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*Dr Shazia Manzoor,
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| S. No | Title | Authors | Page No. |
|--------------|--|---|-----------------|
| 1. | Comparative Study on Government Schemes and Policy Frameworks for Promoting Entrepreneurship in the BIMSTEC Region | Sanjay Vanani & Dr. Hiren Patel | 1 |
| 2. | Exploring the Avenues for Social Work Intervention in Education in Emergencies: Reflections from A Post Pandemic Perspective | Bilal Kaloo | 19 |
| 3. | Voices Unheard: Exploring the Psychosocial Landscape of the Adolescent Girls | Shabana Khurshid, Shazia Manzoor & Aadil Bashir | 27 |
| 4. | Skilling the Youth: Addressing the Youth Unemployment and Skill Development Challenge | Dr. Bilal A. Bhat | 46 |
| 5. | From Lab to Field: Understanding the Social Implications of Genetically Modified Crop Technology in India | Javaid Rashid & Sarafraz Ahmad | 64 |
| 6. | Optimising learning process among students with special needs through Special Education – A critical review on status and strategies | Rayees Zahoor Shah & Dr. P. Swarna Kumari | 77 |
| 7. | Psychological Impact of the Pandemic Outbreak and the High Vulnerability: An Analytical Study | Dr. Jayanta Kumar Behera | 88 |

Comparative Study on Government Schemes and Policy Frameworks for Promoting Entrepreneurship in the BIMSTEC Region

Sanjay Vanani¹ & Dr. Hiren Patel²

Abstract:

Adequate legal and policy frameworks are essential elements that can promote the growth of entrepreneurship in markets. This paper focuses on a comparative study of these government schemes, regulatory, and policy frameworks to identify potential obstacles among many of the frameworks in India, Bangladesh, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and Myanmar. However, there are differences in the frameworks that may contribute to various developmental stages in entrepreneurship in the BIMSTEC region. The study demonstrates how governments in various nations implement similar laws and policies to encourage the emergence of entrepreneurial opportunities. The frameworks of those seven nations are compared in the article to the BIMSTEC agenda. The research also demonstrates that the laws and rules governing enterprises face difficulties in the BIMSTEC region, “1.68 billion people, or 22% of the world's population, reside in the BIMSTEC region, and its member countries' yearly GDP totals US\$3.697 trillion” (ABOUT BIMSTEC – Home-The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), n.d.). This paper offers some suggestions for India to take to encourage entrepreneurship using the comparison.

Keywords: BIMSTEC, Public Policy, Government Schemes, Entrepreneurship

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Introduction:

Entrepreneurship is one of the major forces behind inventive and economic developments. Countries focus on developing and executing policies and government schemes that support and provide incentives for the growth of entrepreneurship. There are numerous programmes available to entrepreneurs that can promote broader economic growth. The majority of firms are run by entrepreneurs, who can significantly contribute to economic growth (*OECD SME and Entrepreneurship Outlook 2019*, 2019). In a market economy, entrepreneurs are essential for engaging with communities and developing cutting-edge goods and services for consumers. This is because, when an economy digitises, entrepreneurship activities are the catalysts for change in a current market toward a new market structure. Governments must ensure that schemes, regulations, and policies encourage the development of enterprises. As a result, most nations adopt their schemes, laws, and policies to support entrepreneurs.

To increase overall economic productivity and creativity, the governments in the BIMSTEC region implement rules and policies that support their entrepreneurs. There are some contrasts and similarities across these seven nations' regulatory and policy approaches to promoting entrepreneurs. By concentrating on a comparison of the schemes and policy frameworks, these contrasts and similarities serve as the paper's main topic. The goal of the comparison study is to improve understanding of the programmes and regulations for entrepreneurs in the BIMSTEC region. Regarding the BIMSTEC region and its trade agenda concerning the Programs and policies for Entrepreneurs, the paper also offers some recommendations for India to enhance and expand its current schemes. There are four sections to the paper. This section serves as the paper's introduction. The second section covers general concepts regarding BIMSTEC and its assistance to entrepreneurs. The government initiatives and frameworks for a policy that supports entrepreneurship in the BIMSTEC region are described in the third section of the paper. In the fourth section, viewpoints on government programmes and legal frameworks from seven different nations are compared. It also looks at some of the schemes and frameworks for a policy that other nations have adopted that can be implemented in India. The paper's last section offers policy recommendations for the creation of programmes and regulations for entrepreneurs in these nations.

BIMSTEC & Its Role:

Seven nations, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, are a part of the BIMSTEC cooperation project. The region has a combined GDP of about USD 3.7 trillion annually and is home to about 22% of the world's population. If used wisely, the region's rich human and natural capital reserves may dramatically and sustainably increase its social and physical capital. The region's

capacity for growth and development is significantly impacted by this (*25 Years of BIMSTEC*, 2022).

This paper aims to highlight, even if in the initial steps, the time is now for BIMSTEC to move forward. Due in large part to the failure of the SAARC story, the notion of BIMSTEC is appealing to be a link between Southeast and South Asia. The Bay of Bengal grouping was established in 1997, but it remained dormant since it lacked the vital components that could have sped up the integration process. The grouping is now garnering more interest from foreign investors outside of the region, even for smaller nations like Bangladesh and Myanmar (Mohan, 2016).

“The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) fifth summit, virtually held in Colombo, set common goals and stated that BIMSTEC should concentrate more on new areas in the future, such as the blue economy, the digital economy, and promotion of exchanges and links among start-ups and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises” (MSME) (MSMEs) (*5th BIMSTEC Summit*, 2022).

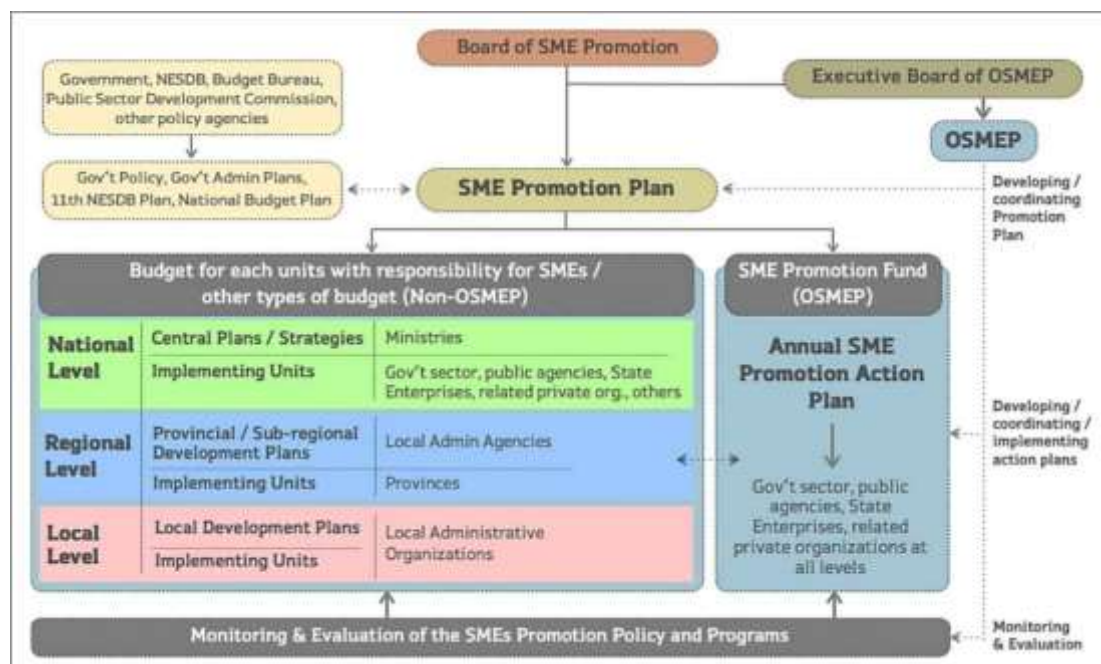
Government Schemes and Policies for the Promotions of Entrepreneurship in the BIMSTEC region:

Thailand:

Thailand implemented laws and regulations during the early stages of its development, from the 1940s to the 1960s, to encourage an expansion of the agricultural sector and micro-enterprises. The government changed its economic strategies between the 1970s and the 1990s to become an export-led nation (Jansen, 2002). Due to the government's export facilitation, there was growth in entrepreneurship and manufacturing with these economic policies. The export-led policy increased the export of produced goods while supporting business expansion (Nidhiprabha, 2017). The government is concentrating on assisting business owners who want to produce goods for export and has not yet created a policy specifically for the promotion of entrepreneurship. The corporate failures in Thailand from 1997–1998 caused an economic catastrophe.

Due to this crisis, the government passed the Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion Act B.E. 2543 (2000) and established the OSMEP as the primary agency to promote SMEs after realising the significance of SMEs in economic development. The SMEs Act was developed as a crucial legislative tool promoting SME development (OSMEP, 2017). According to the Act, SMEs must assist OSMEP and be granted money to help them become more effective and capable. To develop and promote SMEs, the fund is also utilised to encourage joint venture investment. The SMEs Act mandates that OSMEP create a suitable "Action Plan on Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion" and suggests the Prime Minister take the helm of the National Board of SMEs Promotion. The board adopted policies under the prime minister's direction that will speed up the expansion of SMEs in Thailand. Planning and strategy for the development of SMEs were created as a consequence of the board's policy proposal to

the government (OSMEP, 2017). The majority of SME promotion programmes align with national economic development initiatives. The strategy for regional and local economic development in Thailand is linked to the promotion plan. SMEs have flourished and attracted both domestic and foreign investors since the introduction of the particular rules for SME development and the creation of OSMEP. The implementation of the SME promotion policy with associated policies for economic development and reform is shown in the Figure below.



(OSMEP, 2016)

The National Board of SMEs' current 4th SME Promotion Master Plan identifies key promotion initiatives for SMEs, such as IT development programmes for SMEs, free access to financing and investment, encouragement of entrepreneurship, changes to regulations that promote SMEs, promotion of SME clusters, and the growth of startups that provide value (OSMEP, 2016). The strategy increases funding for SMEs while giving creative startups more thought. In addition to this strategy, the government has also founded the SME Bank of Thailand, an important financial institution for SMEs. SMEs can ask the SME Bank for business assistance and special loans with lower interest rates (ข้อมูลธนาคาร, 2020). Through bank credit guarantees and tax advantages for new beginning enterprises, the Thai government additionally supports SMEs. The credit assurances make it very sure that SMEs can seek OSMEP to guarantee their

loans from Thai banks and their credit scores to the government. Based on the Figure, more funding will be provided to SMEs that are just getting started.



(OSMEP, 2016)

Additionally, the Thai government offers tax breaks, exemptions, and incentives to startups and SMEs. The National Science and Technology Development (NSTDA) Agency-approved technical startups are the primary beneficiaries of the tax advantages. The following industries have technical startups that are eligible to apply for tax incentives: The industries listed include advanced materials, textiles and decorations, vehicles and parts, electronics, computers, software, information services, biotechnology, energy conservation, healthcare and public policy, tourism, services, and the creative economy. Thailand has developed regulatory and policy frameworks that aid SMEs and has refocused these frameworks on startups and SMEs using new technology.

India:

India has a long history of entrepreneurship. “Its entrepreneurial and business tradition was shaped by traders, handicraftsman, potters, handloom & silk makers-weavers, leather, agro-focused manufacturers, a variety of artisan entrepreneurs, diamond and precious stone businesspeople, and many others” (Roy, 2009). Traditional village economies suffered during colonial rule as a result of growing worldwide exposure. Therefore, one of the goals pursued during Gandhi's period was the improvement of local economies (GHITRA, 1949). It became fashionable to wear Charkka and Khadi, which stand for economic independence and business.

The goal of policy throughout the post-independence era was to create a state-owned economy. The new business owner was called Indian State. There were many new public sector organisations created. A different set of regulations, based on licensing requirements, inspector authority, and corrupt bureaucracy, applied to the private sector and over time helped to form India's business environment. Except for those who came

from entrepreneurial backgrounds, starting a firm was practically a difficult endeavour (Rao, 2017).

The resolutions relating to the industrial policy included the entrepreneurship policy. The Industrial Policy was first implemented by the government in 1948, right after Independence (*Industrial Policy Resolutions*, 2021) The Industrial Policy was extensively amended and enacted in 1956, following the introduction of the Constitution and the socioeconomic objectives. It was occasionally amended through declarations made in 1973, 1977, and 1980 to address fresh concerns (*Industrial Policy Resolutions*, 2021).

In the 1990s, there was a significant change in how entrepreneurship was encouraged. In 1991, the government implemented new industrial and economic policies (*GoI*, 1991). The importance of the private sector, especially the small-scale sector, has been stressed. A one-window system for obtaining licences, permits, and approvals was started, easing the regulatory load. Such actions helped millions of entrepreneurs realise their potential and unleash their energy.

India has made considerable strides in enhancing its startup and entrepreneurial ecosystem in the twenty-first century. The ecosystem of today includes institutions, entrepreneurial cells to promote awareness in universities, supporting mechanisms, incubators, and funding programmes that make credit simpler for firms (Rao, 2017). Both at the national and regional levels, promotional activities and startup initiatives could be observed. Huge modifications were made to the policy framework (Kazmin, 2014). India's standing in the rankings for business ease improved. Rules and regulations that are superfluous are being abolished. The process of obtaining clarity to establish a firm is quite effective (World Bank, 2019). Technology-focused academic institutions, businesses created in labs, and entrepreneurship aimed at eradicating poverty are all given similar weight. The government of India initiated many schemes in Startup India, The government of India's Start-up India project aims to create a strong startup ecosystem in the nation to foster innovation and give aspiring business owners opportunities. State startup missions, seed funding provided by incubators and accelerators, and regional networks of angel investors and individuals are all part of the state government's startup promotional initiatives at the state level. States are graded according to a variety of factors to urge them to develop an environment that will support new businesses, inventions, and the emergence of an entrepreneurial culture. The government has developed many programmes and institutions to support and facilitate access to financing for startups and business owners.

The MUDRA scheme was created by the government to assist entrepreneurs in obtaining funding. According to specified qualifying criteria, it restructures financial organisations that lend to businesses up to INR 1 million. Since they provide capital in the form of debt or shares, angel investors are an essential source of funding. There are

many angel networks and venture funds in India, and their investment portfolios mostly target industries with a high concentration of technology, such as IT, AI, robotics, FMCG, and high-tech (*Genesis and Role of MUDRA*, n.d.). The government has prioritised fostering entrepreneurship among non-traditional business communities and entrepreneurial classes because it recognises the importance of potential entrepreneurial talent for creating jobs, reducing poverty, and achieving sustainable development goals (*Relevant SDG Targets Related to Enterprise Development*, n.d.).

Development of skills, mentoring, and other forms of assistance: There are systems for skill development, training, and mentoring that can further support the prospects of new businesses and initiatives. Business accelerators and incubators An additional component of the startup programme is business incubators. In India, there are numerous incubators of various types. Many tech startups have come from academic institutions. “A few examples of incubation programmes in this context include Atal Incubation Centers (AICs), ASPIRE: Livelihood Business Incubators, and incubators under the TIDE Scheme of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology” (*Startup India*, n.d.).

Bangladesh:

With a young population that is 62% digital savvy, Bangladesh's economy is quickly moving in the direction of a robust startup ecosystem (*BHTPA*, 2021). The government of Bangladesh's (GoB) backing has been one of the factors fueling startup growth. The National ICT Policy from 2009 and the Digital Bangladesh Agenda from 2021 both had a significant impact on the development of the startup ecosystem. Additionally, the government's ICT Division unveiled several beneficial regulations and initiatives, including the Innovation Design Entrepreneurship Academy (iDEA) Project and Startup Bangladesh Limited (SBL), where USD 65 million has been set aside to enhance the regional startup environment. In addition, the GoB is establishing more than 28+ hi-tech parks, complete with infrastructure like data centres, to support innovative firms. For it to continue to play a significant role in the creation of self-employment for economic growth and prosperity, The GoB is also creating new programmes to promote the expansion of startups and create a long-term pipeline (*Bangladesh Startup Ecosystem Assessment Report*, 2022). Through the ICT Division, the government of Bangladesh has also implemented numerous initiatives to promote startups. One of these initiatives is Startup Bangladesh Limited, the government's own public startup support organisation that was started with USD 65 million money to stimulate (*Startup Bangladesh Limited*, n.d.). The government has also made numerous efforts to boost the ecosystem, establishing funding possibilities, incubation centres, and mentorship programmes and some schemes like BIG 2020, The Bangabandhu Innovation Grant 2020 (BIG) event has been introduced by the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Division to commemorate the 100th birthday of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the nation's founding father. The competition attracted more than 7,000 businesses and inventors from 56 nations, including

Bangladesh. A total of 36 startups will receive \$12,000 apiece, and the winning startup will receive \$100,000, GoB (*BIG: BANGABANDHU INNOVATION GRANT*, n.d.) & The Entrepreneurship & Skill Development Project (ESDP) launched by the Bangladesh Development Authority (BIDA), is an investment initiative focused on job creation rather than job seeking. The ESDP aims to develop skilled entrepreneurs for supplier and linkage development industries by educating potential young people on the regulatory framework and business procedure. The Sustainable Development Goal 8 (decent work and economic growth) and the target of private investment are both goals of the programme (34 percent of GDP). The initiative was implemented in 64 regions and taught 24,000 young entrepreneurs. (*BIDA*, n.d.), The government is fostering new ideas in the fields of education, agriculture, health, financial services, e-commerce, e-governance, environment, transportation, and infrastructure through the iDEA Accelerator. Consider proposals' potential impact, execution strategy, and public benefit when evaluating them. Startups can receive pre-seed (idea) funding from iDEA. Startups in the pre-seed or idea-stage are eligible to apply for grants worth up to 10 Lakh BDT also (*IDEA Bangladesh*, n.d.), Through the expansion and development of high-tech businesses in the nation, the Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority was founded by the "Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority Act-2010" with the goals of fostering investment-friendly conditions and generating jobs. Through the expansion and development of high-tech businesses in the nation, the Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority was founded following the "Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority Act-2010" with the goals of fostering investment-friendly conditions and generating jobs. 28 IT Training and Incubation Centers, Software Technology Parks, and Hi-Tech Parks have been established across the nation by the Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority. Through national entrepreneurship promotion and encouragement, BHTPA has taken steps to foster the growth of new businesses (*BHIPTA*, 2021).

