). The recognized reasons were fear of embarrassment, economic dependency of women over men, women's fear of retaliation, notions of society at large, etc.

According to a study by Mc. Kinsey Global Institute, women were 1.8 times more vulnerable than men during the lockdown (The power of parity: Advancing women's equality in India, 2015). Moreover, according to UNFA Report, 47 million women do not even have access to contraceptives, leading to 7 million unwanted pregnancies. (UNFPA, 2020)

METHODOLOGY

The research philosophy of Positivism has been executed while working with observable social paradox. An Exploratory Inductive mixed-method approach has been followed, converging both quantitative and qualitative data.

SAMPLE

The current research's primary sample incorporated 214 diversified records among the ages of 15 and above and was consequently merged with secondary data via literature review to give better context to this study.

The respondents were presented the questionnaire through the Internet, seeking their socio demographic profile and their perspective of gender-based violence (on a five-point Likert scale). The respondents were asked to fill as per their comfort level with a confidentiality promise.

RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

The assessment achieved a 100% response rate, appreciably more from the female population (131, 61%) than the male population (83, 39%) as depicted in the following pivot table-

Table 1. Showing the respondents' gender and State of residence

		GENDER		
		FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
STATE	DELHI	93	52	145
	OUT OF DELHI	37	32	69

Since magnification was on the youth's perspective, 83.18% of the population were people between the ages 15-25, followed by 11.21% between 25-35 years of age and rest, above the benchmark of 35. Almost 12% of the population was either married or living in with their partners.

Furthermore, almost 70% of the population included students from various institutions across India; the rest proportion included people from the corporate background, housewives, academists, businessman, professionals which are presented in figure 1:

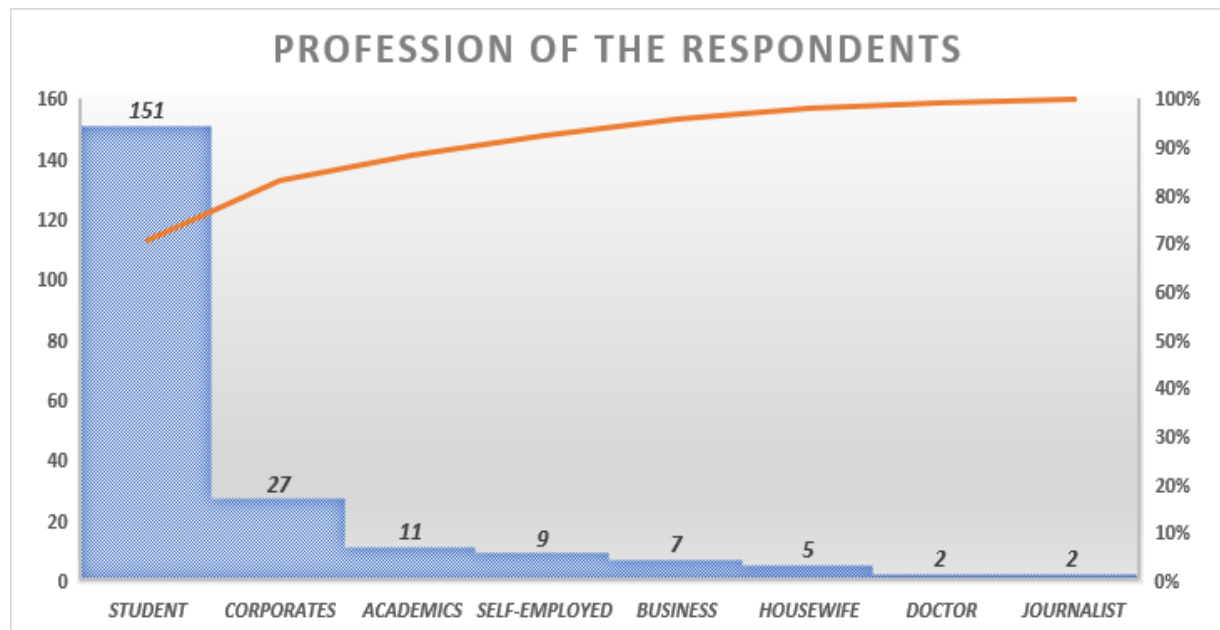


Figure 1: Respondents' profile: this figure demonstrates the profession of the respondents

The education level was rather andragogy, comprising 88.79% of graduates, students pursuing graduation, professional degrees, and Ph.D. scholars.

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The questionnaire was prepared with utmost diligence after discussion with experts and referring to published literature. It was structured into two sections. The first section seemed to gather the socio demographic profile of the respondents. Whereas the second section of the sample included the questions such as whether the respondents give credence to gender equality in their milieu or regarding their awareness about sexual consent, cases encountered, and the medium of information. Concerns regarding gender-based issues such as marital rape, increased household burden during the lockdown, domestic violence, and feminine rights were also put forth. The respondents indicated a degree of agreement and disagreement through Likert scale items on a five-point scale, from 1(Strongly disagree) to 5(Strongly agree). Furthermore, the respondents were asked about their candor towards menstrual hygiene, the role of education, and their approval on proximity and safer households (whether being abode is safe or not). Their independent views towards the government initiatives and self-help campaigns were also recognized.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Based on an extensive literature review, the following hypotheses were constructed and consequently tested in this paper:

HYPOTHESIS 1: Gender equality is poles apart among citizens of all marital status. (CHI-SQUARE)

HYPOTHESIS 2: The physical and sexual violence cases experienced by all age groups between 15 or above are not equal. (ONE-WAY ANOVA)

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS:

All the responses were duly filled, digitally recorded, and considered for analysis. Proper COVID-19 norms were followed. The information received was cross-tabulated and distinctive variables were realized, such as CONTINUOUS VARIABLES (age), DICHOTOMOUS VARIABLES (gender, marital status), DISCRETE VARIABLES (profession, state, education level, living with parents, partners, etc.), DEPENDENT VARIABLES (gender equality, domestic violence, marital rape, sexual and physical violence, burden of household chores, proximity), INDEPENDENT VARIABLES(strict restrictions of mobility and loss of communication channels during lockdown, patriarchy, socio-cultural aspects such as dowry, economic losses occurred during the pandemic, availability of obscene material over the Internet, societal influence, and other factors such as lack of sex education) were studied. Qualitative data collected from a series of studies were exposed to content investigation to distinguish the focal ideas and designs identified with research questions. It acted as a manual for data organization and helped to identify and study the broad-gauge concepts. A combination of Microsoft Excel 2010 and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for analysis. Additionally, both the analyzed quantitative and qualitative premises were induced to produce practical conclusions into the platter.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS:

When asked about whether the respondents have encountered any sexual, physical, or emotional harassment or violence during their lifetime, the older generation got heed, with almost 45% of the population experiencing drastic touches and circumstances during their lifetime. Moreover, it was found that there exists a high positive correlation coefficient of "0.884" between age and the cases of such physical, sexual, and emotional abuse experienced. As the age increases, the proportion of cases of physical and sexual violence also increases. However, 39.51% of the male population strongly believed home is the safest place for a woman, whereas women smirked eyeball to eyeball with such views with almost the same proportion strongly disagreeing.

The state-based comparison clearly shows the juxtaposition between the gender equality faced by people living in the capital vs. the states such as Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, etc. According to a report by the Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC), female employment is comparatively more in urban areas as compared to rural areas, leading to economic independence (Pozarny, 2016). Therefore, 65.52% of the population living in Delhi believes that there is gender equality in their homes, workplaces, and environment. In contrast, only 35.56% of women believe in gender equality in their milieu.

Diving deep into the dark picture COVID-19 has served, the respondents were inquired about the domestic violence cases during the lockdown and whether the cases were officially heard or not. According to the National Commission for Women (NCW), there has been an increase of at least 2.5 times in domestic violence complaints since the lockdown, with almost 70% of the cases going unreported (The National Commission for Women(NCW)). The primary data collected by the survey of intellectuals from different professional and regional backgrounds showcased the same results; most of the issues were unreported from the population that experienced domestic violence.

It was recognized that out of 28% of the domestic violence cases encountered during the lockdown, almost 60% of the cases were never officially set for trials and inquiry. Therefore, a new enshroud has been identified for underreporting cases, generally known as the "Tip of the Iceberg" problem of domestic violence. The reasons for non-reporting of cases can be personal, like embarrassment, economic dependence of women over men, sabotage of communication channels, or societal issues such as victims being blamed, privacy concerns, the biggest one being misogynistic attitudes and existent internalized patriarchy.

Similarly, when asked about the reasons for increased abuse, some new factors such as unemployment, stress and frustration, loss of communication channels, strict restrictions of mobility straightened up with the current prevalence of social practices such as misogynistic ideologies, societal influences, and ease in availability of obscene material in a youth-bulging country like India. Also, violence tends to be more likely, according to some previous studies, where men are unemployed or where the household bears immense financial difficulties. (The Unemployed Man and His Family. The Effect of Unemployment Upon the Status of the Man in Fifty-Nine Families, 1941)

The implied impetus of the widespread social ramifications includes the traditionally existing premises like patriarchy, societal issues, socio-cultural aspects such as dowry, ease in the availability of obscene material over the Internet, and others such as lack of sex education, lack of speedy trials, etc. with some new emerging and apparent variables such as strict restrictions of mobility, unemployment arising due to the economic crisis, and others such as frustrations and stress arising at the dawn of the COVID-19 pandemic. The proportionate cause arising out of the respondents' views for the increased number of cases during the lockdown is well depicted in figure 2.