Myanmar:

Agriculture has historically contributed significantly to GDP (up to 38%) and employed up to 60% of the labour force. Along with farm exports, the demand for locally produced clothing has recently increased, which has been crucial for the economy's health since unfavourable weather conditions including drought, floods, and sea level rise in 2016 and 2017 had a detrimental impact on returns in the agriculture sector (*Myanmar: Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Snapshot*, 2019).

The Southeast Asian nation, sometimes referred to as "the last frontier," is benefiting from economic change, despite its delayed implementation. The Myanmar Investment Law was passed by the government of Myanmar in 2016 to encourage both domestic and foreign investment. On a scale of "ease of starting a business in the country," Myanmar placed equal with India in 2018 and just below the regional average. Myanmar, which now ranks 165th in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Ranking, needs to make some progress, though, before it can move up the list. The time and expense involved in starting a business is a significant obstacle dragging

down Myanmar's rating. With advice from international experts and attorneys, the Myanmar Investment Law specifically addresses this, intending to streamline the guidelines for investing in the nation. To encourage further economic growth in Myanmar, the United States also withdrew the sanctions it had imposed on the nation in 1997.

However, compared to US\$7.8 billion in 2016, the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) only authorised US\$5.6 billion in new foreign direct investments (FDI) in 2017. Despite this decline, Myanmar's outlook is still favourable. The Companies Law was enacted to reduce obstacles and limitations for foreigners doing business in Myanmar, and it became effective in August 2018. Many industries have been liberalised as a result of the legislative change, which also enables domestic companies to expand by partnering with international companies to access their cash and experience. It opens up trading on the Yangon Stock Exchange to non-Myanmar citizens and permits foreign entities to acquire up to a 35 per cent interest in domestic enterprises. The company registration procedure has also just been digitalized, and the registration fee has been cut in half (*DICA Issues Myanmar Companies Regulations Implementing the Myanmar Companies Law and Requiring Companies to Re-Register Online*, 2018). Additionally, the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) authorised Myanmar Credit Bureau Limited to open a credit bureau in the nation in 2018. This will facilitate borrowers' access to financing and enhance risk assessment processes. In the end, it will make it possible for many business owners and small and medium-sized organisations (SMEs) to be approved for loans. Along with economic progress, the government of Myanmar is finalising its national Sustainable Development Plan, which some employees of the World Bank Group in Myanmar are hoping will address the issue of the slow adoption of economic reform and move the country closer to inclusive and sustained growth (*Myanmar: Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Snapshot*, 2019).

Sri Lanka:

Sri Lanka's advantageous geographic position offers geopolitical advantages, serves as a centre for global logistics, and enables companies to communicate with customers who are located in various time zones. The government has made efforts to draw FDI and make business the primary driver of economic growth.

The Sri Lankan government has recently implemented many initiatives to strengthen the startup environment. Since 2018, a web-based platform delivering a faster and more convenient service has been introduced, and the company registration procedure is now entirely automated. The "Enterprise Sri Lanka" project of the Export Development

Board provides youth with subsidised loans to assist them start their enterprises more quickly. Government-sponsored events "Spiralation" and "Disrupt Asia," which are administered by the ICT Agency of Sri Lanka, introduce businesses to lenders, accelerators, and mentors. Investors, academics, students, businesses, and entrepreneurs come together at the startup conference and exhibition known as Disrupt Asia. A programme called Spiralation helps entrepreneurs with capacity building, market access, and early capital (*Startup Bangladesh Limited, n.d.*).

Bhutan:

“Bhutan's entrepreneurial initiatives have a lot of promise if efforts are made to promote the consumption of its indigenous products and to restrict or discourage imports. These efforts must also include systems to support these indigenous products” (Sharma & Gautam, 2020). To improve more domestically produced goods in place of imported goods and create nearly 2000 job opportunities as part of the government's "Narrowing the Gap" initiatives, the policy launched the Nu. 1.2 billion Cottage and Small-scale Industries (CSI) and startup flagship programme (Bhonsale, 2020). The growth of CSI in Bhutan is the goal of the Department of Cottage and Small Industry, which was established in 2010.

Bhutan has developed a "CSI Policy 2019" along with six major domains of focus for the ecosystem of entrepreneurship. These policy-level measures are considered necessary at this moment to provide the country with favourable platforms for the creation and development of CSIs. Cottage, Small and Medium-Sized Industries (CSMI), which account for over 98% of all industries in Bhutan and many other nations around the world and are a significant economic driver (GNHC & RGoB, 2021), were registered as 95% in Bhutan in 2019 (MoEA & RGoB, 2019) . The report also emphasised CSIs as the most advantageous economic elements due to country geography and settlement patterns, and as a result, it has been one of RGoB's main flagship programmes in its 12th Five Year Plan, making it a crucial area of emphasis, afterwards, Bhutan has also released a new version of its "Cottage and Small Industry Policy 2019" to support and develop CSIs and make them a significant part of the country's economy. As a result, this policy is geared toward encouraging the creation of CSIs and serving as a support system for enhancing the general effectiveness and competitiveness of the CSIs that are currently in place. Bhutan's government has developed several programmes over the years and has taken part in events like the EDP Training With Dzongkhags, NGOs, and Other Institutions, Student Business Seedling Program, Training of Trainers in New Business Creation, Counselling, and Mentoring, Start-Up Weekend, Startup Innovation Tech Week, Startup Acceleration Programme, Global Entrepreneurship Week, Business Idea Competition of Bhutan (BICOB), Loden Entrepreneurship Program (LEP), and others (*What Are the Entrepreneurship Programmes and Initiatives Available in Bhutan?*, 2021).

Nepal:

Throughout its planned development that started in 1956, the Government of Nepal has consistently worked to encourage industrialization. The government passed the first Industrial Enterprise Act in 1961 to achieve this goal. Incentives and concessions are outlined in this Act for starting and running small businesses in the Kingdom. It gave industrial marketing a bigger boost, especially for small and medium-sized businesses. The government pledged numerous tax benefits, extension services, free licensing, training facilities, etc. to the cottage and small companies in 1974 to hasten the industrial policy process. Despite these generous incentives and exemptions, the rate of industrial development lagged what was expected. It was discovered that to hasten industrial expansion, more focus should be placed on the application of policies and the supply of a suite of integrated services. The 1980 revision of the 1974 new industrial policy considered this (Pokhrel, n.d.).

Programs for the development of entrepreneurs offer a range of services to both aspiring and established business owners, as well as to the auxiliary groups that support them. The organization's main activities include, among others, training for trainers, business start-up and improvement training, microenterprise creation, business counselling, production management, and productivity improvement. Other major activities include marketing, financial management, business management, business expansion/growth, business identification and selection, business planning, and feasibility study and research (Karki, 2014). Currently, there are a few sizeable funds that are involved, either directly or indirectly, in entrepreneurship and company growth in addition to the official finance sector (Shreshtha, 1981). Some of these include the 2009-launched Youth and Self-Employment Fund (YSEF). Surath Giri (2014) claims that despite investing a significant amount of money, "YSEF scarcely had any impact in boosting entrepreneurship in Nepal since a substantial volume of the low-interest loans was granted to speculative business instead of new ventures that create employment possibilities." The Poverty Alleviation Fund (Rural Self Reliance Fund (RSRF), Economic Rehabilitation Fund (ERF), Women Entrepreneurship Development Fund (WEDF), Technology Development Fund (TDF), and Challenge Fund) are additional funds available to combat poverty.

The Industrial Policy 2010's Number 21.11, which states that "A distinct women's entrepreneurship fund must be developed for the promotion of women's entrepreneurship," is where the Women Entrepreneurship Development Fund (WEDF) got its start (Adhikari, 2017). As of right now, the Technology Development Fund has not been active since its creation in 2013. (K.C. & D., 2017). The Youth Self-Employment and Small Enterprise Fund, which aims to make investment more accessible, is unduly politicised, with little to no ties to other significant entrepreneurship strategies, claims a 2013 World Bank report. The Nepalese government has started to recognise the many advantages of encouraging entrepreneurship as part of its post-conflict and national economic development

policies, with a focus on youth. These recent government initiatives have opened up new opportunities for young entrepreneurship and employment while beginning to set the groundwork for increased national engagement with youth (World Bank, 2013). Particularly, social entrepreneurship significantly contributes to the triple-bottom-line aspects of community development (Khatiwada, 2014). The government will invest between Rs. 500,000 and Rs. 1 million in each of thousands of youths without requesting collateral to encourage youth entrepreneurship (RSS, 2018). The government declared in 2018–19 that it would offer loans to young people using their educational certificates as collateral. The government announced a financial incentive for prospective new firms in 2019–20 of up to Rs5 million. It began putting together a work method. The government established a Rs 500 million startup fund in 2020–2021 to provide loans with an interest rate of 2% to support creative entrepreneurs affected by the pandemic (Prasain, 2022).

Comparative Perspectives:

The adoption of frameworks for supporting entrepreneurship is of critical interest to the seven countries from the Bimstec region. The general pattern across all nations is that first frameworks focus on encouraging entrepreneurship, with later adaptations geared toward startups that create value through technological improvement. The framework for promoting entrepreneurship shares many commonalities, however, there are some distinctions between the frameworks and how they are put into practice. The policy/legal frameworks of the seven nations are briefly compared in the table below.

| No. | Parameters of Comparison | Countries |
|-----|--|--|
| 1 | Specific Law/Policies for entrepreneurship promotion | All seven countries issue specific laws/Policies for promotion of entrepreneurship |
| 2 | Government Grant for Enterprises | All seven countries provide government grants for start-ups to the residents of the respective countries citizens that too vary with sector and geography |
| 3 | Financial Support for Enterprises | All seven countries establish financial programmes that promote businesses, such as low-interest loans and credit guarantees. |
| 4 | Tax Incentives | India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand Establish enterprise tax exemptions and other tax perks as tax regulatory incentives for businesses. Bhutan provide very certain tax benefits which are also limited |
| 5 | Overseas Start-up Incentives | Bangladesh and Myanmar provides effective benefits to foreign investors to attract international investments India provide certain benefits for overseas enterprises that varying with sectors Shri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Thailand lacks a harmonized schemes or incentives for overseas enterprises |

Conclusion:

Frameworks for legislation and policy are essential to the growth of entrepreneurship. Broadly speaking, The frameworks give enterprises preferential assistance in the form of tax relief, related regulations, workshops, start-up funding, and investment matching. The frameworks support the expansion and stability of enterprises. This study analyses the BIMSTEC region's legislative and regulatory frameworks supporting entrepreneurship. To encourage the growth of entrepreneurship, the seven nations keep similar frameworks. The nations have created laws and policies to support the expansion of enterprises. Frameworks have recently changed, with governments increasingly giving value-added thoughts and ideas priority. The study analyzes the variations among the components and the efficiency of execution in boosting economic growth. The study also looks at how government laws and policies have changed over time. With cooperation from the BIMSTEC region, many issues can be resolved, and the region's nations can create a unique ecosystem for the growth of entrepreneurship in a set of seven countries.

Governments in the BIMSTEC region would need to concentrate on evaluating the current frameworks for entrepreneurship promotion and take into account effective variables in enabling the growth of firms as well as ways to streamline the request for support process. Additionally, governments must ensure that their frameworks adhere to the needs of the entrepreneurial sector. The connectedness of regional firms among the seven nations is facilitated by international and regional collaboration on entrepreneurship legislation and policies.

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Exploring the Avenues for Social Work Intervention in Education in Emergencies: Reflections from A Post Pandemic Perspective

³Bilal Kaloo

Abstract

The Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic affected the people across the globe. Be it the number of deaths and infections, the disease posed a great threat to the people at large. Economic activities remained suspended for many months and imposed long spell of lockdowns forced people to adopt new set of living. Educational institutions including schools, colleges and universities were closed for face-to-face learning paving way to online mode of learning as an alternative. Given its magnitude and global spread, COVID19 resulted in a new set of social problems with both immediate and long-term consequences for key institutions of the society including education.

Social work as a profession tries to adopt skills and theories of human behavioral and social systems in resolving social problems. An attempt is made in this article to understand the role of social workers in different capacities in the context of corona pandemic with special focus on education. In the entire enterprise of education, this research article tries to study how teaching learning process has undergone a radical transition in a pandemic environment. The key focus of this research article is to find the need and relevance of professional social work practice to address the multiple set of problems in education posed by pandemic circumstances. It is anticipated that exploring interventions that will positively impact the lives of the stakeholders associated with education including students, teachers, parents, administrators and community at large will be significant. Social work profession being responsive to the naive and challenging social situations has to step in to play its instrumental role in addressing the pandemic/post-pandemic issues faced by educational institutions.

Keywords: *COVID-19, Social Work, Education, School closure, Intervention.*

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Introduction

COVID-19 pandemic emerged from the Wuhan city of China in 2019 and later on spread all over the world. The affected countries were caught off guards as the healthcare system faced a colossal crisis of unprecedented nature. To contain the spread of the virus the countries imposed strict lock down measures to restrict movement of people. Economic activities got paralyzed and owing to containment of the spread of the virus the educational institutions including schools, colleges and universities remained closed.

Social work professionals can perform multiple functions due to the complexity and dimensions of reality that exist in society. Their actions are focused on the solution of social problems and social change, which is a very extensive area of intervention, prevention, and assistance (Fernándezetal., 2012).

The unprecedented situation emanated by the pandemic demanded social workers to innovate in their intervention to reach out to the individuals and groups struggling to negotiate the challenges posed by the unusual calamity. On the one hand , social workers have to attend the professional call to attend people facing difficulty and on the other hand they ought to ensure their own safety and of their families as well. As strict lockdown measures denied people access to essential services in general, the individuals and groups relying on health care professionals and workers suffered a lot. Barriers in reaching out to the individuals in need of social work assistance posed varied challenges to social workers to carry out their professional duties.

Education and the Pandemic

Millions of students across the globe got affected by the closure of educational institutions. Not only students, teachers, parents, educational administrators, school support service providers including those who are directly or indirectly associated with educational institutions all suffered heavily.

The exigency and inevitable switchover to digital mode further exposed the inbuilt differences and deficiencies of the educational systems. The vast majority of students enrolled in public institutions were not prepared and ill equipped to the task to accommodate and adjust with online learning. Socio-economic disparities in societal groups forced majority of learners to be shelved from the mainstream of educational services. The digital divide with in the country poverty ridden communities finding it

difficult to afford the cost of smart phones and internet charges, learning through digital platforms for vast population remained a distant dream. The widening gap in learning outcomes of children based on their socio-economic backgrounds became a major concern.

Globally, around **131 million schoolchildren** in 11 countries missed three quarters of their in-person learning from March 2020 to September 2021. Among them, 59 per cent – or nearly 77 million – have missed almost all in-person instruction time. These 77 million students come from six countries. Among these countries, Bangladesh and the Philippines represent 62 million of the 77 million learners impacted. Around 27 per cent of countries continue to have schools fully or partially closed. Additionally, more than 870 million students at all levels are currently facing disruptions to their education. (UNESCO 2021)

School children around the world lost an estimated **1.8 trillion hours** – and counting – of in-person learning, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. As a result, young learners have been cut off from their education and the other vital benefits schools provide. Girls face greater barriers to education and are more vulnerable to abuse such as domestic /gender-based violence when not in school. (ECW 2020)

Social Work Intervention in Emergencies:

Disasters of massive magnitude like COVID-19 affect people from all age groups and backgrounds. Some groups are potentially more vulnerable than the other groups. Children, Persons with Disability (PWD), patients admitted at hospitals, prisoners, migrants, refugees, elderly and people with some chronic physical or mental ailments are at greater risk to face threatening situations. People at institutional or rehabilitation centres availing care and therapies like orphanages and mental asylums find it extremely difficult to respond to emergency situations of man made or natural calamities. Disaster preparedness and mitigations measures among such populations' poses a challenge for the professional social workers to intervene.

Professional social work encompasses a variety of roles towards helping people in distress. Vital public necessities when affected during disasters demand multiple ad diverse interventional strategies. Be it health care, social welfare services, legal aid,

education etc. From awareness to advocacy, rescue operation to rehabilitation, sensitization to settlement, and information dissemination to identification of vulnerable groups – professional social workers are required to play their instrumental role.

Disaster and Disruptions in Education:

Education as system operates in a smooth and peaceful environment. Curricular and co-curricular activities at schools, colleges and universities are dependent on feasible conditions. Any untoward incident like a natural or man-made calamity including earthquake, floods, epidemic, cyclone, war etc brings closure to the educational activities. When educational institutions remain closed for long time, the routine gets disturbed.

For families with scarcity of income, children completely get disconnected from studies. Parents find it difficult or impossible to meet basic needs struggle a lot. In such cases, children are at risk of becoming child labourers. It was witnessed during the recent pandemic that many school going children joined work force to support their families in crunch crisis.

The loss of school space adversely affects children. Thus the number of drop out children increases in emergencies.

Traumatic experiences observed by children de-motivate the students to feel any interest in the studies. When children witness the loss of any family member or destruction of the house, consequently it results in mild to chronic traumatic experiences. In such a state of mind, the attention not only gets diverted but long spells of sadness and anxiety sets result in drop outs. In case of forced migrations and devastation of the homes due to calamities, the make shift arrangements threaten the survival. Emigration becomes an unavoidable necessity. The issue of maladjustment among children in emergency at times promotes deviant behaviour.

School as Social Space

Apart from teaching learning activities, school offers conducive space for socialization to prosper. The bonding and network developed during the course of studies among students, staff, care givers directly and indirectly influence the overall

personality of the learners. These trusting relationships address vital social and emotional needs of the children. The curriculum of the institution provides ample opportunities for learners to act and perform in individual and group activities. A sudden calamity resulting in closure of schools abruptly denies the learners to enjoy this *earned social space* and consequently social and emotional development gets hampered. The prolonged spell of closure of school adds to the emotional deficiency resulting in psycho-social problems among young children. Exploring alternative and parallel platforms that to some extent can compensate the emotional needs of children in emergencies demand social workers to thin out of box solutions. Student safety issues assume significance during emergencies. Social workers can play the role of intermediaries to augment the efforts of service providers in calamities like pandemic.