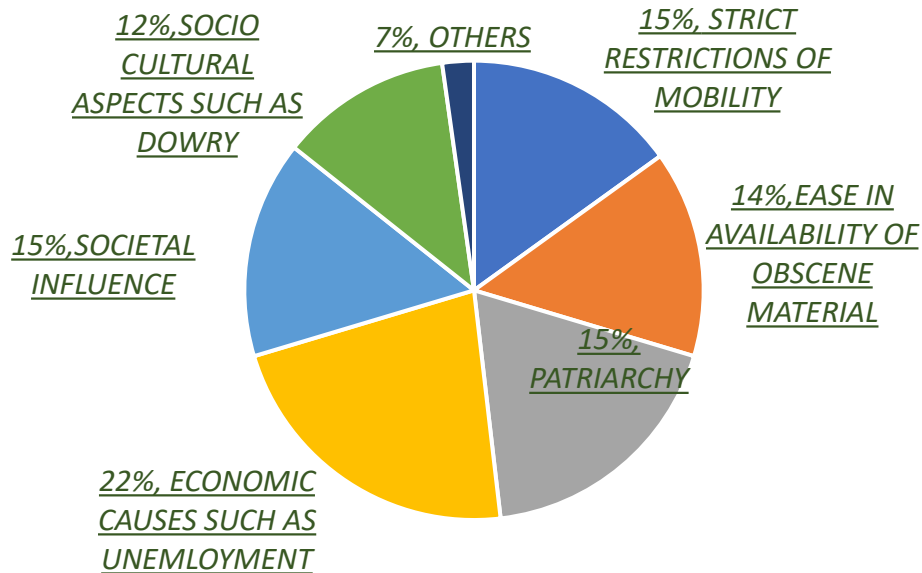


Figure 2: Showing the proportionate causes of increased cases during the lockdown in the views of the respondents.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING AND RESULTS:

HYPOTHESIS 2- CHI-SQUARE TEST:

Marital rape has always been moral turpitude in society. Once married, a woman's consent is an implied notion. Over 71.56% of the population strictly demanded strict legal provisions to abandon marital rape in the country. A Chi-square test was conducted to check the consistency level of gender equality within married and unmarried samples of the population.

The results from these hypothesis tests predict that gender equality and gender-based issues are not consistent among all citizens, married or unmarried. The sample included 186 respondents who were unmarried, 25 who were married, and the rest living with a partner or separated. These frequencies were statistically different, $X^2(6, N=214) = 13.015, p=0.043 < 0.05$ as shown in table 2

Table 2: Hypothesis 2: Chi-Square Test Results

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.015 ^a	6	.043
Likelihood Ratio	11.721	6	.068
Linear-by-Linear Association	.040	1	.841
N of Valid Cases	214		

HYPOTHESIS 2: ONE-WAY ANOVA:

19.77% of the female population between the age group of 15-25 have experienced sexual, physical, domestic violence, and intent to outrage modesty. On the contrary, 60% of the female population above 45 are forced to contend with the same. Victim-blaming and misogynistic attitudes and high tolerance towards abuse dwelling in the society might be the main reason for the same. With this study, this can be concluded that the physical and sexual violence cases experienced by all the age groups among 15 or above are incommensurate. The effect of age, therefore, was significant at $F(3,210) = 2.870$, $p=0.037$ as shown in the TABLE 3.

Table 3: Hypothesis 3: One-Way Anova Test Results

			Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	(Combined)		106.397	3	35.466	2.870	.037
	Linear	Unweighted	14.890	1	14.890	1.205	.274
	Term	Weighted	64.368	1	64.368	5.209	.023
		Deviation	42.029	2	21.015	1.701	.185
Within Groups			2595.135	210	12.358		
Total			2701.533	214			

Qualitative Analysis using Narratives and Interpretative Methods

Examining impact of Patriarchy and resultant mobility restrictions for women through respondents' narratives. The motoring of a child at an early age by a patriarchal mindset puts feminism at the question mark. Patriarchy is basically a social system that conceives from male superiority and male dominance, leading to neglecting feminism and womanhood. According to a report by Allen J. Johnson, it is a manifesting reality that patriarchy is the only gender game so rooted in the world that it goes unchallenged and unexamined. The ultimate prevalence of woman's image as the "home-maker" and the man as "home-

financer” shapes the patricentric society. The woman who tries to rebel in such a scenario is labeled as a "gauche". (Johnson)

This research stems from the patriarchal mindset and examines the impact of Patriarchy and resultant mobility restrictions for women through respondents' narratives. The existence of Patriarchy is all-pervasive, which was socially transparent when a respondent shared the plights of his mother. He quoted an experience as, "It is unfortunate that it was Mother's Day and we kids were preparing greeting cards for our mother when we heard a crash of voices in our home. Subsequently, it was our father who slapped my mother over a trivial fight." Moreover, reciting the past school days, he also mentioned that the condition of his school was heinous, and the boys in his school had also committed some severe offenses such as eve-teasing and attempt to rape. He labeled it 'the strange gift of poverty and patriarchy', leaving a concern and impact on the whole study.

While these social handicaps were prevalent, during the lockdown, men and women had to spend more time under the same roof, leading to strict mobility restrictions for women and loss of communication channels. Interestingly, a study titled "Unintended Consequences of Lockdown", published in the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), highlights that the red zones having higher restrictions received domestic violence and abuse cases than the orange and green zones (Ravindran & Shah, 2020). Lockdown may be a smart and perceptive step for controlling the Coronavirus disease, but the consequences by some social dilemmas are far-ranging, causing "A SILENT AND A SHADOW PANDEMIC" affecting women. (Ravichandran P, 2020)

During the lockdown, when few voices became prominent, it became impossible for the second narrator to be deaf to these voices. Eventually, they encountered a domestic violence case in their locality, where a drug addict husband used to beat and abuse his wife due to all the frustrations and mishaps of the lockdown. Unfortunately, they could not provide a helping hand as it was labeled as a family matter, and the victim did not even retaliate against her husband. She took the imminent solution to leave her husband and live at her parent's house with her two children, which was a valiant option yet looming a trial that was never heard, and the sinister chose to flee.

The levels of Patriarchy in society and strict restrictions of mobility during lockdown are supposed to be considerable reasons for the increased gender gap and surging cases during the lockdown.

AWARENESS-

It was disheartening to know that most of the respondents were numb to woman helplines, NGOs working hard to retrieve the scenario. On the brighter side, the respondents expressed a spark of empathy towards the victims and their emotional values. They observed their disheartening approaches during the lockdown by not giving their mothers and sisters a hand in household chores. Some displayed utter hope towards the victims' future and Government redressal plans for them. Some even got further inspired to launch self-help desks and for joining or funding some NGOs.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

This research calls for understanding the concerns after a new regular and implies statistical testing and drawing conclusions to address the gender gaps and increased gender-based issues during the lockdown. The concerns after a new regular should be to prioritize and tackle the gender-based issues exacerbated

because of the pandemic and keeping the victims as the prime center for the COVID-19 revival policies and making mitigation measures for any other situation that may befall us. For this, some suggestions can be to have Sustainable local initiatives, like self-help desk, community space to discuss ideas, recovery plans should address the increasing care burden, strict and stringent laws, acts, and schemes for the welfare, financial incentives, moral support to the victims, and awareness programs.

However, some limitations should be duly noted. Due to COVID-19 situations, the data was virtually recorded, and proper COVID-19 norms were followed. Therefore, personal interviews and direct observation methods and remarks would not be feasible. The data collected focuses more on the urban population than the rural population. This study has not considered the illiterate people of India, which are an essential and a significant part of the population and yet, are more subjected to abuse.

CONCLUSION:

Since the time of the great depression, every pandemic has yielded a line of difference between the genders, leading to an increase in violent and compulsive abuse of women. This study seeks an important initiative of challenging the mindset and having a sustainable world after the COVID-19 waves, where the woman-related issues should be prioritized. During the lockdown, the biggest reason for violence against women was that men and women must stay under one roof 24x7, leading to reduced communication channels and strict restrictions on mobility for women.

The complaints received during the lockdown were just a scintilla into the problem; the actual problems are tenser. The biggest challenge starts from recognizing the unpaid work done by a woman to stop the bias on the part of society. Women in the rural districts also do not even have access to basic infrastructural facilities like firewood. Moreover, lack of digital literacy and sex education is also a cause of consideration to be administered. Ironically, the most prominent stakeholders in a woman's life can act as a giant cage for her. To address this issue, awareness programs, self-defense training, and sex education should be organized starting from an early age by various institutions, such as schools, colleges, and even NGOs. It needs to be superintendent that sex education is as crucial as teaching photosynthesis to a child. Professional childcare industries could be set up, and women should be encouraged to take part-time internships rebalancing the nation's economic structures. Woman helpline number – 1091 and the woman helpline for domestic abuse – 181 should be like a prayer in the morning assemblies of school, recited daily, hung on the notice board. Women need to be aware and considerate of their rights and pledge not to fabricate themselves to the society.