Avenues for social work intervention at educational institutions during emergencies:

- **Identify educational institution as a space for social work intervention** be it in-person or virtual mode.
- **e-Social Work:** Exploring the ways and means to reach out to population in need using appropriate ICT to improve remote interface.
- **Preparing Programmed and customised content** for target groups for dissemination of information
- **Orientation of Social Workers** to become tech savvy and assist learner support services facilitation
- **Institutional Collaboration** and coordination via digital connect
- **Vulnerability Profiling** : Identifying individuals and groups with high vulnerabilities of being disadvantaged vulnerability profiling as preparatory measure to respond to the emergencies can reduce the extent of damage or loss. Vulnerable groups like persons with disabilities (PWD) can be shifted to safer places/rehabilitation centres to reduce loss of human lives.
- **Addressing Digital Divide:** Aiding and exploring alternative modes for enhanced / remedial teaching, Community Classes, community work, resource management,
- **Networking and Collaboration** with organizations providing short term and long term support services during emergencies including government, NGO/INGO's etc.

To conclude, Covid-19 pandemic as a colossal calamity has opened new corridors of social work intervention to reach out to the populations in dire need assistance. Educational institutions like schools are instrumental in shaping the future of young generation. School social work as one of areas of social work profession needs to be revisited and reviewed in the context of pandemic. Addressing sudden and prolonged school closures, assessing the affect and aftermath of such closures on school children and exploring alternatives as a compensatory measure are some critical queries that need to be addressed.. These challenges demand widening the spectrum of scientific research undertaken by professional social workers. The lessons learnt from the corona pandemic will define and determine the trajectory of social work intervention in emergencies as a new found profession.

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Voices Unheard: Exploring the Psychosocial Landscape of the Adolescent Girls

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Abstract

The adolescence period is the most conflicting time during adolescence. It is a time of confusion when the child is not an adult, and at the same time, the child is no longer in the childhood stage. Girls experience puberty much earlier than boys with a series of events. Considering these individual differences, each girl can progress through these changes differently. Girls in adolescence face more challenges from both physical and emotional aspects. The adolescent stage for girls is more challenging than boys, and they need more support to tackle such problems. Although studies have been conducted to discover such problems amongst adolescent girls, the review of such studies needs to be included in the literature. This paper has attempted to present a review of critical studies concerning psychosocial issues among adolescent girls. This paper can help bring forward such issues which need to be resolved for the welfare of girls.

Keywords: *Adolescent Girls; Adolescence; Psychosocial, Stress, Emotional Issues.*

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1. Introduction

Adolescence is a period of imaginative powers, liveliness, and massive enthusiasm for living (Silvers, 2022). It can also be a time for self-expression, curiosity, exploration, discovery, and adventure (Sawyer et al., 2012). Theory and research suggest that positive future expectations can facilitate optimal development and a successful transition into adulthood (Arnett, 2000; McDade et al., 2011; Schmid & Lopez, 2011). Some teenagers who assume a negative or pessimistic perception of their future are likelier to exhibit problematic behaviour (Dubow et al., 2001; Sipsma et al., 2011). Every adolescent faces some difficulties in adjustment to somatic variations and other psychosocial problems which may occur during puberty. Psychosocial refers to psychological development in a social environment, including interaction within. Research suggests that psychosocial problems are "a state of emotional and behavioural disorders synonymous with internalizing and externalizing conditions" (Bista et al., 2016).

Adolescents are mainly affected by school and the home environment. It is estimated that globally, one out of ten adolescents suffer from at least one behavioural problem. Adolescents experience the ill effects of psychosocial issues at various phases of their development. A large number of these issues are transient and are frequently unnoticed. Progressive youngsters may show these issues in one setting and not in another (e.g., home, school). A few critical transitional periods (moving from early essential to centre school, from centre school to secondary school or from secondary school to higher school) can exhibit new difficulties for these adolescents and manifestations of being broken may happen. Psychosocial problems, such as bodily and mental problems, increase during adolescence. Globally, 1 out of 10 (10%) adolescents encounter at least one behavioural problem. Half of lifetime mental disorders begin before the age of 14, and 75% begin by the age of 24 (Kessler et al., 2005). Notably, girls face more issues than boys at this stage due to their different biological setups. Understanding the effects of society and the environment on the growth and development of adolescent girls is therefore vital. From this perspective, it makes it of utmost importance to study the psychosocial problem of adolescent girls concerning societal, psychological and biological systems in society.

This makes it critical to study such issues amongst them to sort out the problems early.

This research article provides an essential perspective on the problems faced by adolescent girls and discusses some critical studies conducted on the topic. This article starts with an introduction segment followed by a literature review, research methodology and discussions.

2. Literature

Adolescence is a decade-long process during which adolescents undergo several biological, social and psychological changes. The transition from adolescence to adulthood is the most challenging, unique, and crucial phase of human development. It is, thus, essential to provide them with a conducive environment where they can grow and develop into responsible adults. It has been observed that family support plays a critical role in adolescent development. An optimistic atmosphere has positive effects, decreasing feelings like anxiety, depression, alienation and loneliness in adolescents. When it comes to adolescent girls, there exist a plethora of problems for them, from psychological to social, as well as nutritional and educational problems. Early pregnancy leads to early childbearing, which potentially risks the lives of adolescent girls. This creates the inter-generational cycle of morbidity as most of such cases lead to maternal mortality and under-weight newborns. In India, it is observed that a large number of adolescents and women suffer from reproductive and sexual health problems. There is a lack of knowledge about HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Family, parents and teachers in school do not provide them with sexual education, which may lead to life-threatening diseases amongst them. India, with a continuous increase in the cases of HIV/AIDS, records the second highest number of HIV cases in the world, which is second only to African nations. Without formal education, children turn to other sources to get information on sex, providing incorrect and inadequate information. The psychosocial factors amongst adolescents are affected by both internal and external factors. The physical and mental health, social interactions, relationships, support system, norms and behaviour of society all play an essential role in the psychosocial well-being of an individual. Psychosocial problems like low self-esteem, insecurity, adjustment and behaviour problems are widely seen in adolescent girls. Early identification of psychosocial problems can help solve them

before they become complicated. It is observed that the knowledge about reproductive health and sex-related health among adolescent girls is significantly low in India.

Many research studies reveal significant relations between educated mothers, household self-sufficiency and children's nutrition (Borooah, 2014). For the initial ten years of an adolescent's life, the needs of boys and girls are identical regarding energy and nutrient needs. Nevertheless, the literacy rate of females is fifty-four per cent (54%). Most women lack the power to make decisions for themselves; some of the decisions include using reproductive health services. State governments govern most health services, and most depend on the State Head's leadership and management skills. The situation can be assessed by the fact that To make progress in the lives of individuals and families and achieve economic development in poor communities worldwide, educating a girl child is one of the most successful ways to achieve progress (World Education, 2017). "Thirty-one million girls do not attend school, and two-thirds of illiterate adults are women" (Right to Education Initiative, 2017). Thirty-nine thousand child marriages take place every day globally (WHO, 2017). Illiteracy is not the only reason contributing to child marriage; issues related to pregnancy and childbirth are also among them. These are the most important causes of death in young women between fifteen and nineteen (WHO, 2017). Marriages such as tender age also make girls more prone to family or partner violence (WHO, 2017). Marriage before 18 years for a girl child has been rooted in sexual category discrimination, consoling premature childbearing and giving the preference for opposite gender education (UNICEF, 2016). Intimate partner violence (IPV) occurs worldwide, with prevalence figures of 1 in 3, i.e. 35% (WHO, 2016). Sexual category disparity and lack of quality education are some causes of IPV (WHO, 2016). IPV can lead to unexpected pregnancies, deliberate abortions, gynecological problems and STDs (WHO, 2016). The National Family Health Survey was conducted to determine gender equality among women based on data from the National Family Health Survey 2015-16 in terms of illiteracy, child marriages, and partner violence.

Adolescents face a lot of problems that arise out of maladjustment within society. In this stage, the adolescents feel independent in society and do not need society's approval. They don't care about the acceptance of their parents or society. Adolescence is also a phase when individuals become more sensitive and wary about things as their world of reality differs from society's natural world.

3. Methodology

By the recommendations of Gough et al. (2017), a four-stage procedure/method was followed in this investigation. As seen below, this study inquiry was conducted meticulously.

Search and Evaluation Inclusion

Only articles that included data on the study topics of “psychosocial problems,” “reproductive health”, “Stress”, “Depression”, “Anxiety”, “Poor Reproductive Health”, “Poor Nutrition”, “Education Level”, “ICDS”, “Adolescent Girls”.

i. To begin, "Google Scholar" was combed for relevant use of the project's keywords. After a cursory examination of the first fifty pages of search results, one hundred and fifty potentially relevant papers were identified. Following that, keywords for article searches were refined even more, leaving twenty-one articles.

ii. Using the needed keywords, the "Web of Science" database was methodically searched, giving a total of one hundred and thirteen papers. Only fifteen studies were identified after a preliminary review of the article titles.

iii. A comparable search utilising related keywords on "Scopus" returned one-hundred and ninety-two papers peer-reviewed article records. Following the first filtering of paper titles, only twelve matches were returned in association with the necessary keywords.

iii. A comparable search utilising related keywords on "J-store" returned ninety-five peer-reviewed records. Following filtering paper titles, only twelve records were returned in association with the necessary keywords.

Only sixty articles were located after merging four sources, including twenty duplicates. Twenty-five duplicate articles were later deleted.

The norm for Inclusion and Elimination

Only manuscripts/studies from respected journals and publishing companies that meet the following criteria were chosen:

i. Peer-reviewed articles/papers published entirely in "English."

ii. The emphasis was on studies that addressed the researchers' critical concerns, including keywords.

iii. Over 31 years, the writings were published (1990- 2021). This timeline was chosen because it spans a period of fast growth in modern work studies.

Manuscripts were excluded if

i. The study did not address the researcher's chosen subject of interest for this current project, and

ii. Editorials, reports, study data sets, editor letters, scientific community conversations, and book reviews were eliminated.

Ethical concern

The researcher validated that the accuracy and objectivity of accessible scholarly data and the appropriateness of references were maintained throughout the current extensive literature review. All instances of duplication or redundancy in the publications, as well as concealed findings and, most importantly, plagiarism, were avoided (Wager & Wiffen, 2011). This was done via the use of the procedures detailed below.

i. The researcher explored online resources such as "Google Scholar," "Scopus" and "Web of Science" for articles/manuscripts.

ii. Only original studies with ethical approval, knowledgeable approval, and a mention/statement of 'no conflict of interest' were deemed suitable for this research work, and

iii. Only original studies published in English and with full access were evaluated in terms of meeting the research objectives.

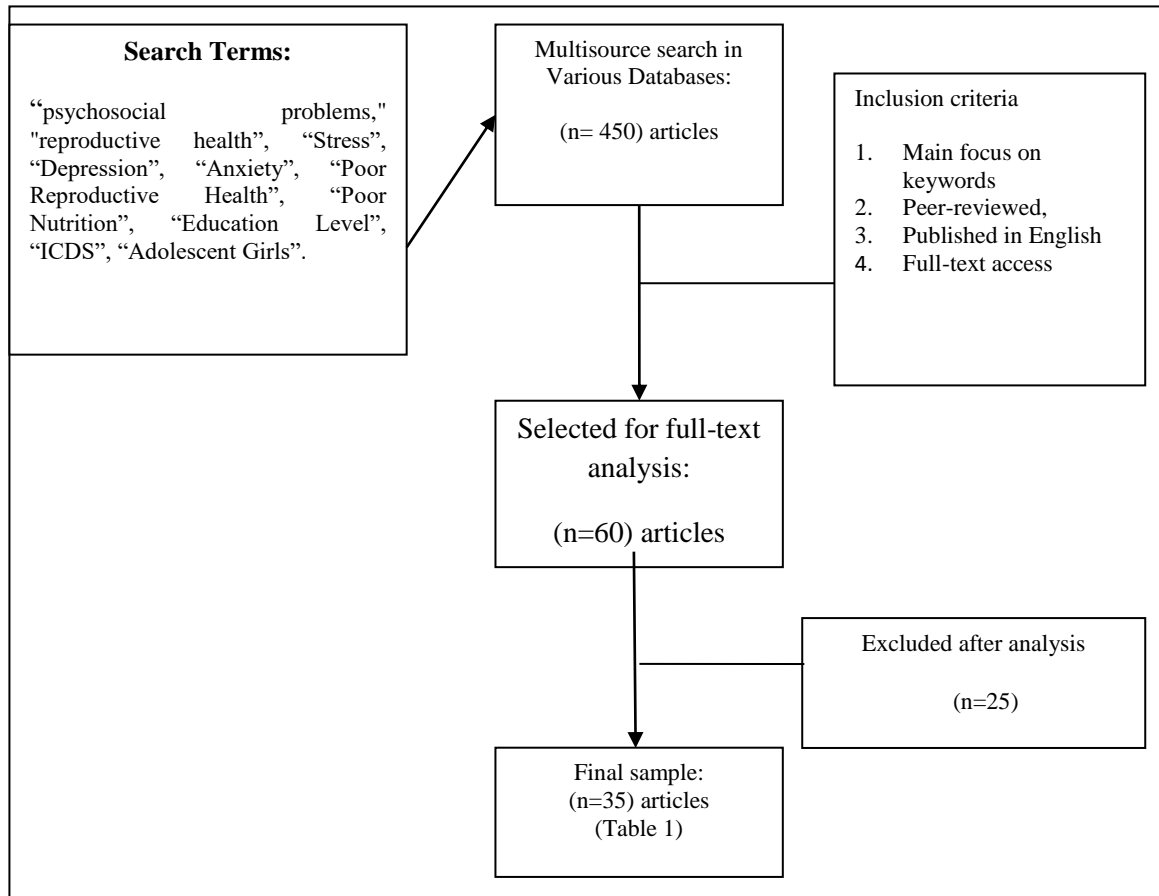


Figure 1 Systematic Literature Process

4. Findings

The extensive review of literature by the researcher has tried to include the most critical studies in the field of psychosocial problems of adolescent girls. The review of literature is classified into the following broad categories:

1. Review of studies on psychosocial problems of adolescent girls.
2. Review of studies on adolescent girls concerning reproductive health
3. Stress, Depression, Anxiety, Poor Reproductive Health, Poor Nutrition and Education Level in Adolescent Girls
4. Review of studies on adolescent girls and ICDS in India

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Somatic Complications, Social Withdrawal, Adjustment Problems, Attention and Sleep Problems of Adolescent Girls

Kekkonen et al. (2015) researched school-going adolescent girls in Finland aged between 13-18 years. Two hundred eighty-eight girls were taken as the sample for the study, and the results showed that, in total, they had made 1411 visits to the healthcare facilities. The data suggest that adolescents frequently visit the health care centre as they suffer from psychosocial problems. Research by Ilana and Jeanne (1989) suggests that many adolescent girls suffer from an eating disorder caused by their concern for body image, physical growth and personality development. Another study by Caspi et al. (1995) revealed temperament and behavioural problems such as lack of control and sluggishness in adolescent girls. A research study conducted by Barua et al. (2007) tried to ascertain the support adolescent girls receive from their parents in Rajasthan. Adolescents constitute one of the most vulnerable groups in society due to the lack of targeted health services available to adolescents. In India, only 12 per cent of the female population uses sanitary pads, and the remaining female population uses only cloth pads or old clothes during menstruation. Lack of knowledge on menstruation hygiene and reproductive health makes adolescent girls prone to reproductive tract infections. Also, in school, many rural girls have no access to dispose of the used pads and a lack of privacy during menstruation results in high school dropouts. Tiwari and Ruhela (2012) researched 300 adolescents to investigate the relationship between 'social isolation' and 'depression' among adolescents. The sample consisted of 150 adolescent boys and 150 adolescent girls. The study's results revealed a significant correlation between social isolation and depression. As compared to the boys, scores for girls were higher on the association between social isolation and depression. Adolescents also tend to limit their social interaction, which can be caused by anxiety and depression. Rubin et al. (2010) suggest peer relationships correlate with children's social competence.

4.1.2 Adolescent Girls and their Reproductive Health

The National Population Policy of India, 2000 (Sharanya, 2014) has recognised adolescents as a vulnerable group with specific needs. They comprise nearly 20 to 21% of India's population, and their numbers are expected to increase over time (Mittal & Goel, 2010). For healthy future generations, the reproductive health of adolescent girls is crucial. With urbanisation and liberal attitudes in contemporary Indian society, there is an increased likelihood of indulging in sexual activities early, which can mostly lead

to issues amongst females. Hence, adolescent girls are at risk of unwanted pregnancy, reproductive tract infections (RTIs), and a spectrum of social and psychological consequences such as discontinuation of education, forced early marriages, unplanned pregnancies, unsafe abortions, and depression (Shashikumar et al., 2012). Earlier millennium and sustainable development goals have focused on the reduction of pregnancy rates in 15–19-year-old girls (Rasanathan et al., 2015). For adolescents to make informed decisions, the Government of India has incorporated the Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health (ARSH) services into the school curriculum.

Chudasama et al. (2014) conducted a study to evaluate the infrastructure, coverage and utilisation of ICDS programmes in the 12 districts of the State of Gujarat. The study found that 73.3 per cent of Anganwadi Centres had concrete buildings, 53.5 per cent had adequate indoor space, and 61.7 per cent had toilet facilities that were child-friendly. It was revealed that all the Anganwadi workers were literate, and around 86.7 per cent had job training. Out of all the registered beneficiaries, 96 per cent of pregnant women, 97.8 per cent of lactating mothers, and 87.0 per cent of adolescent girls received the services through ICDS. 48.3 per cent of children were reported to have benefited from the supplementary nutrition coverage. It was found that only 10 per cent of children were immunized.