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RELIGIOUS HARMONY IS RELIGIOUS PLURALISM THE WAY?

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ABSTRACT

The contemporary world exhibits a diversity of religions with every religion having its devoted adherents. For a harmonious life, it is crucial to have a favourable attitude towards other world religions and faiths. A constructive role from people is required to address the issues related to religion. Such issues have acquired significance, attention, and intensity in contemporary times because of globalization and technological advancements. Any action would now lead to worldwide reaction and thus our responsibility to act wisely increases manifold. The question is what should be our response to this multiplicity of religions? We need to respond to this diversity in a positive way so that it turns out to be an asset and not a threat. If we understand and accept diversity our attitude towards it would be more accommodating than conflicting. This paper discusses the response of Exclusivism, Inclusivism and Religious Pluralism to the multiplicity of religions prevalent by stating their main tenets using narrative review methodology. A pluralistic view of religious diversity asserts that all religions are equally good. Religions should be allowed to coexist and be respected. Exclusivism, on the other hand, affirms that a particular religion is the most valuable and the only way to attain liberation. Inclusive theories try to achieve a middle ground between exclusivism and pluralism by acknowledging that other religions have significant religious values while also agreeing with exclusivism that there is one religion closer to the truth than the others. The paper further discusses the Sikh view on the multiplicity of religions highlighting Guru Nanak Dev's philosophy which stresses the equality of all religions. The philosophical problems concerning religious pluralism are laid down. An argument is provided to show how pluralism promotes religious harmony. Despite conceptual difficulties, the implication of religious pluralism in society is seen as progressive and leading to much-desired religious harmony.

Keywords: Religious harmony, exclusivism, inclusivism, religious pluralism, diversity

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary era, the awareness of the diversity of religious beliefs is well recognized. The rise of disciplines like comparative religion and comparative theology has led to a keen understanding of various religions. In addition, such a study brings about an appreciation for varying religious traditions and an acceptance of the fact that religions differ significantly in belief and practice. This increased awareness of the world's religions, whether through current media, human experiences, or education, raises new questions. How should we perceive different religious traditions? The core notions fundamental to the major religions of the world are the nature of the Ultimate Reality, the nature of Self and Soteriology. According to Meister (2014), religion is a system of beliefs and practices and includes a belief in an ultimate transcendent reality which is non-physical. The meaning and purpose of life are provided by attaining unity with this Ultimate Reality. (Meister, 2014) There are not only diverse and conflicting views on these core aspects of religion but there are many disagreements even with respect to the nature of Ultimate Reality and our relation to it. In fact, scholars mention seven aspects of religious systems- doctrinal, philosophical, mythical, ethical, legal, ritual, personal, social, and artistic (Smart, 1996). The major religions differ in all these aspects. Thus, it becomes important to reflect on what should be one's response to religious diversity. There are several responses to religious diversity. The generally cited responses are - exclusivists, inclusivists, and pluralists. This division was first proposed by Alan Race (1983).

Exclusivists

This is the group of those religious followers who believe that the central doctrines beliefs and practices of only one religion are solely and objectively true and that is the religion to which they belong. They maintain that because the central religious claims of the major religions contradict one another so logically they all cannot be true together. According to them for a religious man, it is important to follow the one correct path, to believe in the truth claims of one true religion because that is an essential condition of salvation or liberation. They further claim that their religion is the only viable path to attain salvation and so is the closest to religious truth. An exclusivist holds that the beliefs of other religions are incorrect and so they are not valuable. Sometimes this disagreement leads to intolerance and even violence towards the believers of divergent religious views.

Pluralists

This group of religious followers believe that all major religions have a distinctive relationship with the Ultimate Real. One can reach God by following any religion. God revealed Himself in various geographical locations through various entities and in various circumstances. Each religion has a set of beliefs or practices which are true and each provides a path which works successfully towards achieving liberation. Therefore, there are several ways to salvation. According to John Hick, Religious pluralism looks at the major world religions as very divergent but equally well-founded methods of thinking, encountering, and acknowledging the ultimate reality (Hick, 1995). The all-important element of religion surpasses the myriad beliefs and practices that constitute the various religious traditions. Every religion perceives the Absolute in its own unique way. An individual experiences the ultimate through the lens of his or her cultural and religious notions and knows his ultimate as Allah, Parmeshwar or Waheguru and so on. Pluralism is thus characterized by humbleness regarding one's own religion and aims at meaningful dialogue and mutual understanding with other religions. and J.Hick's Pluralistic hypothesis considers all religions as viable paths which lead to one God.

Inclusivists

This is the group of religious followers who believe there is one true notion of an Ultimate reality and one true account of salvation or liberation. They acknowledge that there is a difference of opinion about these fundamental issues among world religions and maintain the view that one religion is closer to the truth than the others. According to McKim (2012) the inclusivists consider all religions equally significant about fundamental religious matters but one tradition describes the object of religion and the process of salvation more accurately. The central doctrines, beliefs, and practices of only one religion are solely and objectively true. The other religious traditions contain elements that are true or effective. All those who seek the truth and the good can attain liberation whether or not they are aware of the religious beliefs of the correct religion.

Sikhism on multiplicity of religions

The response of Sikhism to religious diversity is derived from the metaphysical views of Guru Nanak Dev ji rather than from epistemological principles. In Guru Granth Sahib ji, the Sikh scripture which incorporates the vision of the Sikh Gurus, we find many references to the fact of many religions. Upon attaining enlightenment, Guru Nanak Dev Ji said, "There is no Hindu, no Muslim." *Na koi Hindu na koi musalman*. (Kaur & Singh, 2000, p. 4)

According to Guru Nanak Dev ji the Creator is One and pervades the entire universe just as a soul pervades the body. God is omnipresent, his activity is felt everywhere in the universe.

“The seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks and months and various seasons originate from One Sun; O Nanak, in just the same way, the many forms originate from the Creator.” (*Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, n.d., pp. 12–13)

The human and the divine soul are identical to one another. This oneness of God is strongly emphasized in Guru Nanak Dev's philosophy. God is not only the creator of the world but he also manifests himself, as a soul, in the entire created world. He is thus present in all beings and things throughout the universe.

“One God created all men;
All men are moulded of the same clay;
Recognize the Lord's light within all, and do not consider social class or status;
There are no classes or castes in the world hereafter.” (*Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, n.d., p. 349)

This doctrine of the unity of humans with God is then transformed into the social concept of equality among all humans. All humans are equal among themselves and equal before him, irrespective of caste, creed, religion, gender, or any other social distinctions. Thus, we can say that it is not that Guru Nanak Dev Ji urges religious pluralism, but rather that this position arises from the way he describes the nature of ultimate reality.

One of the compositions of Guru Gobind Singh clearly brings out the equality of all human beings, ‘Manas ki Jat sabai ekai pahichanbo’ (Sahni, 2018, p. 569)

Thus, Guru Nanak Dev ji and Sikh philosophical thoughts reflect respect for all religions and acceptance of the prevalence of many religions. Guru Nanak Dev ji believed that all religions have similar purposes and goals. All are different paths leading to the same destination. Religious nomenclature is impermanent and disappears as and when the body disintegrates.

There are many instances from the life of Guru Nanak Dev Ji which point out his views on both the equality of all religions and equal space for multifarious religions. An episode in the Janamsakhis relates to Guru Nanak's visit to Multan. Persons of various religious traditions met the Guru with a bowl filled to the brim with milk, implying thereby that the place already had all the religious traditions represented there and that there was no place for a new one. Guru Nanak is said to have placed a flower petal on the milk, thereby indicating that his faith though distinct is not an attempt to replace any but will co-exist with others. Besides such incidents, Mardana, a Muslim by birth, and lifelong companion of Guru Nanak Dev Ji was never asked by Guru to convert, emphasizing Guru Nanak Dev Ji's respect for all religions.

The essence of religion and all ways of spiritual living is the sabd :

“Some call the Lord ‘Ram, Ram’, and some ‘Khuda’.
Some serve Him as ‘Gusain’ (Jesus), others as ‘Allah’.
He is the Cause of causes, and Generous.
He showers His Grace and Mercy upon us.
Some call themselves Muslim, and some call themselves Hindu.
Some yearn for paradise, and others long for heaven.
Says Nanak, one who realizes the Hukam of God's Will,
knows the secrets of his Lord Master.” (*Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, n.d., p. 885)

Religion and morality

Guru Nanak Ji and John Hick both consider morality as an important aspect of religion. Guru Nanak dev ji preached that it does not matter to which religion a person belongs too, what is valuable is the deeds that one performs. Being religious is not just adhering to a particular set of religious beliefs but it consists in being righteous. Guru Nanak Ji says “Truth is high, but higher still is truthful living.” According to him, one should choose truthful, honest, and moral ways of living. One should be just, fair, and righteous as these virtues connect with spiritual awakening and bring one closer to God. (*Living Truthfully*, 2019). There are multiple paths leading to one Ultimate and salvation is available to all those who walk the path of righteousness, by performing virtuous deeds. by chanting His name, practising, and contemplating the teachings of their prophets and saints. An adherent of any religion can achieve salvation.

On the other hand, for Hick too, morality is an important feature essential to any religion. He says, that within each major religion, we witness a transition from being “self-centeredness to reality-centeredness”. (Hick, 1985, pp. 36–37). Each religion brings out effectively a transition from ordinary human existence which is characterized as trivial and unsatisfactory to an existence which is blissful, significant, and liberating. This soteriological transformation is recognized by all great religious traditions. Due to their success in transforming and saving or liberating people, all the great traditions are appropriate responses to the Real (Rogers, 2009). It is primarily because of their success in the personal moral transformation that major world religions have endured over the years. Compassion, charity, and selflessness are among their core values. A person’s moral evolution is key to a successful religion (Meister, 2014).

ARGUMENT: Religious Pluralism promotes religious harmony

1. Each major religion of the world believes in an Ultimate Reality beyond the physical world.
2. Each religion has a specific notion of its nature and set of religious beliefs and practices.
3. Each one has a belief as to a viable path towards Liberation or Salvation.
4. It is not the case that any one religious tradition holds the exclusive truths about Ultimate Reality and offers the only path to Salvation.
5. So, we should adopt an amiable attitude towards other religious beliefs, customs and practices resulting in the harmonious co-existence of various religions.

Practicing religious pluralism can help us to give up the attitude of arrogance and be more accepting of other faiths, beliefs and practices. Our attitude towards other faiths should be of acceptance and respect. And this is the key notion of religious pluralism.

PROBLEMS

For religious believers’ religious statements like ‘thou art that’ or ek Onkar (there is only one God) or ‘Lord is Divine’ are cognitively true. They are not merely expressions of subjective attitudes. The believer believes in the truth of the situation described by such statements. Consequently, some critics argue that religious pluralism fails to accurately reflect the beliefs and language of religious people regarding the religious language they use in general (*Religious Pluralism*, n.d.).

According to some critics, religious pluralism negates any possibility of a historical divine revelation. Some religions are based on historical evidence. Other religions, however, are not based on verifiable facts (Zed, 2016).

Also, the major religions of the world hold incompatible and exclusive views on various religious notions like the nature of ultimate reality, salvation, prayer, grace, world and self-etc. it is then contradictory to say that all religions offer equally valid ways of conceiving and responding to Ultimate Reality (Meister, 2014).

According to Hick a person's religious experiences and descriptions depend on how they are interpreted and framed. It is the same reality but experienced differently - either personally and theistically or impersonally and pantheistically. Our interpretations are influenced by concepts ingrained in our culture and tradition, values, and practices we are nurtured with. But such an account will not then provide a precise picture of the Ultimate Real which is a critical epistemological restriction of religious pluralism. We have no basis for knowing whether attributes like omniscience, omnipotence, benevolence, loving caring etc which we use to portray the ultimately real are accurate descriptions of that reality or whether they are psychological projections or mere wish fulfilment (Meister, 2014).

CONCLUSION

To conclude we can say that the philosophical problems stated above are genuine for a religious adherent. A religious believer seeks God, wants to know his true nature, and yearns to be in his vicinity. His ardent desire is to know the God he worships. Religious pluralism seems to do away with the possibility of ultimate truth. All religious beliefs become culturally constructed explications that do not correspond to actual reality (Jones, 2008).

But at the same time, religious pluralism offers a very progressive attitude towards the diversity of religions. In order to achieve a better world, religions must coexist harmoniously, share concepts, cooperate, and understand and respect the distinctness and uniqueness of others' belief systems. Religious pluralism is the need of the hour, surpassing religious and non-religious demographic lines. It is the voice of the masses turbulent by religious conflicts. From a pragmatic point of view, the realization of the similarities and purposes can foster love, brotherhood, and solidarity instead of fear, arrogance and narrow individualism. Religious pluralism emphasises dialogue, which seeks understanding amid the differences and can thus be an effective tool in promoting religious harmony (*Religious Pluralism*, n.d.).

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SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-ASSERTIVENESS AMONG ADOLESCENTS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GENDER DIFFERENCES

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ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a significant phase of development, as it represents a critical period of transition from childhood to early adulthood, spanning approximately from 10 to 19 years. During this period, adolescents undergo significant physical, emotional, cognitive, and social changes that shape their identity, self-concept, and interpersonal relationships. In this context, self-esteem and self-assertiveness are two essential constructs that help adolescents to communicate effectively and thrive in their personal and social life.

This study aims to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and self-assertiveness in adolescence while exploring the role of gender. The study included 60 adolescents (30 boys and 30 girls) aged between 15 to 18 years, who were selected from Delhi-NCR. The participants completed two self-report questionnaires, namely the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale and Rathus Self-assertive Scale. The Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale is a widely used instrument that measures global self-worth, including both positive and negative self-evaluations. On the other hand, the Rathus Self-assertive Scale measures the degree to which an individual is willing to express his/her feelings, thoughts, and needs to others in various social situations.

The findings of the study revealed a weak positive correlation between self-esteem and self-assertiveness in adolescence indicating the presence of other factors that might influence the relationship between self-esteem and self-assertiveness. Interestingly, the study also found a significant gender disparity in self-esteem levels. Specifically, girls had significantly lower self-esteem than boys, which is consistent with previous research on gender differences in self-esteem. This finding is noteworthy as low self-esteem has been linked with a range of negative outcomes such as depression, anxiety, poor academic performance, and risky behaviors. Therefore, it is crucial to address the gender disparities in self-esteem levels to promote positive developmental outcomes in adolescents.

In contrast, no significant gender differences were observed in self-assertiveness. This finding suggests that both boys and girls are equally willing to express themselves in various social situations, indicating that self-assertiveness is a universal construct that is not influenced by gender.

Keywords: Adolescence, Gender, Self-esteem, Self-assertiveness

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is the transitional stage of development between childhood and adulthood, typically lasting from ages 10-19. It is marked by physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes that prepare individuals for the demands of adulthood. In this period, adolescents undergo rapid physical changes, such as growth spurts, secondary sex characteristics, and changes in brain development that affect behavior and decision-making. The two important characteristics that shape one's identity during this period are Self-esteem and Self-assertiveness.

Self-esteem is defined as the judgments we make about our worth and the feelings associated with those judgments. It originates early, and its structure becomes increasingly elaborate with age. A child's self-esteem might reflect a belief about whether he or she is intelligent and attractive but that belief has nothing to do with accuracy. On one hand, high self-esteem may refer to accurate, justified perceptions of one's worth as a person and one's successes and accomplishments, but it can also refer to an arrogant, grandiose

and unwarranted sense of superiority over others. In the same manner, low self-esteem may reflect either an accurate perception of one's shortcomings or a distorted, even pathological insecurity and inferiority. Self-esteem in adolescence is affected by many factors ranging from biological to environmental, from social-familial to cultural.

Self-esteem is influenced by gender stereotypes, with adolescent girls feeling less confident about their physical appearance and athletic abilities compared to boys due to experiencing puberty and school transitions at the same time. Girls tend to score higher in language arts self-esteem, while boys score higher in math, science, and physical/athletic self-esteem. However, girls excel in self-esteem related to close friendships and social acceptance. Young adolescent girls who prioritize maintaining others' approval and social relationships may have lower self-esteem than boys. It is commonly believed that boys have higher overall self-worth than girls, which explains why girls tend to experience larger drops in perceived self-worth during adolescence.

Self-esteem is the judgment we make about our worth and the feelings associated with it. It originates early and becomes more complex with age. Factors such as biology, environment, and culture affect self-esteem in adolescence. Erik Erikson believed that the physical, cognitive, and social changes associated with puberty cause a decline in self-esteem in young adolescents. Studies show that perceptions of competency in particular domains decline gradually in adolescence. However, self-esteem becomes more stable in adolescence and early adulthood. Healthy self-esteem in adolescence has various benefits such as making a person more assertive, confident, and resilient. Gender-stereotyped expectations affect self-esteem, with girls having lower self-esteem than boys due to concerns about physical appearance, athletic abilities, and social relationships.

Bhamani, Jamil and Mohsin (2014) aimed to explore the self-esteem trends in adolescents of Karachi, Pakistan regarding gender differences. They reported a significant gender difference in the variable of self-esteem of the chosen adolescents wherein the female adolescents have shown significantly higher self-esteem than boys. In another study done by Minev et al. (2018) aimed to analyze the correlation between successful academic achievement and self-esteem in adolescent students and gender differences in self-esteem. They found that boys have higher self-esteem than girls. Girls were found to regard themselves more negatively than boys and boys regard themselves as more independent and worthy. This difference was explained by the fact that boys tend to be more independent from the opinion of others, while girls are more prone to conformism. In a study by Quatman and Watson (2001), boys were found to demonstrate a slightly higher level of self-esteem than girls.