4.1.3 Stress, Depression, Anxiety, Poor Reproductive Health, Poor Nutrition and Education Level in Adolescent Girls

The right to nutrition and health is a fundamental right of every child. All children are entitled to certain "opportunities and facilities" that the Indian Constitution guarantees them. A large number of adolescents suffer from mental, emotional and behavioural disorders. They often find it difficult to concentrate; they suffer from attention deficit, hyperactive disorder and impulsiveness. Integrated Child Development Services is one of the world's largest welfare schemes catering to adolescent girls' needs. Even after 40 years of its existence, almost half of Indian children are still malnourished. A large number of Indian children do not have access to full immunization. Physical victimization is when individuals are mocked about their physical outlook, making them think they are lesser. Verbal victimization is when individuals are constantly bullied and threatened with words. The main psychological problems among adolescents are depression, loneliness, low social involvement, low self-esteem, lack of

self-worth and anxiety. Several studies have noted that adolescent girls are at a higher risk of stress and anxiety. It has also been observed that adolescent girls reported more negative events and experiences compared to boys. The reason is the different expectations of family and society for boys and girls. Sexual abuse is the cause of depression in females in later stages of life. The stereotypical expectation to behave a certain way is another cause of depression in adolescent girls. For instance, in an Indian context, girls are expected to speak quietly; restrictions on their visits outside the home and many other restrictions are also prevalent among them. The parenting styles and the stressful relationship with a sibling are also major causes of stress for adolescent girls. The environment at school, higher personal vulnerabilities, and heightened sensitivities all affect adolescent girls' mental health. The high level of stress and depression can increase negativity in adolescent girls. Related literature studies have also concluded that socialization factors enhance the stress level in adolescent girls. The physical comparison with others puts them at risk of depression and acute mental disorders. The obesity rate is higher in adolescent girls than in adolescent boys, which is another cause of stress for these girls (Strauman et al., 2011). In a study of adolescent girls in a South Indian city, it was found that depression was prevalent in 2 per cent of the girls and symptoms of anxiety were noted in 1 per cent of girls in the study group. The issues and problems of adolescent girls differ from those of male adolescents (Aradhya, 2013). For instance, Brooks-Gunn and Warren (1989) discuss the emotional difference between girls and boys. Contrary to the general perception that the changes in the hormonal level in girls lead to negative behaviour, they found that social factors accounted for a more negative effect on girls than the hormonal puberty factors. The behaviour of girls changes after the onset of puberty and breast growth. Apart from the behavioural changes, these changes affect an adolescent girl psychologically. Early adolescence is an important phase of psychological development in adolescence. This is when adolescents develop detachment from their parents and growing individualization amongst them. There is more dependency on peer groups and a sense of independence and self-dependency amongst the early adolescents. In their research, Steinberg and Silverberg (1986) found that adolescent girls are more autonomous in their behaviour than adolescent boys. Girls described themselves as self-reliant and independent (Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986). Most of the research on adolescent development talks about adolescents' emotional upheaval. According to Steinberg and Morris (2000),

adolescents' psychosocial problems are temporary and are resolved during adulthood as their ability to think and solve problems increases. The most focused problems of adolescents discussed in Western literature are substance abuse and consumption of alcohol, unemployment and juvenile delinquency. However, the more serious issues include stress, anxiety and depression, which affect them mentally and physically. The psychosocial problems of the adolescents also include their changing relationships with their parents, family and siblings, particularly the male sibling. Adolescence is also when they discover themselves as independent of their parents, family or society. They try to discover ways to adapt themselves and fit in the world. Erikson defined it as a time of self-exploration. Peer culture and peer group are synonymous with adolescent culture as adolescents create their group and social order different from society during this time. Adolescents try to spend more time alone and with their friends due to a lack of support from parents and family, which can increase their problems rather than solve them. Recent research in adolescent development has focused on adolescents' behavioural aspects, relationships with peers, parents, and siblings, and self-development. The focus of research in the area of psychosocial problems has been minimal. The researcher's interest has been more towards behaviour rather than the causes for such behaviour. The psychosocial problems of adolescent girls are a potential area of research which needs to be researched exhaustively and rigorously to make important interventions in this area.

4.1.4 Adolescent Girls and ICDS in India

Gupta et al. (2013) conducted a study on the functioning and the progress of ICDS and revealed that certain loopholes exist in the programme. Since its inception in 1975, ICDS has widely expanded its services. Until this study, ICDS covered around 7.6 million pregnant women, lactating mothers and approximately 36 million children under the age group of 0-6 years. Although there has been a rapid expansion in ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) centres, not all are functioning correctly and optimally. It was reported by Gupta et al. (2013) that infrastructure and basic amenities under the purview of ICDS need to be strengthened. Inadequacy of the basic facilities is a significant cause of concern in preschool education in Anganwadi centres. The study concluded that the Anganwadi Centres' preschool environment needs improvement.

The Anganwadi workers should be sensitized and trained to provide good quality services.

A study on adolescent girls' schemes in Kerala was conducted in four districts of Kerala: Malappuram, Palakkad, Wayanad and Kasargode, to evaluate the status of services under the Adolescent Girls Scheme (NIPCCD, 2009). The research found that 69.64 per cent of adolescent girls were aware of the Adolescent Girls Scheme under the ICDS programme. Ninety-two per cent of the adolescent girls felt empowered and needed to return to their studies. Eighty-eight per cent of the adolescent girls found the life skills training satisfactory. Only 6.24 per cent of the adolescent girls felt that life skills training was not helping, and 5.76 per cent had no opinion. The study also found that the lack of financial assistance significantly hindered the success of the Adolescent Girls Scheme. The operation timing of the Anganwadi centre was also a significant reason for adolescent girls' non-participation in the scheme. The girls are also recommended to decide the session timings at the Anganwadi centre.

During the study, there were 4 ICDS blocks under which 802 Anganwadi centres were operational. It was found that ICDS projects were operational in all the district blocks but needed to provide supplementary nutrition to all the registered beneficiaries. The study found that the distance between the Anganwadi centres and the beneficiary households affected the implementation of the scheme. The researchers also found that preschool education, the core objective of ICDS, needed to be stronger and needed improvement.

The literature provides some relevant studies on adolescents, adolescent girls, and psychosocial problems among adolescents. In South Asian countries, most boys receive better and more nutritious food than girls as they are supposed to be the breadwinners in the family (Pande, 2003; Darnton-Hill, 2005; Carloni, 1981). The condition of women in India is usually low, except in the southern and eastern states. India has high maternal mortality, early marriage and early pregnancy, poor literacy and poor health among women and girls (Family Welfare Statistic, 2006). Adolescent girls drop out of school early and face several sociological and psychosocial problems. Adolescent malnutrition and other types of morbidities and gender-based discrimination exist. Poor quality of living standards, pregnancies, child marriage, and biased sexual class norms are the reasons that primarily prevent girls from attending school (Right to Education

Initiative, 2017). In addition, girls in India face various taboos that restrict their access to education and health. Deep-rooted beliefs and superstitions regarding menstruation put various restrictions on women and adolescent girls. Menstruation and menstrual hygiene misinformation embarrass thousands of women and girls around the globe, and they are being discriminated which leads to myths and stigma. These myths and stigmas about menstruation disregard women's rights and their equality, integrity, privacy, and the right to freedom from ill-treatment (Kaiser, 2013). Psychosocial problems in adolescent girls are also a severe problem that must be addressed. Social factors have a prominent role in adolescent girls' emotional and behavioural problems. The most common psychosocial disorders are anxiety, depression, stress, delinquency, substance abuse, aggression, suicide, eating disorders and conduct disorders.

5. Conclusion & Discussions

The above studies show that adolescent girls face numerous problems worldwide, especially in developing economies. Moreover, the problems faced by adolescent girls in India are also multi-pronged, as the social myths and taboos in India compound such problems. This paper provides an essential perspective on the problems faced by adolescent girls on many fronts, such as psychosocial, emotional, reproductive, and socio-economic, amongst others. These studies can provide an essential perspective for academicians to research this domain further and discover many other issues among adolescent girls. This can also help government agencies develop programmes to improve girls' health needs. Programme policy planners must also take lessons from other developed regions where such programmes run successfully. This would guide the policy planners in the present context and remove any deficiencies for successful programme implementation. Ultimately, the objective of influencing the lives of adolescent girls in a positive, caring and learning environment can be achieved. All the stakeholders need to be taken into confidence, and their support is essential for successfully achieving the desired goals and objectives. At the same time, a multi-dimensional approach is needed to provide proper care, support, education, and counselling to adolescent girls.

Strength-based approaches to the overall programme aim should be used to develop and augment the beneficiaries' abilities, knowledge, competencies, values, and learning. Health and hygiene awareness should be given special consideration. They need proper

counselling and guidance, especially regarding their menstrual hygiene. ICDS centres should conduct proper medical examinations by registered doctors. Adolescent females can have regular medical checks at ICDS-hosted camps dedicated to health care for them. Adolescent girls suffer from a variety of psychosocial challenges as they transition from childhood to adolescence. The Integrated Child Development Scheme should provide them with access to trained and licensed counsellors who can assist them in coping with these challenges. ICDS centres play a critical role in the implementation of these types of programmes, making it imperative that their employees feel empowered to do their jobs. ICDS staff must be adequately trained and empowered to carry out programmes aimed at building adolescents' abilities.

Children's well-being is also influenced by the society in which they live. The community should endeavour to provide the necessary community resources to focus on quality education and learning as a critical priority. Gender-related health difficulties need to be addressed by parents, who must be aware of their children's psychological and socio-emotional challenges. Social workers should educate parents and guardians about their responsibilities. Educators and school administrators need to recognise and comprehend the key influences on teenage development. For the benefit of the students, educators and other school stakeholders must make efficient use of community resources and include parents and other resource workers. Child-care groups should better support adolescent girls to help them learn to cope with their behaviour. In order for these plans to be successful, they must be well-known by panchayats and their members. Even the government of India's New Education Policy, 2020, recommends the use of school-based social workers and counsellors. Students, parents, and other community members would benefit from the engagement and cooperation of these educators.

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Skilling the Youth: Addressing the Youth Un-employment and Skill Development Challenge

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Abstract:

Skilling of youth is one of the major policy interventions of the Government to address the unemployment amongst the youth. The economy has experienced unprecedented growth, but has been characterized by jobless growth and informalization of job opportunities in the organized sectors. This paper attempts to assess the employment intensity and the potential to create jobs through the skill development initiative of Udaan program. A major policy objective of the scheme is to ensure demand-oriented employment opportunities. Nevertheless, the scheme serves broader socio-economic goals of empowerment through positive network effects. This paper discusses key policy imperatives towards expanding the scale and scope of the scheme amongst the educated youth of Jammu and Kashmir.

Keywords: *Youth, Employment, Skill, Kashmir, Scheme, Govt.*

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Introduction:

The youth are often perceived as agents of social change. This role in social change/transformation is pursued as a result of the young people differentiating between what they accept and what they wish to change in a given social setup, at times through participation in movements for social change. Throughout the world, there have been several cases of such movements by youth. Example can be what was witnessed in the late 1960's, which was marked by the rise of "hippies", who in the West represented a non-violent protest of the youth against western values. They wanted to be left alone to do what they liked without the constraints of the mores and laws of the civilisation in which they grew up. The 1970s witnessed the movements of the underprivileged seeking redress of their social disabilities. For example, the Black Panthers of America resorted to militant movements to pursue their goal. An illustration of revolutionary agitation was that of the youth in China in 1987. In India since 1970 there have been a number of cases of youth agitation, such as that of the anti-reservation in Gujarat in 1985, the All Assam Student Union agitation in Assam in 1984 and the anti-Mandal agitation in north India in 1990 and so on and so forth. But the main challenge in twenty first century for the State has been to address the bigger issue of unemployment and for that purpose from time to time numbers of policy interventions and schemes have been formulated including the skilling of the youth.

Skill India

Skill India Mission is a government scheme launched in 2015. It is an umbrella scheme that has many skilling schemes and programmes under it. The chief objective is to empower the youth of the country with adequate skill sets that will enable their employment in relevant sectors and also improve productivity. The mission intends to create opportunities and space for the development of talents in Indian youth. It aims to develop those sectors which have been put under skill development for the last many years, and also to recognize new sectors for skill development. It is important to empower students with skill-based training as the development of our economy depends upon them. Here's why skill development is important:

- The skill development process helps students think beyond grades. It helps them tap into their capabilities, develop real-life skills, and prepare themselves to be successful in the careers of their choice.
- Skill-based learning improves employability and helps the youth earn more. Furthermore, it improves the economy of a country and promotes its financial growth.
- Skill-based learning helps students develop problem-solving strategies and effective communication techniques.
- Learning skill development promotes the leadership skills of students as it helps them become more altruistic. They learn to use their skills to organize and inspire their teams, which in turn, creates in them leadership qualities.
- It also helps students develop creativity, critical thinking, and analytical thinking as skill-based learning focuses on the evaluation and application of facts to real-life problems.

The aim of the Udaan scheme is capacity building of the youth in J&K through skill development and subsequently exposing them to the best of corporate in India. The initiative also aims at providing the corporate sector in India access to the rich talent pool in J&K. According to official papers reviewed by *Greater Kashmir*, contrary to the aim of Rs 982.57 crore covering around 42,658 beneficiaries, J&K-based banks have approved Rs 1840.15 crore in favors of 53,299 beneficiaries under various employment generation schemes. This comprised Rs 1337.94 crore under the PMEGP, Rs 316.93 crore under the NRLM, Rs 68.93 crore under the NULM, Rs 10.45 crore under the PMWMY, Rs 57.37 crore under the CCS for artisans and weavers, and Rs 48.53 crore under the JKREGP. According to an official, the J&K administration has adopted a two-pronged strategy of courting outside investors while handholding young entrepreneurs to launch their businesses so that they could be job providers instead of job seekers. The government has introduced a variety of self-employment programmes during the last three years to aid young people in starting their businesses. One of the J&K administration's most fruitful efforts has been the mission youth programme.

A sustainable livelihood line in the transportation industry has been established for unemployed kids, thanks to the 'Mumkin' (livelihood generation) programme run by Mission Youth. The 'Spurring Entrepreneurship Initiative' programme is built on the idea of the Youth Enterprise with Innovation (YouWiN) and Champion for an Innovation initiative, which aims to inspire young people, especially young women, to

start and grow innovative businesses. Dentists are receiving tailored financial help for opening dental clinics under a sector-specific programme for dental professionals. Under this programme, a sum of Rs 8 lakh is given as financial support for starting their business.

Another initiative called 'Rise Together' aims to foster community-based entrepreneurship in the Himalayan region in the best possible way to create jobs and income, and foster a sense of social service among the new-age young businesspeople. Under the programme, qualified youth groups receive financial support of Rs 20 lakh, which is made up of a loan from the bank for Rs 17.50 lakh or 70 percent of the project cost and an upfront subsidy component minimum of Rs 2.5 lakh or 10 percent of the project cost. According to the CMIE, J&K has a higher unemployment rate than the rest of India at 15 percent. This raises the issue of how to control the rising unemployment

A Skill Training: Udaan Training in Jammu and Kashmir.

I. Basic features of the UDAAN scheme in Kashmir

The Udaan Scheme was undertaken by the National Skill Development Corporation as a Special Industry Initiative (SII) for the state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). The Rangarajan Committee's recommendations guided the creation of the plan, which the federal government used to improve the employability of J&K's educated young, including graduates, post-graduates, and engineers with three-year diplomas. Udaan was promptly implemented in the 2011–12 fiscal year after the Rangarajan Committee was created in August 2010 and its report was submitted in February 2011. By facilitating people in the development of their talents and thereafter introducing them to the top Indian corporations, the Udaan scheme seeks to boost the capacity of young people in J&K. The project also aimed to open up J&K's enormous talented individuals to the industrial India. The organisation in charge of funding and overseeing the programme is the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). MHA allocated a total of Rs 750 crore rupees in funding to the scheme. The implementer has so far received Rs 353.45 crore in funding, of which Rs 344.74 crore has been used as of August 2018 (MSDE,2020). The Central Government's Udaan scheme was a big effort to hire the educated youth of the state of J&K. It intended to provide five years of coverage for over 40,000 J&K youth. The government did, however, extend this programme, and it was currently in the closed phase (STARTUP, 2020).

II. Procedure of implementation:

Udaan scheme's overall procedure generally involved the selection of corporate organisations, training of applicants, and placement of candidates (which is an incentivized activity). Four steps are involved in these actions, and they were as follows:

Stage of a proposal: Interested corporate groups submitted proposals to the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). It included the relevant information as well as the specified objectives. NSDC screened the documents after they were submitted. Following the approval of ideas, NSDC assigned final objectives to corporate organisations for specific time periods.

Mobilization stage: During recruitment drives, candidates were given information about the training needs, qualifications, and employment possibilities, as well as other details like the facilities available. Campaigns for mobilisation have had a substantial contribution from NSDC. As a result of the Jammu and Kashmir Youth Development Forum's (JKYDF) active involvement in assisting in the mobilisation of candidates in accordance with corporate organisations' requirements. The corporate bodies furthermore have offices (which include company representatives, NGOs, mobilisation agencies, etc.) in the state in order to undertake drives.