Assertiveness is considered to be an important communication skill influencing our interpersonal relations. It plays a role in stress management, conflict resolution, and developing a positive self-concept. Self-assertiveness refers to the ability to confidently and courageously state one's views, express feelings, ask for what one wants, and enjoy one's rights. This includes exhibiting assertive behavior, which allows adolescents to act in their own best interest, stand up for themselves without excessive worry, express honest feelings comfortably, and exercise personal rights without infringing on the rights of others. A self-assertive individual displays integrity, honesty, directness, and respect for others. Assertive behaviors help to foster strong relationships with others, even if there is disagreement. Some key traits of assertive

individuals include confidence, effective communication skills, validating others' opinions, honesty, and an understanding of personal boundaries.

During adolescence, being assertive is essential. This skill assists adolescents in creating strategies for assertively managing aggressive behavior. It also helps them become more conscious of their emotional responses to others' behavior and how to handle challenging individuals. Furthermore, it strengthens their capacity to express their thoughts effectively while empathizing with others' emotions.

Pararay and Kumar (2016) conducted a study to examine the assertiveness level of undergraduate students about their gender, residence, and stream of study. The Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (1978) was used to assess the assertiveness of the students. The results of the study revealed no significant gender difference between students in their level of assertiveness.

Assertiveness and self-esteem in adolescents are the instruments for expressing themselves without any psychological disturbances in different situations. It is essential for better emotional well-being and to maintain socially supportive relationships. In a study by Sarkova, Slekova & Orosova, (2013), carried out to study the associations between assertiveness, psychological well-being, and self-esteem in adolescents, it was seen that both the dimensions of assertiveness- distress, and performance- used for the study, were associated with psychological well-being and self-esteem. Shanmugam and Kathyayini (2017) studied assertiveness and self-esteem in Indian adolescents. Rathus' assertiveness schedule and Rosenberg's self-esteem scale were used to assess assertiveness and self-esteem in adolescents. The results indicated a positive correlation between the assertive behavior and self-esteem of the adolescents.

Keeping the results of the past research in mind, which looked into the correlation between self-esteem and self-assertiveness, and gender differences in self-esteem and self -assertiveness, the present study aims to find out the relationship between assertiveness and self-esteem and to study the role of gender on self-esteem and self-assertiveness among adolescents in the age group of 15 to 18 years.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the present study are:

- To study the relationship between Self- esteem and Self Assertiveness of adolescent boys and girls.
- To study the role of gender in Self-esteem.
- To study the role of gender in Self-assertiveness.

HYPOTHESES

Based on the above objectives, the following hypotheses were developed:

- There is no correlation between self-esteem and self-assertiveness for both boys and girls.
- There is no significant difference in the self-esteem of boys and girls.
- There is no significant difference in the self-assertiveness of boys and girls.

METHOD

Participants

The sample of the present study consisted of 60 participants (30 boys and 30 girls) in the age range of 15 to 18 years. They belonged to middle socio-economic status and went to public schools.

Tools Used

Two tools have been used in the present study- Self Esteem Questionnaire by Rosenberg and Rathus Self Assertiveness Scale.

Procedure

The study aimed to see the correlation between self-esteem and self-assertiveness among adolescents. The aim was also to look at the gender (male and female) differences concerning self-esteem and self-assertiveness. Two scales were used for this purpose- the Rosenberg self-esteem questionnaire and a short form of the Simple Rathus self-assertiveness scale. The participants were approached purposely and were briefed about the study. Participants were also told that they had the right to withdraw at any time and that their information and data collected would be kept anonymous. After getting their consent, they were given the questionnaires. After the completion of the scales, they were thanked. The scoring of the scales was done accordingly. The obtained results were analyzed using the Pearson correlation method. To understand the gender differences in self-esteem and self-assertiveness, mean and the values will also be calculated.

RESULTS

The results obtained in the study are presented in the form of tables (table 1 and 2) and a graph (graph 1).

Table 1: Correlation Obtained Between Self-esteem and Self-assertiveness for Boys and Girls.

	r values
Boys	+0.24
Girls	+0.0839
Total	+0.187

Table 2: Mean, SD, and t-value for Self-esteem and Self Assertiveness for Boys and Girls

	Group	Mean Score	SD	df	t value
Self-esteem	Boys	30.33	5.09	58	-2.152*
	Girls	27.93	3.39		
Self-assertiveness	Boys	5.37	13.41	58	1.627
	Girls	-1.17	17.43		

a* =.05

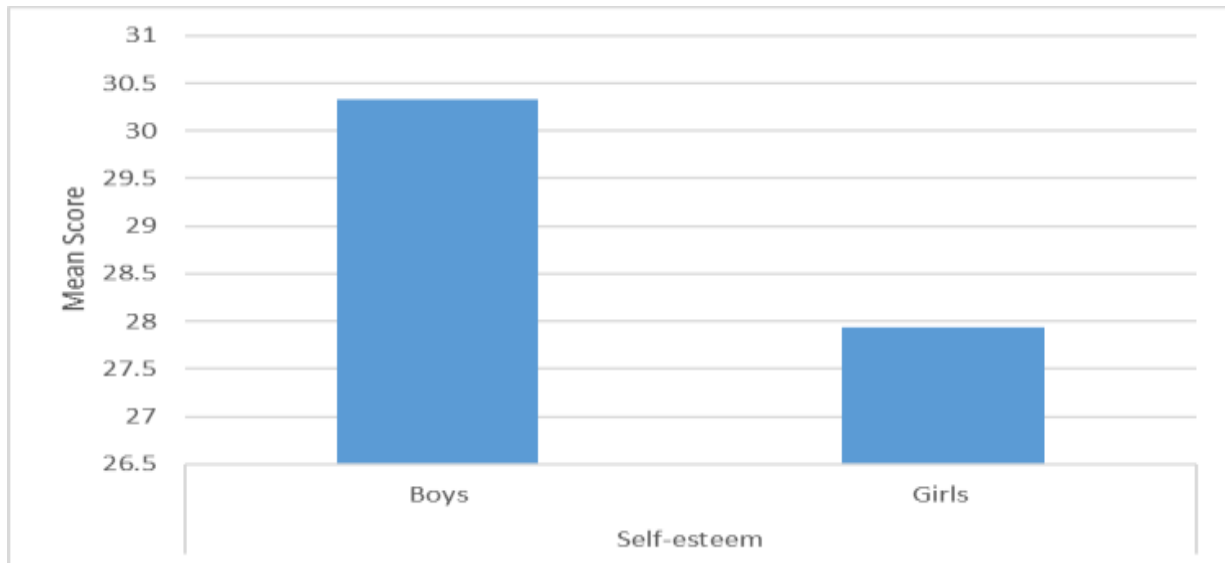


Figure 1: Means Obtained for Self-esteem of Males and Females

DISCUSSION

The present study aims to understand the relationship between self-assertiveness and self-esteem among adolescents in the age group of 15 to 18 years. The study also looks into the gender differences between boys and girls with respect to self-esteem and self-assertiveness. Using Google Forms, two scales were administered to sixty participants. The two scales used were the Rosenberg self-esteem questionnaire and the Simple Rathus self-assertiveness scale. After having obtained the data from the participants, the results were formulated in the form of tables (Tables 1 and 2) and Figure 1.

The first objective was to study the relationship between self-esteem and self-assertiveness among adolescent boys and girls. In the context of this objective, the hypothesis framed was, “There is no correlation between self-esteem and self-assertiveness for both boys and girls”.

The results obtained showed a positive correlation of +0.187 between self-esteem and self-assertiveness among adolescents. A positive correlation indicates a direct relationship, however, since the correlation value is small, it indicates a weak relationship. This may point out that self-esteem and self-assertiveness are conceptually very different aspects of a person. Self-esteem may refer to how a person evaluates and thinks about their internal self, whereas self-assertiveness mostly refers to how a person expresses himself/herself. Both of them are important for a person as they enable him/her to make better life decisions and help them in their career and interpersonal relationships. However, both constructs are independent and share the least chance of influencing each other.

The weak correlation may also be explained in terms of the factors influencing them. Both self-esteem and self-assertiveness are influenced by different factors. Self-esteem is affected by factors such as peer influences, parenting styles, the culture one lives in, and biological and personality factors. Self-

assertiveness on the other hand can be influenced by factors such as culture, values, level of education, confidence levels, and personality factors.

The correlation between self-esteem and self-assertiveness among boys and girls was also observed. It was observed that the correlation between self-esteem and self-assertiveness among boys was +0.24, which was comparatively higher as compared to the girls, where the correlation came to be 0.08. According to a study by Bronstein (2006), in many cultures, mothers conform to cultural and social norms and teach their daughters to be more obedient and responsible as compared their sons. They place more restrictions on daughters' autonomy. Fathers show more attention to sons than daughters, engage in more activities with sons, and put forth more effort to promote their son's intellectual development. Similarly, teachers also act in ways that maintain and even extend gender roles taught at home. As early as kindergarten, teachers give more overall attention to boys than to girls. All these external or environmental influences play a huge part in an adolescent's life and reinforce the type of behavior they form in their life. Therefore, it has been observed that boys are higher on the aspect of self-assertiveness and self-esteem because they are encouraged to be a part of situations that include competition, conflict, power, and excitement as compared to girls who encounter situations of intimacy, self-disclosure, and support.

The second objective of the study was to understand the role of gender in self-esteem and self-assertiveness. Accordingly, it was hypothesized that there is no significant difference in self-esteem between boys and girls. The mean score on self-esteem for boys is 30.33 and for girls is 27.93. From Table 2, it is also observed that the t obtained is -2.15. Thus, it can be deduced that the hypothesis is rejected. A significant difference in gender is observed where the self-esteem of boys is better as compared to girls.

Self-esteem is a component of self-concept and is defined as the judgments we make about our worth and the feelings associated with those judgments. Gender differences could be counted on many biological, cognitive, and especially social and environmental factors that influence an adolescent's personal development and self-esteem. Parents from childhood hold different perceptions and expectations from their sons and daughters, which plays a huge part in creating gender differences. They actively reinforce independence in boys and closeness and dependency in girls. It has also been observed that many adolescent girls have more negative assessments of their physical characteristics and intellectual abilities than boys which tends to lower their self-esteem. The existence of gender differences in self-esteem was also proven in a study by Minev et al. (2018) that aimed to analyze the correlation between successful academic achievement and self-esteem in adolescent students and gender differences in self-esteem. It was found that boys had higher self-esteem than girls. Girls were found to regard themselves more negatively than boys who regarded themselves as more independent and worthy.

The parenting styles and the sensitivity of parenting during early childhood influences positive and negative constructs of self. Children and adolescents whose parents are warm and supportive, set clear standards for them to live up to engage in positive problem solving and allow them to make decisions that affect them personally, have higher self-esteem than children and adolescents whose parents are more authoritative and stricter towards them (Gutman & Eccles, 2007). Such parents often help or make decisions for their children and therefore, communicate a sense of inadequacy to the children. It is often observed in the Indian context, whether in rural or urban settings, boys are allowed a greater sense of independence, freedom, and authority. In contrast, for females, more rigid rules and obligations are followed. Having parents who are repeatedly

disapproving, and insulting is also linked to low self-esteem (Kernis and Paradise, 2002). Children of such parents may need constant reassurance, and many rely heavily on peers to affirm their self-worth (Donnellan et al., 2005). Overly tolerant, indulgent parenting is linked to unrealistically high self-esteem, which also undermines development. In many parts of India, the birth of boys is celebrated as a joyous occasion and they are given a position of power from early on, which helps boost their self-esteem. Parents are more interested in giving a more comfortable and suitable future to their sons in terms of education and business, whereas women in most parts are still groomed for a future as suitable wives. Although there is a considerable change concerning the representation of women at the national and international level, there are still many hindrances that deter women from fulfilling their ambitions. They are more likely to be subjected to scrutiny and ridicule when they charter into largely male-dominated fields.

It has also been revealed in various research that girls mature faster than boys as they get more strictly monitored and reprimanded for their behavior. Because girls mature faster than boys, they are more likely to be experiencing school transitions and pubertal changes at the same time. Girls are more likely than boys to be dissatisfied with their bodies and physical appearance during their adolescent years (Knauss, Paxton and Alsaker 2006 ;). And girls, who are more concerned with maintaining others' approval (Rose and Rudolph 2005) are bothered more by hassles with family members and peers than boys are (Gutman & Eccles, 2007). Perhaps more girls than boys become depressed during adolescence (Stice & Bearman, 2001) and why adolescent girls tend to show more sizable drops in perceived self-worth than adolescent boys (Robins and Pals, 2002).

During adolescence, the influence of peers on one's self-esteem becomes increasingly evident. If young teenagers receive balanced and substantial social support from both peers and parents, they tend to exhibit high levels of self-esteem and minimal problematic behavior (DuBois, Holloway and Valentine, 2002). The quality of adolescents' relationships with their close friends has the most significant impact on their self-evaluation. When reflecting on experiences that affected their self-esteem, young adults often mention experiences with friends and romantic partners, rather than parents and family members (McLean & Thorne, 2003).

It was also hypothesized that there is no significant difference in the self-assertiveness of boys and girls. As seen in Table 2, the mean obtained by boys is 5.37, and for girls is -1.17. No significant difference is observed. Self-assertiveness is having or showing confidence and courage in stating one's views, expressing one's feelings, asking for what one wants, and enjoying their rights. This result can also be corroborated by a study conducted by Muragod (2017) and Parray and Kumar (2020). The mean difference shows that boys are more assertive as compared to girls. The result can also be further explained as both adolescent boys and girls assert themselves in an equal measure. Society expects rebelling and asserting opinion as a behavior more commonly associated with boys and is seen as unacceptable for girls.

Therefore, this study observed a weak correlation between self-esteem and self -assertiveness among adolescents for both boys and girls. A significant difference between adolescent boys and girls concerning self-esteem was noticed.

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THE THREE WITCHES: DECIPHERING AUTONOMOUS VIABILITY WHERE UNSEXING NECESSITATES A THICK BEARD RATHER THAN MASCULINITY

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ABSTRACT

In the syntax of early society of England, women unsexing themselves necessitate a thick beard rather than masculinity. In the age where the beard advertised the completion of apprenticeships and the acquisition of freeman status, I argue that witches with their beards were sexually independent beings belonging to the natural world. At the same time, they are comparable to women and a consequence of being neglected by society and pure patriarchy. Lady Macbeth's choice of opting for non-masculinity in the act of unsexing herself is thus a social and economic choice that is in keeping with the societal status of the beard found in a hegemonic and all-pervasive gender discourse. Particularly in the Elizabethan theatres, male apprentices who performed as women exhibited the blatant gender ambiguity through cross-dressing. These effeminate men received criticism for being less manly and unethical in light of the Bible. It emphasized men as the dominant and opinionated sex over women, in keeping with the beard's status as a symbol of masculinity. In the end, the beard stands for autonomous viability outside of a gendered societal discourse.

Keywords: *Unsexing, Beard, Patriarchy, Cross – dressing, Autonomous Viability.*

Mark Albert Johnston says, “Since the male facial beard operated in both economic and sexual registers to signal the privileges of autonomous viability, the female facial beard challenged that spectacular system of signification by which patriarchy naturalized its own constitution” (Mark Albert Johnston : 2007) . In this context, the bearded man provided a critical hegemonic discourse to explain the appearance of witches. Unsexing is a strange concept once more because when a woman requests it, she doesn't want to transform into a man; she just needs a beard to advance socially and financially. Indeed, it is a curious and largely unappreciated art-historical fact that nearly all of the men depicted in portraits from the English Renaissance have beards. In England, starting around 1540 and continuing for at least a century after that, males over the age of twenty-one are almost always depicted with some sort of facial hair. As an instance, some academics have argued that giving male actors feminine roles was just “a mundane habit in Renaissance dramatic practice, but rather a risky “source of homoerotic attraction” that stirs up “deep-seated worries” of a “unstable and grotesque,” feminized self. Cross-dressing involved struggle, subversion, and resistance in addition to adaptation, healing, and “reduction of the system of gendered patriarchy. Many investigations of the literature from the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras reveal that gender and clothing concerns captured early modern England's attention, and that the theatre provided special spaces for the discussion of sexual topics. “The woman shall not weare that which pertaineth vnto a man, neither shall a man put on a womans garment: for all that doe so, are abomination vnto the Lord thy God.” (Deuteronomy 22, 5). According to J.W Binns, “This verse was taken up as one of the central objections to the theater. This is an exegesis which counted for a good

deal in the Puritan criticism of a stage in which boys habitually took the female parts."(J. W. Binns: 1974). Men's androgyny and effeminacy as a result of their lack of facial hair made them less manly and hence less powerful. For the most part, the idea of masculinity for men with beards was one of independent viability, sexual freedom, and financial independence. (Will Fisher: 2001).

Why then are we unable to discuss whether witches shared the same concept of autonomous viability? They can, after all, grow a moustache, which is a sure sign that they have grown to be more than just a vulnerable woman. A man being singled out by witches as the model of society, as they say, *'I'll drain him dry as hay: sleep shall neither night nor day.... He shall live a **man** forbid*, (Payal Nagpal: 2016) Witches could have forbid the sailor's wife from having children, but instead they disregarded the fact that men and manhood must be prevented. The witches, on the other hand, had nothing in common with those fifteen predominant beard styles; instead, they had odd, dispersed, small or big hair, spread unevenly over their faces, which further supports the idea that they had rejected the strict patriarchy. As Banquo also mentioned that those unearthly beings or withered hags had 'skinny lips', chapped ('choppy') fingers and beards.