Training: The candidates who were chosen for the training stage are given one-time travel expenses from J&K to their respective training centres. As soon as the applicants arrived at the training facilities, procedures like document verification, candidate declaration form completion, and training programme orientation began. They were then given accommodations (along with meals). Throughout the duration of their course, they also get monthly stipends. The lengthy training procedure lasts for a minimum of 90 days, which includes both on-the-job training (OJT) and classroom instruction in technical and product knowledge.

| District | Share of Candidates |
|-----------|---------------------|
| Srinagar | 11% |
| Baramulla | 10% |
| Anantnag | 7% |
| Budgam | 6% |
| Pulwama | 5% |
| Kupwara | 5% |
| Kulgam | 3% |
| Bandipora | 2% |
| Shopian | 2% |
| Ganderbal | 2% |

The requirements for the programme stipulate that 40,000 Jammu and Kashmiri youth

were to be targeted throughout a five-year period rather than district-specific registration goals. The majority of rural areas had registration shares between 1% and 2%. The viability of mobilising in rural areas within the allocated budget has been a source of worry for business groups. Rural candidates' superior income prospects in agricultural operations through Udaan compared to corporate postings, their reluctance to travel due to potential employers' conservative mindsets, and other factors have all contributed to this lack of enthusiasm. Political upheaval has also hampered mobilisation attempts in other areas, including Bandipora, Shopian, and Ganderbal. Effective mobilisation was highlighted as being hampered by inadequacies in the distribution of scheme-related information to all districts, which for many corporate bodies remained limited to big districts alone. Male candidates made up about 78% of the candidates, with female candidates making up the remaining 22%. Due to concerns about adaptability, safety, security, etc., parents were frequently hesitant to advance the interests of possible female candidates. The cultural framework governing the advancement of women can be positively changed by offering parental counselling and sharing the success stories of female candidates with the families of prospective female candidates. Handicrafts and Hospitality were the two main industries where women from the state can easily flourish, provided that they were given the required familial support, freedom, and handholding.

| Sector | Share |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| IT/IteS | 35% |
| Retail | 20% |
| BFSI | 15% |
| Tourism and hospitality | 13% |
| Telecom | 13% |
| Human resources | 11% |
| Healthcare | 9% |
| Textiles and apparels | 7% |
| Engineering services | 7% |
| Sales and marketing | 7% |
| Automobile | 4% |
| BPO | 4% |
| Logistics and supply chain management | 4% |
| Aviation | 2% |
| Advisory | 2% |
| Electrical | 2% |
| Market research | 2% |
| Capital goods | 2% |
| Construction | 2% |
| Electronics | 2% |
| Manufacturing | 2% |
| Security services | 2% |

According to NSDC records, there were 46 active Udaan partners (corporate entities), of which a sizeable portion (35%) were engaged in IT and ITeS. Other prominently

represented sectors included retail (20%), BFSI (15%), tourism and hospitality (13%), telecom (13%), human resources (11%), and healthcare (9%). As can be seen, there was a lot of room for corporate bodies to participate more actively in industries including manufacturing, electronics, aviation, and construction. Tourism and hospitality, textiles, and garments, among other important industries potentially witness significantly greater participation from corporate entities active in these industries. According to few business bodies, there were no sector-specific requirements for corporate representation under the scheme's rules. As a result, corporate in the IT/ITeS industry (mostly BPOs) first provided a significant amount of training, a tendency that persisted.

| Duration | Share |
|-----------------|--------------|
| 3 months | 26% |
| 3.5 months | 7% |
| 4 months | 2% |
| 4.5 months | 2% |
| 5 months | 4% |
| 6 months | 57% |
| Above 6 months | 2% |

Note: From BRIEF (2018-2019)

Candidates dropping out of Udaan: Some candidates who enroll in the Udaan training later resign from it or fired by the company. Under the appointed supervision of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the all-encompassing implementing agency established a timeframe for each milestone specified in the scheme's clause (NSDC,2018, p.14).

SECTION III: Methodology.

This program aims to provide Skill training and enhance the employability of unemployed educated youth of Jammu and Kashmir. The scheme covers all educated youth like graduate, post-graduate, and diploma holders. During Interviews, many UDAAN trainees were privileged to have suitable jobs after properly being trained in companies through UDAAN.

A thorough evaluation of the relevant studies on the "UDAAN scheme," "UDAAN-related schemes," and other related topics was conducted. This study's main goal was to investigate and pinpoint the pertinent aspects of the "UDAAN scheme". Case Study is

the main component of this study. Some twelve candidates were chosen to use a semi-structured interviewing technique to obtain their opinions on the "UDAAN scheme". The first question asked was to consider the reason for joining training under the "UDAAN scheme". They were also asked about the benefits received during training. Questions concerning their satisfaction level after completion of their training program. Questions concerning their placement/job offers after completion of their training program were also asked to candidates. Finally, they were also asked about any issues or limitations of the training program.

Here are some Cases of UDAAN recipient candidates.

CASE - I

One of the intriguing conversations was with Imtiyaz Ahmed, a *B.sc Graduate*, at Apollo Med-Skills, Bangalore. The reason for the young man from Baramulla district to joining the program was that he had been unemployed after completing his graduation. He needed to support his family and found that the "UDAAN scheme" was a good platform for enhancing his job skills. He thought that their learning improved as a result of the training. He also added that "the candidates have been influenced and have undergone radical change due to the learning and teaching techniques used by Ms Sikha, Salina, Reema, and Ms Jaspreet Kaur." The Royal Orchids Hotel, one of the businesses hired by the program to train 800 J&K-educated youth, was also mentioned. It is a Bangalore-based hotel chain that worked with NSDC to conduct specific training and job searches for young people in the UDAAN Scheme who had received their education in J&K. He further highlighted that trainers in the program were quite proficient in their teaching skills. He also stated that the training program should cover relevant skills like website designing and healthcare skills. Overall, he was satisfied with the training program and his job offer.

CASE - II

Trained by Sebiz info Pvt. Ltd for six months, Mr ASIF GUL MALIK having Diploma in computer engineering was Placed as a Trainee software engineer at Gurgaon. The candidate has joined the program as he was not sure whether he wanted to pursue his studies or look for a job. He had found out that the "UDAAN scheme" was a good platform for enhancing his technical skills. He added, "when the training was finished, they provided a placement. The recruits from J&K are given new skills through this

training, which helps to develop their interests in industrial work and professional skills. However, this procedure was carried out through the massive recruitment drive under the UDAAN initiative, which was carried out by the Training and Placement Team. Several engineering graduates and IT professionals who had earned professional degrees showed up for the eligibility test, which consisted of a written exam, a group discussion, and a final interview. Their main goal was to give students real-world exposure with the chosen technology through projects". He further said they use various training technologies, such as instructor-led courses, e-Learning, and conventional techniques. They also focused on entrepreneurship growth and personality development. Special sessions were held on business etiquette, negotiating competence, personal grooming and effective communication. These courses have greatly impacted our personal grooming as leadership qualities, teamwork, and analytical skills development amongst unemployed candidates. It offered us 6-month training, and the training location was at Mohali Chandigarh with free training allowances. He highlighted that trainers in the program should also focus on other aspects, like enhancing the trainees' communication skills. At last, the candidate said, 'In an overall scenario, my experience was excellent.

CASE - III

A more fascinating meeting was with a young employee of Maruti Suzuki, a little pioneer in India who worked in the Maruti Suzuki Training Academy for the automotive business. *SHARIK FAROOQ LONE (name changed), a Mechanical engineering graduate who was trained by IISD Marutiis Duration for 6 months, works now at Gurgaon.* The candidates' decision to enroll in the programme was motivated by his unemployment and zeal to learn more about his area of education. He realized that the "UDAAN plan" was a wonderful platform for improving his job abilities because he wanted to provide for his family. In 2019, he left his employment for several personal reasons and afterwards, Maruti Suzuki Company chose him in Kashmir. He believed that his behavioral, technical, and functional abilities were enhanced. He added, "The Maruti Suzuki Training Academy and the Indian Institute for Skill Development have collaborated on several trainings and upgrading programs. It offers a prestigious training program that prepares recent graduates or diploma holders over six months for "Automotive Sales Training" before placing them with

Maruti dealerships". He emphasized the need for programme instructors to pay attention to enhancing technical skills. Finally, the candidate concluded, "In general, my experience was excellent."

CASE - IV

Another graduate candidate *HARSHITA JAIN*, trained by *VISPL Pvt. Ltd* for a duration of 6 months at as Analyst joined the programme as she was unsure about her life goals. The candidate said, "my friends told me about the UDAAN skills to succeed in life further." "When I joined VISPL at Delhi, choosing to do so as an UDAAN partner was, in retrospect, a freeing experience." The candidate was content with her training in UDAAN as she had the opportunity to live in a big city and leave behind the usual life of staying at home, getting married young, and starting a family. She was impressed with the professional environment in the programme and the skills she received during her training. She was also happy about the stipend allotted given to her during training. She emphasized that more girls should join the programme to enhance their personal and professional lives. She wanted to highlight that the programme should specifically target girls. Overall, she was satisfied with the content and training of the program.

CASE - V

Muzamil Malik (name-changed), a graduate young boy trained by *Apollo Medical Skills* for three and a half months at *Delhi NCR* as executive medical sales. The candidates' reason for enrolling in the programme was that he was confused about his career prospects after graduating. He added that the training curriculum was effectively crafted to advance youths' careers and positively mould them. Candidates who participated in the module of this programme were exposed to a variety of business prospects where they could experience significant professional progress. He also said that "with the help of this system, young people can select from a variety of employment options depending on their academic qualifications and career interests, which they would not have access to in their native places." He highlighted that trainees should be provided with some brief features of the programme before joining so they can be fully prepared for their expectations in the program. He also highlighted that their stipend at times is not received on time, which makes them less motivated to continue in the program. But he thought such programmes should be increased in all places to improve life-skills.

CASE - VI

Another candidate *ABIDA (name-changed)* with an MBA degree trained by *IISD, Pvt. Ltd.* for 6 months at Gurgaon as sales marketing, had been disappointed in her future career prospects due to a lack of confidence and counseling. The candidate had no knowledge of or exposure to the corporate world. She was enthused to join the training programme as she had heard about its positive aspects. She felt that her interview and marketing skills had improved after joining the program. She thought the trainers were quite skilled and professional in their approach towards the candidates. She also added that Project UDAAN acts as a step up for newcomers and systematically discusses the problems and finds appropriate solutions for the trainees. Overall, she was content with her training and her job placement.

CASE - VI

The young lady had joined the training module as she was unemployed after getting a business degree. She had hoped that NSDC's UDAAN programme would allow her to explore her potential and flourish in the working world. *INAYA-MARYAM (alternate spelling)* With MBA degree was trained by *Frontline Business Pvt. Ltd.* at Delhi for six months as a business analyst. She added that once "she started the training, she understood that it was a good opportunity and a good choice." During the training, she was able to better understand the business's organizational structure, develop interpersonal abilities, speak with assurance, and learn what true autonomy entailed. She described her training as a fantastic exploration, full of knowledge, contact with new people, and more. She was fully content with the training parameters and her job offer. She believed that the government should start more programmes that specifically target girls.

CASE – VII

MOHD ADEEM (name changed) with a degree in Mechanical Engineering was trained by *Tata Motors* for 6 months at *Tata Motors Pune* as *Manager of Operations/Head of Training Academy*. This young person had joined the programme to support his family due to little source of income at home. He was looking for a job and, at the same time, enhancing his job skills for a better future. He believed that UDAAN provided an excellent platform for him to improve his interview skills and gain valuable experience in the corporate world. He added, "after taking part in the training programme,

receiving the full support of my directors, and working with a diverse group of people, I was able to dramatically develop my own talents." Additionally, I value the program's structure and rigour. He also added that the programme worked hard to get them into good jobs, as he genuinely liked working with Tata Motors.

CASE - VIII

Despite the successes, there was a candidate who had a negative experience with UDAAN programme. The young boy had enrolled in the programme hoping to receive training and find a good employment option. An intriguing discussion with a candidate *Suhail Mohd (name changed) with MPhil in English, trained by Maruti Suzuki Pvt. Ltd. for 6 months at Tata Motors Pune.* According to him, top businesses offer people training and jobs as a part of the UDAAN scheme, but there are not enough jobs in the state for everyone. He wasn't impressed by the salary, which starts at Rs. 10,000 per month. He believed that some leading companies provide training to the youth and even help them find jobs, but when it comes to opening their offices in the valley, they simply deny it. As a result, candidates who do not want to leave the state can get good jobs because of the lack of opportunities within the state. He also said, "I was selected for training but was not getting the right employment that suited my qualifications." He said that the valley's young people were not looking for jobs at the call centres. Companies that offer them training are unwilling to give them jobs. He added that it is very traumatic for people who cannot find a job after their training. He added, "So far, in my batch, around 547 applicants have completed the training, of which 221 have been offered employment." He also highlighted that the dropout rate was high in some cases due to lack of job opportunities. Although the candidate was impressed with the training program, he was disappointed with the placement offers and efforts of the authorities to place them in good jobs.

Impact Analysis

The main aim of the qualitative analysis of the study was to get a profound understanding of different aspects of the Udaan scheme. For this, 12 in-depth interviews of Udaan trainees were conducted to get deeper insights of the trainees regarding their expectations, aspirations and their satisfaction level about the scheme. It was observed most of the respondents had joined the programmed due to the following reasons:

- i. Lack of employment
- ii. Learning relevant job skills (computer training, communication, technical skills, software courses)
- iii. Exposure to corporate world
- iv. Personality development
- v. Providing support to family

Most of the trainees were satisfied with the training programmes of UDAAN as it provided them with relevant skills. This training provided the recruits from Jammu & Kashmir with new abilities fostered them with a passion for industrial work and a ladder for the growth of their professional expertise. The primary objective of the training was to expose job aspirants to the chosen technology in a real-world setting through projects. A wide range of training methods, including traditional classroom instruction, online tutorials, and more were offered. Additionally, it also led to the enhancement of their character and capacity for entrepreneurial endeavours. The programme trainees were satisfied as they opined that it has also aided their personal development in areas such as leadership, teamwork, and analytical thinking. They were also contented with the trainer's program. Trainees felt that the instructors were very knowledgeable and professional in their interactions with the trainees.

However, some candidates also emphasised that a component of practical skills like website design and healthcare in the curriculum may be included. Female aspirants were also pleased and satisfied with the high quality of instruction and the supportive professional atmosphere of the programme. The stipend during training that was given to them also made them very happy. They wanted more young women should participate in the programme since it would benefit them greatly. They stressed the need to make the programme accessible to women.

Some trainees, however, did mention that they were not getting their stipends on schedule, which discouraged them and affected many youngsters from sticking with the programme. Few said that the government should expand its media outreach and also include local campaigns targeting young people who are out of work. Government should initiate more initiatives aimed at young women and their growth. Although, majority were satisfied with programme, but lack of jobs in their hometown due to non-availability of corporate firms left some unsatisfied. They said that government should

try to get more corporate firms in the valley, to reduce an unemployment rate which is increasing at alarming rate. They also said that due to patriarchal structure of the society, many people don't let their daughters to opt jobs outside despite being beneficiary of the Udaan scheme. Setting up, corporate firms shall also lead to empowerment of young female aspirants. Overall, the programme has been deemed successful by the candidates.

Conclusion: A unique industrial initiative, Udaan was created and implemented in Jammu and Kashmir. Udaan had a strong focus on countering unemployment; it aimed at reaching the 40,000 educated youth of Jammu and Kashmir over a five-year period. It offered skill development and improved employability for educated unemployed youngsters in Jammu and Kashmir. The performance of scheme has been satisfactory and beneficial for the target audience which included graduates, post-graduates and diploma holders in engineering field from Jammu and Kashmir. The program was focused on skills, and the skill certification program's goal was to make it possible for many young people in Jammu and Kashmir to enroll in standard training techniques, instructional classes, and e-Learning that is industry-relevant. They also focused on entrepreneurship growth and personal development. On corporate etiquette, negotiation skills, personal grooming, and effective communication, separate seminars were held. The focus was on assisting young aspirants in building job-related competences and establishing themselves in the specific workplace environment. Udaan intended for the industrial and private sectors to flourish concurrently. It offered young people around the country a platform to learn about career and entrepreneurship options by its distinctive style. Through this programme, mobilisers like JKYDF made an important effort to alter young people's lives and teaching ecosystems how to determine their own future. The overall findings of the study indicate positive changes in applicants' technical skills and employability. However, it was seen that when one person becomes unemployed, it will have an effect on the living situation of an individual. However, Udaan scheme provided with jobs that allowed an individual to become self-sufficient and meet their basic needs. Udaan addressed socio-economic development by assisting youth with placement support with salaries ranging from Rs 10,000-20,000. Successful candidates are working in major companies across the country. In addition, applicants who returned after completing their training under the programme had started their own businesses in Jammu and Kashmir, joined automakers, hotel establishments,

showrooms, etc, which could be considered as a positive economic development backed by the plan. Successful entrepreneurial endeavors created an atmosphere that was favorable for the growth of start-up enterprises among the educated masses, and ensured the creation of jobs. In order to improve training under a more robust legislative framework, Udaan was envisioned as an option for apprenticeships in the skill development environment. It was understood from the study that the scheme should be restarted for the benefit of the youth of Jammu & Kashmir, in future with some revisions in the overall framework and further streamlining of operational aspects.

Suggestions: Here are a few recommendations:

- I. Reintroduce the Udaan scheme for the greater benefit of youth and society. The limitations in the previous Udaan scheme, as per the respondents, should be addressed. These limitations include issues with stipend, gender representation, training sessions, etc.
- II. There should be better awareness of the scheme, through multiple forms of media (TV, Radio, Social Media, etc). Efforts should be made to ensure that the public, particularly in rural areas, are adequately informed of the various Udaan provisions.
- III. The J&K government should have a greater role in implementation of the Udaan system.
- IV. Accountability and openness is necessary for the scheme's resources. In this context, social audit provisions should be extremely important.
- V. There should also be provisions in which self-employment and entrepreneurial activity is promoted among youth, alongside the focus on placement in private sector.
- VI. Jammu and Kashmir need a comprehensively defined industrial plan. Additionally, new opportunities for skill development will be required to revitalize the small-scale manufacturing sector. Increasing the private sector's involvement in social services like health and education can aid in job creation. In the context of private employment, it is important to change our customary outlook of our society where government jobs are given more priority and privilege. In educational institutions, teaching-learning should

enable every student to be independent rather than make them wait for government jobs. A huge chunk of the workforce can be employed in the private sector provided there is some pay security and minimum wage rules in this sector.

- VII. More focus should be on skill training and its improvement under the Udaan scheme to ease the entry of all participants in the job market. Programmes like credit access measures can assist youth-entrepreneurship.
- VIII. People should also be trained for the local market needs, like hospitality and food processing. This will also aid the development of private sector locally.

Employment generation is the key channel through which economic growth translates into prosperity for the population. In a growing economy, employment growth with rising productivity is the most effective mechanism available to the poor to participate in the growth process and raise their standard of living. In order to reduce the unemployment, the following points must be considered to frame the policies to eradicate the plague of unemployment.

- I. Promotion of labour intensive generation activities, for example, horticulture, regeneration of degraded forests, watershed development, etc.
- II. The non-farm activities in the rural areas should be given preference. There is lot of service activities required in the remote and rural areas in the field of education, health, and in respect of information technology.
- III. The major employment generation sectors like tourism and handicrafts are required to be encouraged and new tourist spots should be explored. The State of J&K has certain inherent strengths that can be utilized to improve the income of its people and to provide gainful employment opportunities on sustainable basis, which are like strong base of traditional skills not found elsewhere; untapped natural resource; a natural environment which has been very profitably utilized by other countries for high income-environment friendly tourism industry.