*Figure 1: Details. Charles I wearing a stiletto beard (ca. 1625-1625), attributed to Jacob Van Doort
Photo: The Royal Collection, Windsor Castle (The Renaissance Beard, pp 161)*

There is also the noteworthy fact that Lady Macbeth never shared the strange sisters' dubious womanhood.

The Early Modern age was heavily influenced by mounting concerns about mothers' contributions to the maintenance of patrilineage and the dependence of the female authority pushed into the hands of men. Women who had illegitimate children were either hanged or sentenced to death, and such mothers and the concept of motherhood were debased to the point where even the legislature referred to such women as monstrous and violent (Stephanie Chamberlain: 2005). Women were defined by the weak regulatory patriarchy, which served as its definers. To which Joanna Levin also says, "*many feminist historians and literary critics celebrate the witch as the nonconforming figure who threatened "hegemonic sex/gender systems."* Some even reveal certain nostalgia for the witch, claiming that her disappearance resulted in

the greater triumph of male hegemony. Based on a direct correlation between witchcraft belief and female power, such an argument assumes that the end of witchcraft prosecutions meant that female deviance, real or symbolic, no longer posed a threat to male dominance." (Joanna Levin: 2002)

However, despite the text's extraordinary supernatural elements like thunder and clouds, which can be symbolic of a struggle against the heavily sexist society, as the witches say, "*Weary sevnnights ~~rie~~times nine, Shall he dwindle, peak and pine. Though his bark cannot be lost, yet it shall be tempest-tossed. Look what I have.*" (Payal Nagpal: 2016) which can be simply translated as for eighty-one wearying weeks he'll slowly become sickly, and waste away from grief.

Although I can't destroy his ship/Can still buffet it with storms by controlling the winds. / Look what I've got. What sorrow can a man bear when he is fully unconscious of the circumstances affecting the witches, which I find particularly ambiguous? Then, how does the spoken word grief come into play when it is brought up as a term utilized for an elevated cause and goal that the situation does not depict? What about the storms and winds that were mentioned? limitless natural elements with no boundaries have given us a grip on a gender hegemonic discourse about the age of manhood. We are being taught about much more than their mere existence, both directly and indirectly. The rare presence of witches represents the social and cultural rejection of them.

In the reign of James I, witchcraft and witch hunting were undoubtedly pervasive, which devalued the fundamental principles of motherhood. The 1624 Infanticide Act made it a crime to "secretly bury or conceal the death of their child," which was a response to the rise in infanticide murders during the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras. Lady Macbeth is one such noteworthy example. She was a "disturbing threat to phallic power" and primarily a paternalistic construct; she was deceptive yet completely somatized. Such contradictions are present in the figure of Lady Macbeth. To which Dymphna Callaghan notes, "*women were persecuted as mothers: as bad old mothers for witchcraft, and as bad young mothers for infanticide*" (Stephanie Chamberlain: 2005). Therefore, the idea of motherhood became consistent with infanticide, witchcraft, and illegitimacy, which led to the creation of a corrupted caricature of maternal kindness. In this regard, Lady Macbeth's unsexing is anything but impeccable; she was well versed in the power dynamics of the dominant political world. In this view, Lady Macbeth can also be seen as a fourth witch in the play, acting as a maternal agency. Unsexing herself was a way for her to escape the constraints of the most passive sex, without, of course, crossing over into a pure patriarchy or masculine affirmations.

However, the indispensable child of Lady Macbeth, whom she mentions, also provides us with an indication about motherhood. "*How tender tis to love the babe that milks me and dashed the brains out, had I sworn as you have done to this.*" (Payal Nagpal: 2016). These quoted words from Lady Macbeth possibly foreshadow her pre-marital life with an illegitimate child of her own, due to which she would have been ignored by the society, and the fear of cultural discrimination may have further motivated her to decide to unsex herself. The violent act of infanticide was once again perceived as an intrusive activity for women. To which, Marvin Rosenberg also says, "*All of Macbeth's violence is in the service of a son of his own. If Macbeth were childless, the succession of Fleance would be no great matter; it could come after Macbeth had peacefully paid*". (Marvin Rosenberg: 1974) .

With regards to Anne Hathaway, Shakespeare's wife, who had already been pregnant before they were married, I have my suspicions that she could have been proven as a witch or a monster if the public had known about it. This can also support claims that Shakespeare wrote in King James I's favor, among

other things, and that she was the mother of an illegitimate child. The subject is once more controversial and open to numerous disputable discourses because the character of Lady Macbeth foreshadows the real-life character of Anne Hathaway on numerous occasions.

Despite being utterly absurd, at last the concept of a beard presents a comprehensive panorama of early modern England and its rulers. Social, sexual, economic, and political factors were undoubtedly biased in favor of one sex over the other, so achieving autonomy and, in particular, sexual independence, required natural transgression. The witches, in my opinion, are perfectly natural creatures of the natural world, but they have been elevated above mere social hierarchies as a result of hegemonic cultural and societal discourse. As Mark Albert Johnston says, "*the female facial beard challenged that spectacular system of signification by which patriarchy naturalized its own constitution and so figured as a site at which the female body's economic/erotic significance required reassertion.*" (Mark Albert Johnston: 2007).

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TEACHING SKILL ENHANCEMENT COURSE IN HISTORY

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ABSTRACT

This article is a small part of various experiences that I have gathered on the journey as a teacher and educator. It is a dialogue addressed to all who believe learning in the first essential step to evolve into a better teacher. In 2015, the Skill Enhancement Course was first introduced in History syllabus in University of Delhi. As a history teacher I share my challenges, experiments, innovations, and experiences through this article.

Keywords- Skill, Challenges, Innovation, Heritage, Fieldtrips, Course Structure

PEDAGOGY-

Teaching-learning is a difficult path, it is neither linear nor eclectic. The path chalked out by the teacher is pedagogy. Collins Dictionary defines pedagogy as “1. the function or work of a teacher; teaching 2. the art or science of teaching; education; instructional methods”. (Harper Collins: 2009). Alexander Cuenca in his paper entitled “Self-Study Research: Surfacing the Art of Pedagogy in Teacher Education” says that “The term pedagogy has been appropriated in education discourse as simply strategies of Instruction.” and he intends to bring out the artistic and relational dimensions of pedagogy in teacher education (Cuenca: 2010). With time the scope of history has widened and in reciprocation impacted pedagogy as well. There is a vast variety of relevant literature that talks about it. In his honours thesis for graduation from Western Oregon University, Daniel J Tew mentions how “History teachers are plagued with the stereotype of being dry and boring.” (Tew, Daniel J.: 2014) On other hand, Philips Roberts in his article “From historical literacy to a pedagogy of history” talks about that “there is a limited body of research that explores the pedagogy of historical literacy and thinking and that provides clear practical classroom advice for pre-service teachers.” He focuses on “how history teacher educators can learn from museum educators and how this can be applied in pre-service education.” (Roberts, P.: 2010) In our time when artificial intelligence is making waves, Okan Yetisensoy and Anatoli Rapoport “explore the relationship between social studies and AI literacy and to discuss the potential role of social studies in teaching AI literacy.” (Yetisensoy, O. & Rapoport, A.: 2023) As teachers with changing scope of subjects we innovate ways to enhance our teaching all the time.

MY JOURNEY

From 1989 to 2021 are over three decades and I have been lucky to have partaken this long discontinuous journey of knowledge, full of wide and varied experiences. I wish to share here how my experiences have shaped me as an educator, a teacher as well as a pupil.

Teaching and learning are two sides to a coin. The learning is not just for the students but also for the teachers or more so because a teacher not only has to prepare to teach but also keep on innovating new ways to make his or her lectures interesting and informative. College teaching has its own benefits and challenges, on one hand the students are mature but on the other hand they are extremely aware and equipped and can keep the teachers on their toes all the time with their questions and expectations.

The CBCS system introduced a Skill Enhancement Course in the syllabus of University of Delhi with very interesting papers like Understanding Heritage, Indian Art and Architecture and others for History Honours and History and Tourism, Introducing Indian Art and others for BA Programme. I will be discussing two papers - Understanding Heritage and Indian Art and Architecture.

Our students have been studying various aspects of heritage in different courses but it was the first time that a course was specifically designed with keeping various aspects of heritage in mind – Understanding Heritage.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND FRAMEWORK:

This course was divided into four units (Syllabus of CBCS 2016 (History) on University of Delhi), namely,

- Defining heritage;
- Evolution of heritage legislation and institutional framework;
- Challenges facing tangible and intangible heritage; and
- Heritage and Travel.

This course was planned as a 24 credits paper which meant there were supposed to be 4 lectures and fieldworks/field trips and projects. In the internal assessment the student was supposed to be assessed as per attendance (5 marks); test (10 marks) and project (10 marks). Visiting a heritage site was an essential part of the course. Among the suggested reading list given in the syllabus there were links like www.unesco.org and www.asi.nic.in.