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From Lab to Field: Understanding the Social Implications of Genetically Modified Crop Technology in India

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Abstract:

The paper traces the underlying ideologies, forces and factors that have set GM crops in motion throughout the world, especially in developing nations like India. It looks at the debate between the opponents and proponents of Genetically Modified (GM) Crops with special reference to the Indian scenario. However, no monolithic praising or condemning of GM crops has been resorted to. It describes both the versions- Pro- and Anti- of GM crops. The paper briefly identifies the public health risk and implication of GM crops. Moreover, it briefly Towards the end, the paper gropes to explore whether there is any meeting ground or balance possible between the two versions.

*“... walk on the legs of innovation and solidarity
and work with one hand for food production
and with the other for environment.”*

Keyword: *Genetic Engineering Crops*

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Introduction:

Alteration of genomes in different organisms including animals and plants, has been taking place for centuries so as to produce specific, selective and desirable characteristics and modifications. The genetic changes in agriculture are often directed towards increasing produce, food quality and resistance to pests and diseases. In past these modifications in agriculture set-ups were done in traditional ways. However, the advancements in science, especially in the field of biotechnology and biochemistry, the whole process gets sophisticated through which prolific knowledge about genes and genetic engineering is applied to get the desired traits in agricultural and food produce.

Background:

The modern process of genetic engineering can trim and isolate a single gene with a specific and desirable trait and the same gene can be transferred from one crop species to another (Bruce & Bruce, 2014). Moreover, the technology also enables to transfer gene/s from other organisms like rat into any plant species like brinjal. The whole process is quite different from the traditional modes of genetic transfer where hundreds and thousands of genes get transferred from one species to another in not so controlled manner as it is done in the modern processes of genetic engineering (Bruce & Bruce, 2014; Tiedje et al,1989). This modern process dates back to the early 1970s when GM technology was experimented *in vitro* settings. Its application has greatly been developed and extended with high end sophistication into the field of agriculture, medicine, environment and food production (Pental, 2003). The manufacturing industry and research & development in the sector have been witnessing huge revolutionary transformations which has motivated multinational corporations to make huge investments in the GM technology (Oliver, 2014; Robert, 1999).

Genetic Engineering and Crops:

The genetic modification technology involves the identification of a particular gene in a species linked to a specific trait or characteristic which is desired and to be transferred to another organism. In other words, GM crops are developed by taking genes from organisms like bacteria, virus, etc and inserting these genes into the genome of crops, so that new traits, like pest & drought resistance, are developed in the engineered crop (Maghari & Ardekani, 2011; Bawa & Anilakumar, 2013). For instance, in Bt Cotton and Bt Brinjal, genes from an organism, *Bacillus thuringiensis* is inserted into natural cotton or brinjal genome; the genes of that organism express in the engineered crops seeds and, henceforth, the new desirable traits are developed. Moreover, the nature of the technology is such that the developers use ‘terminator/ suicide genes’ in the GM crops that makes it non-renewable, i.e. the seeds that are produced by GM crops after one season are sterile. In short, the GM crop-seeds are viable for only one season. This ‘terminator

technology' is to prevent the patent infringements of the agribusiness corporations who are involved in the propagation of GM crops in the world (Dalazen & Merotto Junior, 2016). The genetic engineering has been variedly used in plants and crops to produce whole plants and their food products that are used in everyday life across human societies. The technology has greatly been used in plants, vegetables and many other crops and end products including tomatoes, soya, maize, rice, yeasts, cotton, brinjal, and different types of protein, oil, beverage and flour. Especially, in case of end-products derived out of GM crops it is being argued that these foods or edibles are refined to such extent that these do not contain any genetic material or modified protein from other organisms. In fact, as argued, these products cannot be distinguished from those produced in traditional manners (Robert, 1999). However, the foods and other products derived from genetic modifications is generally defined as a food which is, or which is made from, a genetically modified organism" and which contains genes or protein material due to this biotechnological alteration.

GMCs as a panacea for Global Food Crisis and Hunger- A Debate:

Since 1992 Rio earth summit majority of nations around the globe fortified their positions that biotechnology could improve food security, health care and environment (Bender, 2001). On the similar lines, the agri-business corporations proposed the developments in biotechnology like GM technology as an ultimate solution to eradicate hunger and global food crisis. In the present context, the argument that the adoption of GM crops into agriculture for solving the global hunger and food crisis has got caught into an intense political and public debate throughout the world. The three reactions to this debate are revolving around "acceptance", "rejection" and "precaution" with respect to the adoption of GM crops. The proponents who accept or are favoring the adoption of GM crops see it as a panacea for the global hunger and food crisis. It is argued that the population across the globe is increasing rapidly and making sure to supply adequate food and nutrition this growing population is regarded by the proponents of GM crops to be a bigger and crucial challenge for future. GM foods are deemed to promise to meet this need in a number of ways by developing high nutritive quality, crop-resistance to pest and diseases; tolerance to herbicide, adverse climate, water-scarcity and salinity. In other words, the three-trait technology proposed by the agri-biotechnologist and agri-business corporation specifically focuses on controlling rampant use of harmful chemicals; increasing quantity, quality and storage life of crops and prevent farm and crops from climatic adversities.

The proponents of GM crops heavily rely on this three-trait technology by emphasizing that the overwhelming damage to farm and crops from insect pests results in huge financial losses that inturn greatly impacts the local populations and regional economies of many nations whose priority sectors are agribusiness. Moreover, the uncontrolled use of chemicals in the form of pesticides or fertilizers contaminates the food and other edible products and also its potential hazard to

environment and water sources is not scalable (Maji, Dwivedi, Singh, Kishor & Gond, 2020). The GM technology offers to greatly reduce the cost of growing crops or bringing these to market. It is projected that through these genomic innovations there is drastic reduction in the use of chemicals to protect crops from pests and diseases, and that it also facilitates their early introduction into markets, which is claimed to be benefitting farmers extensively (Pental, 2003). Moreover, it is also projected to reduce impact on environment by reducing high and rampant use of chemicals in agriculture sector. On similar lines, the GM technology makes it possible to introduce climate-specific traits in crops like anti-drought, anti-saline or anti-freeze gene in plant genomes that is claimed to enable crops to tolerate extremes of heat, saline or cold condition across diverse agricultural zones (Chandra & Pental, 2003). These innovations are believed to be ready to revolutionize agri-food industry by allowing agricultural activities in region which were inhospitable or unsuited for plants and crops. Additionally, it is also possible to enrich nutritive value of existing food crops like rice or other grains by introducing specific genes into the plants genome that greatly enriches its protein, vitamin and mineral composition. In collaboration with pro-GM lobby corporations, many non-profit agencies, like Rockefeller Foundation, have sponsored similar GM research and lab activities. Moreover, the level of acceptance or adoption of the GM crops across nation could be assessed from the following fact that the majority production of GM crops at global level is heavily controlled by agri-business corporations with huge increase in GM production across previous two decades. The transgenic processes have transformed the agriculture sector in such countries (Maghari & Ardekani, 2011). As claimed by the proponents of the genetically engineered varieties in agriculture, the adoption of the new biotechnology many milestones have been achieved (Thamarajakshi, 2001; Pental, 2003; Whitman, 2000).

Between ‘Claimed Benefits’ and ‘Apparent Risks’- A brief:

The opponents of the adoption of GM crops vehemently focus on the bio-safety and impact of the genetically engineered varieties on human health, environment and natural biodiversity. They generally take either a “rejectionist” approach or a “precautionary” approach. The former group of the opponent so GM crops completely “rejects” the new biotechnology of the engineered crops and strongly advocates for the adoption of traditional and conventional varieties and practices in agriculture to increase the production and productivity. A somewhat moderate group, the precautionary group advocates for the strict testing of GM crops before their environmental release (Ando & Khanna, 2000), and thereafter, infallible regulation and monitoring. The European approach to GM crops could accurately be identified with the “rejectionist” ideology while the precautionary approach towards the GM crop adoption is being shown by the developing nations like India. Nonetheless, the

two approaches, more-or-less, equally consider bio-safety an important aspect that needs serious attention in the whole GM driven innovations. Since they have an adverse impact on environment, health and biodiversity as evidence across the globe is emerging.

The fact that GM technology embeds specific genetic material into diverse genomes for desired traits it must also be noted that these engineered genomes remain active in the biosphere which may pose threat to national biodiversity and may incite unwanted genetic modifications. Precisely for this reason we have lobbies and critics across the globe against transgenic agri-technologies who either vehemently reject this technology altogether or sensitize stakeholders to follow a precautionary approach. Nonetheless, there are evidences emerging that contest the claims made by pro-GM lobbies that the GM crop-adoption has increased production or has greatly benefitted the farmers. In a survey, conducted by Department of agriculture (in AP) 71% farmers reported low yield when compared to local hybrids (Stone, 2002). With respect to yield of cotton growing countries the average cotton yields have stagnated or at best remained neutral, since the adoption of Bt cotton (Kuruganti, 2009; Trivedi, 2008). Pertinently, the agriculture secretary (Gujarat) wrote to the chairperson of GEAC:

“Yes, the productivity which was 175 kg/ha in 2002-03 is touching 460 kg/ha in 2004-05. But this is not solely due to Bt cotton hybrids as Gujarat recorded 450 in 1998-99 when there was no Bt cotton. In our opinion, all these years were good years of rainfall, with low to medium bollworm activity, hence this increase.” (cited in Kuruganti, 2009)

Thus, the opponents of GM crops contest that the productivity of cotton in India, after adoption of Bt cotton, increased due to increase of irrigation facility by massive water harvesting programmes; rainfall; low pest pressure; black soil and farmers’ experience (Durant, 2006; Ramanna, 2004). Likewise, there is a clear trend of yield (relative) growth declines in the case of soybean after the advent of the transgenic, herbicide-tolerant soybean in the US, (Meyer et al 2007 in Karuganti, 2003). In China’s Xinjiang province, that contributes 30% to cotton produce of the country, witnessed 3.74 times increase in its production of cotton. The reason, however, was not the adoption of Bt cotton (as it had only 7 % GM adoption rate) but the primary causes of increase were conventional varieties and traditional experience based technology (Xiaoling et al, 2006). Thus, it come to the forefront that the yield are much more complex than a linear function of technology.

Moreover, in the case of developing nations like India, the illegal adoption of GM crops of various varieties without any regulation and monitoring could have serious implications. As various reports indicate, especially the human health studies and the livestock mortality reports, there

are serious shortcomings in the bio-safety testing of the country (Kuruganti, 2006; Patel, 2007). In terms of the enforcement of the regime as it exists, there are numerous reports which have repeatedly pointed to serious bio-safety violations and the regulators have proven themselves incapable of fixing accountability in each such case. Thus, in the present scenario there is an intense debate between the proponents and opponents of the GM crops, at both public and political levels. On one-hand, the increase in production and productivity with environmentally friendly ways is claimed and on the other hand, the bio-safety and the hazardous impact of GM crops on human and environment is emphasized. There seems to be no meeting ground between the two approach and understandings. One works at the behest of the agri- business corporations, who control the GM crop and seed markets throughout the world. The enormous expensive research is being conducted to develop the GM crops, and support the same with the research backed and funded by the same corporations to mediate the construction of the market for GM crops worldwide. The pro-GM positions are grounded in the socially-embedded market, techno-scientific, non-deliberative and neo-managerialist constructs (Bender, 2001). It emphasizes the scientific analysis and objective rationality in understanding the problems of the world and also develops and suggests the strategies to deal with these problems on the similar lines. Infact, the markets are socially constructed by buyers and sellers, and markets are embedded in the broad socioeconomic environment in which they exist. Those seeking to construct a market for the GM crops using the existing commodity markets as a platform conflict with the sociopolitical environment that withholds normative and regulatory legitimacy from this outcome (Ibid). Consequently, the opponents' positions regarding the GM crops are grounded in religious, normative, cultural, and collaborative constructs. The groups who oppose the adoption of GM crops are branded as "neo-Marxist", "socialists" or "anti-technology people".

A wide range of issues emerges out of the conflicts between the proponents and opponents of GM crops. The prominent among them could be identified as:

- I. The integration of scientific progress with the public policy;
- II. The impact of the current models of development on the environment;
- III. The conflict of interest between the actor's interests (agri-business corporations) with that of public;
- IV. The relevance of the technological intervention to the cultural constructs dominant in the common people;
- V. The social construction of market and its opposition in the certain socio-political context; and above all,
- VI. The changing role of the State in the dominant neo-liberal paradigm.

Quite interestingly, it must be mentioned that many scientists and researchers have been victimized (under the influence of agri-corporations) who have

brought to surface the hazards of GM crops. Like the work (paper) of Chapela-Quist on genetic contamination published by *Nature*, was later withdrawn by the Journal, citing „severe criticism“. Pusztai's who worked on transgenic potatoes, was victimized by the scientific community backed by the corporations. The Pusztai and Chapela-Quist case are only two of the most dramatic demonstrations of the results of the increasingly commercial environments in which science is being carried out these days (Dubhashi, 2004; Patel, 2007)

Public Health Risks and Implications:

It has been widely debated among few stakeholder groups that transgenic crops or GM foods have complex concerns for environment, public health and economy. It is being understood that GM technology is being used by agribusiness or multinational corporations for pursuing profit without assessing potential hazards that this technology could have on diverse aspect of human and environmental interactions. These issues become more perilous when governments across the globe seem to be failing to exercise adequate regulatory mechanism on introduction and integration of GM technology with agriculture and economy of given region (Maghari & Adrekani, 2011). The potential risks and hazards of GM crops include:

1. Diminished efficacy of pesticides after introduction of transgenic crops in farms;
2. Genes get transferred to unintended or non-target plants/crops;
3. Harm to other organisms has been reported;
4. Risk to Human Health has been documented ;
5. Unexplored or unknown effects;
6. Impact on socio-economic aspects of farmers and agriculture sector (Prakash, Verma, Bhatia & Tiwari, 2011).

It goes without saying that rigorous and reliable research from an interdisciplinary perspective on the impact of GM technology and its products is inevitable. Yet, many studies and explorations have brought forth certain critical and crucial aspects of transgenic crops and food. Doubtlessly, these genetic innovations have positive implications for agriculture and food systems across the globe. Besides that there is also a huge global lobby against this technology which the opponents claim that it is being abused and misused by the big giant corporations, majorly located in US, which have great global market- and profit-share in the sector. Bringing a GM food to market is a lengthy and costly process, and of course agri-biotech companies wish to ensure a profitable return on their investment. Many new plant genetic engineering technologies and GM plants have been patented, and patent infringement is a big concern of agribusiness. Yet consumer advocates are worried that patenting these new plant varieties will raise the price of seeds so high that small farmers and third world countries will not be able to afford

seeds for GM crops, thus widening the gap between the wealthy and the poor. In the case of developing countries, there had been an increase in the agrarian distress and the suicides among farmers due to the economic strain. The economic cost of buying new seeds every season has driven farmers to extreme poverty and indebtedness, which is the main cause of suicides among farmers in developing countries like India. GM crops would aggravate economic strain, poverty and indebtedness by widening gap between poor and rich, promoting ecologically unhealthy genetic variations, and uprooting traditional and indigenous seed-saving and exchange (Shiva, 1999). In fact, evidence across the different countries indicates the transgenic crops have led to emergence of ‘super weeds’ and ‘super pests’ that has greatly been a worrying cause for farmers and eventually leading to increased the use of chemicals in the past seasons (Kuruganti, 2006, Patel 2007, Murthy, 2001). Also, the possibility of exploitation of farmers rapidly grows as the commercialization of seed technology though GM technology is tightly controlled by big agri-business houses. For instance, lawsuits filed by Monsanto, an agri-business MNC, against farmers for using ‘the Monsanto-licensed GM seeds from an unknown source and did not pay royalties to the company. In fact, the farmers contested that their traditional/unmodified crops get cross-pollinated from someone else's GM crops planted a field or two away *and* genes are exchanged between plants via pollen (Bender, 200; Pistorius, 1999).

Quite interestingly, it must be mentioned that many scientists and researchers have been victimized (under the influence of agri-corporations) who have brought to surface the hazards of GM crops. Like the work (paper) of Chapela-Quist on genetic contamination published by *Nature*, was later withdrawn by the Journal, citing ‘severe criticism’. Pusztai’s who worked on transgenic potatoes, was victimized by the scientific community backed by the corporations. The Pusztai and Chapela-Quist case are only two of the most dramatic demonstrations of the results of the increasingly commercial environments in which science is being carried out these days (Dubhashi, 2004; Patel, 2007)

Green Revolution, Indo-US Agricultural Knowledge Initiative:

Tracing the roots of green revolution, for two decades after 2nd world war, hunger in developing nations was tackled by US food surplus. But with the following economic strain in US and the favoring breakthroughs in agriculture and hybrid technology the 1st green revolution got mediated. The US food aid to India resulted in stagnation and degrading of the indigenous agricultural system, adding serious maladies to the food scenario in the country. When the food aid stopped the problem surfaced throughout the nation and it witnessed food riots across states. Consequently, the influx of hybrid-seeds, fertilizers and the related technology termed to be the 1st green

revolution for India (Patel, 2007).

Though the hybrid varieties yielded more than the traditional ones, but this technology heavily depended on increased-irrigation, fertilizers and pesticides. Thus, it had serious social and economic cost that had more serious implications on the hunger and food scenario in the developing nations. In India, green revolution weighed heavy on farmers, who were not able to buy irrigation and fertilizers. The number of smallholdings of farmers dropped by a quarter; risks of defaulting were higher and farmers were driven to poverty by debt, (Shiva, 1989). As the spiral of cost associated with needing increased levels of fertilizer, they were not able to secure the same level of yield. Three quarter of all farmers, cultivating one-third of the country's landmass, continue to be marginalized by Government (*Ibid*). In this context, the solutions provided by agri- business corporations to tackle the prevailing hunger and food crisis were based on genetic modifications of crops. This is further being mediated by the alignment of the US and Indian elites' interests and sharing of common assumptions and values about governance and economic order (Patel, 2007; Sahai, 2009). The Indo-US Agriculture Knowledge Initiative, (a secret attachment to the NUKE 123-deal) is basically for sharing knowledge and working together to develop better way to grow crops and lead a second green revolution. But why? Has the first green revolution achieved what it was supposed to? The Indo-American Knowledge Initiative is to achieve the goal that Indian biotechnology markets remain open to United States, which will have access to Indian biodiversity, genetic material, DNA, etc. The Private companies would develop gene patents and sell them at higher prices to the developing nations. The companies behind the Knowledge Initiative are the same chemical companies linked to 1st Green Revolution; now world's largest owners of seed firms (Mishra, 2005). Reflecting the same about the Indo-US initiative, Suman Sahai, an Indian geneticist, argues:

“Earlier a private company like Monsanto only had the status of a business entity. Now they can ask the director-general of ICAR to get our vast genetic wealth from any of its more than 200 research establishments.” (*in Patel 2007*).

It has opened the political and economic doors to a “second green revolution” based not on fertilizers and improved seeds but this time on biotechnology and genetic engineering- the GM crops. Besides, the Bt Brinjal debate in India demands some attention. The moratorium on the environmental release of Bt brinjal was seen by the anti-GM crop activists as victory for now. It puts on hold the approval given by GEAC for environmental release of Bt Brinjal developed by Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Co. Ltd. (Mahyco). However, the way the Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India (BRAI) Draft Bill is taking shape, with its draconian clauses to thwart any anti-GM voice, the pro-GM lobby seems to win in near future. It is seen as a tyrannical, secretive and

frightening bill to eliminate all the opposition to GM crops (Frontline March, 2010). The bill has imprisonment and fine to dissent against the new technology in agriculture. Even in US there is a three-tier regulatory mechanism, the Bill here, however, proposes a single-window clearing body. It is seen by the anti-GM lobby as to dilute the sovereignty of India in agriculture and essentially about changing Indian regulatory regimes around agriculture so that it suits the American business interests better (*Kuruganti, 2009*).

Conclusion:

The harms and hazards of GM crops are far more than its benefits. More so, when bio-safety of GM crops is not ensured; when faulty regulation and monitoring systems prevail. The solutions to poverty, deprivation and food crisis are seen in faulty technology, neglecting the distal determinants that are located in the wider socio-economic and political contexts. As it is argued that the not physical availability but the problem in food crisis is economic accessibility and affordability, for which the proponents and promoters of such technology are themselves responsible, in one way or the other. It becomes imperative to state that the 1st green revolution, if there was any, was mediated by the government or simply the State had a central place. Contrarily, the so-called 2nd green revolution of GM crops is out and out driven by the agri-business corporation and seed companies. As is evident from the experience of developing nations (particularly after the neo-liberal turn after 1980s), the governments are used to create such a policy architecture in these nations that facilitates self-benefiting interventions. Lessons need to be learnt from the Cuban experience of the heavy mechanizations and industrialization. It found Industrial-agricultural model to be unsustainable and proposed agrarian reforms. Moreover, they heavily regulate the GM crop adoption throughout the country and allow it very restrictedly, where farmers resort to it not as a matter of course but as a matter of last resort. The farmer is seen as an expert in the use of chemicals and the related technology like GM crop technology.

Thus, it is high time that the stakeholders in the developing countries come to the frontline and re-orient their economic and agricultural system on the publication of knowledge rather than its privatization; develop on the knowledge shared by peers rather than on the wisdom handed down by “international experts”; and adapting farming to the land, rather than land to crops. The development must emanate from the public’s own knowledge initiative, so that socially relevant, economically viable, culturally acceptable and environmentally safe lives are ensured for humans; beyond that, infact.

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Optimising learning process among students with special needs through Special Education – A critical review on status and strategies

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Abstract

The inception of special education for students with disabilities provided hope and opportunity for equitable educational experiences. A disability studies in education framework allows for complex components of teaching and programming for students with special needs to be explored in a practical way that promotes inclusive education among students with disabilities. Special education ensures students with disabilities receive specialized instruction designed to meet their unique learning needs. That way, they too get an opportunity to reach their full academic potential. For students with special needs, inclusion means everything because they thrive in the presence of their peers. When disability is viewed as a difference rather than deficit, it compels educators to consider the alternatives to pedagogy and programming more importantly it allows curricula and less on students overcoming their disability. Special Education ensures students with disabilities to receive specialised instructions designed to meet their unique learning needs. Through the special education people with special needs get an opportunity to reach their full academic potential.

This paper is focused to provide a critical review on how special education optimises leaning process among people with special needs and highlights various strategies and challenges of special education.

Keywords; Special Education, Special Needs, Rehabilitation, People with Disabilities.

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Introduction

“All of us do not have equal talent. But, all of us have an equal opportunity to develop our talents”. (Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam).

Special education is a modified programme which involves some unique tools, techniques and research efforts in improving instructional arrangements to meet the need of exceptional children. It is not a totally different programme which is assigned for the normal children. But it adds a sort of design proposed to assist the gifted children, physically and intellectually disabled children. As it is a planned and systematically mentioned arrangement, majority of average children are not grouped into this category of education. Special education can be provided in general schools with some special arrangement or in special schools the early history of special education was largely a history of separate schools; especially for children who were blind or deaf, whatever the problem, the solution was to put the child in a class with other children having similar problems. This was nothing but to exclude the handicapped from the main stream of the society. Thus separate, became only one of the meanings associated with special education. But as society's response to the handicapped began gradually to shift away from education critics of special classes, began to express doubts and there came special education.

In accelerating the special education programme, extra time may be devoted by the same teacher or by an expert in the concerning field when a project is taken for a delinquent child the child may be directed to attend his regular classes. He should also participate all the curricular and co-curricular activities carried out by the school. In addition to this he may be assigned with extra consultation hours in the school with the counsellor or school guidance officer or with the specific teacher to go through his special problems. The children with some difficulties may be included in this class but there is no necessity for the ordinary children to attend it. With such kind of designed programmes, the exceptional children achieve a great deal success in their personal and academic endeavours.

- The special education helps both the average children and exceptional children in special classes.

- The gifted children are not satisfied in the normal classes. They do not and scope to exercise their cognitive abilities. They also feel the tasks very easy and complete it very soon than others for which they show behavioural problems. But their talent is daily recognised and the development of skills and potentialities take their full shapes while they are included in homogenous groups with a special treatment.
- Sometimes the hearing impaired, visually impaired, orthopaedically handicapped and mentally retarded need special treatment. So special education helps them to keep pace with the academical activities are with their environment.
- Special education is not only useful the exceptional children it assists the teacher to know the leaders and their learning difficulties.
- Special education stimulates the children to participate in different co-curricular activities. This type of involvement provides the children to highlight their leadership qualities and creative urges.
- Special education tends the children to a fresh their intellectual abilities and know the various streams of knowledge, which they feel difficult in normal class situation.
- Due to facilities including special building features special equipment and special literary materials, special education prompts the children to be more motivated. It develops readiness and cowardness in learning.
- As the different personals like teacher problems of the children and make them more alert and quicker in their thinking process.
- Special education helps teacher to implement new methods, procedures tools and techniques in educational situations.
- Special education condemns the interiority complex among the children. They also get more freedom to work together and achieve their goals educators, consultants, psychotherapists, speech therapists and others are involved in this special education programme the learning becomes more meaningful and permanent. It wipes out the various emotional problems of the children and make them more alert and quicker in their thinking process.
- Special education helps teacher to implement new methods, procedures tools and techniques in educational situations.

- Special education condemns the interiority complex among the children. They also get more freedom to work together and achieve their goals.

Prevalence of Disability in India

According to a UNICEF Report on the Status of Disability in India (2000), there were around 30 million children that had some form of disability. Another report, the sixth All-India Educational Survey reported that of India's 2,000 million school aged children (6-14 years), 20 million require special needs education (Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI 2000). Although these numbers show a large discrepancy, it is clear that there are a large number of students with special needs that require appropriate educational services. Recognizing the large number of special needs population and regional disparities, the Government of India initiated policy reforms and strategies for special needs and inclusive education. The educational system in India has witnessed many changes after the coveted independence from Great Britain in 1947. The post freedom era together with the economic and social development policies in the last four decades have contributed substantially to bringing about an evolution in the overall educational system in India through legislative measures as well as social welfare activities.

Special Education in India

- The Indian Education Commission, widely known as the Kothari Commission (Kothari, 1966), was the first statutory body which highlighted the issue of children with disabilities in the Plan of Action in 1964 (Alur, 2002). It made strong recommendations for including children with disabilities into regular schools.
- The Ministry of Welfare launched the scheme for Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) to overcome some of the difficulties faced by the special education system in the country, particularly, limited coverage and a lack of qualified and trained teachers (Dasgupta, 2002). The Central Government provided 50 percent financial assistance to the State Governments for the implementation of the IEDC in regular schools.
- The IEDC scheme was followed by the seminal year of International Year for the Disabled Persons (IYDP) in 1981. The United Nations established that all

countries should frame legislation for people with disabilities and that was the major thrust of the year. India was one of the first signatories to the resolution proclaiming the year 1981 as the “International Year for the Disabled Persons.”

- The NPE highlighted various issues in relation to children with disabilities, such as, the magnitude of the problem, the approaches to service delivery, the scheme of human and material resources, and nature of linkages between various agencies, in special education, which created the platform for serving children with disabilities as well as highlighted “education as the right of the disabled child”.
- The DPEP, a centrally sponsored scheme, was launched in 1994, with the ultimate goal of achieving universal education. This program laid a special emphasis on the integration of children with mild to moderate disabilities in line with the world trends. The DPEP is noteworthy because it was the first time that primary education had been delinked from the state (Alur, 2002). The DPEP in 1994-1995 with financial support from the World Bank, the European Community, and the United Kingdom’s Overseas Development Agency, UNICEF, and the Government of the Netherlands and the GOI became one of the largest programs of the GOI in terms of funding. Approximately 40 billion rupees were budgeted to fund this program in 149 districts, in 14 states.
- A number of significant initiatives have taken place in the last decade that further strengthened inclusion movement in India. Some of these initiatives included: Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2000), The Action Plan for Inclusion in Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2005), National Policy for Persons with Disabilities (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, 2006), and Inclusive Education of the Disabled at Secondary Stage (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2009).
- The second education policy of India was adopted in the year 1986. NPE 1986 by emphasizing on Inclusive Education states that “the children with mild disabilities should be permitted to education in the regular school while the children with moderate to severe disabilities should continue to get education in the special school” (NPE, 1986).

- In the year 1987, the Mental Health Act came into action which revoked the Indian Lunacy Act of 1912 intending to consolidate the law for mentally ill persons.
- In the same year, the Project Integrated Education for the Disabled (PIED) to encourage the school in the neighbourhood to enrol the children with disabilities. This was a joint venture of Education Ministry with NCERT and UNICEF.
- However, the Programme of Action in the year 1992, stated that “the children’s disabilities who can be integrated in the regular school must get education there and the children who are facing problem in integrating in the regular school must send to the special. After learning skills, they can further have shifted to the regular school” (POA, 1992).
- Rehabilitation Council of India Act (RCI) also came in September 1992. This act was enforced for regulating the training of rehabilitation professionals and the maintenance of a Central Rehabilitation Register.
- After RCI act the Persons with Disabilities Act came in 1995, which ensure the full participation and equality of the people with disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region.
- With the joint effort of Government of India and the world bank in 1997, the District Primary Education Program was launched. DPEP states that “any difference that a child exhibited in learning was to be attributed not a problem with child, but of school system.” This was the first time when the emphasis was on the school preparedness (DPEP, 1997).
- In the year 1999, National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act came. To provide financial support to the people with mentioned four disabilities, various scheme such as “Reach and Relief Scheme” and “Samarth Scheme” was introduced (National Trust Act, 1999).
- For the Universalization of Elementary Education, Government of India launched Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in 2001. Though SSA was not an intervention specific to disability but the emphasis was Education for All.
- In the year 2009, Inclusive Education of the Disabled at the Secondary Stage (IEDSS) came. This was a reformed of IEDC for secondary stage education. 18.

In the same year Rastriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) was introduced by the Government of India, for the Universalization of Secondary Education.

- 2009 was a major year in education for India. The Right to Education act was passed in the same year and enforced from 1st April 2010. RTE 2009 under the article 21 A, makes the education a fundamental right of every child in India.
- The Rights of Person with Disability Act 2016, replaced the PwD Act of 1995. This act was in line with the UNCRPD. It includes 21 conditions as disable. The central and state government will be established advisory board on disability.
- In the year 2018, the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan was launched by the MHRD. It is an integrated scheme for school education, which merged three scheme SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan), RMSA (Rastriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan) and TE (Teacher Education).
- NEP 2020 is in line with the RPwD act 2016. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act 2016 defines inclusive education as a “system of education wherein students with and without disabilities learn together and the system of teaching and learning is suitably adapted to meet the learning needs of different types of students with disabilities “(RPwD Act, 2016). The RPwD act also affirmed the provision of free education for the child with disability up to the age of 18 years in an adequate condition (Banga, 2015). The RPwD act also increased the 3% reservation to 5% for the people with benchmark disabilities in all government institution for higher education. Any person with at least 40% of the listed 21 disabilities in the RPwD act is known as the person with benchmark disability.
- The act also emphasised on the barrier free access as a non-discrimination measure (Narayan, John 2017);
 - a) Schooling NEP 2020 affirm all the recommendation given by RPwD Act 2016, regarding school education. The policy has given highest priority to enabling regular schooling process from foundational stage to the higher education, for the children with disability. Children with moderate to severe disabilities will have the option of regular or special schooling (NEP 2020, Part-I, Section 6.10).

- b) School Complex School complex will be provided with a resource centre inside the complex itself and other resources. School also must ensure the recruitment of special educators with cross-disability training. The school will be supported to provide individualized accommodations and support mechanism in order to fulfil the need of the child with disabilities and to ensure barrier free access (NEP 2020, Part-I, Section 6.11).
- c) Curriculum, Supportive Devices and Assistive Devices NCERT will work with expert bodies like DEPWD to make national curriculum framework (NEP 2020, Part-I, Section 6.10). NIOS is responsible for developing high-quality modules to teach Indian Sign Language and through this to teach other basic subjects. The curriculum will be flexible according to child strength, which will allow the children to work on their own pace. To integrate and engage the child in the classroom activities, appropriate technology-based tools and other assistive devices, as well as teaching-learning materials which are adequate and language-appropriate such as large print textbooks and Braille will be made available in school (NEP 2020, Part-I, Section 6.11).
- d) d) Teacher NEP 2020 talks about reform of teacher education programmes. Sensitization, early intervention, support and special pedagogy to teach children with disability, to be an integral part of teacher education programmes (NEP 2020, Part-I, Section 6.14).
- e) Assessment National Assessment Centre, PARAKH, will formulate the guidelines and recommend tools for the assessment of the child with disability. This will be for all the exams including the entrance test from the foundational stage to higher education (NEP 2020, Part-I, Section 6.13).
- f) Home Schooling The home-schooling option will be available like before for children with severe and profound

disabilities. The resource centres and special educators will provide support for homeschooling. For home-schooling all the guidelines and standards will be developed as recommended in the RPwD Act 2016.

Conclusion

Only placement of the child with disability will not help. If we want to grow as a country, it's our moral duty to make education accessible to every child regardless of their disability. India as a country of diversity, always see these diversities as an opportunity similarly now it's time that the mindset of people to change and see every disability as a special ability. That is to focus on what these children can do better rather than merely focusing on things that they cannot do. From segregation to inclusion, the inclusive education system in India goes through several hurdles. To look at the disability as a special ability, it's required a change in the mindset. Finally, the government of India came up with such a policy which include the minute details. The New Education Policy 2020 if implement with proper planning, will be proved as a catalyst for inclusive education. This will bring the paradigm shift in inclusive education. All the aspects discussed above altogether will give rise to effective and quality education for children with disability. This will help in bridging the gap between the expectation and the reality of inclusive education.

Educating all children in India requires a joint effort from people at all levels. It includes support and cooperation from government officials, school administrators, parents, teachers, typically developing children, and people in the community. By including all children in regular schools, children with and without disabilities would get an opportunity to learn from one another. Both parties can learn to accept each other from a younger age, valuing differences and similarities in one another. A limited number of special schools, such as those currency existing in India, will never be able to address the needs of these children. True inclusion can happen only when every child with disability gets admission to his or her local public school. If Indian law requires education of all children, public school officials do not have any right to deny admission to a child based on his or her disability. Parents should no longer wait for more special schools to emerge for the education of their children with disabilities; instead, they should start agitating for their children's right to be educated in a public

school. Community members and organizations should come forward to advocate the education of all children in public schools. Every Indian needs to understand that inclusion is an opportunity for children with and without disabilities to learn from one another. India has already adopted the inclusion model but has not succeeded in implementing it. Research reveals that implementation of current laws and policies with strict enforcement can yield positive results. There is evidence that the inclusion model is not fully understood by politicians, government officials, school administrators, teachers, parents and people with disabilities. We should not forget that no nation can build inclusive communities using the philosophy of segregation.

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**Psychological Impact of the Pandemic Outbreak and the High Vulnerability:
An Analytical Study**

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Abstract:

COVID-19 has created an unprecedented worldwide health crisis, and the effect on the mental health of children and adolescents is expected to be significant. The present study explores consequences of the pandemic on fueling frustration, loneliness and isolation, psychological effects of students and their educational trajectories. Online education appears to be a permanent part of education systems, potentially marking the start of a new era in learning methods. The present study is also reflects on the economic collapse, employment anxiety and depression, financial worries, families of children with child sexual abuse. The study also addresses the mental condition of street children in India and children of migrant labourers during the pandemic, widening inequity of the impact on children from low-income families and lastly on building of mental health services for young and poor families.

Keywords: *Mental Health, Educational Trajectories, Employment Anxieties and Despair, and Financial Difficulties*

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Introduction:

COVID-19 is a significant public health issue with significant consequences for the population, including morbidity and mortality risks, as well as the impact on student health and the pandemic's impact on their learning trajectories. The mobility restriction and social distancing measures established around the world aimed at stopping the transmission of the virus (WHO, 2020), have produced an important impact on the psychological health of the student and probably the largest alteration of traditional educational practices in human history, affecting millions of students in countries around the world (Pokhrel and Chhetri, 2021). The pandemic has exposed the world's largest known educational and financial crisis, alongside socio-cultural, political, and economic issues. The pandemic has had a major impact on the students and also employment anxiety and depression of general population of worldwide. Despite various countries and organizations like the WHO implementing health policies in educational contexts, the pandemic's impact on students and their educational trajectories is expected to persist globally in the coming years.