NATURE OF THE COURSE:

As announced this course was supposed to be a Skill Enhancement Course for the students who had History Honours. It was supposed to give the students a broader and deeper understanding of the heritage aspect of their discipline of History. Though students had been studying about some aspects of Indian heritage as sources of history or probably as art and architecture of a certain period/dynasty which was generally a small part/detail of their paper. Now, they were studying the concept as a whole.

IDEA BEHIND TEACHING HISTORY:

It is important for a history teacher to know why he/she is teaching history. It is also important that the teacher should have a clear conception of what purpose history should serve in the culture and society in which they live. History should be looked at with a broader perspective as to promote better social understanding and civic efficacy on the part of the students who are the future citizens. Keith A Erikson had said,

Over the past four decades, the reigning paradigm among history educators has tacitly ignored the concept of place in its emphasis on helping students “do history.” In practice, the slogan has included a range of activities, from skillful cognitive explorations of what it means to think and read and write “like a historian” to document-based questions on advanced placement history exams to simply giving students photocopies of “primary sources.” (Erikson, Keith A.: 2011)

However, now more heed is being paid to the aspect of taking history lessons outside the classroom and focussing on the real-time learning also. The effort is being made to blend theoretical knowledge with practical knowledge so that a holistic development of the student is possible. I am sure, we would not want more James Mills, who could write volumes about India without ever visiting the country.

Since, the nature of the Skill Enhancement Course takes a different trajectory from the study of core discipline, such a course might help understand the core discipline better.

CHALLENGES OF TEACHING THIS COURSE

Usually, when teams of scholars who frame the curriculum have to plan a course, they keep in mind that it should encompass the values related to well-being, emotional stability, critical thinking, social justice and also skill for employability. They try to suggest the readings for the course in such a manner that the aspiration of the team from such a course could be met. In order to do so best of the readings from renowned scholars and academicians is included. To update the teaching faculty, the university holds teachers' workshops from time to time. The challenges start after that.

When such courses are introduced in the syllabus, the suggested and the essential readings are not immediately made available. Another, and one of the most pertinent issues is that there is hardly any material made available for the Hindi medium students. In our university we have a huge strength of the students whose medium is Hindi. The college timetables are stretched in such a manner that it is very difficult to plan trips for the students without affecting their other classes. How to arrange for such large class groups to visit a heritage site is an important logistic issue.

Interestingly, even the approach of the students who had been used to only classroom lecturing was an obstacle. To get the students out of the classroom and prepare them for a different kind of study based on observations and discussions was quite a task.

REAL-TIME SOLUTIONS TO REAL-TIME TEACHING ISSUES

Without going into paradigms of history teaching, I will talk about a paradigm shift, and also discuss how I learnt, innovated and incorporated some new ideas into my teaching.

The new paper of Understanding Heritage was SEC in the second year History Honours. Nature of the course is such that instead of just lecturing the students, a slight change in the procedure was required. It was an initial lecture to introduce the topic and then open the floor for interactive discussion. This actually got the students interested and also made me realise their ideas and perception of concepts like Heritage, antiquity, tangible and intangible heritage, archaeological sites and art treasure. The class discussions were generally very vibrant and they quickly attracted even the quietest of students to come out of their cocoons.

On topics like national and international heritage laws, conventions and acts after discussing all the past and present laws, the students were asked to look for suggested books in the college library, search for the recent acts or legislations in the websites that had been suggested by the course planners, i.e., asi.nic.in and unesco.org. Interestingly, the website of ASI proved a big help for the Hindi medium students as it could be accessed in Hindi as well.

It was during this period a visit to the library of INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage) proved extremely helpful for my Hindi medium students. This visit proved an extremely enriching experience for me but also opened the doors of knowledge for the students. INTACH, Delhi has a wonderful documentation centre, library, conservation centre, Heritage Education and Communication Service (HECS) etc. Interaction with the people of the document centre revealed how a heritage artifact or a visit to the archaeological site should be documented. The officials at HECS gave me three brochures which were to prove extremely beneficial for the students.

For their fieldwork, the students were sent to the National Museum in groups of 4 to 6 to get first-hand exposure to the wealth of the nation's material heritage housed there. They were asked to make a project

on the basis of their observations for which some mandatory questions had been raised which they needed to answer. As another mandatory requirement the students had to affix their group selfie and tickets on the project file. This was to confirm that they actually visited the place.

The classes during Unit 3, which dealt with challenges to tangible and intangible heritage would start with a usual lecture where a case study would be investigated, followed by very vibrant discussions. Student's interest and their observations indicated that we were moving in the right direction. Loss of cultural heritage in war, terror activities, in natural disasters or by sheer negligence was discussed at length.

Finally, in Unit 4 we discussed Heritage and Tourism. It raised issues like sustainable tourism and challenges to our natural and cultural heritage because of the huge load of tourists parcelled off to places not equipped for it. The discussion also made students aware of the environmental degradation due to all these activities and how they were becoming a huge challenge.

The feedback of this course was positive and as a teacher it was an enriching experience.

The second SEC History Honours paper that I will discuss here is Indian Art and Architecture. Visiting monuments and heritage sites is one thing but teaching a paper on art and architecture is a different issue altogether. It requires not only an understanding of the architectural styles, material used, the geography of the region and equally important, why it was built. Luckily, for this paper, sufficient text material is available (though in Hindi the smooth flow of textual content usually dries up quickly). There are lovely very short video clips by ASI and UNESCO at least on the world heritage sites that are very helpful. Most importantly, Delhi is blessed with monuments of all historic periods.

Its syllabus was divided into five units –

1. Historiography of Indian Art
2. Indian Art (c. 300 BCE-600 CE): art, craft and paintings; stupa, cave and temple art and architecture.
3. Indian Art (c. 600 CE -1200 CE): North and South temple architecture, Chola bronzes.
4. Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Architecture (c. 1200-1800 CE); Mughal and other styles of paintings.
5. Introduction to the rise of modern art; art schools with special reference to the Bengal School. (Syllabus of CBCS 2016 (History) on University of Delhi)

It has usually been perceived that at the undergraduate level, while art and literature formed part of the usual rubrics, however, very few teachers take pains in explaining them. This resulted in distancing the students from these topics. On the other hand, now there was this whole paper about the topics they would usually avoid. Luckily, a workshop was organised for the faculty for better understanding of the topic, its nuances and what it should be conveying to the student. It was helpful, but the final test was classroom teaching. Soon it became apparent that the only verbatim approach was utterly useless. But with help of pictures and video clips it was easier to make the students understand the architectural features of monuments and finer points of the paintings.

RENDEZVOUS WITH ART AND ARCHITECTURE-

Unit 1 dealt with historiography and is not so much a problem as good textual reading was suggested for it. Unit 2 became a little easy for students to understand as they had been to the National Museum in the previous semester and that helped in understanding art, craft and paintings. This unit also had the

rubric of Gandhara and Mathura sculptures which students had seen. The videos and pictures were of stupas, Ajanta caves and early temples were like a lifeline for a good lecture.

Unit 3 brought the extravaganza of Nagara, Dravida and Versara temples. Here my being an avid tourist proved extremely helpful. One would realise that a seen temple or a monument becomes even easier to teach when students enjoy the nuances and description which can be given only if one has visited them. This got the students very interested in visiting the monuments. Glimpse of Chola Bronzes in the National Museum made their understanding clear and many of them wanted to see the lost wax method of making bronze sculptures.

As Unit 4 approached, the students were again assigned a project where they had to visit any one of the monuments in Delhi and write an architectural description of it. They can be taken for heritage-walks. Project files came with a breeze of fresh and enriching observations. The National Museum has a good collection of Mughal Art and other types of arts. This helps build their understanding better.

The last unit was about the modern art of India and what could be a better place for the students to see this art than a visit to the National Gallery of Modern Art. This visit was a part of the second project where they had to discuss art-style and three paintings of around ten artists that were part of their syllabus.

Visits to monuments, museums and art galleries give students a better understanding and more concept clarity. It is an experience which stays with them and is any day better than reading a text. It makes them aware of their rich heritage and compliments their classroom learning.

Students who take admission in University of Delhi come from different states, regions, religions, castes, and diverse income groups. It is here where they rub corners and smoothen out as individuals. Their scope of understanding is widened and enriched. Some issues or structures have over the years earned a dubious reputation thanks to some insensitive political handling. Therefore, it is very important to handle such topics with the support of well researched and seminal articles and reading material. It requires a teacher who can explain sensitively and sensibly that certain decisions of some despots to raze down or build new structures were their personal decisions as it is been world over and now in modern times of popular sovereignty, we must learn to understand that whatever was the past is still our own and we need to accept and protect it.

Thus, teaching of History in University of Delhi is not just making a student understand what has happened in the past but it is endeavoured that students learn to reflect and draw inferences from the past and address the issues of present. Through papers like Heritage and Indian Art and Architecture students are exposed to our pluralistic cultural heritage and makes them realise the importance of unity in diversity.

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Note: The National Museum of India is in close vicinity of my college, Mata Sundri College for Women, University of Delhi. The college itself is located near the gurudwara, where Mata Sundri ji, wife of tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Govind Singh had lived for more than four decades.