Recent studies indicate that younger age groups are becoming more susceptible to stress, depression, and anxiety symptoms during the pandemic. Furthermore students face various risks: individual risks (infection), family risks (infection of relatives, loss of loved ones, decrease in family income, family estrangement, etc.), which have affected them psychosocially (Zhai and Du, 2020), and they also face risks related to the alteration of their educational trajectories rapid implementation online education, little social interaction, lack of teamwork and difficulty in adapting. Numerous studies confirm that the pandemic has generated anxiety problems in students, depression and stress (Odriozola et al., 2020). The pandemic has created uncertainty among students about what will happen in the future, which generates stress, and stress has unfavorable effects on the learning and psychological health of students (Sahu, 2020). Higher perceived stress is associated with more emotional distress, depression, fear, compulsion, anxiety, neurasthenia, and hypochondria (Yang et al., 2021). Students are worried about issues related to their studies and their future professional careers, they feel anxiety and frustration (Aristovnik et al., 2020) and great uncertainty until they are clear about how their courses will be restored after the crisis (Daniel, 2020) In some cases the lack of computer skills and a higher workload have prevented students from performing adequately while adapting to distance education. It can be affirmed that academic and daily difficulties have generated in students high levels of anguish and mental health problems, which are associated with difficulties in concentrating on academic work and sometimes job loss (Kecojevic et al., 2020).

Lockdowns create social distance and mental interaction among students, causing emotional damage and limiting learning. The coronavirus pandemic hinders interaction, which is essential for education and learning, affecting both aspects of student life. Students are experiencing despair due to family issues and distance from friends, leading to irritation, loneliness, and depression. The closure of educational

institutions is also affecting students' mental health, causing stress, anxiety, and fear of their studies. This has resulted in dropouts, session delays, and uncertain shutdowns, affecting their overall mental health. Students worldwide are experiencing increasing mental strain due to constant computer use for online courses, leading to physical disabilities and isolation. UNESCO reports that 1.5 billion students in 190 countries are disconnected from their institutions, highlighting the urgent need for improved education systems. Psychologists and therapists highlight the impact of censorship and social distance on students' mental health. A study was conducted to identify the most significant factors affecting students' mental health during the Covid-19 pandemic, along with the impact of economic, social, and educational issues on their mental health. This research aims to understand the underlying causes of these issues.

Objectives:

The primary goal of this study was to evaluate its psychological effects. Lockdown and dread associated to the disease's potential symptoms and spread had a significant impact on people's lives. The fatal toll and global expansion of COVID-19 are increasing the terror associated with it. Determining the first psychological effects of COVID-19 on students and the general public, as well as its connection to physical symptoms, were the goals of this study. This could aid decision-makers in developing comprehensive responses.

Methodology:

The nature of this paper is quantitative. The study included primary and secondary data, with the former being gathered via personal interviews to provide a more accurate picture of how Covid-19 has affected students' mental health in fact. A structured questionnaire approach was used to gather primary data, which included three variables: economic factor, social component, and educational factor. The study tried to collect data from 180 respondents, including students, working men and women, who are all affected emotionally by the Covid-19 epidemic. The respondents are conveniently selected. The convenience sampling approach (a non-probability sampling methodology) was adopted here because it allows the researchers to restrict costs and save time while also offering a conveniently available facility. This study examines the mental health of students affected by the school shutdown and the mental health of working men and women affected by their financial hardships during the epidemic. A model is used to evaluate how many the respondents mental health is being impacted by COVID-19. It also investigates respondents' mental health and depressive symptoms on a range of levels. Despite the fact that mental health is just as essential as physical health, it is still not adequately addressed. This study contributes fresh empirical information on the present situation of depression and mental health among respondents in an emerging developing country.

Secondary data from various sources was used to create a literature review. The questionnaire included demographic information like gender, age, and education. The

remaining sections were connected to economic, social, and educational factors, with mental health as a dependent variable. The data was gathered from various sources, including books, journals, printed materials, and internet.

Disruptions exacerbate loneliness, frustration, and isolation:

Seeing their parents suffer from anxiety may be upsetting for children, who usually rely to their parents for comfort and assistance in coping with the unknown. The combination of hereditary risk factors and acquired behaviours makes children of anxious parents more likely to experience anxiety themselves. Children and adults react to crisis situations quite differently. Children and young people could find it challenging to comprehend the necessity for social isolation and separation, whereas adults can perceive the need for both. Parents may maintain lucid communication, stability, connection, and academic advancement in order to promote resilience in their kids. However, these efforts will not totally alleviate the sense of loneliness and isolation that quarantines and social distance cause in children and young people worldwide. According to the report, 55% of the young people they assisted felt lonely and alone. Loneliness may raise the likelihood of despair and anxiety while also boosting emotions of stress, all of which can damage physical health and lead to unfavourable health behaviours. In the COVID-19 lockdown, many kids have been spending more time on screens for entertainment, social interaction, and education. With inadequate parental supervision, children may spend more time online and be exposed to disturbing information that fuels their fears and anxieties. Spending more time online might raise the risk of being exposed to hazardous information and online bullying. More than a third of survey respondents believe the crisis has a negative impact on their mental health, and more than half say it has a negative impact on their daily life. According to a survey, two-thirds of parents are concerned about the emotional and mental health of their kids as a result of COVID-19. According to this survey, approximately half of those aged 6 to 18 are concerned, with one-third fearing the virus.

The crisis is particularly challenging for underprivileged communities:

The COVID-19 epidemic has adversely impacted all the communities. These communities have long faced health-care disparities and systemic imbalances. They have also come across variations in living situations, employment situations, underlying health concerns, and access to care. The astonishing volume of employment losses has deepened existing disparities. This disparity also affects the educational system. According to the most recent UNESCO report on education, the coronavirus epidemic has touched more than 91percent of students throughout the world. The UNESCO report states that over 157 crore students across 191 countries have been severely impacted by the closure of educational institutions due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In India, more than 32 crore students have been affected by the various restrictions and the nationwide lockdown, which was on 25 March (UNESCO, 2020). While schools have swiftly adapted to online learning, not all children have access to the necessary

broadband infrastructure to actually participate. Many of these online learning environments demand that the parent participate actively as a home co-teacher. Some low-income parents may be vital workers or without the language and educational abilities to assist their children with their schoolwork.

Educational Trajectories:

The global education community, as well as several international organisations and educational authorities from various nations, recognised the urgent necessity to use an online teaching strategy. However, the growth of distant learning is a difficult topic that has received little attention (Appolloni et al., 2021). In general, both students and teachers are ill-prepared to transition from traditional classroom-based education to online learning (Delafosse, 2021). Due to technological obstacles, restricted internet access, inadequate gadgets for online learning, and a lack of technical understanding among many students, e-learning platforms provide a problem for many of them. A recent research highlighted several issues for pupils as a result of school closures and the advent of online learning; for example, they struggled to study properly from home, and parents struggled to supervise their children's learning process (Owusu et al., 2020). Another study discovered that the pandemic caused a considerable number of students to postpone their graduation and lose their jobs (Aucejo et al., 2020). Furthermore, owing to socio-economic differences, some students must cut their study time, which is why lower income students are more likely to postpone graduation. Delays in academic activities have been positively associated with anxiety symptoms (Cao et al., 2020), and therefore with more difficulties in achieving academic goals. Institutions and educational systems must put extra effort into assisting children whose parents don't support them and whose circumstances don't encourage learning (Daniel, 2020).

Closing of schools and disruption of student life:

According to UNESCO, over 90% (1.5 billion) of the world's student population have been impacted by school cancellations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Children and teenagers have less structure, routine, and peer connection because of the closure of schools. Additionally, it is more difficult for children who need assistance with their mental health issues because school is frequently where they seek it out initially. Students may experience frustration and anxiety over changes to their school's curriculum, evaluations, and promotions. College entrance examinations have been delayed or cancelled in numerous places, which has left students feeling unsure, anxious, and stressed. According to a study conducted in India, more than 20 percent of applicants for university admission exams said that their stress levels were at their highest possible rating of 10, even before the exam was postponed. The survey revealed that children struggle with emotions of worry and dread connected to skipping out on school events, missing their friends, and falling behind in schoolwork. Many

students have also missed out on significant occasions and chances due to the crisis, including graduation ceremonies, internship possibilities, and term-break events.

Vulnerable children and emotional stress:

Children who are already suffering from mental health difficulties are more vulnerable to the epidemic. Some children's mental health regimens and therapies have been significantly disturbed by quarantines and social exclusion. While telemedicine and virtual therapy may be solutions, the nature of support for these adolescents and young people has altered radically as a result of the crisis. Without the structure and support that schools offer, children with special needs and learning disabilities experience more difficulties and may not be able to adjust to online learning. ADHD and autism spectrum condition can provide distinct obstacles for children, their families, and educators. Household problems, such as domestic violence, mental illnesses, and parental substance misuse, may increase the risk of child abuse in a confined environment when families are compelled to take shelter in site. Additionally, a lockdown might prevent students from receiving regular care from teachers, counsellors, and other caregivers, which could mask child abuse. The pandemic has disproportionately affected vulnerable populations, with greater rates of infection and mortality observed in vulnerable communities, perhaps making them and their children more vulnerable to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Hunger, family tensions, and other outbreak-related impacts may increase the risk of PTSD in vulnerable youngsters. All of this can have a long-term influence on their psychological well-being.

Internet accessibility in remote areas:

Even if the nation has been adjusting to new-age learning, there is still a barrier preventing the endeavours from being completely effective. The fact that only 45 crore of the nation's total population have access to the internet and e-learning is still unaffected. Rural residents still suffer a great deal from a lack of access to modern technology, which hurts the cause of online education. Nowadays, virtual classrooms depend on more than just e-lectures; they also need access to e-content, online reading materials, practice questions, etc. And here is where we fail to meet, since India is not completely ready to bring education to all corners of the country through digital platforms or online classrooms. There is no doubting that the existing approach will hold back pupils who don't have the same privileges as the others. However, academic institutions and the Indian government are working nonstop to find a solution to this issue.

Economic collapse and its devastating effects:

This crisis strikes at a time when India's GDP growth is faltering, and unemployment is rising as a result of the country's dismal economic performance in recent years. The unstable state that the economy was in before to the shock's impact might exacerbate the shock's effects. This is especially true given that the financial sector, which serves as the brain of the economy, has been dysfunctional and that there

is little room for macroeconomic policy to respond to a crisis of this magnitude. Due to COVID-19 disruptions, the job market has deteriorated, with the total unemployment rate rising to 14.7 percent in April. Laborer/worker unemployment rates were significantly higher. The prevalence of mental health issues is higher during recessions, according to research. Children whose parents lose their employment are more likely to feel despair, show psychologic symptoms, and have a worse overall assessment of psychological well-being. The COVID-19 pandemic, like the Global Financial Crisis of 2008, will very probably increase the number of people living in poverty. Extreme poverty can delay or perhaps permanently damage cognitive, emotional, and physical development in certain children. As a result, these developmental problems can hinder upward mobility and exacerbate poverty and unfairness. Adolescents and young adults preparing to enter the labour force will be particularly severely impacted by a downturn in the economy. Lack of employment options for new graduates, especially those with student debt, will undoubtedly increase stress, and because so many young people work as "gig workers" without job security or health insurance, they may also struggle to make ends meet.

Disasters have enduring psychological effects:

According to information from previous disasters, the impact of COVID-19 on children and young people whose lives have been drastically changed might last for years. Those who survived from previous disasters were considerably more likely to develop emotional disorders than children who did not. Furthermore, the effects were frequently worse for children who were already vulnerable and in distress before to the catastrophe. Numerous studies have shown that children and teenagers who lived in cities had severe PTSD months or even years after the pandemics. People who had lost a parent during the epidemic and those who lived close to ground zero were particularly at risk. Many children and teenagers are experiencing the death of a family member for the first time because of the epidemic. Many physical and mental health issues, such as adult depression, PTSD, and other psychiatric diseases, are at risk due to such early childhood trauma.

Employment anxiety and depression:

Employment anxiety refers to the fear and anxiety people experience about their future employment security, while depression is a mood disorder characterized by a depressed mood, loss of interest, energy, guilt, low self-worth, disturbed sleep, and decreased attentiveness, according to the World Health Organization. These issues can lead to ambiguous fears and spiritual responses towards a particular profession. The disturbing impacts of the epidemic have inspired researchers and psychiatrists to focus on and investigate the impact of unemployment on psychological health and wellness (WHO, 2020). Global pandemics have always had a negative impact on the employment sector by causing job losses and job instability. Similar to the last global crises, the COVID-19 epidemic has significantly curtailed both human life and the world economy. Unfair employment, unstable work, and job losses all contribute to job

seekers' anxiety. Furthermore, reports of rising employment losses cause student sadness and negatively impact their mental health. Students are the most susceptible demographic influenced by the rising bad information about employment and the financial crisis, because fresh graduates will confront an uncertain job market with little or no investment in new businesses. A crisis also makes it difficult for families to manage their fundamental demands for survival, as the expense of healthcare and the possibility of job loss both rise quickly. Numerous long-term researches have found a substantial link between depression and unemployment, defining depression as a side effect of unemployment. Depression is connected with job anxiety.

Financial worries and depression:

Financial well-being is described as the sufficiency and degree of economic solvency that shields individuals against financial risks such as abrupt unemployment, health risks, and poverty after retirement. Financial anxieties are unpleasant sensations experienced by those who are unable to pay their financial obligations. A range of circumstances, including a lack of finances, falling income, debt, and job instability, may contribute to such concerns. Pearlin et al. conclude that the presence of financial anxiety has a substantial impact on depression, self-confidence, and personal life management (Pearlin, L.I. 1981: 337-356). Because of insufficient assistance for education, health care, and household expenses as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic, students' depression has worsened. As a result, it is clear that rising financial stress, followed by a dramatic fall in healthy life management, causes depression. Financial anxiety is connected with depression.

Families of children with child sexual abuse:

According to a research conducted by Aarambh India Initiative, Prerana, and ADM Capital Foundation, the Mumbai lockdown has exacerbated the condition of child sexual assault survivors, with 127 families presently involved, largely from deprived socio-economic status segments. The researchers believe that a sudden loss of income and a lack of social support have made it more difficult for many families to cope with the effects of child sexual abuse (Pandharipande N., 2020). A pandemic inside a pandemic exists: the quiet epidemic of child sexual abuse. According to Vikas Puthran of Childline India Foundation (CIF), during the ten days of the lockdown - between March 20 and March 31 - there was a 50percent rise in the number of calls to 3 lakh from 2 lakh (Buckshee D., 2020). Lockdown was shown to be the ideal atmosphere for an upsurge in sexual abuse since many abusers, particularly in situations of incest, engage in situational sexual activity with children as a result of stress in their lives. Furthermore, self-quarantining at home necessitates remaining in constant contact and close quarters with the abuser, which may be quite emotionally exhausting.

Street children in India:

Tens of thousands of people phone assistance lines every day, and many more go to bed hungry as the government shuts down to combat the pandemic. India has millions of children who sell balloons, pens, and other trinkets at traffic signals or pick up trash in cities. These children live in cities on streets, beneath flyovers, or in little alleys and byways. Everyone has been instructed to stay inside during the lockdown. How about the kids who live on the streets? What do they do next? Delhi is thought to have 70,000 or more street kids, while the actual number may be far higher. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR, 2020) has recommended actions to create a database of these children in response to the plight of street children during the coronavirus lockdown in order to link them to various government social programmes and prevent them from returning to the streets.

Children of migrant labourers:

There are serious issues due to the emigration from our cities. Children from migrant families make up a hidden vulnerable population that might include any of the following groups. Children abandoned in the countryside by parents who pursue jobs elsewhere make up the first category. They depend on money sent back home as remittances. The reduction or loss of parent's pay as a result of the lockdown will have an immediate impact on food consumption and health consequences for these children. Children who move about with their parents who regularly work in the construction, brickmaking, and agricultural industries make up the second type. A study on unofficial labour locations in seven Indian cities found that 90% of accompanying migrant children did not use ICDS services, 30% had never enrolled for school, and 80% did not have access to education. Many youngsters were reportedly living in dangerous and unsanitary conditions. The employment losses migrant workers experience as a result of the current pandemic will worsen their situation. Thousands of these families travelled back to their homes with infants and toddlers in tow, either on foot or in state-provided transportation, subjecting these kids to unforeseen hardships like malnutrition and sickness. The third type consists of kids who relocate because of their jobs. A variety of problems, including salary loss and physical abuse, have been brought up by child rights campaigners. Relief and transit camps at state borders, as well as quarantine facilities, should offer families with safe, child-friendly shelters that provide nutritional food, water, and sanitation (Behera R, DnieIU, Minz R., 2014).

Conclusion:

The study provides novel insights on depression and student mental health difficulties, which have hitherto received little attention. The results show that anxiety about finding work, worry about money, and lack of knowledge about the pandemic all contribute to sadness, which has a negative domino impact on students' mental health. The research's findings therefore highlight the need of using a variety of coping techniques to safeguard students' mental health and maintain their optimism during the

crisis. The pandemic will eventually end, but there may be many survivors who are at greater risk of contracting the disease. As a result, practical actions must be taken to enable individuals to accept and adapt to the 'new normal' way of life with ease. The issues that India faces are underlined. As we deal with this pandemic, many more will appear. Better preparation is required for a gloomy future. Budgets for healthcare, infrastructural improvements, better telemedicine capabilities, crisis management drills, and substantial lifestyle and travel habit adjustments must be put into place. It should be the duty of governments and politicians to enhance spending in both the physical and mental healthcare sectors, as well as to commit to resolving the system's main flaws that the crisis has exposed. In addition to reducing the burden of sickness, this may also reduce risks and increase readiness for the next crisis. Investing in mental health services during an economic downturn may also assist decrease societal costs, accumulate human capital, and maintain long-term economic recovery. Supporting children from households who are close or below the poverty line is another way to combat inequality. We also encourage corporations to provide greater mental health services to their employees and families. This might involve providing staff counseling, arranging mental health and parenting discussions, and providing wellness tools, guidelines, and programmes. This assistance may help increase employee well-being and productivity, and it has become an increasingly essential employee value proposition. This paper aims to provide an early evaluation of possible consequences based on currently available facts, research, and insights from the Alliance and its charitable partners. To quantify the impact on children's mental health and to better guide intervention plans and activities, much more thorough study and statistics are required. We are committed to ensuring the continuation of this study.

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